SOME ASPECTS OF ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE BĀBĪ-BAHĀ'Ī INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

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■ ABSTRACT

`Some Aspects of Isrā'īliyyāt and the Emergence of the Bābī-Bahā'ī Interpretation of the Bible'

Stephen N. Lambden

This thesis deals with Islamic Isrā'īliyyāt ("Israelitica") literary traditions, the Bible and the relationship to them of two closely related post-Islamic movements, the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions. It concerns the Islamic assimilation and treatment of pre-Islamic, biblical and related materials and their level of post-Islamic Bābī-Bahā'ī assimilation and exposition. More specifically, this thesis focuses upon select aspects of the biblical and Islamo-biblical ("Islamified", "Islamicate") traditions reflected within the Arabic and Persian writings of two Iranian born 19th century messianic claimants Sayyid `Alī Muhammad Shirazī, the Bāb (1819-1859) and Mīrzā Ḥusayn `Alī Nūrī (1817-1892), entitled Bahā'-Allāh, the founders of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions respectively.

The presence of Islamo-biblical citations and the absence of canonical biblical citations within the writings of the Bāb will be argued as will the emergence of the Bahā'ī interpretation of the canonical Bible though its founder figure Bahā'-Allāh who first cited an Arabic Christian Bible version whilst resident in Ottoman Iraq (Baghdad) towards the end of what has been called the middle-Bābī period (1861-2 CE). This laid the foundations for the Bahā'ī interpretation of the Bible which was greatly enriched and extended by oriental Bahā'ī apologists , Bahā'-Allāh's eldest son `Abd al-Bahā' Abbās (d. 1921) and his great-grandson Shoghi Effendi (d. 1957) who shaped the modern global Bahā'ī phenomenon. Over a century or so the neo-Shī`ī millennialist faction that was Bābism (the religion of the Bāb) evolved into the global Bahā'ī religion of the Book.

Throughout this thesis aspects of Isrā'īliyyāt will be analysed historically and the Islamic, especially Shi`ī-Shaykhī background to and the Bābī-Baha'ī messianic renewal of the Isrā'īliyyāt rooted tradition of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) will be noted and commented upon.

SOME ASPECTS OF ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE BĀBĪ-BAHĀ'Ī INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

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■ PREFACE

This thesis was begun about nineteen years ago. For medical reasons it was largely abandoned for more than a decade. Several actual or nominal doctoral supervisors encouraged me, though I was initially unable to accomplish much. I did, however, manage to collect relevant material, struggle to keep up to date in the research area, maintain contacts in the fast evolving field of Bābī-Bahā'ī studies, and attempt to become computer literate.

My initial supervisor within the Dept of Religious Studies (Univ. of Newcastle upon Tyne) Dr. Denis MacEoin (1982-86, then lecturer in [Arabic and] Islamic Studies) had been and (unofficially remained) wonderfully supportive and generous with advice and loans from his excellent library. After him the now retired head of the Newcastle Dept., Prof. John Sawyer, offered encouragement and support for an extended period, witnessing little evidence of completion. More recently and despite multitudinous academic and other commitments, Dr. William Telford generously and patiently guided me on the right path through writing up and submission.

In the early 1980s I benefited considerably by extending my meagre knowledge of Arabic and Persian though the study of Persian grammar and the translation of Babi-Bahā'ī texts at the University of Durham with Dr. Paul Luft (until recently, at Manchester Univ.) and his assistant, the now late Dr. Reza Navabpour. A good many professional and lay and experts in the field of Shī`īsm and Bābī-Bahā'ī studies have also, over the years, assisted in various ways; including, for example, Dr. Juan Cole (Univ. Michigan), Dr. B. Todd Lawson (Univ. Toronto), Dr. Moojan Momen (Cambridge), Dr. Sholeh Quinn (Athens, Ohio) and Dr. Peter Smith (Univ. Mahidol, Thailand). The institutions at the Bahā'ī World Centre (Haifa Israel), the family of the late Hasan Balyuzi including the trustees of the (now Tonbridge, UK based) Afnān Library, as well as numerous other families and friends, generously provided me with an almost unending supply of the primary Persian and Arabic and other Bābī-Bahā'ī source materials as well as notice of important books and mss. of diverse kinds. I remain in great debt to all of the above persons and to others too numerous to mention here, for their longstanding

patience, friendship, support and understanding.

■ INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Bābī-Bahā'ī studies had its apologetic genesis in the first half of the 19th century when learned, predominantly Shaykhī, disciples of the Bāb expounded and defended their religion in the face of increasingly hostile, largely Shī`ī clerical attacks. Later, numerous apologetic writings of the founders of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions and their followers were written. Bābī-Bahā'ī primary, and to some extent secondary literatures, are extremely vast and in a very wide range of languages. Many Bābī and Bahā'ī manuscripts and documents remain uncatalogued and unstudied awaiting academic examination and publication. Secondary literatures are often uneven. They exhibit a very wide range of perspectives from the banal and uninformed to works of considerable insight and integrity. Most academic writing remains highly speculative and often misleading in a field that remains in its infancy.

The prominent western orientalists who published studies in the nascent Bābī (-Bahā'ī) religions, include several persons then active in Tsarist Russia, including Alexander (Mīrzā) Kāzem-Beg (1802-c.1870), Alexander G. Tumanski (1805-1881) and their German born associate, Jean-Albert-Bernard Dorn (1805-1881). It is a curious twist of history, however, that the notorious French journalist, diplomat, and `Father of Racism', Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882) in his *Religiones et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (Paris, 1865+ many subsequent editions), made spirited and more than passing mention of the religion of the Bāb. He thus stimulated interest in the Bābī rooted Bahā'ī religious movement which ultimately promoted an anti-racist universal perspective highlighting the oneness of humankind. It was this volume of Gobineau which first inspired the Cambridge scholar E. G. Browne (1862-1926) to devote many years to the study of the Bābī-Azalī and to a far lesser extent Bahā'ī religion.

The genius of the idiosyncratic `Father of Islamic Studies', Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), penned an occasional paper on matters Bābī-Bahā'ī. He had cordial association with `Abbas Effendi, `Abd Al-Bahā, the son and successor of Bahā'-Allāh. So too did his early mentor, the

turkologist Armin Vambery (1832-1913), a Jewish-Hungarian linguist and one-time dervish who ultimately considered himself a Bahā'ī. This also became the professed religious orientation of the Oxford Hebraist, Thomas K. Cheyne (1841-1915). The one time `Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture' at Oxford, Cheyne adopted the epithet *Rūḥānī* ("Spiritual") and authored a now largely forgotten Bahā'ī book, *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1914).

Scholars, orientalists and academics of the subsequent couple of generations following Browne's death, largely paid little or no attention to the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions. This despite the fairly impressive global diffusion and growth of Bahā'ī (now approx., 5-6 million, Smith, 1996:132). They tended to dismiss it as an insignificant outgrowth of Islam, an alien movement or crankish faction neither exactly Islamic nor Christian and frequently attacked by narrow-minded followers of both these world Faiths. It has largely been in the last few decades that things have begun to change. There are now several professorships in Bahā'ī studies and a growing number of lectureships in the subject in academically respectable universities including the Hebrew University at Jerusalem.

Bābī-Bahā'ī studies was a fairly respectable orientalist-academic pursuit from the 1860s up till roughly the 1920s. The succeeding decades up to the 1960s were very largely a period in which Bahā'īs were persecuted in the Middle East and, on the whole, no longer taken particularly seriously in the West. The majority of Bahā'īs were heavily engaged in matters evangelical. Intellectual adherents were generally marginalised or too ensconced in their own academic or other careers (sometimes in the field of Iranian-Middle Eastern Studies) to give sustained or serious attention to the academic analysis of their own Faith. Until recently few built upon or scrutinized the findings of the above-mentioned pioneer orientalists. Very little non-evangelical writing or research had, for practically 60 years, been published within or without the Bahā'ī community.

It was largely amongst western Bahāī' intellectuals in Europe and America in the late 60s and early 70s that early glimmerings of an academic Bābī-Bahā'ī studies appeared. This

was partly inspired by the example and writings of the academically oriented Bahā'ī historian and apologist, Hasan M. Balyuzi (1908-1980). Through him British Bahā'īs became fascinated with seemingly approachable aspects of Bābī-Bahā'ī history. The largely historically oriented legacy of Browne and others began to be pondered and critically assessed. Very little or no attention was initially given, however, to the academic analysis of Bābī-Bahā'ī religious doctrine, to the intricacies of its theologized historiography, theology or theophanology. Few analysed the Bābī-Bahā'ī phenomenon and its sacred writ. Among the exceptions was the somewhat unique 1923 Edinburgh University doctoral thesis of S. Alter entitled *Studies in Bahaism.* This thesis attempts to research some aspects of the genesis of Bābī-Bahā'ī religious doctrine, the origins of its biblical citation and interpretation in the light of Isrā'īliyyāt (Israelitica); loosely, Abrahamic biblical and related materials within Islamic sources.

■ TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS.

In view of the existence of a myriad Shīrāzīs of note, the name of Sayyid `Alī Muhammad Shīrāzī (1819-1859 CE) will not be abbreviated in this manner. Rather, his well-known title the Bāb (`The Gate') will be used (in bibliographical contexts Bāb will occasionally be further abbreviated as B*). Mīrzā Ḥusayn `Alī Nūrī (1817-1892) who came to be entitled Bahā'-Allāh (The Splendour of God) and founded the Bahā'ī religion, will be abbreviated BA*. His eldest son and successor `Abbās known as `Abd al-Bahā' (1844-1921) will be indicated by AB* and his great-grandson, the Bahā'ī leader Shoghi Effendi (Shawqī Rabbānī; c. 1896-1957) by SE*.

CALENDRAL AND GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

Years will be given (when appropriate) according to the Islamic Hijri calendar followed by a forward slash and then the corresponding date[s] of the Common Era. CE indicates the date of the Common Era and AH (*Anno Hegrie*) that of the Muslim (lunar) calendar. The calendral abbreviation BE will indicate the solar Bābī-Bahā'ī or *Badī`* (new) era which began in May 1260/1844 and is in use by contemporary Bahā'īs.

■ GENERAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

A variety of general abbreviations will be used at various points throughout this thesis. Apart from Heb. for Hebrew, Ar. for `Arabic' and Per. for `Persian' a few further examples are:

HB	=	Hebrew Bible (Old Testament),	K.	=	*Kitāb* (book..),
Kh.	=	Khuṭba (= Homily, Sermon),	L.	=	*Lawḥ* (tablet),
NT	=	New Testament,	Q.	=	Qur'ān,
Sh.	=	*Sharḥ* (Commentary),	T.	=	*Tafsīr* (Commentary).

Abbreviations for periodicals and other sources, generally follow those set out in key western academic literatures in the fields of Biblical, Iranian and Islamic studies e.g. the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1: lii-lxxxviii), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (xxi- xlviii); the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed. 1:ix-xii) and *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1:8-19). Most of these major abbreviations are indicated alphabetically in the bibliographies (1-->3 p. 216ff).

■ Transliteration of Arabic and Persian.

The system of Arabic-Persian transliteration used throughout this thesis is essentially that adopted in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* ^{2} (-> EI^2) except that all underlining is dropped, the letter ج is transliterated j (not dj) and "q" is used for ق (not "k"). The Persian termination ه `ih' will usually be used for distinctly Persian sources and names (as opposed to the Arabic *a*).

■ Terminology: Islamo-biblical, Islamified, Islamicate.

Academic terminology expressive of the creative Islamic utilization and reinterpretation of the Bible and Abrahamic and other religious materials is undeveloped and inadequate. As succinctly defined the following terms will be utilized here:

a) Islamo-biblical = Islamic citations or recreations of biblical data. Something Islamo-biblical may express a conscious or unconscious Islamic assimilation of biblically rooted materials.
b) Islamicate or Islamified will be used to express aspects of the Islamic utilization of pre-Islamic (Jewish, Christian, etc) religious and cultural materials.

Chapter One

ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT: SOME ASPECTS OF THE ISLAMIC AND BĀBĪ-BAHĀ'Ī BACKGROUND

Sayyid `Alī Muhammad Shīrāzī, the Bāb (`the Gate'; 1819-1850 CE) and Mīrzā Ḥusayn `Alī Nūrī, entitled Bahā'-Allāh (= BA*, `The Splendour of God', 1817-1892 CE) were contemporary Iranian born messianic claimants who founded religious movements which have evolved into the now globally diffused, neo-Shī`ī, Bahā'ī `religion of the book'. The voluminous Arabic and Persian Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture which they set forth includes exegetical, prophetological and eschatological themes and motifs. A proportion of this literature is directly or indirectly expository of the Bible and the Qur'ān (= Q.) as well as Isrā'īliyyāt traditions expressive of motifs and themes originally Jewish Christian or Abrahamic. While, as will be argued, the Bāb made no direct use of the canonical Bible, BA* and his successors evinced an increasingly detailed knowledge of the Bible. Post-Bābī Bahā'ī writers were progressively and more markedly influenced by the Bible though this text had a relatively minor influence compared to the foundational Shī`ī and associated Islamic universe of discourse.

Of primary background importance to Bābī-Bahā'ī scriptural studies is the Arabic Q. which often reflects biblical material. This influential book was frequently cited as divine revelation by the Bāb and BA*. Both were born into Qajar Shī`ī families where at least the consciousness of its importance and the rote learning of something of its contents was standard. The architects of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions both show a wide knowledge of the Q. They produced sometimes neo-qur'ānic Arabic writings modelled upon it. Directly and allusively, often typologically and allegorically, they commented upon the Q.; upon certain of its sūrahs, verses, words and/ or letters, at times in a novel, rewritten or *waḥy* - `revelation mode'. Their Arabic-Persian style was much influenced by the content, vocabulary and rhyming prose of the Q. A good deal of Bābī-Bahā'ī prophetology and theophanology (Ar. *maẓhariyya*) is rooted in an exegesis of the often biblically rooted prophetology of the Q. Many writings of the Bāb and BA* draw upon and expound, from a basically neo- or post-Shī`ī standpoint, Islamic traditions which have a biblical-qur'ānic substrate.

Bahā'ī scripture seeks to re-interpret both the Bible and the Q. This in the light of its claim to fulfill previous major Abrahamic eschatological expectations and extend the eternal religion of God (= renewed "Islam"). While the writings of the Bāb contain huge quantities of *tafsīr* and Q. influenced texts, those of BA* additionally contain numerous directly, biblically influenced *pericopae.* Select extra-biblical, Islamo-biblical and other Abrahamic religious materials from primitive Islamic times dubbed Isrā'īliyyāt (= "Israelitica") are likewise interpreted in novel ways. The Bāb, BA* and their successors creatively utilized and interpreted qur'ānic and extra-qur'ānic motifs, *pericopae* and narratives collectively found in the Islamic *qiṣāṣ al-anbiyā'* (Stories of the prophets) literatures. These prophetological materials are intimately related to and here considered a part of the Isrā'īliyyāt stream of religious tradition.

The Bāb and BA* were both influenced by aspects of the vast corpus of orthodox and heterodox Islamic literatures which in one way or another contain, assimilate or expound pre-Islamic scripture, legends of the prophets and associated materials. Dimensions of such Isrā'īliyyāt materials pertinent to the background of this thesis will be selectively surveyed below (-->2.1ff). The result will be a source-critical trajectory which will sometimes follow pathways outside of mainstream Sunnī and even Shī`ī Islamic norms. The complex, multi-faceted often Shī`ī-Shaykhī and associated background material demands this (–> 5.1f). Just as the non-mainstream, `heterodox' Qumran and associated Jewish texts throw light on emergent Christianity, so does the Bābī-Bahā'ī religious `universe of discourse' have key doctrinal roots in the byways of the Islamic mystico-intellectual world. From time to time in this opening and the following chapters key Bābī-Bahā'ī hermeneutical and doctrinal teachings will also be summarily noted. First a few notes upon the significance of the term Isrā'īliyyāt.

■ 1. 1 Isrā'īliyyāt and its Islamic assimilation

The Arabic plural إِسْرَائِيلِيَّات, Isrā'īliyyāt (loosely, `Israelitica'; sing. Isrā'īliyya) is an Arabic plural derived from the Hebrew proper name יִשְׂרָאֵל (yisrā'êl, lit. `contender with God'), namely (Ar.) إِسْرَائِيل Isrā'īl, the designation of the renamed Jacob, who was the father of the twelve tribes (Gen.

32:28, 35:10). In its narrow sense it may indicate oral or written Islamic traditions thought to have been transmitted by or derived from the "children of Israel" *(banī isrā'īl)*. More inclusively it can indicate a range of biblical or Abrahamic scripture, folklore, hagiography and legend. The term Isrā'īliyyāt indicates diverse traditions to a greater or lesser extent Islamicate (= `Islamified') or Islamo-biblical in the sense of having been doctrinally assimilated within Islam or exegetically reinterpreted by Muslims.

The word Isrā'īliyyāt has been in use since the early Islamic centuries when it initially had purely descriptive and neutral connotations (Adang, 1996:9 fn. 49). In later centuries this word came in some circles to be used pejoratively though this negative use of Isrā'īliyyāt was not and never has been adopted universally in the Muslim world. In numerous Islamic sources Isrā'īliyyāt has a long, disparate and not yet fully articulated semantic history. There is no standard, clear cut or agreed upon Islamic or modern academic definition of Isrā'īliyyāt. In this thesis, as in much modern academic writing, Isrā'īliyyāt will be used neutrally to indicate all manner of source materials expressive of the Islamic adoption of biblical, extra-biblical, Abrahamic and related religious materials of the kind registered in Muslim literary sources to be listed and partly discussed below (--> 3.1ff).

Islamic Isrā'īliyyāt traditions often originated with early converts to Islam from the Abrahamic and related religions. Some derive from non-Muslim Arabs who had intimate contact with Jews, Christians and other Abrahamic religionists (Vajda, EI^2 IV:211). Jewish, Christian, Manichean and other converts to Islam did not simply abandon their cherished sacred writings and religious traditions. They often came to be assimilated into an Islamicate intellectual universe where Jewish, Christian and other streams of scripture and tradition were assimilated and deemed fulfilled; where proof-texts and eschatological traditions were given new dimensions of meaning. Elements, for example, of biblical, pseudo-biblical, pseudepigraphical, and Rabbinic, (targumic, midrashic and Talmudic, etc) thought were registered or reflected in the Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. So too on occasion were apocryphal Gospel and other Christian materials assimilated within nascent

Islam (Hoyland 1997; Wasserstrom 1994). A dynamic and creative symbiosis between emergent Islam and Abrahamic and associated religious ideas was a feature of early Islam that is reflected in the Islamicate and Islamo-biblical Isrā'īliyyāt traditions (Wasserstrom, 1995).

■ Early Muslim transmitters of Isrā'īliyyāt

From the early Islamic centuries charismatic and sometimes literate converts to Islam became *quṣṣaṣ* (sing. *qāṣṣ)*, story-tellers or pious *wu`āẓẓ* (= "preachers", sing. *wa`īẓ*). These persons were basically popularises of Islamo-biblical or ultimately Islamicate stories which can often be traced back to legends of the *ahl al-kitāb,* the `People of the Book' (= Jews and Christians, etc) or the *banī Isrā'īl* (children of Israel = Jews). Though Muslim converts from the *ahl al-kitāb* sometimes perpetuated fantastic, entertaining myths, others were respected and influential fountainheads of oral and literary Isrā'īliyyāt. The *quṣṣaṣ* were important in the dissemination of biblical and extra-biblical materials as well as Abrahamic and Persian-Zoroastrian, Manichean and other materials into Islam. Through their storytelling they expounded and interpreted the implications of the qur'ānic and post-qur'ānic Islamic message. This in the light of Abrahamic scripture and tradition which they Islamified or made expressive of Islamic perspectives.[1]

It must suffice here to introduce three key figures among those who transmitted Isrā'īliyyāt from the earliest times. Still cited as authorities today in many parts of the Muslim world the following persons lived during the period of emergent Islam. The Isrā'īliyyāt they creatively transmitted was often attributed to Muhammad, certain of the Shī`ī Imams, or to other worthies of the first Islamic centuries. It helped shape centuries of Islamic attitudes towards pre-Islamic scripture and the `people of the Book'. The following three persons were among those especially

[1] Pederson,1948; Pellat, EI²IV:733-5;Thackston, 1978:xiv-v; Newby, 1980:689-91;Kister,1981:186; Brinner EAL2:465-6; Adang 1996: 9-10; Berkey 2001.

important as transmitters of Isrā'īliyyāt.[1]

[1] Abū Isḥāq Ka`b al-Aḥbār b. Māti` (d. c. 32 / 652)

Possibly a Yemenite Rabbi and Jewish convert to Islam, Ka`b al-Aḥbār is said to have "read and explained the Torah in the mosque of Medina" (Adang, 1996:8). He is believed to have written such now lost works as a `Book on Adam and Eve'; `The Tradition of Dhū'l-Kifl'; a *Sīrat al-Iskandar* (The Story of Alexander) and the *Wafāt Mūsā* (Passing of Moses). Ibn `Abbās and Abū Hurayra (d. c. 58/678) were allegedly among his pupils. They transmitted a very large body of tradition (esp. from `Abd-Allāh b. Salām) which falls within the category of Isrā'īliyyāt.[2]

[2] `Abd Allāh b. Salām al-Ḥarīth (d. 43 / 663-4)

A Medinan Jew of Meccan origin, `Abd-Allāh b. Salām converted to Islam after the Hijra. He is said to have aided Muhammad "in obtaining correct biblical information from the Rabbis" (Abbott 1977). The Prophet is said to have promised him a place in paradise. To him are attributed books on magic and amulets as well, for example, as 'Traditions from the Book of Daniel'. Numerous Islamicate, Isrā'īliyyāt traditions originated with him. They were often relayed by the prolific traditionalist Anas b. Malik (d. Baṣra., c. 91-3/709-11?). Clusters of traditions including an important *K. al-Masā'il* (`Questions and Answers') text are attributed to this key transmitter of Isrā'īliyyāt. He figured as an archetypal, Jewish convert to Islam (Sezgin, GAL 1:304; Horovitz, EI^2 1:52; Wasserstrom 1995:175-8).

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[1] In addition to these three transmitters of Isrā'īliyyāt numerous other figures could be listed. Space prevents details being given, for example, about the illiterate though knowledgeable (in the Torah and other areas) companion of Muhammad (`Abd Shams =) Abū Hurayra (d. c. 58/678), Ubayy b. Ka`b c. 21/641 ?) a convert from Judaism and `Abd-Allāh b. `Amr b. Al-`Āṣ (d. c. 66 /685?) who allegedly "read Syriac, engaged in theological discussions with converts and had extensive knowledge of the Talmud" (Newby, 1980:687).

[2]See H. Schmitz, EI II:582-3+bib.; Sezgin, GAL I:304-5; Nagel, 1967:60f; Juynboll, 1969; Khoury, 1972; Halperin, 1982; Brinner, EAL 2:421; Donner, 1998:299.

[3] Abū `Abd-Allāh Wahb b. Munabbih (b. Sana c. 34 / 654-5 -d. c.110 / 728 or 114 / 732?)

Probably another Yemenite Jew of Persian descent, Wahb was an important authority on Abrahamic scripture and legend, especially South Arabian lore. Though perhaps another name for part of his *K. al-mubtadā'* (Book of Creation'), *K. al-Isrā'īliyyāt* is the title of one of his several lost books (Duri, 1983:128f). It appears to have been a work whose contents were acquired from Yemenite Jewish *hakhamim* and Christians (Hirschberg, EJ16:241-2). These works of Wahb b. Munabbih are attested as early as 229/843-4 (Rosenthal, 1968:335 fn.2) and in even earlier streams of the *Tafsīr* tradition . Other works evidence his wide interest in Isrā'īliyyāt as Abrahamic fables, folklore and history. Among works ascribed to him is a *Ḥikmat* ("Wisdom book") associated with the sage Luqmān, a version of the *Zabūr* (Psalter) entitled *Mazāmīr Dāwūd* (Psalms of David) and a *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Stories of the Prophets) work.

Also attributed to Wahb b. Munabbih is a *Tafsīr* (Q. commentary) and a *Sīrat al-nabī* (Treatise on the Life of the Prophet), a *Maghāzī Rasūl Allāh* (Account of military expeditions of the Messenger of God) and a compilation entitled *K. al-qadr* (Book of Destiny). A recension of his *K. al-Mulūk .. min Ḥimyar...* (The Book of the Himyarite Kings...) by Ibn Hishām, known as the *K. al-Tijān fī mulūk al-Ḥimyar* (The Book of the Crowned Kings of the Himyarites) has been described as "a rich mine of Arabian fable, legend and garbled chronicles" in which may be seen "the powerful influence of Rabbinical, Syriac and Persian lore in both poetry and prose." (Norris, CHAL 1:385). Muhammad is said to have stated that God bestowed *ḥikma* (wisdom) upon Wahb b. Munabbih (Ibn Sa`d, *Tabaqāt,* V:395). Numerous respected Muslim authorities, including Ibn Isḥāq, al-Ṭabarī and al-Kisā'ī cite him approvingly though some modern Muslim anti-Isrā'īliyyāt authorities regard him as unreliable. Adang has recently referred to Wahb b. Munabbih as the "foremost transmitter of biblical narratives" (1996:10).[1]

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[1] See Wahb b. Munabbih, *K. al-Tijān*; Norris, CHAL 8:381. On Wahb see GAL. Sup.1:101-2+ refs.; Sezgin, GAL I:306-7; Horowitz, EI IV:1084-5; Guillaume, 1955:xv, xviii; Khoury, 1972; Abbott, 1977; Hirschberg, EJ 16:241-2 [CD]; Schwartzbaum, 1982: 58-61; Duri, 1983:30-32+ index; Brinner EAL2:801-2; Adang,1996:10-12; Donner, 1998 [index]).

■ 1.2 Positive and negative early Islamic / Shī`ī attitudes towards Isrā'īliyyāt

> So, if thou art in doubt regarding what We have sent down to thee ask those who recite the Book before thee (tr., Arberry) (Q.10:94).

In certain early, allegedly prophetic traditions, the Muslim appropriation of material from the *banī Isrā'īl* ("children of Israel" = the Isrā'īliyyāt traditions) is viewed as perfectly acceptable. (Goldziher,1902; Kister, 1972). Existing in different forms in a wide range of early Islamic works including the *Jāmi`* of Ma`mar b. Rashīd (d.154/ 770), the *Risāla* of al-Shāfi`ī (d. 204 /820), the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/ 855) and the *Saḥīḥ* of al-Bukharī (d.256 /870), it is reported that Muhammad stated, according to one positive version of the *ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īla* ("Narrate from the children of Israel!"),

> Transmit of my [prophetic] authority be it even one verse [from the Q.], narrate [traditions] concerning the children of Israel [*ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īla*] and there is nothing objectionable [in that]; he who [intentionally] tells a lie on my authority -- let him take his place in hell... (tr. Kister 1972:215-6)

Versions of this *ḥadīth* were widely circulated and variously understood by Muslim writers. At times it was a directive which formed part of a complex *ḥadīth* bidding the faithful to (a) transmit qur'ānic verses and (b) narrate traditions concerning the "children of Israel" but not to c) lie when transmitting traditions from Muhammad (Kister, ibid, 217). On the authority of Abū Hurayra a variant of this tradition was recorded to the effect that when asked whether Muslims should narrate stories about the children of Israel, Muhammad replied,

> Narrate concerning them, there are always [Islamic?] things which are more wonderful (Kister, ibid.,218-9).

Another positive version of this *ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īla* reads, "Transmit on my authority be it even one verse and narrate concerning the Children of Israel and there is nothing objectionable (in that)" (cited Kister 1972:217).[1]

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[1]Particularly ecumenical is the following prophetic tradition, `Believe in the Torah, the Zabūr [Psalter] and the Evangel, but the Qur'ān should suffice you (Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* [I:329-330] in Kister, 1972:239).

For some early Muslims these and similar traditions legitimized the whole scale incorporation of Isrā'īliyyāt traditions into Islam. Converts to Islam from the "people of the Book" were free to disseminate and incorporate the Isrā'īliyyāt heritage. Key figures of later generations often followed their example and Isrā'īliyyāt appear in a very wide range of Islamic literatures (-->2.1ff). The term Isrā'īliyyāt is used positively, for example, by the historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) in his famous *Muqaddima...* (Prolegomena [to History] *Muqaddimah,* 15, tr. Rosenthal, I:19f)[1] and by the Persian Sunnī scholar Faḍl-Allāh b. Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī (d.927/1521) in his systematization of history, the *Tā'rīkh-i `ālam ārā-yi Amīnī* (Khunji-Iṣfahānī, ed. Woods, 1992:9, [Per.] 88).

■ Shī`ism and narration from the *banī Isrā'īl* ("children of Israel").

Widely read in the Islamic east, the third volume of the detailed history *K. al-Bad` wa'l tā'rīkh* (The Book of Creation and History, written c. 355/966) of the Shī`I historian Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (fl. 3rd/10th cent.) cites a positive version of the *ḥaddithu `an banī isrā'īl*, "Narrate from the children of Israel without hesitation *(lā ḥaraja)".* This in the context of his discoursing upon the miracles of Moses and the wonders of the children of Israel (K. Bad` III:93f). Maqdisī records a great deal of Isrā'īliyyāt and other details of Abrahamic religion and history (Adang, 1996:48-50;84-7;126-31;233-4). So too the biblically learned Shī`ī historians al-Ya`qūbī (d.c. 292/905) and al-Mas`ūdī (d. 345/956) (-->3.1).

The weighty *Biḥār al anwār* of the Shī`ī polymath and one time Shaykh al-Islam, Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī (d.1111 /1699) does not contain especially negative forms of the *ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īla* or register trenchantly anti-Isrā'iliyyāt traditions (Biḥār [2]14:494f). A fairly positive version of the tradition about narrating from the Israelites going back to the Prophet through Ja`far al-Sādiq is cited by Majlisī in his *Biḥār al-anwār* from the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* work of

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[1] According to some mss of this work the author did not accept the literal sense of the *taḥrīf* ("corruption") of the Torah (see ibid).

Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rawandī (d. Qumm, 573/1177). It is included in a section of the *K. Nubuwwa* headed *nawādir akhbār banī Isrā'īl* ("The curiosities of the narrations regarding the children of Israel") (Biḥār^2 14:486ff). With a few minor variants, the recent printing of the *Qiṣaṣ* of al-Rawandī (1409/1989--> bib.) contains this tradition in division five of its 9th section headed *fī banī Isrā'īl* (On the children of Israel) (al-Rawandī, Qisas,187). It is cited from an unspecified work of Ibn Bābūya (4.2-->) as transmitted through his father back through a certain `Abd al-A`lā b. A`yun who is said to have informed Abī `Abd-Allāh (= Ja`far al-Ṣādiq) that a tradition *(ḥadīth)* had been transmitted by the people *(al-nās* = Sunnis?) to the effect that the messenger of God [Muhammad] said, "Narrate from the children of Israel *(ḥaddath[ū] `an bani isrā'īla)* and without hesitation *(lā ḥaraja)".* Imam al-Ṣādiq affirmed that this was the case without further comment. The tradition, however, continues thus:

> I said [to Ja`far al-Ṣādiq], `So is it the case that we should transmit from the children of Israel and should not discount this testimony?'. He [Ja`far al-Ṣādiq] said, `Have you not heard what he [Muhammad] said?', Man is the best liar if he transmits everything he hears'. Then I said, how is that? He [Ja`far al-Ṣādiq] replied, `It may not be [contained] in the Book (= Q ?) but be something [sanctioned] among the children of Israel, so transmit what belongs to this community and don't hesitate about it" (Biḥār^2 14:494-5).

Majlisī himself found it necessary to attempt clarification of this somewhat ambiguous tradition apparently legitimizing Isrā'īliyyāt transmission from the *banī Isra'īl* (Jews). He appended several interpretations to it (Biḥār^2 14:495). He first cites a certain Jazrī who explained that such transmission from Jews is perfectly acceptable as long as it is an accurate transmission and is not relayed through aberrant persons. The tradition obviously gives legitimacy to Shī`ī Muslims transmitting from Jews, in relaying, it appears, Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. This Shī`ī version may be contrasted with the often more negative Sunnī versions of the *ḥadīth.*

The question of the specifically Shī`ī position(s) regarding Isrā'īliyyāt, biblical *taḥrīf* ("corruption") and related matters needs detailed investigation and is beyond the scope of this

thesis though some further notes will be sketched in subsequent chapters (esp. 5.2).[1] It can be noted though, that a proportion of Shī`ī thinkers from both early and later times held back from viewing pre-Islamic scripture and tradition as absolutely corrupted. Numerous Shī`ī writers had a tremendous openness towards the assimilation of biblical texts and Isrā'īliyyāt traditions (–>4.2f). Records of the *Iḥtihājāt* (Religious Disputations), the debates of the (twelver) Imams, the *ahl al-kitāb* and others show the considerable and positive by the Imams of Abrahamic scripture and tradition. From the earliest times (proto-) Shī`ī writers seem to have delighted in finding a nexus of typological intimations and prophetic testimonies to their Shī`ī beliefs and practices in the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt. They held that Shī`ī perspectives were upheld and intimated in pre-Islamic scripture. It was assumed in the interests of apologetics that the pre-Islamic age was really a proto-Shī`ī era. Shī`ī Islam existed from primordial times as evidenced in ancient history and biblical scripture. Isrā'īliyyāt materials and biblical texts were drawn upon within Shī`īsm in order to highlight an allegedly ancient Shī`ite wisdom. Developed Bābī-Bahā'ī globalism and ecumenism owes a good deal to the openness of Sufi and Shī`ī thinkers.[2]

■ Muslim opposition to Isrā'īliyyāt traditions.

Bypassing the implications of Q.10:94 (cited above) other pious Muslims were not at all well-disposed towards Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. They gave weight to negative versions of the *ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īl* (Narrate from the children of Israel) and other more explicitly restrictive traditions. It came to be believed in pietist, orthodox circles that the acceptance of traditions from

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[1] Until recently academics have paid scant attention to the specifically Shī`ī assimilation of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt. Aside from various 1909 -10 articles by I. Friedlander, a 1915 article by Aichle (---> bib.) and occasional articles touching upon this subject by Vajda (1941-5,1981), Ayoub (1976); Rubin (1979), Kohlberg (1980 [rep.1991:XVI), Thomas (1988), Lassner (1993; 993a), Wasserstrom (1995) and Moreen (1999) little seems to have been written.

[2] At this point it should be noted that while the largely unchanged massive 1993 2nd edition of the *Lughat-Nāmah* of `Alī Akbar Dekhoda (d.Tehran 1956) includes a very basic, only slightly dismissive definition of `Isrā'īliyyāt' (Ed.[2] 2:1924), the even more recent, Shī`ī centred and very bulky Persian *Dā'irat al-ma`ārif-I buzurg-I Islāmī* (`Great Islamic Encyclopaedia', Tehran, 1998>) contains a substantial entry `Isrā'īl[iyyāt]' which includes a thorough overview of Isrā'īliyyāt seen as a technical term in the realm of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* studies (vol. 8:290-4).

the unbelieving "people of the Book" was something unwise or interdicted (Kister, 1972, esp. 234f; Montgomery-Watt, 1956[7]: 60-62). The sources confirm an early Muslim reaction against an increasing tendency to accept guidance from Jews and Christians seen as unbelieving purveyors of possibly "corrupt" non-qur'ānic scripture. In allegedly prophetic traditions and writings influenced thereby, grave misgivings were voiced regarding Isrā'īliyyāt materials. One such tradition reported through Zayd b. Aslam has the prophet state,

> Do not ask the people of the Book *(ahl al-kitāb*) about anything, because they will not show you the right path having already led themselves astray.[1]

The companion Ibn Mas`ūd similarly reported from the prophet:

> Do not ask the people of the Book [*ahl al-kitāb,* Jews and Christians] about anything [in *tafsīr*] for they will not guide you aright, seeing they have misled themselves, and you will (find yourselves) disbelieving something true and believing something false (trans. Montgomery Watt, 1957:61 citing *Jāmi` bayān al-`ilm* of Ibn `Abd al-Barr [d.463/1070]).

These negative, restricting traditions were generally ineffective (so Kister, 1972). They did, however, lead to the expression of caution; especially with reference to *Tafsīr* (Q. commentary). Summing this matter up Brinner has written,

> The Muslim collectors of the stories (Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā') often state the line of transmission of a given tale or version as going back to early Jewish converts to Islam. This gave rise to a labelling of such tales as *Isrā'īliyyāt,* a term that took on a rather negative aspect with the flourishing of a brilliant Islamic civilization connected with the vast, wealthy and powerful early `Abbāsid caliphate. Becoming culturally self- assured and independent, the *`ulamā'* tended to discourage and even to forbid recourse to non-Muslim sources (Brinner, EAL2:466).

Though they failed to inhibit the transmission of Isrā'īliyyāt, these negative opinions had a continuing effect. Even the ecumenically and mystically inclined Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 638/1240) – whose writings are rich in gnostically interpreted Isrā'īliyyāt themes and motifs -- in his encyclopaedic *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (Meccan Illuminations) has a section (in the O.Yahya edition) headed, `The [use of the] narratives of the Jews in commentary upon the Qur'ān: the Isrā'īliyyāt'. In the light of authoritative texts he warns the *mufassirūn* (Q. exegetes) against giving precedence to Jewish traditions or Israelite prophets *(al-anbiyā' al-isrā'īliyyīn)* thereby confounding the

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[1] Questioned further, Muhammad allegedly added, "Narrate [about the children of Israel], there is nothing objectionable [in that]." Seeking guidance from the "people of the Book" is wrong but narrating things about them is not (see Kister, ibid, 219).

authoritative guidance of Muhammad :

> .. whoso has expounded the Qur'ān by means of the traditions of the Jews *(bi-rawāyat al-yahūd)* has assuredly gainsaid the directive of the Messenger of God *(amr rasūl Allāh)* and whoso goes against the Messenger of God [Muhammad] has gainsaid the very command of God... (Futuhat-Y 14:217-8/ Futuhat II:00000).

It was within 14th century Sunni *tafsīr* (exegetical) and related circles that the term Isrā'īliyyāt came be used highly dismissively. This negative attitude is evident in writings of the polymathic controversialist Tāqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 /1328) and in those of his pupil and associate Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373). These pious Muslims generally considered Isrā'īliyyāt traditions unsound, extraneous materials related by unseemly heretics among the misguided `people of the Book' (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya..* I:5-6; *Tafsīr 1:12f;* Rippin, 1993; `Tafsīr' EI^2 X:85).[1]

An apparently early, not wholly dismissive attitude towards Isrā'īliyyāt traditions, is seen in Ibn Taymiyya's succinct, hermeneutical treatise *Muqaddimatūn fī uṣūl al-tafsīr* (Treatise on the Principles of Tafsīr). Here he noted that the companions of the Prophet legitimately recounted traditions from the *ahl al-kitāb* (people of the Book). Permission was granted to "narrate [traditions] from the Banu Isrā'īl (Children of Israel) without constraint" (citing Bukharī, trans. McAuliffe, [in Renard ed.]1982: 35-43). Ibn Taymiyya comments on this by stating that Isrā'īliyyāt may be used for the "purposes of attestation" but not "as a basis of belief". He viewed Isrā'īliyyāt as of three kinds, those [1] *saḥīḥ* (sound) or [2] *kadhīḥ* (unsound) and those [3] *maskut`anhu* (ambiguous, or of uncertain veracity) (ibid, 38; cf. Bosworth 1982,1995:175).

Towards the beginning of his massive history *al-Bidāya wa'l nihāyah* , Ibn Kathīr again quotes a version of the *ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īl* from the *Saḥīḥ* of al-Bukharī (*K. al-shāhadāt*, no. 29) which he immediately follows with this negative remark:

> So he [Muhammad] was burdened *(maḥmūl)* with respect to the Isrā'īliyyāt. In our opinion they are a cause of uncertainty. Wherefore it is neither within our power to affirm nor to deny them and it is thus that we operate in this our book... (*al-Bidāya..*

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[1] al-Sakhāwī (d.902/1497) like certain other late medieval commentators and historians, was ill-disposed towards fanciful Isrā'īliyyāt communicated by over imaginative storytellers or derived from the `people of the Book' (*I`lān bi'l-tawbīḥ..* tr. Rosenthal, 1968:335; cf. Vajda, `Isrā'īliyyāt', EI^2 IV:211f).

I:5-6).

In the prolegomenon to his huge *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-`aẓīm,* Ibn Kathīr cites *ḥadīth* about Isrā'īliyyāt deriving from the "people of the Book" and, like Ibn Taymiyya, enumerates three kinds of Isrā'īliyyāt when considering `The most favourable modes of exegesis *(al-tafsīr).'* Like his master he reckoned three kinds of Israelite traditions *(al-aḥādīth al-isrā'īliyyah)* for "such as consider evidence" *(al-ishtishāhad).* They are [1] expressive of "strong faith" *(al-i`tiqād)* which are *saḥīḥ* (sound), [2] those demonstrably false and [3] those which pose unresolvable questions even for the *`ulamā'* of the `people of the Book'. A few examples of this third type of Isrā'īliyyāt are given. They may, for example, detail the names and exact number of the *aṣḥāb al-kahf* (`Companions of the cave', Q.18:9ff) or of the colour of their dog (Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr,* I:12-14). Elsewhere in his *Tafsīr* Ibn Kathīr actually forbids the consultation of allegedly corrupted pre-Islamic scripture:

> Some of the Isrā'īliyyāt were invented by some of their *zanādiqa* [heretics]; some of them may be sound, but we do not need them: what is written in the Book of God [Q.] is sufficient for us and we do not need to look for it in the remaining books [dating] before it; neither God nor his Messenger caused us to lack their knowledge (*Tafsīr* IV.282 trans. Kister 1972:237).

Despite these predominantly negative attitudes towards Isrā'īliyyāt their whole scale abandonment was never systematically achieved in the Islamic world. Like numerous other Muslim writers, the works of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathīr themselves relayed numerous "sound" and "ambiguous" Isrā'īliyyāt traditions.

In recent times some Sunni (e.g. Egyptian) Muslims, influenced by the above attitudes, have come to view Isrā'īliyyāt extremely negatively. Isrā'īliyyāt are viewed as spurious traditions stemming from subversive Jews intending to undermine Islam (Juynboll, 1969). In such Muslim circles today Isrā'īliyyāt indicates nothing but "superstitious nonsense" (Adang: 1996:9 fn. 47). In recent decades a number of Egyptian and other Muslim thinkers have defined and used the term *Isrā'īliyyāt* with extreme contempt: especially as a result of anti-Jewish sentiments following Middle-East conflicts. Many anti-Israeli ["Semitic"] examples, can be seen in the proceedings of

the al-Azhar sponsored, Cairo located `Fourth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research' (Sept. 1968; not long after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967).[1] Several of these aforementioned conference papers touch directly and very critically upon the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. [2]

■ 1.3 Modern academic definitions and discussion of Isrā'īliyyāt

Over the last century or more modern academic Islamicists have variously defined and discussed *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Among western educated Islamicists there are the classic discussions of Isrā'īliyyāt by Goldziher (esp.1902) and Goitein (1935) and a considerable number of important, more recent contributions only a few of which can be summed up here.

Nagel in his 1967 thesis *Die Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'* equates *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* with `biblical legends' which include Isrā'īliyyāt stories. In his view, however, only those specifically and restrictively dealing with the Israelites between the death of Moses and the Israelite entry into the promised land are considered Isrā'īliyyāt (1967:66). This position is not wholly in line with many Muslim statements about the nature and contents of the Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. Sayings of Jesus, for example, are cited in Islamic sources as being among the Isrā'īliyyāt. Such sayings are, for example, cited in Islamic sources as coming from the *Traditiones israëliticae,* the Israelite traditions, as Asin et Palacios translated *al-Isrā'īliyyāt*, into Latin in his learned *Logia et Agrapha Domini Jesu,* 1946:415, 423).

Vajda, in his 1978 EI^2 entry `Isrā'īliyyāt' (IV:211-212) more adequately gives Isrā'īliyyāt a

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[1] Various records of the proceedings were produced (3 Arabic vols. 1970 + 1 English vol. of 935pp.) as well as an independent English summary with extracts from the 1970 English volume by D. Green entitled, `Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel' (Geneva, [1972], 74).

[2] A certain Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, for example, delivered a paper which seems to be identical with the several times separately published volume, *al-Isrā'īliyyāt fī'l-tafsīr wa'l-ḥadīth* (Jāma`at al-Azhar/ Majma` al-buḥūth al-Islāmiyya, 1391/1971+ 4th printing, 1991). A recently published al-Azhar sponsored though somewhat mangled `translation' of Ibn Kathīr's *`Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* ('Stories of the Prophets') also, for example, contains some fairly trenchant anti-Bible statements (introduction, xii-xiii, etc). In 1992 there appeared the useful volume *al-Isrā'īliyyāt wa'l-mawḍū`āt fī kutub al-tafsīr* by Muhammad Abū Shahaba which continues in much the same vein and registers some interesting dimensions of Isrā'īliyyāt which occur in Sunnī hadīth compilations and Tafsīr literatures.

broad and inclusive definition. For him it indicates "an Arabic term covering three kinds of narratives, which are found in commentators on the Kur'ān, the mystics, the compilers of edifying stories and writers on various levels".[1] In the widely acclaimed and previously drawn upon study of the *ḥadīth* about transmitting from the *banī isrā'īl* Kister gives a more comprehensive viewpoint of the contents of *Isrā'īlīyyāt,*

> The themes covered by the stories about the Children of Israel are very extensive. They include stories about prophets and others, about sins committed by the Children of Israel and the punishment inflicted on them, about the sufferings of the righteous and pious and the reward granted to them by God, about utterances and sayings of sages and wise men, about supplications of prophets and pious men, about speeches and wills of nobles, saints and martyrs. These stories usually called "Isrā'īliyyāt" included predictions of the early prophets about the appearance of the Prophet and descriptions of dynasties, about the Maḥdī and signs heralding the Day of Judgement. This lore was transmitted by Jews and Christians or by members of these two religions who studied their Scriptures and embraced the faith of Islam (Kister, 1972:231-2).

Another later article by the same writer further includes within the body of Isrā'īliyyāt those traditions and texts celebratory of Jerusalem, the *Faḍā'īl bayt al-maqdīs* (Praises of the Sanctified House [Jerusalem] (Kister, 1981:185-6).

Hasson identifies Isrā'īliyyāt with biblical quotations and "Traditions dealing with Jews and Christians" (Hasson, 1981:174). In her *Women in the Qur'an,* Stowasser similarly used the phrase "Bible-related traditions" for Isrā'īliyyāt (1994:22). Firestone in his 1990 *Journeys in Holy Lands* also noted that "Muslim writers occasionally refer to certain narrative traditions treating pre-Islamic biblical and extra-biblical characters as Israelite Tales (Isrā'īliyyāt)". He adds that this term is best defined as "of Israelite origin" though such traditions in their Islamicate versions come to transcend their origins (1990:13ff cf.183 fn. 5). Lazarus-Yafeh in her *Intertwined Worlds* indicates that Isrā'īlīyāt may constitute "Biblical and Midrashic material" or "alleged quotations from the Bible" (1991:112,114).

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[1] Vajda goes on to define "three kinds of narratives" as [1] "Narratives regarded as historical" serving to complement and clarify summary qur'anic information touching upon biblical personalities; [2] "Edifying narratives" loosely set within the framework of the "period of the (ancient) Israelities"; [3] "Fables belonging to folklore, allegedly (but sometimes actually) borrowed from Jewish sources" -- often not too distinct from [2] above (`Isrā'īliyyat' EI^2 IV:211-2).

In *Between Muslim and Jew* (1995) Wasserstrom at one point states, "Generally speaking Isrā'īliyyāt are the manifold and miscellaneous traditions that the early Muslim community received, through various channels, from the Banu Isra'il, the "Children of Israel".. from Judaism and, to a lesser extent, from Christianity... Isrā'īliyyāt were more than merely superstitious, popular legends.." (1995:172). He cites approvingly an article of Bosworth (*The Concept of Dhimma..*1982) which underlines the applicability of Isrā'īliyyāt to Jewish, Christian and other streams of influence which were legitimately embraced in Islam. Wasserstrom has it that "..Isrā'īliyyāt provides us with a clear case of open, acknowledged, and religiously condoned borrowing" (1995:173).

In her *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible.* Adang touches upon the relationship between *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and Isrā'īliyyāt. She follows Khoury in finding a "very thin" line between these terms and uses Isrā'īliyyāt "to indicate the whole genre of Islamicized biblical legends" (1996:8-10). Brinner's succinct yet comprehensive entry `Isrā'īliyyāt in the second volume of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* (ed Meisami, 1998) somewhat literally translates Isrā'īliyyāt with 'Israelite matters'. That it had neutral and pejorative senses is noted as is the fact that the term generally refers to "stories based on material of ancient Israelite (i.e. Biblical) origin".

Nettler in a 1998 consideration of `Early Islam, Modern Islam and Judaism: The Isra'iliyyat in Modern Islamic Thought' like most others focuses upon Sunnī Islam. He explores the intertwining of ideas, history and politics in his excellent reconsideration of the Isrā'īliyyāt. An early religious "cosmopolitanism" among the various religious traditions came to be eclipsed by an actual or imagined consciousness of "borrowing" and being "borrowed" from: "The Isra'iliyyat most certainly derived from this milieu" (1998:3). The Isrā'īliyyāt within Islam betoken "Islamic-Jewish cultural interaction and symbiosis which implicitly overrode the built-in monotheistic exclusivism on both sides.." (ibid).[1]

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[1] Nettler's insightful article provides an excellent basis for understanding the roots of Isrā'īliyyāt and articulates a balanced mode of critiquing modern Sunnī (especially Egyptian) anti-Isrā'īlyyāt and its occasionally extreme, allegedly proto-Zionist roots.The positive Bahā'ī attitude towards pre-Islamic faiths and towards Palestine-Israel also contrasts markedly with modern Shī`īte anti-Zionist polemic.

McAuliffe in her 'Assessing the Isrā'īliyyāt: An exegetical conundrum' (Leder ed. 1998:345-369) recognises the fluidity of definitions of Isrā'īliyyāt and the 20th century attention this matter has received. Discussing various definitions she notes that Isrā'īliyyāt may signify actual written texts (cf. Wahb b. Munabbih <--) indicative of a genre of Islamic literature or a particular non- *isnād*-laden "generalized corpus of oral and written material that is distinguished less by its content than by its ascription". This writer yet favours the translation "Jewish memorabilia"; a translation also occasionally used by Lassner in his *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba* (1993:121; McAuliffe, 1998:346). Bernstein in an essay in honour of William Brinner translates Isrā'īliyyāt as "Israelite material" or "Israelitica". This he succinctly refers to as "material included in the Islamic traditions about biblical characters and events" (Hary ed. 2000:157, cf. also index Isrā'īliyyāt).

In the *Studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern Texts and Traditions in Memory of Norman Calder* (ed. Hawting, et. al.), P. S. Alexander in his 'Jewish Tradition in Early Islam: the case of Enoch/Idris' (2000) identifies the Isrā'īliyyāt as expressions of "Jewish tradition" in "early Islamic sources, starting with the Qur'ān itself" (2000:11). He clarifies this by writing, "I use Isrā'īliyyāt not in any negative sense, but simply as a convenient designation for all those elements in the Qur'ān, Tafsīr and *ḥadīth* which have clear parallels in Jewish sources". This usage, he as serts, "corresponds to the older use of the word [Isrā'īliyyāt] in Islamic sources". Alexander not only acknowledges that Jewish traditions influenced nascent Islam but highlights the fact that Islamic sources had an impact upon such Jewish works of the midrashic *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the writings of Saadya Gaon (fl. 9th cent. CE) (2000:11+fn.1,13).

Finally, though not exhaustively, it might be noted that Moreen has referred to Is[h]mā'iliyyāt (= loosely, Ishmaelitica), the reverse phenomenon indicated by Isrā'īliyyāt which she defines as "Islamic lore penetrating Jewish midrashic and literary texts" (Moreen, 2000:185f), the importance of which has been underlined by Alexander and others (2000:12-13).[1]Though the Jewish intertextual penetration of Islamic sources is undoubtedly significant as expressed by the neologism "Ismaelitica", no such term could be so easily coined for the Isrā'īliyyāt (Israelitica) and

Is[h]mā'īliyyāt (Ismaelitica) intertextual penetration and reinterpretation within Bābī-Bahā'ī scriptural sources.

■ 1.4 Isrā'īliyyāt and its Bābī-Bahā'ī assimilation and exegesis

The various modern, academic discussions of Isrā'īliyyāt ("Israelitica") are both helpful and somewhat disorienting. In its wider senses it is now evident that Isrā'īliyyāt indicates more than "Jewish memorabilia", as it is sometimes translated. In view of the wide, often extra-Judaic senses Isrā'īliyyat has appropriated in a wide range of Islamic sources, this rendering seems restrictive for a term virtually synonymous with the modern expression "Abrahamic"[1]. This since Isrā'īliyyāt can indicate Jewish, Christian, Islamo-biblical and/ or Islamicate streams of tradition often but not always relayed by Jewish *(banī Isrā'īl)* and other converts to Islam among the *ahl al-kitāb* (people of the Book) and others.

In Islamic sources the Isrā'īliyyāt traditions and motifs to a greater or lesser degree, express an Islamo-biblical or Islamicate perspective. In their post-Jewish/Christian hermeneutical and religious context they encapsulate a distinctly Islamic mode of discourse. While Jewish materials ("memorabilia") sometimes predominate, the term "Abrahamic" perhaps more befittingly sums up the range of Isrā'īliyyāt materials contained in the various literatures representative of the Isrā'īliyyāt traditions (cf Adang, 1996:8-10).

In this thesis (as already indicated) Isrā'īliyyāt will largely have its wide and inclusive sense. It will denote the whole range of orthodox and heterodox Abrahamic scripture, Islamo-biblical texts, legends and traditions found within Islamic literatures. Prior to its later, post-Baghdad (post-1860s) Bahā'ī development, Bābī-Bahā'ī Arabic and Persian scriptural sources cite, incorporate and interpret Islamo-biblical citations and other Isrā'īliyyāt rooted motifs and traditions.

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[1]Loosely speaking, the term "Abrahamic" can indicate religious traditions and practises in one way or another believed (according to salvation history or heiro-history) to stem from Abraham (fl. 2,100 BCE??) and his progeny, especially Isaac the symbolic forbear of Judaism & Christianity and Ishmael the symbolic father of the Arabs, Muhammad and Islam.

Abrahamic traditions or Isrā'īliyyāt materials were adopted, assimilated and `Islamified' by Muslims. The Isrā'īliyyāt motifs and traditions might be deemed Islamicate (to utilize terminology initially coined by M. Hodgson) in that they are Jewish and or Christian rooted materials that have become distinctly Islamic. Abrahamic traditions contained within the Isrā'īliyyāt often, to a greater or lesser degree, shift from being in some sense Jewish or Christian to being conceptually or hermeneutically Islamic. Then, when subject to Bābī-Bahā'ī (re-) interpretation, another intertextual shift in their hermeneutical universe of discourse has taken place.

Some Islamic *isrā'* ("night ascent") and related *mi`rāj* (lit, ladder" = "ascension") traditions, for example, are Isrā'īliyyāt in the sense of being Jewish / Christian informed elaborations of Q.17:1ff (and related texts, cf. 53:1f; 83:19f). When subjected to Bābī-Bahā'ī, essentially neo or post-Islamic interpretations, they express a Bābī-Bahā'ī viewpoint. The *masjid al-aqṣā* (Furthermost Mosque) motif of the Islamic *mi`raj* traditions, for example, in developed Bahā'ī texts is no longer a Jerusalem locale (nigh the *qubbat al-sakhrā* = "dome of the rock") but the Acre-Haifa located celestial *Haykal* ("Temple") of the person of BA* (or the shrine of the Bāb; BA* AQA 4:176-7; AQA 5:29; cf. B* QA 68:274; 91:364; R. Jasad.).

One time Isrā'īliyyāt and associated materials become textually Bābī-Bahā'ī through the exegetical revelations of the Bāb and BA*. Identifying and analysing such traditions source-critically and in terms of their new hermeneutical, doctrinal and apologetic or theological characteristics, lies at the heart of this thesis. The intertextual shifts undertaken by religious motifs and blocks of tradition are sometimes such that they span several religious traditions: from their Jewish roots to possibly Christian and then Islamicate-Muslim to Bābī and / or Bahā'ī post-Islamic expository levels. A tradition or motif from being Jewish might become in some sense Christian then be distinctly Islamo-biblical or Islamicate. Such materials may thus also be seen to have subsequently appropriated post-Islamic senses in Bābī-Bahā'ī sacred literatures.

In the following paragraphs and chapters it will be seen how widespread and deep rooted

was the Sunnī and Shī`ī Islamic reinterpretation of biblical and Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. The post-Islamic Bābī-Bahā'ī phenomena are recent examples of religious movements which have reinterpreted and assimilated Isrā'īliyyāt. They have refashioned Abrahamic religious traditions and assimilated Islamicate Bible citations. Isrā'īliyyāt traditions are often allegorically reinterpreted in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources. They are sometimes demythologized in a rationalist, neo-Shī`ī, Bābī-Bahā'ī religious sense. Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture sometimes exhibits exegetical demythologization as well as exegetical re-mythologization (to draw on Bultmannian rooted terminology).

The remythologization of Isrā'īliyyāt traditions is, for example, evidenced with the basically Isrā'īliyyāt-rooted Bābī-Bahā'ī theology of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) as it appears in developed Bābī-Bahā'ī sources (-->7.1f). That God has a greatest or Mightiest Name is at root a Jewish concept. In Muslim Isrā'īliyyāt traditions such concepts have been thoroughly Islamified and given further levels of meaning as may be seen in the writings of Muslim esotericists-magicians, mystics and theologians. Originally closely related to the power and transcendence of the tetragrammaton (Y-H-W-H = Yahweh, traditionally pronounced as Adonai, "Lord"), the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* concept entered Islam in the early centuries. Today, in recent times, a neo-Isrā'īliyyat theology of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* informs numerous Bābī-Bahā'ī scriptural texts as well as a good many semi-ritualistic Bahā'ī practises (Lambden, 1997, cf. MacEoin, 1994).

Two Bābī-Bahā'ī related aspects of Isrā'īliyyāt will most often be focussed upon in this thesis, (1) the citation and absence of citation of Islamicate biblical and pseudo-biblical texts and (2) the appropriation within Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources of originally Jewish, later Shī`ī Islamicate and ultimately Bābī-Bahā'ī concepts of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (God's mightiest Name). For the rest of this chapter some basic aspects of Islamic chronology will be sketched forming something of a background to the consideration of Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī prophetology of the following chapter.

Chapter Two

FROM ISLAMIC *NUBUWWA* ("PROPHETHOLOGY ") TO BĀBĪ-BAHĀ'Ī *MAẒHARIYYA* ("THEOPHANOLOGY")

In the four sections of this chapter some basics of the Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī positions regarding *Anno Mundi*, millennialism, prophetology and theophanology relative to the traditional 'twenty-eight' Islamic prophet-messengers will be sketched as will the status of several of them as Bābī-Bahā'ī divine manifestations (sing. *maẓhar-I ilāhī*). The Bābī-Bahā'ī exegetical transcendence of the Islamic *khātamiyya* ("sealedness") through an eternal continuity of divine guidance mediated through human representations of the Divine Will (*mashiyyat)* will be briefly explained as will the roots of the Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrine of the *maẓhar ilāhī* (divine theophany, manifestation of God).

■ 2.1 *Anno Mundī,* millennialism and chronological aspects of Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī prophetology.

Unlike the Hebrew Bible with its chronologically oriented materials and genealogical notices specifying the lifespan of Israel's ancestors (Genesis 5,11 etc), the Q. displays little or no concern with chronological data pertaining to ancient history, nations, prophets or peoples. The relative dating and chronological order of past messengers and prophets is not systematically presented in this Arabic text. Even the dates and genealogy of Muhammad himself are not present. Muslims, however, have variously and repeatedly calculated the period between the *anno mundi* (creation / the era of Adam, allegedly the `first man') and the days of the prophet Muhammad. They made many attempts to narrate the lives and give a precise dating and chronological order to ancient patriarchs, prophets, philosophers and other worthies of past ages.

Despite the qur'ānic dictum regarding an exclusive divine knowledge of the eschatological "Hour" (Q. 7:187 + similar traditions in numerous Islamic sources), there exist sacred traditions as well as Muslims writers who, with varying degrees of alleged chronological precision, have attempted to fathom the time of the eschatological *yawm al-qiyāma (*"Day of

resurrection") or of the messianic *parousia.* As in 19th century Protestant and other millennarian factions, such speculations were widespread in the Muslim world in the same and certain earlier centuries. The consummation of the ages was widely deemed imminent, the "time of the end" at hand (Amanat, 1989:70f; Eraqi Klorman, 1993). Important authoritative traditions register Muslim calculations about the span of world history which often presupposes the `time of the end', an eschaton that has been frequently pushed forward in view of its non-literal realization. Numerous Islamic sources bear upon these matters which cannot be discussed in detail here. The following notes must suffice to sum up some key points in relation to Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī chronology and millennialism.

■ Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī Millennialism

It was primarily a result of an often Zoroastrian rooted Judaeo-Christian influence that a large number of Muslim traditions and sources reckon the span of world history as extending into a fifth, sixth, seventh or even an eighth millennial era. The frequently cited Yemenite Jewish convert to Islam, Wahb ibn Munabbih, for example, on one occasion is said to have reckoned a period of 5, 600 years AM up to the Islamic era (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* 1:15). On another he is cited as having maintained that around 6, 600 years had transpired in view of the fact that "God created the heavens in six days and established the magnitude of each day at 1,000 years" (Maqdisī, *K. al-Bad'* III:150).

Lying behind a large number of Islamic computations of the period separating the *anno mundi* and the time of Muhammad are Byzantine Christian chronological and associated speculations expressed in millennial terms. Jews and Christians from at least the opening centuries CE divided the scheme of the ages of the world into millennial periods on the basis of such texts as Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 90:4 (cf. II Peter 3:8; Rev 20:1ff). [1] Early Jewish, Hellenistic, pseudepigraphical, and later Rabbinic literatures implied, and various Christian

[1] Since antiquity an originally Zoroastrian then Judaeo- Christian dualistic time-scheme of world eras ("This [perishable] Age" and "The [eternal] Age to Come") had been an "an essential feature of apocalyptic" (Vielhaur & Strecher, NTA II: 549f).

texts explicitly utilized, diverse millennial schemata extending world history for several thousands of years (AM). Four, five or six 1,000 year periods were often envisaged as being consummated by a seventh millennial age of fulfilment and eschatological beatitude.[1] Indicative of this is the following foundational passage from the early Christian *Epistle of Barnabas*,15 ©. 125CE?) which cites Gen. 2:2a and Psalm 90:4 maintaining that:

> .. in six`days -- six thousand years, that is -- there is going to be an end to everything. After that , *he rested on the seventh day* [Gen 2:2b] indicates that when His Son [Christ] returns, He will put an end to the years of the Lawless One, pass sentence on the godless, transform the sun and moon and stars, and then, on the seventh Day, enter into His true rest" (tr. Staniforth, *Early Christian Writings,* 214).

Influenced by such early Christian traditions inherited from Papias bishop of Hierapolis (d. c.130?) and Justin Martyr (d. 165 CE?), the Christian theologian and heresiologist Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 200 CE) held that the world would end after 6,000 years (Irenaeus. *Haer.* 5. 28. 3; 5. 32f ; cf. Justin, *Dial, Tryph.* 80-81). So too Hippolytus of Rome (d. c. 236; *Comm. Dan.*, 4.24), Julius Africanus (of Jerusalem; d. after c. 240) and other chronographers of the apostolic, patristic and later eras. Lactantius ©. 260-.c.330) was expectant of a future "hedonistic enjoyment by the just" in a sabbatical millennium to be realized after a 6,000 year period (*Instit.* vii.14, 24; Loi, EEC II:470; cf. 166-7). Like some of the speculations among the former Christian writers whose chronology was frequently based upon that of the Greek Septuagint (LXX; early 3rd Cent BCE), Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 340) thought that the world would last for 6,000 years (six millennia) and that Jesus Christ was born in 5, 500 [later 5,199] AM (cf. Augustine, C.D. xxii.30.5).[2]

The originally Syriac *Me`ārath Gazze* (`Cave of Treasures' 4th cent. CE?), which exists

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[1] Each of the 7 days of creation were understood as 1,000 years of history; the final millennium being a kind of `messianic sabbath.' Thus there is the notion of the "timeless new world of the eighth day" which follows a kind of `messianic sabbath millennial day' (Caird, 1966[71]:250).

[2] See further Finegan, 1964 esp. 137ff; Caird, 1966[71]:250; Grabbe, 1982:107-8; Massyngbaerde Ford, `Millennium', ABD., IV:832-834; Smith, `Ages of the World', ERel. 1:128-133; Hughes, `Chronology' DBI:120-123. The expectation of a 6,000 year age of the world period was also known among the Jews as is clear from the *Seder Olam Rabba* and the saying of `the Tanna of the House of Elijah'.

in various (post 6th cent. CE) Arabic recensions, reckons a 5, 500 year period between Adam and Christ (Bezold, 1883-8; rep. nd.; Gibson,1901; Budge,1927:10, 221). For many early Eastern Christians a period of at least 500 years before the end-time *parousia* (6,000+) was thus presupposed. These figures were later abandoned or adjusted by Christians when eschatological events seemed soon to be realized as in the late 7th century (Syriac) Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius.[1] For the pious in the Islamic community, such millennially based chronological speculations were set out in numerous authoritative prophetic *hadīth / akhbār* from the (Twelver) Imams.

The early *Kitāb al-ṭabaqat al-kabīr* (Great book of the Classes) of Ibn Sa'd (d. Baghdad, 230/845) has a section dealing with the time span between Adam and Muhammad. Millennial (1,000 year) periods were recorded between Adam and Noah (= ten 100 year generations), Noah and Abraham and Abraham and Moses. A tradition of Ibn `Abbās (d. c. 68 / 687) is cited reckoning a period of 1, 900 years between Moses and Jesus, and a fairly precise figure of 569 years is said to separate the birth of Jesus and the time of the prophet Muhammad. The reader might thus be led to think of a roughly 5, 500 year period, a 5,469 year period between Adam and Muhammad (= 1,000x 3+1, 900+569) (Ibn Sa`d, ibid, I:53). This is in line with the realization of millennial eschatological hopes. Certain earlier and many later sources more explicitly presuppose Judaeo-Christian chronological speculations.

The rich in Isrā'īliyyāt *Muḥaḍarāt al-abrār..* (Conference of the Pious) of Ibn al-`Arabī (d.638/1240) contains a section headed `The record of the diversity of the nations regarding what has elapsed of the time span between Adam and the *hijrah* '. Here there is reference to a tradition of Ibn 'Abbās reckoning a period of 5,575 years between Adam and Muhammad. Then it is recorded that al-Kalbī (d. 204/819) transmitted the duration of 6,019 years between Adam and Muhammad. Ibn al-`Arabī further had it that al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823) thought the

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[1] Apparently on the basis of the chronology of Julius Africanus and that of the *Cave of Treasures* (-->) the (Syriac) Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius divides history into seven millennia placing the eschatologically suggestive Arab conquest late in the seventh or last millennium (Alexander, 1985:17ff, 44; Reinink, 1992:150+fn.2; 178f).

period from the fall of Adam to the birth of Muhammad was 4, 600 years and that Muhammad ibn Isḥāq (d.150/ 767) transmitted a period of 5451 [5416] years.[1]

The early Muslim historiographer Abū `Īsā ibn al-Munajjim (fl. late 8th cent.?) drew upon Syriac and Greek Byzantine Christian historiographical traditions [2] in his lost but partially cited survey of pre-Islamic chronography perhaps entitled *al-Bayān `an ta`rīkh sinī zamān al-`ālam `alā sabīl al-ḥujja wa'l-burān.* (Exposition of the Chronology of years of the Duration of the World according to the way of Proof and the Evidence) (Rosenthal, 1968:72-3, 511 n.1; Stern, 1972). Familiar with Jewish and Persian scripture and tradition, he to some extent wrote "according to the accounts contained in the Torah and the stories of the prophets and the kings [*akhbār al-anbiyā' wa'l-mulūk*]" (al-Mas`ūdī, *Murūj,* I:23; tr. Stern, 1972:438). Like Eusebius and `the historian Abū al-Fiḍā', Ibn al-Munajjim (who was utilized by the former) reckoned 6, 216 years from the fall of Adam until the *Hijra* (*Tārīkh,* 1:(9) 21; Stern 1972:441). This also places his pre-Islamic age of the world into the early seventh millennium.

Chronological traditions registered in Ibn Qutayba's (d. 276/889) early and wide-ranging survey of world history, the *K. al-Ma`ārif* (Book of Knowledge) include the tradition that "Adam lived 1,000 years", or "according to the Torah" (Gen. 5:5 cf Q. 29:14) "1, 000 less 70 years". In his *K. al-Bad' wa'l-ta'rīkh* (The Book of Creation and History', written 355/966) al-Maqdisī (d. fl.10th cent. CE) drew on Ibn Qutayba and included a lengthy section on the span of world history mentioning a 6, 600 year period and reckoning the period between Adam and

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[1] E.g. Adam->Noah, 1, 200; Noah->Abraham, 1, 142; Abraham->Moses, 575; Moses->David, 569; David->Jesus, 1, 365; Jesus->Muhammad, 600. Additionally, the Great Shaykh notes that Wahb Ibn Munabbih calculated 5600 years and gives details of the calculations of other religionists including the a history of the Jews as 4640 years and the computations of the Greek Christians as 5772 + years (*Muḥaḍarat,* 120-1).

[2] Most notably (indirectly) on various works of Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 370 CE) and his successors: Eusebius wrote both a two part Greek *Chronicom* (pre. 330 CE., on sacred and profane peoples and figures of antiquity and their parallel chronologies) and the well-known *Ecclesiastical History.* Of Ibn al-Munajjim's sources Stern also refers to the 6th cent. Byzantine chronicler Andronicus (cited in Syriac literature) and to a work of Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 CE) (1972: 441-2).

Muhammad as 7, 852 years (Ibn Qutayba, *K. al-Ma`ārif,* 33-4; Maqdisī, K. Al-Bad` II:145ff).[1] Roundly summing up this view, Maqdisī held that from the "covenant of Adam" *(`ahd Ādam)* until [the time of] Muhammad a period of 7, 800 years had elapsed *(al-Bad',* II:150-151). The idea of creation in seven millennial "Days" is also mentioned by al-Maqdisī as are various complex Hindu rooted notions of aeons of cosmic and worldly time.[2]

At the very beginning of the *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* of Abū Ja`far al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) there is a section about the duration of *zamān* ("time") from "beginning to end" (*Tarīkh,* I:15-19; tr. Rosenthal, I:172f). It is noted that certain traditions reckon the "total extent of time" as 7, 000 years (a "week of the other world" cf. Mas`ūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān,* 31) of which 6, 0[2]00 (mss. vary) were thought to have passed. Ṭabarī himself favoured the passing of around 6, 500 years (AM) up till the time of Muhammad. He also registered the period from the creation of Adam until the time of the *hijrah* (622 CE) as calculated by Jews (= 4, 642 years AM) and by Greek Christians (= 5,992) years AM (*Tarikh,* I:19; tr. Rosenthal, 183-5).[3]

Probably early traditions attributed to the (Twelver) Imāms bear upon the time span of the pre-Islamic era. Among them are those indicating that certain of the 29 sets of (so-called) isolated letters of the Qur'ān *(al-fawātiḥ al-ṣawar; al-ḥurufāt al-muqaṭṭa'āt)* should be understood in chronological or predictive terms relative to their *abjad* ("numerical") values (cf.

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[1] Ibn Qatayba also records a tradition to the effect that that *Injīl* (Gospel) has it that there are three sets of 14 generations separating Abraham and Jesus (*K. al-Ma`ārif,* 34). This is basically in line with the Matthean genealogy (Matt. 1:1ff; esp. 1:17) which is in all likelihood founded upon the numerical value of the messianically suggestive Hebrew name David (D = 4+W=6+D =4 total = 14).

[2] Maqdisī also gives detailed chronological information from the lost *Kitāb al-tarīkh* of Ibn Khurdādh[bih] (fl. 3/9th cent.) (II:151f)

[3] In the section `On the chronology of the years of the Israelites' (= sect. III) in his (predominantly pre-Islamic) *Ta`rīkh sinī al-muluk al-arḍ wa'l-anbiyā'* (`Chronology of Kings and Prophets of the Earth', finished 350/ 951) the Muslim chronographer Ḥamzah al-Isfāhānī (fl. mid-late 10th cent. CE) basing himself on biblical sources and Jewish informants writes, "So everything that has elapsed of the years of the world up till the beginning of the era of the Arab, from the *hijrah* [of the prophet] amounts to 4,382 years [AM].." (*Tārīkh,* 68; cf. Rosenthal, 1968:79, 90f ; idem, `Ḥamza al-Iṣfāhānī', EI^2 III:156; 1989 [= Tabari 1]:184 fn. 148). Rosenthal further notes that the 5992 figure is "close to that of 5990 in Ḥamzah [al-Isfāhānī] and that of the 5, 969 of the Antiochian era (*Tārīkh,* 184 fn.147).

Krotkoff, 'Abjad,' Elr. 1:221-2) . An interesting example is ascribed to the fifth (or the sixth) Imām (Abū Ja`far) Muhammad al-Bāqir (d. c.126/743) as cited by al-Ayyāshī (fl-9th-10th. cent. CE) in his Tafsīr as transmitted by Abū Labīd al-Makhzūmī:

> O Abā Labīd! There is abundant knowledge *(`ilm$^{an}$ jamm $^{an}$)* in the isolated letters of the Qur'ān *(al-ḥurūf al-qur'ān al-muqaṭṭa`ah)* for God, exalted be He, sent down [the qur'ānic revelation] "*Alif, Lām, Mīm* (A+ L+M). This Book" [Q. 2:1-2a] and Muhammad rose up until his light was made manifest and his word was established. He was born on a day when there had elapsed 103 years from the seventh millennium *(al-alf al-sābi`)...* (Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfī,* I:77-8; Majlisī, Biḥār ^{2} 52:106).

It is indicated here that the year 6,103 AM had been reached at the time of Muhammad's birth (c. 570 CE). This figure is very close to the 6,122-3 given by the polymathic scholar and scientist Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. 442/1051) in his comparative chronology *al-Āthār al-bāqiya.. (`Vestiges of Bygone Days.)* ( Rosenthal, op. cit. 184 fn.147). However 6,103 is to be precisely, chronologically understood, its basic import is that the seventh millennial era indicative of end-time fulfilment had commenced because 6,000+ years had passed. The above Shī`ī tradition certainly seems to presuppose early speculations about the time of the mission of Muhammad in millennial terms after the (Abrahamic-Islamic) *anno mundi.* In his *Risāla fī'l-nubbwa al-khaṣṣa* the Bāb cites this *ḥadīth* of 6,103 (INBMC 14:245) as does the Bahā'ī apologist, Mīrzā Abū al-Faḍl Gulpayigānī (d. 1914 CE) in his *Sharḥ āyāt al-muwarrikha* (Commentary on the Chronological Testimonia, Hamadan, 1888: 8ff.). It was utilized in Bābī-Bahā'ī texts as evidence of eschatological fulfilment.

This 6,103 seventh millennial Shī`ī tradition continues by having the Imam state that the clarification of the 6,103 figure is "in the Book of God (= the Q.), in the isolated letters *(al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa`a)* if they are counted them without repetition" (T.Sāfī, 1:78; Bihar^2 52:106). This confirmatory numerical value of the twenty nine qur'ānic isolated letters is 5995 (+ 5 = 6,000 +10= 6005) which is again a figure of almost 6,000 which would definitely place the mission of Muhammad well within the 7th millennium of fulfilment even if he were born just before it (cf. B* P. Bay. VIII:17, 302).

The Persian version of the *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* of Bal`amī (written c.963 CE), referring to the Shāh-Nameh tradition and to Hamza al-Isfahānī, mentions a period of 6013 years from Adam until the era of the Prophet as well as to a period of 5, 900 years (Per. Tārīkh, 1:5). The numerical value of the qur'ānic isolated letters is again associated with the time span of world history and there is mention of a possibly Zoroastrian influenced figure of 14, 000 years (7, 000 + 7, 000). Like other Islamic sources, this source relates the creation in "six days" to a period of six millennia in the light of Q. 32:4 and Q. 22:47b (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* ed. Yaghmā'ī 4:968f; 1:32; ed. Sadeghi 1:3).

Evidently desirous of showing that Muhammad ushered in the new 7th millennial era, early Muslim apologists and historians consciously or unconsciously based their calculations upon such (Judaeo-) Christian figures as have been mentioned above. Their chronological age of the world speculations suggested millennial fulfilment. Just as the essentially mythical biblical chronology is infused with schemata suggestive of a pre-ordained, providential (heiro-) history with eschatological implications, so too are certain of the chronologies of Islamic world history which draw upon early *ḥadīth* or Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. They are often underpinned by an apologetically rooted millennial scheme (Johnston[2]1988:36). A similar orientation is presupposed and mirrored in aspects of the developed and extended, millennially oriented Bābī-Bahā'ī cyclic view of salvation history.

■ **The Qā'īm-Maḥdī and the chronology of qur'ānic isolated letters.**

The qur'āniç isolated letters are also seen in Shī`ī imamological traditions as indications of the dates of the appearance of the Imāms or, the (for twelver Shī`īs) the time of the advent of the twelfth of them, the Qā'im-Maḥdī. Majlisī in one of the sections of his celebrated *Biḥār al-anwār* entitled *al-tamḥīṣ wa'l-nahī `an al-tawqīyah* (`The proving and the modes of understanding from the letters', Biḥar[2] 52:101-121) records and briefly discusses several interpretations of these isolated letters, the *fawāṭīḥ al-sawar* (opening of the Sūrahs) deriving from the Prophet and the Imāms. The 7th (6103) tradition of the 5th Imām (cited above) continues as follows:

> There is not among the disconnected letters a letter which will find its realization save there should rise up a Qā'im ("Ariser") from the progeny of [Banī] Hāshim... The "A" *(al-alif)* is one; the "L" *(al-lām)* is thirty, the "M" *(al-mīm)* forty and the "Ṣād" *(Ṣād)* ninety which [abjad numerical value] amounts to 161 years. Then came to pass the emergence of Ḥusayn son of `Alī [ 3rd Imām Ḥusayn; d. 61/680]. *"Alif, lām, mīm* ("A"+ "L"+ "M") *Allāh* (God)." So when its period came to pass there rose up a Qā'im of the progeny of `Abbās nigh *"Alif+Lām+Mīm+Ṣād* (Q sūra 7; total = 161] and there rose up our Qā'im nigh their termination in *Alif+ Lām+Rā'* (= Q. sūra 13; total = 231). So understand [this]! Pay heed [memorize]! and keep it secret!" (cited from the *Tafsīr* `Ayyashī in Majlisī, Biḥār [2] 52:106).

On the basis of such traditions the Bāb[1], BA* and subsequently Bahā'ī apologists understood the value of the qur'ānic isolated letters from A-L-M [-Ṣ] (Q. 2 [3]) up till A-L-M-R (Q.13) to be indicative of the time of the advent of the Qā'im or Maḥdī (= the Bāb). These seven sets of isolated letters from Q.2 (Baqara, Cow) until Q. 13 (*Ra`ad,* Thunder) compute to yield : 71 (Q2) +71 (Q.3)+161 (Q.7)+ 231 (Q.10) +231 (Q.11)+ 231(Q.12) +271 (Q.13), totalling 1,267. This is understood to indicate lunar years AH for the Bāb initiated his mission in Shīrāz on May 22nd 1844 or in the year 1260, seven years away from the figure 1,267 (cf. B* P.DalS:47) By backdating 1,267 seven years or commencing at the time of the public mission of Prophet Muhammad (- 7 AH/ c. 615 CE?) the result is 1260 AH when the Bāb initiated the Bābī religion in Shiraz, Iran. Aside from this 7 year adjustment the Bāb also frequently dated the origins of the Islamic era to the *ba`tha* ("Call to prophethood") of Muhammad which he reckoned as being 10 year before the Hijra (P.Bay. II:7; IV:14, 16,18; VI:7,8,13; K.PanjS:319, etc).

This year 1260/1844 or thereabouts is of great significance in the Bābī-Bahā'ī millennial and cyclic scheme cryptically indicated in certain of the *ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa`a* (Isolated letters) (B* INBMC 98:35ff; BA* L. Ḥurufāt). In this connection BA* writes in his *L. Ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa`a,* (c.1857)

> Then know that on another level God intended by these [qur'ānic isolated] letters *(al-ḥurūfāt)* the mysteries indicative of fulfilment (*asrār ilā nihāyāt)* by means of which he alludes to the period of concealment of the [eschatological] Beauty *(al-*

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[1] In his Persian *Dalā'il-I sab`ih* the Bāb makes specific reference to the *ḥadīth* of Abī Labīd Makhzūmī about the "qur'ānic *ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa`ih"* noting that he had explained this matter in his *T. Kawthar* (P. Dal. 48-49).

jamāl) behind the pavilions of Glory such as is evidenced in the recorded traces of the [twelver] Imams of the Criterion (= Qur'ān), [thus, for example, the words] "With the expiration of *Alif- Lām - Mīm - Ṣād* (Q.[2]) through *Alif- Lām - Mīm - Rā'* (Q.13), the Mahdī shall arise" .. *(L. Ḥurūfāt, mss. 15).*

■ Bahā'ī cyclic speculation and the millennium

Like certain Abrahamic streams of religious thought, most notably Ismā'īlī Shī`ī sources, Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrine maps out past and future human and heirohistory in terms of various kinds of religious cycles *dawr* (pl. *adwār*) or eras of a greater or lesser magnitude and time span. Successive aeons and religious eras are punctuated by the missions of founder *maẓhar-i ilāhī* who appear from age to age with a new *sharī`a* (religious law) and further dimensions of spiritual truth. Cycles of religious guidance are essentially prophetological cycles referred to by SE* (and in modern Bahā'ī sources) as "dispensations" (Ar./Per. *ẓuhūr)*, an English term borrowed from western Protestant "dispensationalism", biblically rooted theological notions of dispensations or eras of religious history (e.g. H. Grattan Guinness, etc).

Certain controversial and novel issues associated with the dating of past Messengers, prophets and philosophers are evidenced in various writings of both the Bāb and BA*. They adopted a *badī`* ("novel", "new") calendar and gave new, sometimes eschatologically oriented re-interpretations to earlier religious chronology. The writings of the Bāb contain sometimes complex prophetological chronology and predictive schemata. Both the Bāb and BA* set out past world history based upon concepts of eternally renewed *maẓhariyya* (theophanology) and upon the claimed realization of eschatologically oriented events.

In his *Persian Bayān* and other writings the Bāb identified with great accuracy the time of his 1260/1844 (= the year "sixty") religious declaration, of being the bāb ("gate") to the hidden Imam, etc. It was exactly 2 hours 11 minutes on the eve (after sunset) on the 5th Jamād al-Awwal 1260 (= May 22nd 1844)(P.Bay. II:7; cf. VI:13). This date marked the beginning of the *yawm al-qiyāma* ("Day of Resurrection") of the Qur'ān or the Islamic (and other) peoples (ibid.) For Bahā'īs the date 1260/1844 marks the point of millennial transition from the pre-Bābī cycle of prophecy extending from the time of Adam until the end of Islamic era, 1,000 lunar

years after the death/passing into *ghayba* ("occultation") of the 12th Imam, Muhammad son of Ḥasan al-Askarī (d. c. 260 AH/874 CE). In his *L. Mawlūd ism al-a`ẓam* (Tablet of the Genesis of the Greatest Name) BA* similarly highlights the importance of 19th century dates such as 1260/1844, the night of his birth (November 12th 1817) and the Riḍwān 12 day period of his semi-secret declaration in Baghdad during April 21(22) –> May 3 1863:

> O Concourse of the hidden and the manifest! Rejoice then exalt within thine own beings for the Night hath appeared within which cycles *(al-akwār)* and eras *(al-adwār)* were intertwined and conflated. Nights and days have moved on such that the appointed times of the divine Cause *(al-amr)* were realized on the part of one Powerful, Almighty...The Riḍwān ("Paradise") of the All-Merciful hath appeared at the midmost heart of the cyclic scheme *(quṭb al-akwān)* for the Breeze of God hath wafted from the shore of forgiveness and the Hour hath, in very truth, come to pass... (L.Mawlūd, 48).

For Bahā'īs an Adamic cycle extended from the time of Adam (viewed as the founder of an embryonic religion) until the end of the Islamic age in 1844/1260 or a few years later at the end of the Bābī period in 1269 / 1850/2-3, the year of BA*'s initial though symbolic prophetic call in Tehran. For Bahā'īs the mid. 19th century is believed to have ended a 6, 000 year cycle echoed in the pattern of the six days of creation understood in millennial terms. The theological and eschatological implications of the biblical chronology as interpreted in Christian tradition lies behind the Bahā'ī affirmation of a 6000 year pre-Bābī-Bahā'ī Adamic or `prophetic cycle.[1] Just as many early Muslims placed the birth or time of Muhammad around 6,000 years AM into a 7th millennium of fulfilment, so Bahā'īs have identified 1844/1260 or 1852-3/1269 as the end of a 6,000 year millennial period initiating a new Bahā'ī universal cycle of fulfilment which as AB* explained to a Zoroastrian enquirer, would extend 500,000 years into the distant future (Tablet cited SE* Dispensation:10-11; SE* GPB: 100). After this 500,000 years Bahā'īs expect the advent of another great universal manifestation *(maẓhar- i kulliyya)* like BA* (who initiated the "Bahā'ī cycle") to appear and initiate a new cycle of possibly inter-

[1]There have been many ancient and modern attempts to relate biblical chronology to an absolute chronological scheme so as to divine the `plan of history' and the `time of the end'. Some like the famous Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) whose computations were virtually incorporated into the English 1611 Authorized (King James) version of the Bible, reckoned the creation around 4,004 BCE (4004 BCE + 6,000 = 1996 CE).

galactic scope (SE* letter cited DG: 7-8 No. 21; Hornby, Lights[3]: 473f, 475-63ff).

Bahá'í interpretations of the millennium (Lat. *mille* = 1,000+ *annus* = "year"; Rev 20:1-6) are basically pre-millennial. The Báb and BA* are both considered the spiritual "return" of Christ and are seen by Bahā'īs to have initiated the onset of a millennial period or periods. When asked about the time of the biblical millennium, AB*, apparently having 1269/1853-4 in mind, wrote:

> Concerning the one thousand years as recorded in the Book [Bible]: It signifieth the beginning of this manifestation until the end of its predominance throughout the contingent world... It shall continue in elevation, exaltation, growth, ... until it shall reach the apex of its glory in one thousand years -- as the Day of this Manifestation is one thousand years... (AB* TAB III: 659-660).

Confirming and making more precise the developed Bahā'ī position SE*, writing a century after the event, stated that,

> ... the rise of the Orb of Bahá'u'lláh's most sublime Revelation [in 1269/1852] making the consummation of the six thousand cycle ushered in by Adam, glorified by all past prophets and sealed with the blood of the Author of the Bábí Dispensation [= the Báb]" (Cablegram of 8th Oct. 1952,MBW: 40).

This cablegram places the termination of the 6,000 year Adamic cycle at BA*'s 1269/1852-3 mystical experience in the "black pit" *(sīyāh chāl)* dungeon in Tehran (ESW: 13 /20f, 39f; cf. SE* GPB: 100, Hornby, Lights, 501f). This would place the time of Adam at 6000 years before 1269/1852-3 or around 4,148 BCE, a figure not far removed from the onset of the 6, 000 year period held by many 19th century and some earlier Christians to reach its end-time consummation in that century. At the conclusion of his 1934 *The Dispensation of Baháu'lláh* SE* also indicated, that the "New World Order" of BA* would find its future consummation with the advent of the "golden millennium". There is the millennium and the "golden millennium", the former expressing millennial potential and the latter the millennial actuality of global peace and justice, etc. This latter "golden millennium", SE* added alluding to Rev. 11:15, would be "the [eschatological] Day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of God Himself" which is identified as the "Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh"

(Dispensation, 69). [1]

It is thus the case that like certain Abrahamic streams of thought, most notably Gnostic, Manichean and Ismā'īlī Shī`ī sources, Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture maps out past and to some extent future human and sacred, heirohistory in terms of *dawr* (pl. *adwār* = religious cycles), eras of a greater or lesser magnitude and time span. The period from Adam to Muhammad and successive aeons is understood in millennial terms as being punctuated by the missions of the founder *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (manifestations of God) who, as will be demonstrated below, are basically reflections of the Shī`ī sent messengers *(rasul)* reckoned *`ulū al-aẓm* ("possessors of steadfastness").

■ Islamic chronology and the pre-Islamic prophets.

Muslim sources not only contain speculations as to the *anno mundi* and associated millennial schemata relating to past salvation history, but include a diversity of traditions about the dating and lifespan of many pre-Islamic prophets, or the periods of time separating their missions, (Bihar[2] 11: 65f). The early Baṣran philologist Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d.255/869) was among those who wrote volumes entitled *al-Mu`ammarūn* (`The Long-Lived'; al-Nadīm, Fihrist, 82f; Dharī`a, 21:268), in which he discussed various amazing life spans including those of such figures as Khiḍr (immortal and undatable), Luqmān the Elder (lived 3, 500 years), Noah (lived 1, 450 years) and Adam (lived 950 years). This fascinating work opens by reckoning Khiḍr (the Green One", Ever Verdent, Eternal) the most long-lived figure, uncharacteristically identifying him as a grandson of Adam through Abel (al-Mu`ammarūn, 3ff). The second most long-lived is identified as Luqmān (the Ist – not the later sage Luqmān) an alleged son of the qur`ānic Arabian prophet `Ad (cf. Ibn Isḥāq, *K. al-Mubtada,* [reconstructed] trans. Newby, 1989:55; Ibn Bābuwayh, Kamāl, 507).

Ibn Bābuwayh, al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 / 991), drew upon the above mentioned work of al -

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[1]The above paragraphs should not be read so as imply that Bābī-Bahā'ī leaders took Genesis texts literally. Both AB* and SE* explicitly rejected that the idea that "this world of existence was created six of seven thousand years ago" (PUP:462, Hornby LG [3] : 494-5). The Genesis narratives and biblico-qur'ānic story of the first couple are likewise non-literally interpreted (SAQ., index, etc).

Sijistānī and a wide range of imamate traditions in the course of explicating the mysteries of extended periods of prophetic (proto-) *ghayba* ("occultation") in his lengthy Arabic *Kamāl al-dīn* ('Perfection of Religion') as well as his *'Ilāl al-sharī'a...* ('Causes of the Directives...'). A tradition is, for example, recorded from `Alī b. Muhammad al-Askarī that Noah had a very extended longevity, "the age of Noah was 2,500 years.." (Ilāl, 45f, Kamāl 134-7; 496, 503; cf. Kohlberg, XVI:52). In the *K. Nubuwwat* (Book of Prophethood) and elsewhere in his Arabic *Biḥār al-anwār* , Persian *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* and other writings, Majlisī records various authoritative traditions and opinions about the miraculous lifespan of Noah and of numerous other pre-Islamic prophets (Biḥār ^{2}, 11:13; Hayat 1:246ff). The following prophetic tradition, cited from Ibn Bābuwayh's *Kamāl al-dīn,* is especially noteworthy:

> ... The Messenger of God said, `The lifespan of Adam the father of humanity was 930 years; that of Noah 1,450 years; of Abraham 157 years; of Ishmael son of Abraham 120 years; of Isaac son of Abraham 180 years; of Jacob 120 years; of Joseph 120 years; of Moses 126 years; of Aaron 130 years; of David 100 years (including 40 years of his rule) and of Solomon son of David 712 years (Bihar ^{2} 11: 65).

The same Shī`ī encyclopaedist elsewhere records a tradition related from al-Wāḥidī and recorded in the *Tafsīr* of Abū `Alī al-Ṭabarsī (d. c. 548/1154), to the effect that Solomon son of David was given rule over East and West for 700 years and 7 months. On this figure Majlisī himself felt obliged to comment, referring to it as a *khabar gharīb* ("hidden report"). He seems to relate the basically 700 year length of Solomon's global rule to his encompassing both eastern and western regions. Traditions such as this may conflict with others though they retain their authenticity and ultimate coherence (ibid, 14:80). Taken at face value Solomon's 700 year rule contradicts traditions related from the 6th Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (d. c.148/765) which reckon a 400 (or 480) year period between David and Jesus. It would also indicate that Solomon outlived Jesus by around 300 years (Bihar ^{2}14:80, 234, 351)! In line with other Islamic traditions, Majlisī somewhat more acceptably records a round 500 year period separating Jesus and Muhammad on the authority of Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (Bihar ^{2} 14: 349).

Such Islamic prophetological-chronological notices as the above are legion. They are

reminiscent of the ages of the early biblical patriarchs and of chronological data found in ancient near eastern, antediluvian genealogies. The biblical tradition is similarly replete with strange chronological discrepancies. The longest-lived biblical figure Methusaleh, son of Enoch, for example, died aged 969 at the time of the flood when Noah was 600 years old (Gen. 5f). Some Arabic and Persian Islamic historical sources contain detailed chronological data which, by modern historical standards, is confused and inaccurate. Chronologically oriented statements in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources occasionally reflect the chronological idiosyncrasies of various, sometimes heterodox Islamic sources. This is at times evident in aspects of the novel prophetological schemata of the Bāb and in the dating given by BA* to certain pre-Islamic philosophers and prophets in his *L. Ḥikma* (as will be noted below).

■ 2.2 The traditional `twenty-eight', the myriad prophets and the *ūlū al-`azm* ("possessors of steadfastness") in Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī literatures.

The narrative portions of the Q. are mostly concerned with the pious example of twenty four or so all male prophet figures directly named therein (Q. 6:84-9; 21:48-91.). This number has traditionally been slightly extended to twenty-seven or eight (still all male figures) by the addition of a few persons not directly named in the Q. (e.g. Seth; Uzair [Ezra]-->). Around this number of messengers consolidated itself fairly early on (pre-12th cent. CE) through the mystical treatment of a listing of twenty-seven figures in the influential *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) of Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 638/1240). This number 28 for pre-Islamic prophets became especially well-known (cf. AB* FWU:99,24). The disciple of the Great Shaykh, Ḥurr al-Āmīlī (d.787/1385) also associated the stream of Islamic prophets with the number of letters in the Arabic alphabet (28).

Communicating messages from God, the twenty-eight called humankind to piety, guiding from primordial times until the era of Muhammad whose own circumstances often coloured the largely non-systematic qur'ānic presentation of past prophets. Roughly eighteen of these figures are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible though most of the major (and minor) biblical prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Habbakuk, etc) are not (directly) mentioned in the

Q. Very few NT figures, aside from John the Baptist, his father Zechariah and Jesus along with his mother Mary, find direct mention in the Q.

Two major, sometimes synonymous terms exist in the Q. for persons who communicate the divine message. Firstly, agents of God may be *nabī* (*nabiyy* = prophet; pl. *nabiyyūn / anbiyā')* meaning `one who speaks forth' (cf. Heb. [Aram.] *nāvī'*, tr. Gk. [LXX] *prophethês*). The term *nabī* occurs around seventy-five times in the Q. mostly referring to the prophet Muhammad. Those so designated are largely biblical figures mostly not considered prophets in the Bible. Apart from Abraham and Moses, Elijah, Elisha and Jonah, none of the qur'ānic prophets are so named in either biblical or mainstream post-biblical, Judaeo- Christian tradition. The following biblical figures become qur'ānic prophets, Adam, Noah, Joseph and David.

Secondly, agents of God may be *rasūl* (pl. *rusul),* variously translated, `messenger', `envoy', `apostle,' etc. This term is most probably rooted in Jewish Christian (Elchasaite) and/ or Manichean terminology (Ar. *rasūl* = Syr. *šĕlīḥa,* Fossum, 1993149f). *Rasūl* occurs over 300 times in the Q., and is also implied by *mursal* (lit. `sent one'; Q. x 36 in 14 *surahs* ; Kassis, 807f; 1032-3). According to the Q. "Every *ummah* (community) has its *rasūl"* (Q. 0:47). Aside from Muhammad himself, eight figures are specifically designated *rasūl* in the Q. [1] Noah, [2] Shu`ayb, [3] Hūd, [4] Ṣāliḥ, [5] Lot, [6] Ishmael, [7] Moses and [8] Jesus.

Like Muhammad, Jesus is explicitly designated *rasūl Allāh* (Q. 61:6). Several of these figures including Moses (Q.19:51), Ishmael (Q.19:54) and Muhammad (Q. 33:40; 7:157f) are also referred to as *nabī.* Not all the *nabī* (prophets), however, are also *rasūl* and not all *rasūl* also reckoned among the *nabī.* Taking into account a chronological arrangement of the sūras, many modern scholars see little or no distinction between the *nabī* and the *rasūl [= mursal].* Descendants of Abraham, however, are particularly designated *nabī / anbiyā'* (Q. 29:26; 45:15; 57:26-7). Several Arabian, non-Abrahamic figures sent to miscellaneous communities (see 05-07 -->) are counted among the *rasūl* (Q. 10:47; 16:38, etc). The words, "And We did not send before you any *rasūl* or *nabī* " (Q. 22:52) have been taken by some to indicate differentiation (Rahman, 1980:82).

■ *Nubuwwa* and *walāya* : modes of prophecy and divine providence.

Islamic literatures contain numerous and divergent attempts to define, clarify and expound the non-systematic, qur'ānic prophetological terminology. The term *nubuwwa* (prophecy, prophethood) occurs only five times in the Q. (3:79; 6:89; 29:27; 45:16; 57:26). It has no detailed explanation beyond the fact that *nubuwwa* was bestowed upon the progeny of Abraham and the "children of Israel" (Q. 29:27; 45:16). References in the *ḥadīth* literatures highlight the importance of *nubuwwa.* Muhammad, for example, is reckoned to have stated that, "The genesis of your religion is *nubuwwa* and *raḥma* (Divine mercy)" (Al-Dārimī, *Sunan* IX). In the Q., the 'early `creeds' and later doctrinal treatises, belief in the prophets and the power of prophethood are regarded as central to Muslim faith (Wensinck, 1938). Both Sunnī and Shī`ī Muslims consider *nubuwwa* (prophethood) a fundamental element of religion. In Shī`ī Islam its importance is such that it often follows *tawhīd* (the Divine Unity) among the five "pillars". The closely related *walāya* concept (-->) has been regarded as a "sixth" pillar of twelver Shīism.

A great many Islamic books and treatises have been written dealing with *nubuwwa* and related mode(s) of *waḥy* (divine guidance), concepts of *ilḥām* (inspiration) and the miraculous powers of various prophet figures attendant upon their prophetic commission. Anawati succinctly defined Islamic prophethood as "essentially an investiture granted by God to certain people" (ERel. 8:465). The relationship between the prophet and the angels, the jinn and humankind was likewise much discussed. In Shī`īsm discussions often centred upon concepts of *walāya* relative to the *nabī,* the *rasūl* and the role of the exalted imāms.[1]

By the 3rd/ 9th century, Islamic discussions of prophecy were part of comprehensive *kalām* (theological discourse) (Strousma, 1985:102f). A theory of prophecy, furthermore, was an essential element in Islamic philosophical systems (Brinner,1988:66). Philosophical,

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[1] See, for example, Horovitz, `Nabī', EI VI:802-3; *Biḥār,* 11:13ff; McDermot, 1978 Ch. IV; al-Razī, *al-Nubuwwāt..;* Ceylan, 1996, Ch.6; Wensinck, 1932:203ff; Corbin, *En Islam..*I:219-284; Rahman, 1958 :30ff; Fahd, `Nubuwwa' EI^2 VIII:93-97, Takehita, 1987:107-169 ; Robinson Waldman, `Nubūwah', ERel. 11:1-8; Brinner, 1989; Chodkiewicz, .

mystical, theosophical and other dimensions of prophetological theory contributed to the huge and very rich Islamic prophetological legacy. All manner of theories were entertained about the nature and significance of modes of communication between God and humankind. Worth citing at this point is the following passage from the *K. Al-Arba`īn fī uṣūl al-dīn* of Abū Ḥamīd Muhammad al-Ghazalī (d. 505/1111) which constitutes excellent summation of the orthodox position regarding angels, prophets and *waḥy* (divine inspiration):

> Know that God created the angels (*al-malā'ikat*) and raised up the *anbiyā'* (prophets) and enabled them to perform miracles *(al-mu`ajizāt).* The angels are one and all [no more than] His servants who did not wax proud on account of service to Him, neither did they weary of it. Day and Night they utter unceasing praise. The anbiyā' (prophets) are those sent unto his creatures. He transmits His *waḥy* (divine revelation) unto them through the instrumentality of the angels. Wherefore do they [the prophets] cry out through *waḥy* (divine inspiration) and this is not *waḥy* from their own self..." (al-Arba`a, 19-20).

Shī`ī discussions of these matters often make much of the differences between *nabī* and *rasūl* relative to the position of the *walī* ( locus of divine guidance) and the sanctified Imam. This can be seen, for example, in the *`Ilm al-yaqīn* (The Knowledge of Certainty) of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kashānī (d.1090/1679) (`Ilm 1:366f).

Along with *nubuwwa* (prophethood) the term *walāya* (= *wilāya)* is generally expressive of God's providential overseership mediated by such agents of his power, salvific intimacy and purpose as the *nabī, rasūl,* imams and saints. The *walāya* concept lies at the very heart of Shī`ī religiosity, often indicating "adherence to the imams and the recognition of their mission" as infallible exponents of the Q. and possessors of *`ilm al-ghayb* (knowledge of the unseen). Within Shī`īsm *walāya* is especially related to the role and sanctity of `Alī and the Imams of the *ahl al-bayt* (House of the Prophet) who are the trustees and bearers of the divine command *(wālī al-amr)* as is the messianic Qā'im, entitled *ṣāḥib al-amr* (bearer of the command). The identification of the believer with the imamate as the fountainhead and locus of *wilāya* is essential to Shī`īte soteriology (Landolt, Enc.R 15:316f; Anawati, Enc.Rel. 7:464f).[1]

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[1] Within Islamic thought the Arabic verbal noun *wa[i]lāya* (Per. *vilāya[t]*) has a wide and complex range of senses going well beyond the qur'ānic roots of this term (Q. 8:44, 72). Fundamental aspects of the "Islāmic social and spiritual life" are encompassed by *walāya* (Landolt, Enc.Rel.,15:316-323). In Shī`īsm and Sufism *walāya / wilāya* (these spellings are synonymous) have multi-faceted theological,

Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 638/1240) and various of his numerous commentators have made much of concepts of *nubuwwa* (prophethood) and *wilāya* ("sainthood"). For the Great Shaykh *walāya* is essentially the *bāṭin* (inner depth) of *nubuwwa,* itself of various kinds as the following passages from the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* must suffice to illustrate:

> *Walāya* (divine guidance) is expressive of *nubuwwa `āmma* (general prophethood) and that prophethood which is legalistic *(al-tashrī`)* also known as *nubuwwa khāṣṣa* (specific prophethood)... Muhammad is the *khātam al-nubuwwa* (seal of prophethood) for there is no prophethood (*nubuwwa*) after him. Yet after him was the like of Jesus among the *ūlū al-`azm* (those characterized by steadfastness) of the Messengers *(al-rusul)* and certain specified Prophets *(al-anbiyā')*... [in due course] there will be disclosed a *walī* ("saint") possessed of absolute prophethood *(nubuwwa al-muṭlaqa)...* (Futuhat, 2:24, 49; cf. 1:200, 429; Fusus,134-6;160,191).[1]

Ibn al-`Arabī saw himself, Jesus and the future Mahdī as loci or "seals" of various modes of *wilāya.* Jesus, for example, is the seal of the general, absolute *wilāya (khatm al-walāya al-muṭlaqa)* (Qayṣarī, Sh.Fusus, 255, 456, 460, 843; Landolt, Enc. Rel.15:320f).

In the course of commenting upon *nubuwwiyya* ("prophetology") in the utterance of Jesus *(kalimat `Īsāwiyya)* in his *Sharḥ fuṣūs al-ḥikam,* Qayṣārī (d.751/1350) makes key statements about *nubuwwa khaṣṣa* and *nubuwwa `amma*, general and specific prophethood respectively. Much commented upon by Ibn al-`Arabī and his devotees this terminology was utilized and commented upon by the Bāb in his *Risāla fī'l-nubuwwa al-khāṣṣa* (Trestise on the specific prophethood). Therein he explained the *al-nubuwwa al-khaṣṣa* (specific prophethood) of Muhammad as an expression of the *mashiyya* (Divine Will):

> The bearer of the *al-nubuwwa al-kulliyya* (universal prophethood) is the *mashiyya* (Divine Will) which.. descended from the world of His Essence... the *mashiyya* was the genesis *(mabdā')* of *nubuwwa al-khaṣṣa* (specific

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imamological and related meanings. *Walāya* can be indicative of divine `Authority', `Trusteeship', and ` Overseership'. It figures significantly in numerous Sunnī and Shī`ī sources and in a multitude of Sufī writings especially those of Ibn al-`Arabī and his followers where *wilāya* (sainthood, etc) and *walī* (saint, friend [of God], etc) are centrally important concepts (Corbin, *En Islam* I:242ff; Muṭahhari, 1402/1982; Ḥā'irī Shīrāzī, nd.; Elmore, 1999:109ff, 110 fn.7).

[1]In his edition of the *Fuṣuṣ,* Afifi explains that Ibn al-`Arabī uses various prophetological terms including, *al-nubuwwa al-`āmma* (general prophethood), *al-nubuwwa al-muṭlaqa* (absolute prophethood) and *al-nubuwwa al-khaṣṣa* (specific prophethood) which is identical with *al-nubuwwa al-tashrī* (legislative prophethood) (Fusus, Ar.176).

prophethood) and the absolute *walāya,* the divine Light and the Lordly mysteries.. (B*., R-Nub.K 14:331-2).

Shī`ī *irfānī* ("gnostic") writers of the Safavid and other periods indulged in complex discussions about the relationship between *nubuwwa* and *walāya.* A few notes from the *Kalimāt-I maknūnih* (Hidden Words) of Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d.1007/1680-81) will illustrate this in that this work contains an interesting discussion of the senses in which *al-insān al-kāmil* (The Perfect "Man" ["Human"]) could be considered a *nabī* (Prophet) or a *walī* (bearer of *wilāya,* `benefactor', `saintly guide'). Kāshānī states that *al-nubuwwa al-muṭlaqa* is "ultimately real prophethood" *(al-nubūwwa al-ḥaqīqa),* an eternally existing reality like *al-nubūwa al-`amma* (general prophethood). It is the force through which Muhammad infuses all existence and is the locus of all *Ḥaqq* (Ultimate Reality). Its bearers are variously entitled *al-khalifa al-a`ẓam* (Most Great Khalifa), *quṭb al-aqṭāb* (Pivot of Pivots) *al-insān al-kabīr* (The Great Human) and *Ādam al-ḥaqīqa* (The Adam of Reality). Therefrom the "Supreme Pen" *(al-qalam al-a`lā)* inscribes reality as the *al-`aql al-awwāl* (First Intellect) and the *al-rūḥ al-a`ẓam* (Most Great Spirit). This *al-nubuwwat al-muṭlaqa* (absolute prophethood) is alluded to as the first creation of God, the "Light" *(nūr)* of Muhammad, the locus of his being a *nabī* (Prophet) when "Adam was betwixt water and clay" (Kāshānī, *Kalimat,* 186).

This same writer further maintains that the *bāṭin* (interiority) of absolute *nubuwwa* is the "absolute *walāya" (bāṭin al-walāyah hiya al-walāyah al-muṭlaqa).* It is related to the supernal "Light" of Imam `Alī's utterance "I was a *walī* (bearer of *walāya),* when Adam was betwixt water and clay". The prophethood of all prophets results from their being channels of *al-nubuwwat al-muṭlaqa* (absolute prophethood) (Fayḍ, Kalimāt, 186-7). Shī`ī *irfānī* speculation focuses upon `Alī (as opposed to Jesus) as the locus of the eternal *walāya* by virtue of which he, Muhammad and all the prophets, express the absolute *walāya* in their absolute prophethood.

Walāya and associated doctrines are expounded in the works of the first two Shaykhī leaders, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī and Sayyid Kāẓim Rashṭī (-->). Commenting on *maṭla`*

(Dawning Point), for example, in his *Qaṣida al-lāmiyya* Sayyid Kāẓim states that this indicates *walāya.* This he defines as an eternally elevated phenomenon without beginning, as "the Eternal Light *(al-nūr al-azal),* the Primordial Designation *(al-ta`yīn al-awwāl),* the secondary Eternality *(al-azaliyya al-thāniyya),* the Bearer of Eternality upon Eternlity without Beginning *(ṣāḥīb al-azaliyya al-azaliyya)* and the sanctified, most holy Emanation *(al-fayḍ al-aqdas asl-muqaddas)*". It is something closely associated with the divine Essence *(hiya ḥaqīqa al-dhāt aḥad). Walāya,* furthermore, has the station of the Primal *Dhikr* (Remembrance) *(al-dhikr al-awwāl)* and is the genesis of the divine Names and Attributes *(mabdā' al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt)* and a great deal more besides (Rashtī, *al-Qaṣīda,* 6).

Wilāya concepts are sometimes central to the Bāb's imamological and gematric interpretations of the letter *wāw (= walāya)* and central to his exegesis of various *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* episodes (T.`Asr 69:33ff on the 1st wāw = *wilāyat al-kulliyya*...etc; 36f, 55f on letter 35 (= wāw), etc). His treatment of Adam and the angels in his early, highly imamologically oriented *T. Baqāra* is also of interest in this connection. BA* likewise made use of concepts of *wilāya* though these have yet to be investigated (e.g. L. Ḥurūfat, 74). Commenting upon the word "moon" in Q. 91:2 in his *T. Shams*, BA* has it indicate *walāya.* Ultimately Bahā'ī *wilāya* was focussed in SE* as the (Per.) *Valī-yi amr Allāh* (Guardian of the [Bahā'ī] Cause of God').

■ 2.2 The traditional `twenty-eight', the myriad prophets and the *ūlū al-`azm* ("possessors of steadfastness") in Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī literatures

The annotated paragraphs set down below on the traditionally twenty-eight prophets and envoy-messengers sum up the qur'ānic references. They introduce a few basic aspects of the Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī positions respecting these figures. Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī sources for the most part assume the largely doubtful historicity of these twenty-eight by arranging them in a partly traditional yet still highly speculative chronological order.[1] The

[1] Certain qur'anic sūrahs and texts and later Sunnī and Shī`ī sources provide numerous loosely chronological lists. The Meccan Sūra Hūd (Q. 11), for example, gives the succession Noah, Hūd, Ṣālih, Abraham, Shu`ayb, Moses and Jesus. Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī also, for example, cites from earlier sources an interesting extended chronological list contained in a lengthy *ḥadīth qudsī* (-->3.2), the *Du`a' Umm Dawūd.*

concrete human existence and / or precise dating of most of these figures accords with Islamic historical perspectives, although concrete historical information is for the most part unknown, if not historically meaningless. The dates sometimes given here for these twenty-eight reflect either the theories of modern biblical scholarship or traditional (though often variant) Islamic chronological assumptions.

Where figures listed have originally Hebrew names found in the Bible they are also given in this language after the Arabic. A few unnamed pre-Islamic figures of the Q. are loosely chronologically listed and identified by the double zero (= 00). Frequency of mention in the Q. is at times indicated by (= Q.x_) along with the number of qur'ānic surahs containing reference to these figures. The (usually) qur'ānic indicated status as *nabī* (prophet) is indicated by (N) and / or that of the *rasūl* (= *mursal*, `sent messenger') by R and / or the speculative (M = R). Figures counted in developed Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrine as (Per.) *maẓhar- i ilāhī* (Manifestations of God-->5.4) are indicated by an M with an asterisk (M*). Only a brief synopsis of the Bābī-Bahā'ī position regarding these twenty-eight (and a few others) will be registered below.

■ **Primordial, Antediluvian figures**

01. **Ādam**, آدم R+N+ M* (= Heb. אָדָם, `ādām = "humankind'), **Adam** the first man in biblical and Islamic tradition who was believed to have lived and flourished soon after the creation (Q x 25 in 9 suras). Several of the genesis motifs and narratives about Adam / the first couple have qur'ānic parallels (Q. 7:20; 20:120ff, etc).[1] Created from clay he was fit to be the primoridial father of humanity, a *khalīfa* (`viceregent', `substitute') and a prophet-Messenger on earth who was taught the names of all things (Q. 2:28f). As in Genesis Adam married Ḥawā (Eve) who was created from one of his ribs (Q. 4:1b cf. Gen. 2:22), the first couple being caused to slip by Satan. They were ultimately expelled from paradise (Q. 2:36). On earth God forgave Adam guided him and made a covenant with him (Q. 2:36f; 20:115..etc). Influenced by Jewish, Gnostic, Christian and other traditions, post-qur'anic Islam greatly elevated the first man. While

[1] Ḥawwā (Heb. חַוָּה, Havvah = Eve the wife of Adam) is not named in the Q. but is twice referred to as his "spouse" (7:18f; 20:120f). Also unnamed are their sons Cain (Qābīl), Abel (Hābīl) and Seth (Shīth, see 02). The sroty of the first couple is related in the probably late Medinan fifth Sūra *(al-Mā'idah,* Q. 5:27[30]f).

his pre-existence is implied in early Sunnī *ḥadīth* numerous Shī`ī sources additionally reckon Adam a major manifestation of the Logos-like *nūr al-Muhammadīya* ("Muhammadan Light"). It was preeminently through his "loins" that this pre-existent "Light" which is the essence of the Prophet and the Imāms was transmitted (see *Biḥār*^{2}, 15:1ff; Rubin, 1975).

For the Bāb Adam appeared 12, 210 years before 1260 AH/1844 CE., an essentially composite (millennial + centennial + decadal) symbolic dating (11x1,000 + 12 X 100+ 10 [adjustment] = 12, 210) which cannot be fully unravelled here (Lambden, 1985). Though there were *`awālim qabl- i ādam* ("worlds prior to Adam") (P.Bay IV:14; BA* L. Qabl- i ādam) he was the first *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (divine Manifestation), emanated from the *mashiyyat* (Divine Will), the *Dhikr-i awwal [azal]* ("Primal Remembrance") in a "prophetic cycle" which to some degree terminated with the advent of the prophet Muhammad (P.Dal., 2-3). Adam brought a "book" and founded an "embryonic religion" such that all subsequent *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (divine theophanies) stood in need of him and were his "spiritual" return (P.Bay. III:13, VI:11, P.Dal. 3).

As a primordial Bābī-Bahā'ī messenger many narratives and details respecting Adam in Abrahamic and Islamic scriptural sources are given symbolic interpretations in the writings of the Bāb and BA*. The details of Gen.1ff are non-literally interpreted, including the creation in six days and the biblical-qur'ānic story of the fall of the first couple from an Edenic paradise (Gen. 3ff + qur'ānic parallels). Under gnostic and esoteric *(`irfānī)* Islamic and Shaykhī influences a multiplicity of exalted Adams are mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture (T. Kawthar, 15b, 21b T. Qadr., 69:19; cf. K.Panj.S 100).

02. **Shīth,** شِيث (trad.N) (= Heb. שֵׁת, *šēt*), **Seth** was the unnamed (Q.x 0) third son of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4:25ff.). He is often considered an important post-Adam prophet in extra-qur'ānic sources as one of the recipients of *waḥy* ("divine revelation"). Aside from this reference Seth is very seldom mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources. In Shī`ī and other sources his progeny in particular, as opposed to that of his brothers Cain and Abel (Ar. Ḥābīl and Qābīl, unnamed cf. Q. 5:27) are seen to constitute the truly "righteous" primogenitors (Quinn, 1962; Klijn, 1977; Huart [Bosworth] EI^2 IX:489-90). BA* briefly narrates his story as Adam's son Seth in his late Iraq period *S. Nuṣḥ* (Sūra of the Counsel, 244). He is represented as a rejected messenger of God to his contemporaries who failed to orient themselves in the direction of the *wajh al-jamāl,* ("the beauteous Divine countenance").

03. Idrīs, إِدْرِيس N (= ? Heb. חֲנוֹךְ, ḥānōk), Enoch (Gen 4:17f; Q.x 2 = 19:57; 21:85) the biblical son of Jared who "walked with God" (Gen. 5:21-4) an "upright man and a prophet" (Q.19:57-8; 21:85). Numerous legends are related of Enoch (Vajda, EI^2 III:1030-1; Fraade, `Enoch' Enc. Rel.5:116-118). Numerous legends about Idrīs exist in Islamic sources. He is "said to have introduced several sciences and arts, practised ascetic piety, received revelation, and entered paradise while still alive" (Fraade, `Enoch' Enc. Rel. 5:116-118). Enoch is occasionally mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources as the father of *ḥikmat* (wisdom- philosophy, etc) and, as in Islamic sources, is equated with the first of the thrice born Hermes' (Martin, `Hermes' DDD:771-783; `Hirmis', EI2 III:463; BA* L.-Ḥikmat, tr.148; Ma'idih 7:143)

04. Nūḥ, نُوح R+N+M* (= Heb. נֹחַ, nūaḥ), Noah (fl. [trad.] fl. 3000 BCE??) the biblical son of Lamech who in both the Bible and the Q. is reckoned to have lived at least 950 years (Gen. 9:29; Q. 29:13-14) and to have survived the flood along with his family (Q. x 43 in 28 suras). As an prototype of Muhammad and one blessed with *waḥy* (divine inspiration, Q. 11:36) the legend of Noah and the associated story of the all-encompassing "flood" and salvific "ark", is important in the Q., one sura of which is named after Noah (Q. 71 [title]). He is mentioned 43 times in 28 sūras of the Q. his story being repeated around ten times. The Noah story is frequently told in *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and other post-qur'ānic literatures.

Little concrete information about Noah, the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* is given by the Bāb or BA* though motifs deriving from his story are frequent in many primary texts. Much utilized is the Islamicate motif of the "Ark" of salvation providing refuge from the "flood" or "storms" of ungodliness.[1] Important rewritten exegetical accounts of the story of Noah are found in the QA of the Bāb and in BA*'s *S. Nuṣḥ* (' Sūra of the Counsel', 244-6). Early on the Bāb understood the "Ark" to be the salvific "Ark of the messianic Dhikr" *(safīnat al-dhikr),* the refuge of the eschatological *ahl al-bayt,* the truly believing "people of the House" (of Shī`ism as proto-Bābism, QA 82:333). In the QA and elsewhere the Bāb also used the motif of "the crimson-coloured and ruby arks" (*sufun$^{an}$ min yāqūta al-raṭba al-ḥamrā',* QA 57:226) assigned to the "people of bahā'" whom BA* subsequently identified as his followers, the Bahā'īs (lit. `characterized with radiance'). BA* also frequently and in a number of different ways glossed

[1] BA*, KI:5f/7-8; S. Aḥsāb AQA 4:XX; K. Badī`, 214 (mss.); cf. Buck,1999:114f.

the term "Ark" as, for example, the "Ark of the Spirit" *(safīnat al-rūḥ)* in his *L. Bahā'* where he also speaks of the "Ark" motif as being his eternal religion:

> Say: O people! Embark on the Ark of Eternity *(safīnat al-baqā')* which traverseth the crimson sea.." (L. Bahā', 72 ; cf. L.Ruh, L.Tuqa)

In 1949 SE*'s secretary explained that for Bahā'īs the story of Noah's "Ark" and the "Flood" are "both symbolical" (LG: 509 No. 1716).

For Shī`īs the issue of the length of Noah's lifetime went beyond scriptural norms (<-- over 950 years). This in part in connection with their desire to justify going to extreme lengths for the *ghayba* (occultation) of the hidden, messianic Qā'im. Several symbolic Bahā'ī interpretations of Noah's longevity also exist especially in view of BA*'s mentioning the figure 950 years in his *K. īqān* (KI:6/7–> 4.2).

■ **Three pre-Islamic Arabian prophets** [1]

05. **Hūd** هُود R (= Heber ? Heb.עֵבֶר, **ḥeber**), possibly (Ar.) `Ābar the Kenite descendant of Hobab and father-in-law of Moses (?Judg. 4:11). Q title sūra 11 and x 7 in 3 sūras. Alternatively, a purely allegorical ancestor of the Jews (? cf. EI$^2$ Wensinck [Pellat] art.` Hūd'). Seven times mentioned in 3 sūras of the Q. Hūd is also the title of sūra 11. In the Q. Hūd is a messenger sent to his people `Ād whose story is related three times in three sūras (Q.7:63-70;11:50-60; 26:123-40). His monotheistic message was ridiculed by the `Ādites (of *al-aḥqāf,* "the sand dunes"; Q.46:21). In consequence they were largely destroyed by the violent *ṣarṣar* ("clamorous [raging] wind"). Hūd finds succinct *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (-->2.4) rooted mention in select Bābī-Bahā'ī sources. In his *S-Nuṣḥ* (c. 1861?) BA* refers to him as a *nabī* (prophet) sent to both orient and occident (S-Nuṣḥ, 246; cf. KI:7-8 /6-7).

06. **Ṣāliḥ,** صَالِح R+N is mentioned x 9 in 6 sūras of the Q. He was a (pre-Abrahamic?) prophet sent to the tribe of Thamūd (Q. 7:73-9, etc). He came with the "sign", "proof" or "test" of the *nāqa* (`[she-] camel') but was rejected. His mocking audience were all destroyed by a storm or earthquake. BA* explained (the tribe of) "Thamud" allegorically as opponents of truth in any

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[1] Islamic traditions reckon Hūd (-->05), Ṣāliḥ (-->06), Shu`ayb (-->07), Ibrāhīm (-->08) and Muhammad (-->028), five Arabian prophets (-->).

age (BA* *T-Shams,* 15-16; cf. *S-Nuṣḥ,* 246; KI 7-8/7). He quite frequently utilized the motif of the "she-camel" (L-Dhi`b/ESW, index) On one occasion AB* explained that the *nāqa* indicates Ṣālīḥ's "sanctified self" *(nafs-i muqaddas).* Being "hamstrung" indicated an event within Ṣālīḥ precipitated by his enemies which prevented him from proffering the "milk" of spiritual beatitude to his people (AB* Ma'idih 2:99).

07. **Shu`ayb,** شُعَيْب R+N, perhaps [the uncle of?] **Jethro,** the father-in-law of Moses (Exod. 3:1; 4:18; 18:1ff]? Q x11 in 3 Sūrahs). A messenger-prophet sent with *risālāt* ("messages") to the people of Madyan (Midian, NW Arabia? cf. Q. 20:40; 28:22f) or the *aṣḥāb al-ayka* ("people of the thicket"; Q. 7:83-91,etc).[1] A qur'ānic *rasūl* though not a Bābī-Bahā'ī *maẓhar-i ilāhī,* Shu`ayb is infrequently mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources (BA* KI:7-8 /7).

■ **Abrahamic patriarchs and associated figures**

08. **Ibrāhīm,** إِبْرَاهِيم N+M* (= Heb. אַבְרָהָם,`abrāhām) **Abraham** (fl.19th cent. BCE?). Frequently mentioned in the Q. (Q14 [title] x 69 in 245 verses within 25 sūras) Abraham in the Q. is a son of Āzar (Q. 6:74 cf. the Eliezer of Gen. 15:2f and Gen.11:26 where the father is Teraḥ). He is the *khalīl-Allāh* (`the friend of God', Q.4:125; 6:125) and scriptural father of monotheism. For Muslims Abraham became a proto-Muslim proponent of primordial Islām, the *millat Ibrāhīm (*"religion of Abraham", Q. 2:130 etc.). Neither genealogically a Jew nor a Christian (Q. 3:67) Abraham is several times accorded the epithet *ḥanīf*, loosely, `pure monotheist' (cf. Syr. *ḥanpo* pl. *ḥanpe*, Q. 2:135; etc). According to Q. 29:27 God established *nubuwwa* (`prophethood') and *al-kitāb* (`The Book', `Scripture') "among his progeny" (--> 09 &10).

In Bābī-Bahā'ī sources Abraham is a centrally important *maẓhar-i ilāhī.* (BA* S-Nuṣḥ, 246-7; KI:8/7-8). Several legendary episodes within Abraham's life are given a spiritual interpretation, including his being cast into the "fire" *(al-nār)* which became "light" *(al-nūr)* and his unfulfilled sacrifice of [Isaac] Ishmael (BA* S.Nuṣḥ, 247-8, etc.). For AB* his exiles prefigured those of BA* (AB*, SAQ:IV).

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[1] In his EI[2] article` Shu`ayb', (IX:491+see refs. and bib.) Rippin notes that it was on the basis of Q. 9:91 that he was "understood to have come after Ḥūd, Ṣālīḥ and Lot (Lūṭ)."

09. Isḥāq, إِسْحَاق N (= Heb. יִצְחָק, Yiṣḥāq), Isaac (Q. x17 in 12 sūras) according to Gen. 22:1f the son of Abraham. In the biblical tradition he was the one bound for sacrifice (*akedat Yiṣḥāq,* cf. Gen 22:9). Though this is not explicit in the Q. some early Persian and other Muslim sources supported his status as *dhabīḥ* (`the one [well-nigh] sacrificed').[1] Isaac is rarely mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources. BA* and AB* have commented upon the meaning and discrepancy between the biblical (Isaac) and qur'ānic exegetical (Ishmā'īl) references to different sons of Abraham involved in the near sacrifice (Māzandarānī, AK 3:196-201). They held that both narratives enshrine the same "spiritual" truth.

10. Ismā`īl, إِسْمَاعِيل R+N (= Heb. יִשְׁמָעֵאל, Yishmā``ē'l,), Ishmael (Qx12 in 8 sūras) the biblical eldest son of Abraham and Hagar (Gen. 16:11ff) said in the Q. to have received divine revelations (Q. 2:136; 4:163). In the Q. he (or a second Ismā'īl –>) is explicitly named a prophet-Messenger (*rasūl* [an] *nabīyy* [an], Q.19:54b) though little concrete information is given about him. He most probably was the one who (it is implied) among other things assisted his father in establishing the Meccan Ka`bah as the centre of pilgrimage (Q. 2:125f) (Paret, `Ismā'īl' EI[2] IV:184-185+bib., Firestone, 1988;1990). Some Muslims hold that he was the *ghulām al-ḥalīm* ("the wise youth") whom Abraham prepared as the *dhabīḥ* (`one [well-nigh] sacrificed', Q. 37:101-7). Abraham's intended sacrifice of Ishmael is occasionally mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources where he is a paragon of detached, personal sacrifice (BA*Tablet to Riḍā' GWB:XXXII). Following the post qur'ānic story BA* likened the actual death of his son Mīrzā Mihdī (d. 23nd June 1870) in Acre, to Abraham's intended sacrifice of Ishmael (ibid). As in various Islamic (Shī`ī) and Shaykhī texts, Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources mention two Ishmaels, one the son of Abraham and the other the *rasūl* and *nabī* mentioned in Q. 19:54-5 as interpreted by Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq and others (Biḥār[2]13:388-91; AB* & SE* unpublished). This second Ismā'īl is sometimes identified as the Israelite prophet, Ismā'īl son of Hizkīl (son of Ezekiel; Shaykh Aḥmad, JK 1/1:101).

[1] Linked (among others) with Jacob and his half-brother Ishmael (Q. 9:71; 19:39; cf.10 below) most of the qur'anic references to him occur in miscellaneous lists of prophets and associated figures. (Alexander, DBI:44-7+ bib.; Montgomery Watt `Isḥaq' EI[2] IV:109-110; Naudé, 1971).

11. Lūṭ, لُوط R+N (= Heb. לוט, Lôt) **Lot** , the biblical son of Haran and nephew of Abraham (Gen 11:27f;13:5-13,7f) In the Q. Lot is an envoy-prophet mentioned 27 times in 14 sūras. He is said to have survived the catastrophic, meteor-like stoning (with *sījill)* of "upturned" *(mu'takifa)* ,'vice-ridden' cities such as (the unnamed) Sodom. Lot is seldom mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources though aspects of his biblical-qur'ānic story are non-literally interpreted. In a letter dating to 1938, for example, SE* defended the integrity of Lot relative to the incestuous episode narrated in Gen.19:29-38 (SE* Dawn:201).

12. Ayyūb, أَيُّوب N (= Heb. אִיּוֹב, 'āyôb) **Job** is a non-Hebrew, universal legendary hero known from the biblical book of named after him and various post-biblical sources including the Qumran texts. In the biblical book Job is pictured as an inhabitant of Ur (= Edom?). He is four times mentioned in 3 sūras of the Q., twice in lists (Q. 4:163; 6:84). Twice mentioned in fragmentary allusions to his story (Q. 21:83-4; 38:41) this Islamic legendry hero is sometimes considered a descendant of Abraham through Isaac (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* I:194).

Job and his (unnamed) wife are greatly celebrated in the opening pages of the twenty-five page Arabic epistle of BA* variously entitled the *L. Ayyūb* (Tablet of Job) and *Sūrat al-ṣabr* (Surah of Patience, March 1863; Ar. text, AyyamT: 282-313). Therein are registered Islamicate forms of originally Jewish-Hellenistic Job materials such as are found, for example, in the *Testament of Job* (1st. cent. BCE/CE?; Kohler, 1897; OTP 1:829-868). Job, though not the biblical book, also figures in a few other *alwāḥ* of BA* (e.g. L.Sarrāj, MA 7:65). AB* occasionally interpreted verses of the biblical book of Job (SWAB: 171-2 on Job 19:25-27) and gave Q. 38:41 an allegorical interpretation. The "spring" *(mughtasal)* in this latter verse is interpreted as the "spring of divine prophethood" *(chashmih-yi nubuwwat-i ilāhī).* On entering it Job was cured of both spiritual infirmities *(amraḍ-i rūḥanī)* and physical strictures *(taqayyād-i nafsānī)* (Ganj, 58-9).

■ **Israelite patriarchs, prophets and other miscellaneous figures**

13. Ya`qūb, يَعْقُوب N (= Heb. יַעֲקֹוב, ya`āqôb,), **Jacob** also know as (Heb) יִשְׂרָאֵל, yisrael, (Ar.) إِسْرَائِيل, Isrā'īl (= Israel, cf. Q. 3:87, etc), the son or brother of the biblical Isaac (Q. 37:113;

6:84). Jacob may have flourished in the mid. 2nd millen. BCE. He is reckoned a a *nabī* and is 16 times mentioned in 10 sūras of the Q. The father of the (twelve) tribes (Q. 2:126f) including that stemming from his beloved son Joseph. It was over separation from this "son of his old age" (Gen. 37:3b) that he was blinded with grief until Joseph's "coat" *(qamiṣ)* was cast upon his head thereby restoring his sight (Q.12:93-4). In Shī`ī tradition the sacred *qamīṣ* ("garment") was *thawb min thiyāb al-janna,* ("one of the robes of Paradise") with which God through Gabriel clothed Abraham. It was handed down to Jacob who bestowed this scented *(rīḥa)* garment (Q. 12:94b) upon Joseph (Biḥār[2] 12:249).

Jacob-Israel is infrequently mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources save relative to his being the father of Joseph. In his *K. Asmā'* the Bāb interpreted messianically the qur'ānic episode of Jacob's sight being restored through the healing scent of the garment of Joseph. The motif of Joseph's sight bestowing, life-giving, resurrecting *qamīṣ* is important in both Bābī and Bahā'ī writings. In his *K. Asmā'*, for example, the Bāb, commenting upon the Name of God *al-Bashīr* ("the Herald of Good Tidings", Q. 12:93) refers to a garment of the "Joseph of Bahā' ". In a passage inspired by Q. 12:93 he writes,[1]

> Hearken! Then take ye firm hold of the garment of the Joseph of Bahā' *(qamīṣ yūsuf al-bahā')* from the hand of His Exalted, Transcendent herald of Glad-Tidings *(mubashshirihi al-`aliyy al-a`lā).* And place it upon thy head in order that thou might be endowed with insight (*li-tartadda baṣīr* ^{an}*)* and discover thyself truly aware *(khabīr* ^{an} *)* (text cited QI 4:1875).

The Bahā'ī apologist Ishrāq Khavarī understood this passage relative to BA*'s being the Bābī messiah figure *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* (Ishrāq Khāvarī, QI 4:1870ff).

On theophanological lines is the exegesis of *qamīṣ* ("garment") presupposed in the *Sūrat al-qamīṣ* (The Sūrah of the Robe, c. 1865) of BA*. This 25 page Arabic work which opens by identifying the supernatural "Garment" as a reality evident as the *haykal*

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[1] Note the use of the exclamation "Good news!" *(yā bushrā)* in Qur'ān 12:19b followed by the words "Here is a youth *(ghulām)*!" (Q.12:18, 25ff) and the use of the word *bashīr* ("bearer/herald of good tidings") in Q.12:93 which recounts the episode of Joseph's garment being placed on the head or face of the patriarch Jacob/Israel (= "But when the bashīr ["bearer of good tidings" came to him, and laid it on his [Jacob's] face *[wajhihi],* forthwith he saw once again"). It is this qur'ānic verse which lies behind the Bāb's words translated above and the following passage from BA*'s *S-Qamīṣ.*

(Temple) of the Person of BA* "betwixt all the worlds!" (S-Qamīṣ, AQA 4:41). In the course of this S. Qamīṣ BA* is addressed by a supernatural voice as the *yūsuf al-kibriyā'* ("Jospeh of the Divine Grandeur") in *Abhā'* (All-Beauteous) garments *(qumuṣ al-abhā')* bidding him ,

> ... deprive not the ears from the melodies of Thy holiness *(naghamāt qudsika)* nor the eyes *(al-abṣār)* from smearing with the *kohl* (eye makeup) of the gnosis of thy Beauty *(`an kuḥl al-`irfān jamālika)* nor the suns *(al-shumūs)* from the flashes of the Lights of Thy Grace *(bawāriq anwār faḍlika)...*

Commenting on Q.3:93a in his *L. Kull al-ṭa`ām* (Tablet of All Food, c. 1854), in a completely different context, BA* gives "Isrā'īl" (Israel) and the "children of Israel" a mystical interpretation relative to the religion of the Bāb at the same time censoring the antinomian proclivities of early Bābī factions:

> Then know that the significance of "food" *(ṭa`ām)* is [the one who is] the Locus of Knowledge *(nafs al-`ilm),* that is, all branches of learning *(kull al-`ulūm).* "Israel" signifies the *nuqṭat al-ulyā* (Primordal Point = the Bāb) and the *banī Isrā'īl* ("children of Israel") he whom God, on His part, made a [messianic] Proof *(ḥujjat)* unto the people in these days [= BA*?]. "Except what Israel made unlawful for itself [or himself]" (Q.) indicates that which the Primal Point [= the Bāb] made unlawful for His elevated ones and His servants (BA*, Ma'idih 4:371).

As far as I am aware this understanding of "Israel" (= the Bāb) is not taken up in Bābī or Bahā'ī literatures though, as will be noted below, it has something of a Shī`ī-Shaykhī hermeneutical precedent (–> 5.1; Aḥsā'ī, *Sh-Ziyāra*, III:278). .

14. Yūsuf يُوسُف M [=R]+N+M* (= Heb. יוֹסֵף/יְהוֹסֵף ,Yôsêp), **Joseph** after whom Sūrah 12 is named, is mentioned 27 times in the Q., twice outside Q. 12 (Q. 6:84 and 40:34). He is the biblical eleventh son of Jacob (= Israel) and Rachel. Though according to the Q. He came with "clear proofs" (Q.6:85b; 40:34b) he was doubted as a prophet. In Islam Joseph is an important messenger-prophet of God. His story is the longest continuous prophetological narrative in the Q. (111 verses) mirroring the extended biblical narrative (Gen 37-50). The *Sūrat Yūsuf* (Q.12) is reckoned the *aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ,* the "most beauteous of narratives" (Q.12:3). It contains dimensions of the extended biblical story (Gen. 37-50) with supplementary haggadic-rooted and other unique features. In Islamic tradition Joseph is reckoned a paragon of handsome

beauty *(ḥusn / jamāl)* and one eminently righteous *(al-ṣiddiq).* [1]

Joseph is figure of great importance in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources. He is mentioned numerous times in a great many texts. The first major work of the Bāb, his *Tafsīr Sūra Yūsuf* (Commentary upon the Surah of Joseph) or *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (lit.`The Self-Subsisting of the Divine Names') is an Arabic neo-qur'ānic, messianic, esoteric and quasi-qabbalistic expanded rewrite of select qur'ānic *pericopae.* For the Bāb Joseph was a key proto-Shī`ī type of the occulted, messianic Qā'im as well as one who prefigured the martyred and expected to "return" Imam Ḥusayn (d. 61/680). As in Shī`ī messianism Ḥusayn's eschatological role is anticipated in the QA , *K. Asmā'* and other writings of the Bāb.

The Qā'im / Ḥusayn-Joseph typology is central to Bābī-Bahā'ī sacred writings. The eschatological Qā'im and Ḥusayn are pictured as "hidden" and "secreted" in a messianic *ghayba* (occultation) just as Joseph was "hidden" in the "pit" of his eschatological theophany by his jealous "brothers" who at times represent the 12 letters of the *kalimat al-tawḥīd,* ("Word of the Divine Unity"), the *shāhada* as the cryptic expression of Shī`ī orthodoxy.

A qur'ānic *nabī* (prophet) Joseph in developed Bahā'ī doctrine was elevated to the position of *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (M*). SE* expressed this as follows, "Joseph was one the the `Sent Ones' [= *mursal*] of the Qur'an, meaning a Manifestation of God [*rasūl* = *maẓhar-i ilāhī*]" (LG:497). The allegorical-typological Bahā'ī identification of Joseph with BA* contributed markedly to his being elevated from Islamic "prophet" to an exalted, pre-existent Bābī-Bahā'ī *maẓhar- i ilāhī* (Divine manifestation, theophany). For Baha'īs the all-eternal, paradigmatic *husn, jamāl* ("beauty", cf. the messianic 3rd Imam Ḥusayn) of the biblical- qur'ānic Joseph, became the *bahā' / abha*, the radiant and glorious "Beauty" of the person of BA* in his role as the incarnation of the powerful *al-ism al-a`ẓam,* the Mightiest Name of God.

BA* frequently claimed to be the new, true, supremely beauteous *(abhā)* Joseph. Bahā'ī exegesis has it that the story of Joseph as interpreted by the Bāb parallels and anticipates the person and fate of BA*. This especially in terms of his Ottoman imprisonment and 1866-7 rejection by his half-brother, Mīrẓa Yaḥya Nūrī . SE* wrote that the Jospeh story "forecast what the true Joseph [BA*] would, in a succeeding [Bahā'ī]. Dispensation, endure at the hands of one who was at once His arch-enemy and blood brother" (GPB:23+index).

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[1] See Coats, `Joseph..', ABD 3:976ff; Dijkstra, `Joseph..' DDD:895-8; Enc.Jud. X:202-217; Heller, `Yūsuf b. Ya`kūb', EI VIII:1178-9+bib.; MacDonald, MW 46 (1956), 113ff+207ff; etc.

15. **Mūsā** مُوسَىٰ R+N+M* (= Heb. מֹשֶׁה, **mōšeh**), **Moses**(13th cent. BCE?) in the Bible is the son of the Levites Amram and Yochebed (Exod. 2:1ff). The central lawgiver and prophet figure in biblical Judaism, Moses is also a key prophet-messenger of the Q. A major prototype and annunciator of Muhammad (Q.7:156) Moses is mentioned in the Q more frequently than any other prophet figure (Q. x 137 in 502 verses within 36 sūras).

Many of the biblical episodes associated with Moses have qur'ānic counterparts; examples are the Sinaitic call, theophany (Q.7:142-3) and revelation of the Torah *(tawrāt)*; Pharoah and the exodus and various miracles associated therewith (Q.20:12; 7:143f; etc). As in the Q. Moses the exalted divine manifestation is very frequently mentioned in Shaykhī and in Bābī-Bahā'ī literatures. The interpretation of the theophany on Sinai was foundational for the self-understanding and claims of the Bāb and BA*. This especially as it is mentioned in the semi-ghuluww (extremist), Shī`ī *khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* (loosely, `"Sermon of the Gulf") ascribed to Imam `Alī (Lambden, 1986:84-5).

16. **Hārūn,** هَارُون R+N (= Heb. אַהֲרֹן, **`aḥārōn**) **Aaron** fl. 3th cent. BCE?) is the biblical elder brother of Moses (Exod. 2:1f) and an Israelite priest of the tribe of Levi. In the Q. he is 20 times mentioned in 13 sūras. He is is the *wazīr* of Moses (Q. 20:30; 35:17) with whom he is almost always mentioned. Aaron is again very seldom mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources save in association with Moses.

17. **Dāwūd,** دَاوُود N [+M*?] (= Heb. דָּוִד, **dāwîd**) **David** (fl. 11th -10 cent. BCE/ c. 1037?-c.961(7) BCE?) the biblical youngest son of Jesse (I Sam. 16:1, etc.). He is a nabī mentioned six times in 9 sūras of the Q. The Q. twice states that God revealed the *zabūr* (Book, Psalter) to David (Q 4:163;17: 55). God is is said to have taught him *`ilm* (knowledge) and *ḥikma* (`wisdom' Q. 21:78f) as well as how to make armour and soften iron (Q. 21:80; 34:10). David in the Q. is considered God's just *khalīfa* on earth (Q. 38:35–38 cf. 2Sam 11-12 cf. Q. 21:78). His victory over *Jālūt* (Goliath) is specifically mentioned (Q. 2:251) as are a few other episodes in his unusual and ultimately pious life. Abrahamic religious traditions picture David as a type of both the eschatological messiah and his enemy the anti-messiah or Dajjāl (Syr. Deceiver). He is a figure of great importance both for the Bāb and BA* as, among other things, the revealer of the Zabūr (Psalter). In this respect he has a sweet singing voice. Just after the

divine his claim "I am *al-bahā'* (the glory/Beauty), the Bāb , addressing the "Concourse of Lights" *(malā' al-anwār)* in QA 108 claims, "This is the Bird *(al-ṭayr)* which singeth in the firmament of heaven with the elevated accent of David *(`alā laḥn al-dāwūd)"* (108:433). This same prophetological motif is utilized by BA* in the eighth couplet of his early proclaimatory *Halih, Halih, halih, yā Bishārat* (Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, O Glad-Tidings! c. 1862 CE):

> This sweet Davidic voice *(naghmih-yi dāwūdī)* came from the Divine Lote-Tree *(sidrih-yi lāhūtī),* with the messianic Spirit *(rūḥ-I masīḥhā)* ... (BA* Ganj, 34).

Though the troubled, apparently far from *`iṣmat* personal life of David spelled out in the Bible would seem to ill-befit his occupying an elevated position, the Islamic David is often represented as an extra pious penitent, a major prophet whose shortcomings were forgiven by God. Though not now regarded by Bahā'is as a *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (Manifestation of God) David is given high rank by BA*. In his *K. Īqān,* for example, he refers to David son of Jesse as being among the "greatest of prophets" *(anbiyā' yi a`ẓam ;* BA*, KI:39/51). Most probably as a result of Shī`ī Irfānī or Ahl-i Ḥaqq influence, the prophetology of the Bāb recognizes a David prior to David the son of Jesse (B* Ar. Dal. Per. Dal., TBA. Ms. 6007C: [189-197], 195; K.Panj.S 424ff; cf. Nuq. Kāf, 27; Muḥadarāt, 1:371f). This second pre-Mosaic David is most probably the Dāwūd exalted by the Ahl-i Ḥaqq faction known as the Dawūdīs ("Davidites") whom the Bāb encountered in Ādhirbayjān and elsewhere (Fr. Anastase the Carmelite, *al-Dāwūda aw al-Dāwūdiyyūn* in al-Mashriq VI [1903], 60-67).

18. **Sulaymān,** سُلَيْمَانَ N (= Heb. שְׁלֹמֹה, **šēlōmōh**) **Solomon** (fl. 10 cent. c. 961-922 BCE?)

was the son and successor of David (and Bath-Sheba, 2 Sam 12:24f; cf. Q.27:1b,16) as the Israelite king. In the Q. he is a *nabī* mentioned 17 times in 7 sūras. He is a faithful servant of God (Q.38:29) and another important antitype of Muhammad. Solomon is credited with esoteric knowledge including the speech of animals and birds (Q. 27:16,19) as well as great powers of magic and divination. In Islamic and other magical sources he is reckoned to have been privy to the secret of the *ism al-a`ẓam,* (mightiest Name of God). Rooted in the biblical text and Jewish traditions, the tale of Solomon and the variously named Bilqīs, the Queen of Sheba, is recounted in Q. 27 : [16] 20-45).

Like David, Solomon son of David is greatly revered in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources. The Bāb knew of Solomon as a paragon of knowledge and one universally accepted (K.Panj.S:28). In

his chronologically Islamo-biblical *L.-Ḥikmat* (Tablet of Wisdom) BA*, like Shaykh Aḥmad and others (JK 1/2:96) refers to Pythagoras (6th cent. BCE?) as a contemporary of Solomon (c. 986-930) and one who "acquired Wisdom *(al-ḥikma)* from the treasury of prophethood (*ma`dan al-nubuwwa),*

> Empedocles [c.493-433], who distinguished himself in philosophy *(al-ḥikmat),* was a contemporary of David (Ar. *fī zamān dāwūd)* (c.1037-967 BCE), while Pythagoras [6th cent. BCE?] lived in the days *(fī zamān)* of Solomon [c. 986-930 BCE], son of David, and acquired *al-ḥikma* ("wisdom) from the treasury of prophethood [= Solomon?]*(ma`dan al-nubuwwa).* (TB 45/ tr.145)

Bahā'ī attempts to resolve the chronological disparities in the above passage originate with AB* and SE*.[1] In his analysis of this data Cole has argued that the chronology of the *L.ḥikmat* is indebted to Sunnī historical works, most notably the *al-Milal wa'l-niḥal* of al-Shahrastānī and the *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar* of Abū al-Fidā' (d.1331) which might (directly or indirectly) have been available to BA* himself (Cole, WO 1979:30). This may indeed have been the case though the Acre located library of the al-Jazzār Mosque. It may be though that other Ishrāqī, Shī`ī `school of Isfahan' or Shaykhī sources lie behind this chronology.

The notice regarding the somewhat enigmatic Mūriṣtus [Mūriṭūs?] (= "Martos" [sic.] in Holley, ed. *Scriptures*:198 [333]) in the same section of the *L.-Ḥikma* of BA* (41/150) may, as Cole also asserts, be (indirectly) derived from al-Qifṭī's (d. 1248) *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'* (ed. 322, through `Abū al-Fiḍā'?). It was Mūriṣtus (spellings vary, pointing uncertain) who, as detailed in his (?) *Ṣan`at al-urghin al-būqī* ("On the construction of the flue-pipe organ"), invented a hydraulic organ which could produce very loud, terrifying sounds and be effectively utilized in warfare. Its inventor is mentioned in numerous sources including, for example, the early *(Muntakhab) Ṣiwān al-ḥikma* (ed. Dunlop, 82) of Abū Sulayman al-Sijistānī (4th/10th cent.) and the much later Persian *Nāsikh al-tāwarīkh* (vol. II:15) of Sepher (–>4.1).[2]

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[1] AB* in a letter to the British Bahā'ī Ethel Rosenberg held that histories prior to Alexander the Great (d. 323 BCE) were "very confused", adding that statements in the *L.Ḥikma* were in accordance with eastern historical records (AB* Mā'idih 2:65-7). SE*, on the other hand, indicated that Bahā'īs need not take too literally the reference to the contemporaraneousness of Pythagoras and Solomon since the meaning of *fī zamān* (lit. "in the time") may be "far more elastic" than the English word "contemporary" implies (Letter written on behalf of SE* dated 15 February 1947).

[2] See further, Ibn Nadīm [Dodge], Fihrist II:643; Cheiko, *Thālath maqālāt `Arabiyya...* in al-Mashrīq IX (1906), 18ff (21-28); Carra De Vaux, `Le Invention de L-Hydraulis' REG 21 (1908), 326-340; Farmer, 1931:16ff, `Muriṭus' EI[2] VII:610-11; Rosenthal, 1975 [92]:235-8); Shiloah, 1979: 286-7 (nos. 200-201).

19. **Ilyās,** إِلْيَاس ، M [=R?]+N (= Heb. אֵלִיָּהוּ,`ēlīyāh, Gk. Elias), **Elijah** (fl. mid. 9th cent. BCE.,1 Kings 17ff; 2 Kings 1-2) is three times mentioned in two surahs of the Q. He is referred to as a sent messenger and a prophet. Ilyās is reckoned "among the righteous" (Q.6:85) having been a staunch opponent of the cult of Baal (Q. 37:123ff). He is not mentioned very frequently in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources though the biblical story of the confrontation between Elijah and the priests of Baal was demythologized by AB*. The "altar of sacrifice" represents the human heart, the "heavenly fire" divine love and the "bullocks" sacrificed carnal desires entirely consumed by the fire of divine love (StarW VII:27). The biblical Elijah is regarded by Bahā'īs as one whose spiritual "return" has taken place twice: first as "John the Baptist" as the NT indicates (--> 26) and again as the person of the Bāb (SE* GPB:58; Citadel, 95). BA* and AB* are both said to have reverentially visited the traditional site of the Cave of Elijah on Mt. Carmel.

20. **Alyasa`** الْيَسَع (N; = ? Heb. אֱלִישָׁע, `ĕlīšâ`) **Elisha,** most likely the biblical prophet Elisha son of Shaphat (? 9th cent. BCE), the (Heb.) *`īsh `ēlōhîm* ("man of God") commissioned by Elijah (no.19) whom he succeeded (1 Kings 19:16f; 2 Kings 2f). In the Q. Alyasa` is only mentioned in two lists of prophet figures, "Ishmael, Alyasa` [Elisha], Jonah and Lot / Dhu'l-Kifl" (Q. 6:86; 38:48). He is only very rarely mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī sacred writings (cf. AB* in PP:12).

21. **Dhū'l-Kifl** ذُو الْكِفْل (trad. N?), `The twice recompensed' (Q.x 2 = 21:85; 38:48) is an unknown figure, thought by al-Ṭabarī to be a pious *nabī* (prophet) named Bishr (or Bashīr), allegedly a son of Job (*Tārīkh,* 1:195,).[1] Other Islamic sources variously, for example, reckon that he was Joshua, Ezekiel, Elijah, a cousin of Elisha or Zacharias (Tha`labī, *`Arā'is,* 144-5, 231-2; Kisā'ī, *Qiṣaṣ,* trans. Thackston, 204, 351 n. 97; 399-400). He remains an obscure figure and is very rarely named in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources (Tārīkh,1:195).[2]

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[1] Cf. Walker, (MW 16 [1926]:399-400) where it is argued on the basis of Job 42:10 that this title indicates Job himself who received "twice as much as he had before".

[2] Cf. Walker, (MW 16 [1926]:399-400) where it is argued on the basis of Job 42:10 that this title indicates Job himself who received "twice as much as he had before".

22. Yūnus , يُونُس M [=R]+N (= Heb .יוֹנָה, yônāh) **Jonah** who may be the (mythical?) son of Amittai [Mattai] (8th cent. BCE?; II Kings 14:25). One biblical book and one qur'ānic sūra bear the name of Jonah (Q.10). In the Q. Jonah appears as a sent messenger and a prophet and is 4 [+2] times mentioned in 4 [+2] sūras. He seems once designated *dhu'l-nūn* ("Lord of the fish", Q. 21:87) and once *ṣāḥib al-ḥūt* ("Man of the Fish", Q. 68:48).[1] Having been swallowed but cast out of a large fish *(al-ḥawt)* he was called by God to prophesy against a people (100, 000 or so Assyrians of Ninevah) whom he induced to faith (Q. 37:139ff).

The story of Jonah is frequently interpreted allegorically in esoteric *(irfānī)* Shī`ī-Shaykhī sources and occasionally in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary texts. In his commentary upon the *basmala* and letter "n" (ں *nūn)* prefixed to Sūra 68, BA* explained that among the innumerable significances of "n" is "fish" *(al-ḥūt)* a sense it also has according to the Hebrew of the *jafr* alphabet of Ibn Sīnā (Massignon 1997:70). Figurative understanding of the story of Jonah and the fish is reckoned to indicate Muhammad as one "drowned in the ocean of ecstatic revelation *(baḥr al-mukāshifat)* and mystical insight" (INBMC 56:38-9). AB* gave allegorical explanations to the story Jonah and Dhū'l-Nūn. In one text he states the "fish" *(ḥūt)* represents the human propensity to materiality, the danger of being engulfed in the dark "ocean" of contingent existence (Mā'idih 5:21).

23. `Uzair , عُزَيْر N (=? Heb. עֶזְרָא, `ezrā'), **Ezra, (N)** the biblical sage and scribal priest of the Archaemenian monarch Artaxerxes I (fl. late 5th cent. BCE? early 2nd Temple Period). He led some exiled Jews from Babylon back to Jerusalem and is believed to have been the post-exilic restorer of the Mosaic Law (Ezra; 4 Ezra). Ezra is only mentioned in Q. 9:30 (cf. Q. 2:259) which probably records the opinion of Medinan Jews that he was the *ibn Allāh* (Son of God; so Ayoub, 1986). The issue of Ezra's "sonship" is several times mentioned and contested by the Bāb. BA* and AB* rarely refer to Ezra save in connection with his role as restorer of the text of the Torah.

24. **Luqmān,** لُقْمَان (N) an unknown figure (Q. 31 [title]; 31:12-13 [x2]) though traditionally a son of Ād, a wise and pious sage and one *al-mu`ammar,* ("one long-lived"), a venerable Aesop-like

[1] Both a name of a book of the Hebrew Bible (one of the `minor prophets') and a sūra of the Qur'ān (Q.11) are after this legendary (?) figure (cf. II Kings 14:26 + New Testament refs.).

teller of fables. Associated with the Islamic wisdom tradition, he occasionally figures in this role in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources. In the *Valley of ḥayra* ("Wonderment ") of his mystical *Haft Vadī* (Seven Valleys, 1858 CE), BA* cites a saying of Luqman whom he says had "drunk from the wellspring of *ḥikmat* and tasted of the waters of mercy" (SV: 34-35). As far as I am aware this is the only substantial reference to Luqman in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources.

25. Dhū'l-Qarnayn, ذُو الْقَرْنَيْن ([trad.] N?), `Possessed of two horns' is three times mentioned in the sūra of the Cave (18:82-98 only). Though this is not at all certain, various Syriac and many post-qur'ānic Islamic sources apply this epithet to Alexander the Great (III of Macedon, 356 -323 BCE). Islamic sources make many identifications of Dhu'l-Qarnayn including for example, *al-Khiḍr* (the `Verdent') and (in certain Shī`ī sources) `Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d.40 /661) (Majlisī, *Biḥar*$^2$ 12:172ff; Mittwoch, SEI:76). AB* repeats this latter identification with `Alī but finds *ramzī,* a cipher or esoteric sense in every aspect of his scriptural story which he classifies as existing in verses *mutashābihāt* ("needing interpretation"; Tablet to Jināb-I Nushābādī in Ma'idih 2:42-3).

According to Q.18:94 Dhu'l-Qarnayn built a barrier to protect the people from the (ultimately eschatological) ravages of Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (`Gog and Magog',cf. Q. 21:96, Ezek.38-39; Rev.20:8). Both the Bāb and BA* interpreted the qur'ānic story Dhū'l-Qarnayn and mystically applied this epiphet to themselves. In QA 76 the Bāb exegetically rewrites, in *waḥy,* (revelation mode) parts of the story of Dhu'l-Qarnayn (Q. 18:83ff). As the eschatological Imam `Alī, the Bāb in various ways identified himself with Dhū'l-Qarnayn. It was in this imamological persona that he made various abstruse dualistic pronouncements regarding his theological station. In dialogue with God he at one point in QA 76 writes,

> O Solace of the Eye[s]! The people shall ask thee about Dhī'l [Dhu'l]-Qarnayn.
> Say [then in reply]: `Yea! By my Lord!
> I am indeed the King of the two Originations *(malik al-bad'ayn)* in the two horns [eras, dominions?] *(al-qarnayn).*
> I am the elevated possessor of a Horn [Dhu'l Qarn] in the two bodies *(al-jismayn).*
> I am the Sinaitic Fire in the two cosmic Waters *(al-mā'ayn).*
> I am the cosmic Water *(al-ma')* in the two [Sinaitic] Fires *(al-nārayn).*
> So hearken unto my call from these two [Sinaitic] Mounts *(al-turayn). ..*

> We verily, established him [= Dhu'l-Qarnaun = the Bāb] in the land and We, in very truth, bestowed a letter [of the alphabet] from the name of the *Dhikr* upon this Arabian Youth *(al-ghulam al-`arabī* = the Bāb) such that

the ways and means to all ends became his.....

In his early Edirne *Lawḥ-i Sayyāḥ* ("Tablet to the Traveller" c.1864 CE?), BA* similarly seems to rewrite with reference to his theophany aspects of the story of Dhū'l-Qarnayn At one time BA* also identified "Gog and Magog" with his dual latter-day Bābī antagonists Mīrzā Yaḥyā Nūrī (his half-brother) and Sayyid Muhammad Isfāhānī, subsequently considered antichrists of the Bābī era (Ma'idih 4:99, cf.146).

■ **Jesus and Christian origins.**

00. **Zakariyyā,** زَكَرِيَّا , N , **Zechariah,** the father of John the Baptist (fl. 1st cent. BCE/CE., Lk 1, etc) is seven times mentioned in four sūras of the Q (3:37f; 6:85; 19:2f, 21:89). He had charge of Mary, the mother of Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple (Q. 3:37f). Despite his advanced age and the barrenness of his wife (Elizabeth) God granted him the (allegedly) uniquely named son Yaḥyā (Q.19:7b). In Islamic sources he is one of the ultra pious believed to have suffered cruel martyrdom. Occasionally mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources both the Bāb and BA* refer to traditions of his martyrdom.

26. **Yaḥyā,** يَحْيَى (N) = **John the Baptist** (> Syr. Yoḥannan?) executed by Herod Antipas c. 29-34 CE. He apparently renounced the priesthood, lived as an ascetic, announced the near advent of the kingdom of God and preached a baptism of repentance. Very few details are given in the Q. where he is five times mentioned in 4 sūras (Q. 3:39; 6:85; 19:7,12; 21:90). The angels make mention of his birth as *muṣaddaq*^{an} *bi-kalimati min Allāh* (one "confirming a Word [= Jesus] from God" Q.3:39). Given *ḥikma* (wisdom, judgement) as a child he was exhorted to "take firm hold of the Book (*kitāb* = the Torah) (Q. 3:46). Yaḥyā is called a *sayyid* (leader, authority) and his piety is celebrated, "and [We gave him Yaḥyā] *ḥannān* (compassion, tenderness) from Us and *zakat* (goodness, purity); making him *taqī* (pious, godfearing, devout) and kind to his parents, neither arrogant nor rebellious" (Q.19:13-14).

Though the Bāb rarely mentions Yaḥya, BA* quite frequently referred to him and cited the NT record of his words (e.g. IQ:95ff). This especially during the Edirne period (1863-8) when he was countering the emergent Azalī Bābism of his half-brother Mīrzā Yaḥyā Ṅūrī (c. 1841-1914). To this end BA* cited both the bible and Q. in his establishing his own claims. In his *K. Badī'* (c. 1868), for example, BA* specifically established a typology between himself

and Jesus and between the Bāb and John the Baptist:

> By God! The theopahny *(ẓuhūr)* of the Primal Point [of Reality = the Bāb] and this most wondrous, most splendid theophany [= BA*] is the exact correspondence of the theophany of Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyya (= John the Baptist) and the Spirit of God [= Jesus] (K. Badī`,114).[1]

Though the Q. refers to Yaḥyā (John the Baptist) as a *nabī* (prophet), BA* in his *K. Badī`* apparently elevates the status of Yahya to that of *a rasūl* and the herald of a *rasūl* (= Jesus). This in the light of the fact that both he (BA*) and the Bāb were *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (= *rasūl*):

> Yaḥya was a *nabī* (prophet) and a *rasūl* (envoy-messenger) from God and, moreover, a herald of the forcoming theophany *(ẓuhūr)* [of Jesus]. Wherefore did he say, "O people! I announce unto you the glad-tidings of the Kingdom of God and it has assuredly drawn nigh.. (K.Badī`,114).

Extending further this typological parallelism, BA* associates Yaḥya-John the Baptist with a new religious law *(shari`a)* and with the baptizing Sabaeans (=, Ṣābi'ūn, Q. 2:62; 5:69; 22 :17 = Mandaeans ?]), remnants of whom exist today in southern Iraq, Iran, the USA and other western locations (Drower, [1937] rep.1962; Gunduz, 1994). As Azalī Bābīs adhered to Bābī legalism and continued to await a future messianic theophany so, BA* states, did the followers of Yaḥya (John the Baptist= "Sabeans" = Mandaens) act similarly by continuing to await the appearance of a saviour (*K.Badī`*, 114ff; AA 4:233) .

00. **Maryam,** مَرْيَم (Heb. מִרְיָם, Miryam, Miriam), **Mary** the mother of Jesus (d. c.3? CE; Q.19 [title] and x 34 in 12 sūras) is the only woman called by her proper name in the Q. though often in the phrase *`Īsā b. Maryam* (Jesus son of Mary, Q. x 24). The qur'anic stories of the annunciation-conception and birth of Jesus to some degree reflect Christian apocryphal writings and select Gospel pericopae. The virgin birth is upheld (Q.19:21; 21:91; 56:22) as is the chastity of Mary who is once curiously referred to as the "sister of Aaron" (Q.3:37-8; 66:12;19:29). The Bāb BA* and AB* all salute the purity of the virgin Mary and affirm the "miracle" of the virgin birth. BA* referred to her in his *K.Īqān* as *an ṭal`at- i kubrā* ("that Supreme Countenance", SE* tr., "most beauteous countenance") and *mukhaddara-yi baqā'* (SE* tr., "that veiled and immortal Countenance") (KI: 43-4/ 36-7).

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[1]This typological parallelism is also spelled out in other *alwāḥ* of BA*. See especially his *Sūrat al-asmā'* (IQ:95ff)

AB* explained her bearing qur'ānic epithet "sister of Aaron" as intimating her being pure like Aaron not a sister of the brother of Moses. SE* seems to have affirmed the reality of her "Immaculate conception" (being born with the stain of `original sin'), though he may have confused this with the Virgin birth itself (PDC:53; LDG:123). With Fāṭima and other "exalted heroines" Mary is seen by Bahā'īs as the outstanding woman of the Christian era (SE* GPB:347). It is Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene who are especially exalted in Bahā'ī literature.

27. `Īsā, عِيسَى R+N+M* (= Heb. Aram. Yeshū[a], a late form of the name Joshua, `YHWH saves'; cf. Gk. *Ieµsous*) Jesus (c.- 6?- c.30 CE?) the founder of that Jewish faction which became Christianity. He has a prominent, elevated place in the Q. (x 93 times in 15 sūras). As the "son of Mary" (Q. x 33) he allegedly spoke from the cradle (Q. 3:41; 5:109;19:30). Jesus both affirmed the Torah and received the *Injīl (evangelion* = Gospel[s]) from God (Q. 3:43f; see 1.4 below). Not literally "a son of God" or a deity consubstantial with God (Q. 9:30f; 5:19f; 43:59), Jesus is said to be *al-masīḥ* (the messiah, Qx11), a prophet *(nabī)* and a messenger *(rasūl)* as well as His "Word" *(kalimat;* Q. 3:45;4:171) and a "Spirit *(rūḥ)* from Him" (Q. 4:171); one aided with the "Holy Spirit" *(bi-rūḥ al-quds;* Q. 2:81; 5:109:19:30; 58:22). While Jesus' ability to perform miracles (= *āyāt,* "signs") is affirmed and several times evidenced (Q. 3:43f; 5:110f) his crucfixion appears to be denied (Q. 4:155f). Though his ascension is mentioned (Q. 4:157) Jesus' second coming or role at the eschaton is only alluded to (Q. 43:61) (Anawati. ``Īsā' EI^2 IV:81-6; Wensinck [Bosworth], `al-Masīḥ' EI^2 V1:776; Parrinder, 1965 esp. 55ff).[1] Islamic sources greatly expand and celebrate the figure of the Islamic Jesus and see him as a very great prophet and servant of God, the "Spirit of God" *(rūḥ Allāh).*

Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources exalt and frequently refer to Jesus.

Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources greatly exalt and frequently refer to Jesus. In his commentary on the Islamic tradition *man `arafa nafsahu* (He who has known himself..) the Bāb in Sufī fashion has referred to Jesus as the *ashraf al-anbiyā'* ("most honourable of the prophets) (INBA Ms. 6007C:64). Going beyond the qur'ānic and later Islamic exaltation of

[1] The more than 500 or so year period between Jesus and Muhammad is often regarded in Muslim sources as a period when the people remained without a concrete or outward *ḥujjat* (`Proof', Guide') for 250 or 400 or more years after Jesus *(Biḥār*^{2} 14: 234; 347).

Jesus, BA* affirmed his (subordinate) divinity and position as an exalted *maẓhar-i ilāhī* with all that this entails. In his *L. Hirtīk* (1872 CE) he states that a true appreciation of the exalted station of Jesus is "beyond the comprehension of humanity".

In line with the Q. BA* rejected the trinity and the incarnation of the absolute Godhead *(dhāt al-dhāt).* Unlike most Muslims he affirmed the historicity of Jesus' salvific death upon the cross. Reminiscent of Shī`ī martyrology he viewed Jesus' death on the cross as an historical event of cosmic, soteriological magnitude and regenerative power (L. Ibn., IQ:98, tr. GWB:85). AB* demythologized the NT resurrection narratives also giving spiritual interpretations to Jesus' miracles and to the NT resurrection narratives (SAQ, index). Both the Bāb and BA* claimed to be the spiritual "return" of Jesus and are so regarded by modern Bahā'īs (SE* Disp. 50 citing AB*). From the mid-late Edirne period BA* claimed to be the second coming of Jesus. He claimed that at the eschaton he had come in the station of the "Father". In his *L-Sarrāj* (c. 1867) BA* refers to Jesus as "my Son in the Supreme Concourse *(malā' al-a`lā)"*(MA 7:05, cf. 112). He drew numerous parallelisms between himself and Jesus and addressed both the Italian Pope Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, Pius IX (1846-78) and the whole ecclesiastical panoply of oriental and occidental Christendom.

28. **Muhammad,** مُحَمَّد R+N+M*. Muḥammad b. `Abd-Allāh (c. 570-632 CE) is mentioned four times in four sūras of the Q. Sūra 47 is named after this Arabian prophet-messenger who from time to time communicated an Arabic Q (= "recitation") in 114 sūras of varying length. Muhammad believed that he was restoring and updating the perspicuous, "clear" *(mubīn)* religion of Abraham. Considered by Muslims to be the greatest of the past messenger-prophets, Muhammad was designated the *khātam al-nabbiyyīn*, the acme (trad. "seal"= "last") of the prophets" (Q. 33:40b)

The Bābī-Bahā'ī religion grew out of Shī`ī Islam in a manner similar to the emergence of Christianity from sectarian Judaisms. The Bāb and BA* greatly praise and elevate Muhammad. They regard him as eternally much more than an inspired human being seeing him as a very exalted and pre-existent *maẓhar-i ilāhī.* They always speak positively of the Islamic religion and its founder prophet. The Bāb wrote a fifty or so page Arabic treatise in proof of the mission of Muhammad, his sometimes esoteric *Risāla fī'l-nubuwwat al-Khaṣṣa* (1847) which was addressed to the then crypto-Christian, governor of Iṣfahān, Manuchihr Khān (d.1847).

BA* often and in various ways identified himself with the exalted, divine Muhammad, as well as with Jesus and other elevated pre-Islamic agents of God:

> Say: By God! I, verily, am `Alī [Muhammad, the Bāb] in the kingdom of Eternity, and Muhammad in the *Jabarūt* of Names, then the Spirit *(al-rūḥ* = Jesus) in the plains of Eternity *(madā'in al-baqā')* and also [Imam] Ḥusayn in this greatest theophany *( ẓuhūr)* ( BA* K. Badī`,151)

. Muslims, Bābīs and Bahā'īs all affirm the God-given status and reality of the abovementioned twenty-eight agents of God. They are all either *maẓhar-I ilāhī* and/ or *nabī* "lesser prophets". Additionally, as will be seen below, the Bāb and BA* upheld the divine status of a number of further pre-Islamic biblical and non-biblical figures. Among them Zoroaster (fl. C. 1200 BCE??), another Ismā'īl (Ishmael), a second David, and Gautama Buddha (d.c.486 or c.368?). Echoing ideas rooted in Jewish, Christian and Islamic gnosticizing factions as well as various Ismā'īlī thinkers, developed Bahā'ī doctrine also sanctions the historicity and exalted status of several biblical figures not counted among the *ūlū al-`azm,* including Melchizedek, King of Salem and contemporary of Abraham (fl.c. 2100 BCE?) and Joseph the one time ruler in Egypt and a prototype of BA*.

For Muslims, Bābīs and Bahā'īs all the above more than 28 figures in varying ways contributed to human progress by representing God. Some are of relatively minor importance in Islamic salvation history and are seldom mentioned in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources. Others, for some Shī`ī, Ismā'īlī and Irfānī Sufi authorities, as well as for the Bāb and BA*, were important divine (Per.) *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (manifestations of God). In this exalted category are usually included (1) Adam, (2) Noah, (3) Abraham, (4) Moses, (5) Jesus and (6) Muhammad. With additions and variations (-->) this list is basically an expansion of the Islamic *ūlū al-`azm* ("possessors of steadfastness").

■ **The myriad prophets and the *ūlū al-`azm* (possessors of steadfastness)**

The traditional number of around twenty-eight prophet figures was vastly expanded in Islamic sources. The Q. itself holds that God sent a *nabī, rasūl* and / or a *nadhir* ("warner") to every people (Q.10:48) to deliver a clear message *(al-balāgh al-mubīn,* Q. 29:18b; 35:24; 10:47; 40:28). In this light al-Maqdisī in his *K. al-bad` wa'l-tārīkh* (The Book of Creation and History' , 355/966) recorded from Wahb b. Munabbih a tradition of their having been twenty-three prophets in Sheba alone; one named Ḥanẓala ibn Afyūn (Ṣafwān) al-Ṣādiq and

another called Khālid b. Sinān al-'Absī who was active in Arabia during the *fatra* (the silent 'interval') separating Jesus and Muhammad (Maqdisī, III:1).

The names then of only a small proportion of the numerous past prophets and other figures such as sages, kings and philosophers etc find mention in the Qur'ān itself (Q. 4:164). Some post-qur'ānic Islamic traditions indicate a very large number of Israelite prophets. Ibn `Abbās, for example, reckoned there had been 1,000 besides other divinely sent figures,

> Between Moses son of Imran and Jesus son of Mary was [a period of] 1,900 years. There was no *faṭra* [`cessation' in divine guidance] between these two for between them He [God] sent 1,000 prophets *(nabī)* of the children of Israel; in addition to others whom He sent besides them... (cited Ibn Sa`d, Tabaqat I:53).

A similar prophetic tradition relayed through the 8th Shī`ite Imam, `Alī al-Riḍā' (d. 201/818) reads,

> God... created 124,000 *nabī* (prophets) and I [Muhammad] am the most noble of them... and God created 124,000 *waṣī* (successors) and `Alī is the most noble of them... (Bihar [2] 11:30-31).

Other Sunnī and Sh`ī traditions speak of 124,000 bearers of the divine message, a number of whom, often 313 or so, were reckoned *rasūl*. The Sunnī *Mishkat al-maṣābīḥ* (Niche of Lights) of Tabrīzī records that Muhammad told Abū Dharr of the number of *al-mursalīn* (`sent messengers'), "There have been three hundred and between ten and twenty all told". Alternatively, it is reported that the prophet told Abū Dharr of "A hundred and twenty-four thousand among whom were three hundred and fifteen *rusul* (messengers) all told" [1] (al-Tibrīzī, *Mishkat,* III:1599, Nos. 5737-8; trans. Robson, II:1229). In Shī`ī texts the same or similar figures are given. Majlisī records the following tradition from `Alī cited in Ṭabarsī's *Majma` al-bayān;*

> God raised up a black prophet *(nabī [an] aswād)* whose story he did not relate unto us. The traditions *(al-akhbār)* differ as to the number of the prophets *(al-anbiyā').* Some have related that their number is 124,000 while others have it that the number of the prophets is 8,000; 4,000 coming from the children of Israel and 4,000 from elsewhere with a "sign" *(bi-āyah)...* with a miracle and a proof (Biḥār [2] 11:21).

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[1] This reckoning the number of *rusul (al-mursalūn)* at 313 corresponds to the number of persons who participated in the first major battle of Badr (2/624) (Friedman, 1989:50.fn.4). Bābī-Bahā'ī sources extend the symbolic applicability of this number to the alleged Bābī battling companions who fought the (for Bābīs) eschatological battle(s) in the service of the Qā'im (= the Bāb) at the fortress of Shaykh Ṭabarsī in Mazandarān (Lambden, 1986:28-9 fn.36.).

In his *K. al-Bad' wa'l-tārīkh* the Shī`ī historian al-Maqdisī gives many details regarding the various prophets *(anbiyā').* He notes the Islamic traditions *(akhbār al-muslimīn)* reckoning 124,000 *nabī* and 313 (or in his opinion 315) *nabī-mursal (rasūl* = sent messengers) also having prophetic status (Maqdisī, III:lf). Other Islamic traditions reckon the pre-Islamic prophets *(anbiyā'* + *mursalūn*) at either 8,000; 124,000 or 224,000 (Friedman1989:50-51; Schimmel 1985:55f). Shī`ī sources count many myriads of divine messengers and a similarly large number of attendant *waṣī* (successor, agent) and *walī* (allies) are listed.[1] Numerous actual or mythical ancient Persian (possibly Zoroastrian), Indian (Hindu) and other figures swell yet further the names of those mentioned in a range of Islamic sources.

In Islamic sources groups of those among the twenty-eight prophets (<--) and others have, for various reasons, been classified together. Wahb b. Munabbih, for example, transmitted a tradition of fivefold groupings: there were five Hebraic apostles (Adam, Seth, Idris [Enoch], Noah, and Abraham) and five Arab apostles (Salih, Hud, [Ibrāhīm] Ishmael, Shuayb and Muhammad) (cf. Bihar[2] 11:32ff). Another important grouping is that of the *ūlū al-`azm,* those "characterized by steadfastness" which will now be considered

■ The *ūlū al-`azm,* **those "characterized by steadfastness" (Q. 46:35).**

In Shī`ī texts certain *rasūl* are representatives of *nubuwwat al-tashrī`* (legislative prophethood) being empowered to found and maintain new religions and institute religious laws. They bring a new *shari`a* (law) while related *nabī* are placed on subordinate level.[2] Though the Q. and certain *ḥadīth* have it that the faithful should make no distinction between the various messengers of God, some *rusul* (messengers) were exalted above others (Q. 2:253;17:55; 46:35). The qur'ānic mentions of unity yet distinction among the prophets inspired statements of oneness and brotherhood as well as hierarchical theories.[3] The favouring of

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[1] Kulīnī, *al-Kāfī* 1:223ff; Biḥār[2]11:30ff. Numerous Shī`ī sources record traditions that plot throughout history the appearance of major prophet figures and their immediate successor(s) after the typology of Muhammad and `Alī.

[2]Refer,Kulīnī, *al-Kāfī* I:174f, 223ff ; Corbin, *En Islam* 1:235f; cf. Wensinck, 1932:204.

[3]An interesting prophetic *ḥadīth* is relayed from Abū Ḥurayra is recorded in the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Tha`labī (-->4.1), "The prophets *(al-anbiyā')* are brethren *(ākhwat)* though of various mothers and their religion is one (*dīnuhun wāḥid,* Qisas: 403).

"some above others" (Q. 2:253a) in terms of the favoured rank of those considered *ūlū al-`azm* will be noted as it is primarily these figures who became Bābī-Bahā'ī *maẓhar-I ilāhī* (manifestations of God).

The qur'ānic phrase *ūlū al-`azm* came to have important prophetological implications in post-qur'ānic Islam. It was much discussed and by many thought to be indicative of exalted *rusul* (sent messengers) as (sometimes) pre-existent beings endowed with constancy of mission, moral and intellectual infallibility *(ma`ṣūm)* and the power of *waḥy* (divine revelation). In Shī`ī sources the *ūlū al-`azm* are the major founders of religions with a binding *shar`ia`* ("revealed law") relevant to a given community *(umma)* or to all humanity (Bihar[2]11:34ff) . Al-Maqdisī expressed a subsequently widely held opinion when he wrote, "of the *ūlū al-`azm* among the *rusul* there are five: [1] Noah [2] Abraham [3] Moses [4] Jesus and [5] Muhammad (*Bad` wa'l-tārīkh,* III:7). This is in line with traditions ascribed to the twelver Imams enumerating the *ūlū al-`azm* recorded in Majlisī's *Biḥar* (11:34ff). In the following example Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq is cited as saying:

> I heard Abū `Abd Allāh say, `The elite *(sāda)* of the prophets *(al-nabiyyīn)* and messengers *(al-mursalīn)* are five. They [five] are the *ūlū al-`azm* (ones "endowed with steadfastness") among the messengers *(al-rusul)*. Around them the mill-stone *(al-raḥā / ruḥīy)* [of reality] turns: [they are] [1] Noah, [2] Abraham, [3] Moses, [4] Jesus and [5] Muhammad *(Kāfī,* I:175).

The Bāb and BA* go beyond these qur'anic and Islamic norms by allotting theophanic status (= *maẓhar-I ilāhī*) to those mentioned in various Shī`ī lists of the *ūlū al-`azm* adding others to them. They include the frequently listed five mentioned above with the addition of Adam and others.[1] Those divine manifestations are [1] Adam [2] Noah, [3] Abraham, [4] Moses, [5] Jesus and [6] Muhammad (-->).[2] To this basically Abrahamic list, developed, more

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[1] Adam, Dāwūd (David) and others are not normally included in Islamic lists of the *ūlū al-`azm.* The former had fallen from heaven and the *Zabūr* (Psalter) of the latter has no legal component (cf. Q. 38:24-5).

[2] On those marked with [0] see below .That Zoroaster, Melchizedek, David (1&2?), Jospeh son of Jacob [Israel], John the Baptist and others are counted in developed Bahā'ī texts as *maẓhar-I ilāhī* will be taken up below.

globally minded, Bahā'ī theophanology adds the biblical figures, Melchizedek, King of Salem (Ar. Malik al-Salam, fl.c. 2100?), Joseph son of Jacob [Israel] (<--), possibly David the biblical king of Israel (d.c. 967 BCE <--1) and another pre-Mosaic David? (>), John the Baptist (-->) and certainly also the ancient Persian prophet Zarathušra (= Zoroaster, fl. 1200 BCE?) As well as Siddhārtha Gautama, the Śākyamuni, and Buddha (Enlightened One d.c. 486 or 368 BCE)(AB* TAB 2:469 cf. 3:565). To these also, it seems, that Bahā'is add the earlier mythical figure(s) (?) [Brahma-] Sri Krishna (4000 BCE??) (AB* PUP:446; PT:35; SE* GPB: 94). With various additions and omissions the Bāb and BA* become figures [8] and [9] in a largely Abrahamic (+ Asian) list – the number nine, being the Bahā'ī sacred number as the *abjad* numerical value of the word *bahā'* = 1+5+1+1= 9).

Like various Ismā'īlis and other heterodox Islamic factions, Bābis and Bahā'īs see Adam as an exalted figure far greater than the largely symbolic figure who features in the Bible and Q. along with his wife Eve *(ḥawā')* in the Eden legend. His story is regarded as basically symbolic, as is his "fall" which, for Bahā'īs, is indicative of human frailty not a loss of the ancient or pre-existent, heavenly status of an exalted primogenitor named Adam (-->). In expressing these doctrines Bābī-Bahā'ī writ echoes the high theophanology of gnostic Shī`ism and, in the case of Melchizedek those ancient and modern gnosticizing factions which uphold the exalted status of Melchizedek, King of Salem (Gen. 11 etc). As a prototype of both Imam Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) and BA*, Joseph becomes a *maẓhar-i ilāhī* going way beyond his biblical-qur'ānic status as a one-time notable in Egypt whose concrete historicity remains doubtful to some biblical scholars and other academics.

The perspectives regarding the *ūlū al-azm* among some Shī`ī Sufīs of the school of Ibn al-`Arabī (-->) such as Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (8th/14th cent.) is worth noting. In his *Jāmi` al-asrār* (Summation of Secrets) he at one point goes beyond a listing of the usual *ūlū al-`azm* (+ Adam, cf. Jāmi`, 281 [= § 553f]) by associating the "seven stars" with the *ṣūrat* (form) of the seven *rusul* (sent messengers) who are *ūlū al-`azm.* On this cosmic, esoteric level it is not the usual five or six but seven who have a special relationship with ultimate realities *(`ind al-*

muḥaqqaqīn), (1) Adam, (2) Noah, (3) Abraham, (4) David, (5) Moses (6) Jesus and (7) Muhammad (Jāmi`, 237 §465). Not normally considered among the *ūlū al-`azm* both Adam and a pre-Mosaic David are included here. Both these figures have an elevated position in Bābī-Bahā'ī prophetology and theophanology.

The Bāb and BA* held that divine guidance to humanity through successive founder messengers referred to as *maẓhar-I ilāhī,* was without beginning and will have no end. For them divine guidance will last as long as human history endures. The Muslim claim that Muhammad was the last of God's messengers was transcended by both the Bāb and BA* as will now be seen.

■ 2.3 The Bābī-Bahā'ī transcendence of *khātamiyya* (Q.33:40b), the finality of prophethood

> Muhammad is not the father of any man among but he is the *rasūl-Allāh* (Messenger of God) and the *khatām al-nabbiyyīn,* (the `seal' `last'. `acme') of the prophets (Q. 33:40).

Understanding the reading *khātam* to mean "last" in Q. 33:40, Muslims have considered this verse foundational for the post-qur'ānic doctrine of the `finality of prophethood`, that no *nabī* (or *rasūl)* would appear after Muhammad, the final *rasūl Allāh* (messenger of God). Probably echoing earlier claims of Manī (d. c. 277), the son of a Parthian prince and messianic claimant (al-Bīrūnī, Sachau, 1879:190) the (Aramaic loanword?) *khātam* came throughout the Muslim world to indicate that the succession of prophets was "sealed up" or "ended" in Muhammad just as it had been in Manī. It was thought that after Muhammad even after the eschatological consummation no future prophet would appear to found a new or renewed religion. Many commentators on Q. 33:40 have it that the Islamic belief in the second coming of Jesus indicates the reappearance of this *nabī* (a prophet) in a role subservient to Muhammad and Islamic law on the Day of resurrection (Zamakshari, *al-Kashshāf,* 3:544-5).

The finality of prophethood through Muhammad became a firmly accepted Islamic dogma. Even though it is not at all clear that the absolute finality of prophethood was the original intention of Q. 33:40, this is today a firmly entrenched in both Sunnī and Shī`ī

orthodoxy (Friedmann, 1986; 1989: 49ff). Any hint of another post-Islamic prophetic claim or a challenge to the *i`jāz al-Qur'ān* (inimitability of the Q.) has generally met with the dire consequences of theological castigation, accusations of heresy and imprisonment or death. Early on in his *Izhāq al-bāṭil* (The Crushing of Falsehood, 1845) on the basis of his analysis the QA (-->) the third Shaykhī leader Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1871) correctly accused the Bāb of such heresy as went well beyond the constraints of Shī`ī piety.

From the outset of his six year messianic career (1844-50) the Bāb in his QA. (mid. 1260/1844) and other writings (INBMC 91) challenged both the finality of prophethood and the inimitability of the Q. In the light of his eschatologically charged, high Shī`ī-Shaykhī imamology, he modified the standard understanding of the `finality of prophethood' by incorporating rewritten forms of the *khātim al-nabiyyīn* (Q.33:40b) into his first major work (QA):

> O people of the earth! God did not create Muhammad the father of any of your men but he made him in the midmost heart of the celestial Throne *(fī kabd al-`arsh)* for His greatest [eschatological] Day. God, hath in very truth concluded this matter as something hidden and treasured up (QA 44:164)..

The Bāb's rewrites of Q. 33:40 such as the above modify or pass over the note of finality which most Muslims read into Q. 33:40b. He regularly all but negates any tone of the finality of prophethood in Q. 33:40b. Through his supernatural link with the *Dhikr*, and/or occulted twelfth Imām, the Ḥujjat-Allāh (messianic `Proof of God'), the Bāb several times radically modified any straightforward notion of the finality of prophethood.

In QA 4 the Bāb addresses the *ahl al-madīna* ("people of the city" of Shīrāz?) accusing them of polytheism if they acknowledge Muhammad as the "seal of the Prophets" and affirm his book (the Q.) yet fail to bear witness to the fact that God also revealed the QA to the Bāb ("Our servant"; cf. Q. 2:23) which is certainly "the like of it" (the Q.). In QA 64 the Bāb similarly set down a messianic rewrite of Q.12:63 in the light of Q. 33:40. He exhorts believing Muslims gathered before Muhammad, the *khātam al-nabiyyīn,* to utter the following words:

> O our father [Muhammad] the [messianic] *dhikr* ("Remembrance"), is a further

> measure *(al-kail)* which has been denied to us. So dispatch with us, the sign of the *Dhikr* for the greater magnification *(li'l-takbīr al-akbar)...* (QA 64:260).

A few sūras later in QA 66 the Bāb speaks of a "Book" (= QA) sent down to inform the people that the messianic *Ḥujjat -Allāh* (Proof of God = 12th Imam) is closely associated with the *Dhikr* even the likeness of the *Ḥujjat* (Proof) nigh Muhammad, the *khātam al-nabiyyīn.* It seems to be implied that the messianic "Hour" is about to be realized through the close relationship between the *Dhikr* (Remembrance) and the twelfth Imam or *Hujjat-Allāh,* the messianic Proof of God. In subsequent years (1848-50) the sometimes thinly veiled `messianic secret' of the Bāb's being the Qā'im / Mahdī was publicly broadcast and his more exalted claims openly promulgated.

In their writings the Bāb and BA* never ceased referring to Muhammad as the *khātam al-nabbiyīn* (INBMC 91; BA* KI:05ff/ 87ff). Q 33:40b was not understood as underlining the finality of prophethood in the sense of outruling an eschatological theophany. Great messianic, theophanological importance was given by the Bāb and BA* to the qur'ānic references to *liqā'-Allāh,* the latter day meeting or encounter with God (Q. 6:31;130,154; 7:51,147; 10:7ff; 13:2 etc). The word *khātam* in *khātam al-nabiyyīn* need not signify "seal" implying "last" of the prophets but more appropriately indicate Muhammad as the "acme of the prophets" during the era before the *yawm al-qiyāma* (Day of Resurrection) when the *liqā'-Allāh* through a messianic *maẓhar-I ilāhī* would be realized. Then the *liqā'-Allāh* is realized through the parousia of the theophanic *maẓāhar-I ilāhī.* In it on these lines that BA* in his *K. Īqān* argues that *khatām al-nabiyyīn* as an epithet of Muhammad underlines the elevated nature of the Arabian prophet and not the absolute finality of prophethood. Understood with the sense of utter finality, *khātam al-nabiyyīn* degenerates into one of the *subuḥāt al-jalāl* ("veils of glory") which hinder the realization of unfolding reality (KI:129f/ 107f,136-7).

Among the earliest passages of BA* dealing with the issue of the *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (Q. 33:40b) is his testimony to the theophanic mission of the Bāb in his *L.Ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa`āt* (Tablet on the Isolated Letters, c. 1858). The Bāb, it is said, came with all manner

of "dazzling proofs" though the people "waxed proud" in their denial despite the qur'ānic promise of the *liqā'-Allāh.* When God sealed prophethood *(khatama al-nubuwwat*) through Muhammad (Q. 33:40) "he gave the servants the glad-tidings of the encounter with Him [God]" and the matter was "definitively resolved" (*khatama al-makhtūm).* In the person of the Bāb

> "God came [unto them] in the shadows of the clouds *(fī ẓulal al-ghamām,* Q.2:210), breathed into the Trumpet of the Cause *(nafakha fī ṣūr al-amr;* cf. Q.18:99; etc), split the Heaven asunder *(inshaqqat al-samā'* cf.Q.55:37;69:16;84:1) and crushed the mountains to dust (Q.56:5;69:14, etc) whereupon all retreated back upon their heels (cf. Q.3:144;6:71) (Ma'idih, 4:65).

BA* continued to argue that in spite of the theophany of the Bāb the people acted like Jews and Christians. They continued to await the realization of the promises and the eschatological *liqā'-Allāh.* In his decade or so later lengthy Persian Tablet to `Alī Muhammad Sarrāj (c.1867 CE), BA* himself touches upon the subject of the obscurity of eschatological prophecies in Abrahamic religious scripture. He highlights the supremely clear implications *(aṣraḥ al-kalimāt)* of finality in *khātam al-nabbiyyīn* (Q. 33:40b) but thinks it as an unacceptable veil inhibiting post-Islamic faith in another supreme agent of God. Despite its implications of finality, pure-hearted persons still came to true faith in Point of the Bayān *(bi-irfān nuqṭa-yi bayān* = the Bāb). Indeed, BA* adds, such pure-hearted persons so comprehended the matter of *khātimiyyat* ("sealedness") that they would happily acknowledge the appearance of a "prophet" *(nabī)* "from the beginning which has no beginning unto the end which has no end" (L. Sarrāj, Ma'idih, 7:28ff).

For the Bāb and BA* the qur'ānic *khātam al-nabiyyīn* in no way rules out the theophany of divinity on the eschatological "Day of God" *(yawm Allāh).* Even if it is taken to outrule the finality of the appearance of a post-Muhammad *nabī* (prophet) or even *rasūl* (sent one) it does not outrule an eschatological theophany. Both the Bāb and BA* claimed to be fully human yet fully divine *maẓhar-I ilāhī* in a way that transcends issues revolving around the meanings of *khātam al-nabiyyīn.* In fact BA* so transcended these matters that in numerous theophanological passages he presents himself as having sent out the *nabī* and *rasūl* of the pre-Islamic era. In an important Arabic Tablet of the Acre period BA* defends himself against

accusations that he has contradicted the Muslim understanding of Q. 33:40b by stating:

> You have assuredly confirmed [the truth] by what you have announced [in citing Q. 33:40b]. We do indeed testify that through him [Muhammad] messengership and prophethood *(al-risāla wa'l-nubuwwa)* were sealed up. Whomsoever after him [Muhammad] makes claim to such an elevated station is indeed in manifest error.... The carpet of prophethood *(bisāt al-nubuwwa)* has been rolled up and there has appeared the one who sent them out *(arsal)* [=BA*] in manifest sovereignty.. (Untitled Tablet to Ḥasan [L. Khātam al-nabbiyīn]).

Bahā'ī arguments against the finality of prophethood usually operate on a somewhat lower level than these elevated theophanological challenges. In modern Bahā'ī apologetics a distinction is often made between a future *rasūl* as a founding *maẓhar-I ilāhī* (Manifestation of God) and the role of the (lesser) *nabī* or secondary prophet. Diverse lexical and Islamic understandings of *khātam* (kh-t-m) are commented upon in the light of the non-finality of prophethood. The Islamic understandings of Q. 33:40b might, it is sometimes held, outrule the further appearance of Israelite type *nabiyyīn* (prophets) but this phrase does not negate future appearances of *rasūl* or *mursalīn* (sent messengers) the like of which is hinted at in the following qur'ānic verse:

> O children of Adam! There shall come among you *mursalīn* (sent messengers) from among yourselves rehearsing my signs unto you... (Q. 7:43)

Many thousands of eschatological traditions were assiduously compiled into sometimes bulky *Istidlāliyya* (testimonia) tracts by 19th-20th century disciples of the Bāb and BA*. Considerable attention was given to overcoming any finality implied by Q. 33:40b.[1] Some at BA*'s command followed the lead of the Bāb's *Dalā'il-I sab'ih* and his own *K-īqān.* This with a view to arguing that all manner of messianic predictions and apocalyptic "signs" had come to pass (cf. INBMC 80). Bābīs and Bahā'īs claimed that for many thousands of years divine messengers (*rusul)* or *maẓhar-I ilāhī* (divine Manifestations) will found and progressively renew the eternal religion of God (= Islam).

It is today a central Bābī-Bahā'ī teaching that future divine messengers (*rusul)* or

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[1] See Gulpaygānī, K. Farā'id, index; Ishrāq Khavarī, QI:383ff; *al-Tibyān wa'l-Burhān,* I:59ff Rawshānī, Khātamiyyat; Momen 1999:34f, 87ff.

maẓhar-I ilāhī (divine manifestations) will, for many thousands of years, found and progressively renew the eternal religion of God (= `Islam'). The Bāb's claim to be the Shī`ī messiah did not prevent or inhibit his also predicting numerous future messianic advents of the originally Sufī figure *man yuẓhiruhu-Allāh* (Goldziher, 1921 tr. Lambden & Walker 1992). This is indicated in a passage from the Bāb's *K. panj sha'n* (Book of the Five Grades; 1850 CE) where the following words could be taken to indicate an infinite number of future theophanies of the Bābī theophanic messiah, *man yuẓhiru-hu-Allāh* (He whom God shall make manifest').

> .. And after the Bayān it is [the theophany of] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* (He whom God will make manifest) [1]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [1] *man yuẓhiruhu Allāh* [2]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [2] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [3]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh,* [3] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [4]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [4] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [5]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [5] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [6]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [6] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh*[7]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [7] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [8]. And after *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [8] *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* [9]. (K. Panj: 314-5, cf. 397).

The position of the Bāb is thus the exact opposite of the Islamic proponents of the doctrine of the finality of prophethood. The mention of nine successive theophanies most likely indicates their endless future realization. Towards the end of his life in his *Haykal al-dīn* (Temple of Religion, 1266/ 1850) the Bāb made increasing mention of "He whom God will make manifest". He variously indicated the time of his advent at after nine (=1269/1852), nineteen (= 1279 =1862-3) or between 1511 (abjad of Ar. *ghiyāth* = `the Assistance') and 2001 years (abjad of Ar. *mustaghath* = `The One Invoked for help') from 1260/1844 (MacEoin,1986:95-155). These latter figures were understood by BA* as either numerically and messianically suggestive Names of God of non-chronological import, or allusions to the time of another theophany after himself (BA* L. Khalīl Shīrāzī; `O Thou Creator 'mss).

■ 2.4 *Maẓhariyya:* The roots and significance of the Bābī-Bahā'ī concept of the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* ("Divine theophany", "Manifestation of God").

It was out of the abovementioned nexus of Islamic prophetological, imamological and

theophanological Sufi and Shī`ī-Shaykhī concepts, that the terminology and many aspects of the Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrine of the *mazhar-i ilāhī* evolved. The Bāb personified the *mashiyya* (Primal Will) and made it, as the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (Manifestation of God), the centerpiece of his theology. It was is by virtue of the *mashiyya* (Will) that God made himself indirectly known to his creation through the *maẓhar* of His own *nafs*, the Logos-Self which is the *maẓhar ilāhī* (The Manifestation of God). In Bābī-Bahā'ī usage *ẓuhūr* indicates the divine *tajallī* (theophany, divine self-revelation) of God through his *maẓhar* (theophanic manifestation) unto the worlds of creation. The study of the background of the centrally important *maẓhariyya* (theophanological) doctrines within the Bābī-Bahā'ī religious universe of discourse, to some degree illustrates how aspects of Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrine evolved out of heterodox Shī`īsm in a similar way to the emergence of Christianity from sectarian Judaisms. Only a few notes pertinent to this can be set down here (cf. MacEoin, maẓhar, EI^2 VI:952-3).

Deriving from the triliteral Arabic root ẓ-h-r which may verbally indicate `to appear', `be manifest', the straightforward sense the Arabic noun of place *maẓhar* (pl. *maẓāhir* cf. *ẓāhir,* `apparent', `visible' `outer', `exterior') is a `place of appearance'. It may also be indicative of an `outward expression' or `mode of apparition', and thus additionally indicate a `manifestation' or `theophany' (Corbin, 1972, IV:518, index). In his *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* Chittick prefers to translate *maẓhar,* "locus of manifestation" (Chittick, 1989:89).

The term *maẓhar* has a long history and rich semantic field in a multitude of texts expressive, for example, of the mediatory position of the prophets and imams as loci of divine realities. Murata has stated that many "cosmologists employ terms like *ẓuhūr* (manifestation) and *tajallī* (self-disclosure) to explain the relationship of the world to God" (Murata,1992:11). *Maẓhar* is a term that lies at the heart of certain prophetological and imamological speculations within Islamic philosophy and theology. It is found within the writings of numerous exponents of Shī`ī mysticism, theosophy and gnosis. [1]

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[1] In early Shī'ī Khaṭṭabī [Nusayrī) gnosis the pentadic "Five Companions of the Mantle" (Muhammad, Fāṭim[a], `Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn) represented by the initial letters of their names, become "Names" or "Principles" as well as *tajalliyat* (`theophanies') and *maẓāhir* (manifestations) of the "Light"

The terms *ẓāhir, ẓuhūr, maẓhar* are frequently used and important within the theologically loaded writings of Ibn al-`Arabī and of persons falling within his `school' (Chittick, 1988:201-221, 470 [index *ẓuhūr,* etc]; 1989:16, 478 index *ẓuhūr* etc). Within the writings of Ibn al-`Arabī *maẓhar* is a theological term rooted in the exegesis of Q. 57:3, "He [God] is the *ẓāhir* (Manifest) and the *bāṭin* (Nonmanifest) (Chittick, 1989:89; cf. *Futūḥāt* III:484-5). For the Great Shaykh *ẓuhūr* is used of the *tajallī,* the divine `self-disclosure' or the `manifestation' of God. For him *maẓhar* can indicate the locus of a particular divine Name (s) and/or Attribute *(asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt).*

For Ibn al-`Arabī the terms *ẓāhir / ẓuhūr / maẓhar* have an important place in Islamic thought (Chittick, 1988:201-221, 470 [index *ẓuhūr,* etc]; 1989:16, 478 index *ẓuhūr* etc). *Maẓhar* is a frequently used theological term rooted in the exegesis of Q. 57:3, "He [God] is the *ẓāhir* (Manifest) and the *bāṭin* (Nonmanifest) (Chittick, 1989:89). At one point in the *Futūḥāt* it is written, "God is the *ẓāhir* (Manifest) who is witnessed by the eyes and the *bāṭin* (Nonmanifest) who is witnessed by the intellects *(al-`uqūl)"* (Fut. III:484-5). In his *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* Chittick prefers to translate *maẓhar* "locus of manifestation" (Chittick, 1989:89). For Ibn al-`Arabī *ẓuhūr* is especially used of the self-manifestation of God which is his *tajallī* (self-disclosure).

Among the many disciples of the "Great Shaykh" who have made fairly frequent use of *maẓhar* as a theophanological technical term was, for example, Ibn al-`Arabī's son-in-law Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d.673/1274). His *K. al-fukūk,* (The Book of Unravellings) represents itself as a `key to the mysteries' of Ibn `Arabī's *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom). In his exposition of the section revolving around the prophet Ismā'īl (here no. 7) and the implications of prophets being *maẓāhir* of the divine Names, Qunawi (commenting on Q.29:27a) categorically states "Every prophet is a *maẓhar* of one of the divine Names *(ism min al-asmā') (K. al-fukūk,* 209). The same is also stated in the section devoted to Muhammad: "every *nabī*

(Corbin, [1974] 1998:186-7).

is a *maẓhar* of one of the Names of the Divine Reality *(ism min asmā' al-ḥaqq;* ibid, 310). In the section on Shu`ayb it is stated that Moses' education *(tarbiyat)* was initially taught by means of this Arab prophet. It was such that Moses' *āyāt* (verses, signs) were according to the dictates of the "outer Name" *(aḥkām al-ism al-ẓāhir).* When God desired the perfection of Moses he sent him to Khiḍr who is said to be a *maẓhar* (manifestation) of the hidden [Inner, Non-Manifest] Name *(al-ism al-bāṭin).* (Qunawī, *al-Fukūk,* 251).

Rajab al-Bursī (d.c.814/1411) in his influential *Mashāriq* compiled much of relevance to this topic including a section dealing with the *anbiyā'* (prophets) as *maẓāhir asmā' Allāh* ("manifestations of the Names of God"). They are all *maẓhar ism kullī* (`manifestations of a universal [divine] Name = Allāh) whose *sharī`a* (law) is likewise universal. All the prophets and messengers *(nabī + rasūl)* are reckoned as archetypally revolving around the following seven figures, (1) Adam, (2) Enoch, (3) Abraham, (4)Jospeh, (5) Moses (6) Aaron and (7) Jesus. Among other things each prophet is associated with a particular divine Name. While Enoch, for example, is described as a *maẓhar* of the divine name *al-ḥayy* (`the Living), Joseph is the *maẓhar* of the divine name *al-murīd* (Disciple) associated with *jamīl* (Beauty). Beyond them Muhammad is the *maẓhar* of the comprehensive divine Name *(al-ism al-jāmi`)* Allāh as well as the *maẓhar* of the (supernal) Lights *(al-anwār)* (*Mashāriq, 32-3).*

Within the *Kalimat-i Maknūnih* (Hidden Words) of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d.1090/1679), another Shī`ī thinker much influenced by Ibn al-`Arabī, is a theologically oriented section (*kalimat)* about the significance of *al-ẓuhūr* (the Manifest) and *al-maẓhar* (the Manifestation). Within this section it is stated that "the manifestations of the True One (*maẓāhir al-ḥaqq)* is something independent *(muṭlaqa)* since the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* is in that locale as something [independently] evident *(ẓāhir)* and manifest *(maẓhar)* (manifest)" *(Kalimat,* 114-5). Another section concerns the ultimacy of the of the theophany of the Ultimate Reality *(ẓuhūr al-ḥaqq).* Relative to the *maẓāhir* (Manifestations) this is said to be by means of the Divine Names *(al-asmā' al-ilāhiyya).* The Manifestation of the Name of Allāh *(maẓhar ism Allāh)* is identified as the person of the *al-insān al-kāmil* (The Perfect Man [Human]). The perfection of

the name Allāh is evident in the manifestation of the Universal Perfect Human *(maẓhar-i jāmi`-yi insān-i kāmil).*

Similar examples could be gleaned from numerous other philosopher-theologians of the school of Ibn al-`Arabī and the `School of Isfahan' and elsewhere. [1] The famed *al-insān al-kāmīl.*. (The Perfect Human) of the Shī`ite Sufī `Abd al-Karīm al-Jilī (d. c.832/1428) contains a section dealing with the divine Names *al-jalāl* (The Majestic) where iti s stated that for every divine Name and Attribute there is a *athar,* a trace-impression which is a *maẓhar* of divine *jamāl* (Beauty) or *jalāl* (Majesty). (New ed, 97).

. BA*'s uses of *maẓhar* are numerous and generally fall into the theological-theophanological pattern set in the writings of the Bāb. BA*'s *apophatic* theology of the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (Manifestation of God) , like that of the Bāb (Lambden, 1997), categorically bypassed the potentially pantheistic *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("oneness of being") speculations of Ibn al-`Arabī (not his terminology) and his devotees (BA*. *Haft vādī,* AQA 3:XX*/* tr. *Seven Valleys, 39-40*). The Unmanifest Godhead ever remains unknowably beyond number, gender. And all limitations. He/She/It, the absolute Godhead is only indirectly manifested through the *maẓhar ilāhī* who, as the (subordinate) "God", makes the `Wholly Other' knowable to human beings. Scriptural (Q. + Bible) statements about God actually have apophatic significance or only disclose something about his Will or His knowable mediatory theophanic manifestations.

As a theological term central to Bābī-Bahā'ī usage *maẓhar* precludes any hint of *ḥulūl,* the `incarnation' of the absolute Divine Essence *(dhāt al-dhāt).* The divine intermediary *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (Divine Theophany, Manifestation) does not manifest the hidden, incomprehensible Deity the *dhāt* or *dhāt al-dhāt.* Rather, it is the totality of the (created) divine Names and Attributes *(al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt)* that are exhibited in his Person. They are

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[1] The first Safavid ruler Shāh Ismā'īl (d.930/1524), a Sufi Shaykh and one time head of the Qizilbash made use of *maẓhar* in certain of his Turkish, distinctly (neo-) *ghuluww* (extremişt) high imamological and theophanologically oriented poems. Apparently referring to himself he states in one poem (no. 259), "A man *(ādam)* has become a *maẓhar* of the *ḥaqq* (Ultimately Real).. My Beauty is a *maẓhar* of Our God (*jamālī maẓhar ilāhhum...* ; Minorsaky, 1942: 1039a-1040a,194).

manifested by any given *maẓhar-i ilāhī* but only according to human capacity at a given point in history and for a divinely ordained era in time *(ẓuhūr* = " theophanological dispensation"). The Bahā'ī prophet's notion of *tawḥid* (the Divine Oneness) is focussed on the non-ontological, spiritual "oneness" of the *nafs* (Logos-like`Self') of the major founder Prophets of religion who are manifestations of the totality of the Divine Names and attributes. They indirectly make the incomprehensible God known through the partial *maẓhar* or disclosure of the knowable Divine Will (BA, *Lawḥ-i madinat al-tawḥīd*).

At the outset of an untitled writing BA* writes, "The [eschatological] Day cries out announcing `The manifestation of the Divine Command has assuredly been made manifest *(qad ẓahara maẓhar al-amr) (La `ālī al-ḥikma,* 1:109 No.170). He composed a number of *alwāḥ* designated *L.-i ẓuhūr* (The Tablet of the Theophany [Manifestation]) in which he detailed some theological aspects of the person of the *maẓhar-i ilāhī.* In one of them he explained that,

> The theophany of the Divine Manifestation *(ẓuhūr)* is not compounded of the four elements. Nay rather, he is the mystery of the divine oneness *(sirr al-aḥadiyya),* the Pre-Existent Being *(kaynuna al-qidamiyya),* the All-Enduring Essence *(al-jawhar al-ṣamadiyya)* and the Hidden Ipseity *(al-huwiyya al-ghaybiyya).* He can in no wise be known apart from his own Self. It is not possible for anyone to establish that he was made manifest from the four elements *(`anāṣir),* from such elements *(ustaqusāt* = Gk. *stoicheion)* as are mentioned by the tongue of the practitioners of philosophy *(ahl al-ḥikmat),* or indeed, from any of the four natures *(al-tabai`).* All such as this was created as a result of His Command and through His Will *(mashiyya)*... In every world he is manifested according to the capacity *(bi-isti`dād)* of that world. In the world of spirits *(`ālam al-arwāḥ),* for example, he reveals himself and becomes manifest unto them [the spiritual beings] through the vestiges of the Spriit *(āthār al-rūḥ).* So likewise in the world of bodies *(ajsād),* in the world of Names and Attributes *(al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt)* and in other worlds which none comprehends save God. All [of these worlds] derive their good-fortune *(naṣīb)* from this theophany of the Divine Manifestation *(ẓuhūr).* Wherefore does he appear unto them according to the requisite form in order that He might guide them unto God, His Lord, and draw them nigh unto the Abode of His Cause (BA* L. Ẓuhūr, Māidih, 4:161f). .

The following are a few Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrinal teachings that are held to apply equally to all *maẓhar-i ilāhī.* Bahā'ī hermeneutics never permits the interpretation of sacred books or Isrā'īliyyāt traditions in ways which might negate these theophanological doctrines:

1) Divinity and Lordship *(ulūhiyya, rubūbiyya).*

All representatives of the unknowable Godhead, the *maẓhar ilāhī* are equally divine. They can all legitimately make the claim to (subordinate) divinity by saying , *anā Allāh* ("`I am God") or the like, though they can never claim to be ontologically identical with the Absolute Divine Essence, the Ultimate Godhead (BA* KI:137/114).

(2) Pre-existence

The pre-existence of the divine Manifestations (*maẓāhar)* is presupposed and affirmed in numerous Bābī-Bahā'ī texts. This by virtue of their divine Logos-like Reality, their primordial *nafs* (Identity-Self-Soul). The multi-faceted Islamic doctrine of the pre-existent (Per.) *nūr-i Muḥammadiyya* ("Muhammadan Light") was foundational and is applied to all of the *maẓhar-i ilāhī.* Like Jesus the Bābī-Bahā'ī *maẓhar* can all utter such words as "before Abraham was I am" (Jn. 8:58b) or claim a central, pre-existent role in the origins of existence.

(3) *`Iṣmā`* (`immunity from sin'; `moral infallibility'). [1]

The Islamic doctrine of *`iṣmā'* was gradually and in diverse ways incorporated within in both Sunni[2] and Shī`ī Islam. It was championed by numerous Shī`ī thinkers including the Imami writers Hisham b. al-Ḥakam (d.179/795). Ibn Babūya (d.381/991) and Shaykh al-Mufid (d.412/1022). Within Shī`īsm the *`iṣma* of prophets and the *ma`ṣūm* (guarded from sin and error) of the Imams became and has remained an important article of faith. It was affirmed and in various ways integrated in Bābī-Bahā'ī imamology and theophanology. All *maẓhar-i ilāhī* are considered *ma`ṣūm* in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Abrahamic sacred books (Bible and Q.) and Isrā'īlyyāt traditions can never be interpreted so as to attribute sin and error to the divine Manifestations of God.

Numerous biblical legends and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* narratives as well as doctrinal

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[1] It was perhaps due to Samaritan (Jewish) influence from the late 2nd/8th century that the principle expressed by the non-qur'ānic terms *`iṣmā'* (moral impeccability) and *ma`ṣum* (immunity from error) first (?) came to be applied to the Shi`ī Imams and subsequently to the Prophet Muhammad as well, on occasion, as other the pre-Islamic prophets and agents of God.

[2] The doctrine of *`iṣmā'* is found in the Sunnī *Fiqh al-Akbar* (Greater Understanding) II (10th cent.) and was earlier championed by various Shī`ī thinkers including Hisham b. al-Ḥakam (d.179/795).

utterances of past prophets, sages and agents of God are interpreted in Bābī-Bahā'ī texts line with the doctrines of *`iṣma / ma`ṣūm.* Majpr Messengers are pictured as all wise paragons of pious virtue and miraculous power. Texts which contract this are allegorically or non-literally interpreted (AB* SAQ III ch. 44). The hermeneutical maintenance of *`Iṣma / ma`ṣūm* is a Bahā'ī religious touchstone of exegetical integrity and historiographical soundness. In Bābī-Bahā'ī exegesis , for example, Adam the *maẓhar-Ii ilāhī* never sinned by eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden (Gen 2-3; Q.2:25; 20:115; cf. Q. 7:19).[1]

Following and expounding BA*'s teachings both AB* and SE* made the upholding of *`iṣmā'* an essential hermeneutical principle. AB*, for example, probably following Islamic exegetical precedent, made lawful the Islamo-biblical notice that Abraham married his half-sister (cousin) or aunt Sarah (cf. Gen.12:10f; Rippin EI^2 IX:26-7) by writing,

> During the time of the Abrahamic Prophethood it was considered allowable, because of a certain exigency, that a man should marry his aunt, even as Sarah was the sister of Abraham's mother" (AB* PUP: 365)

BA* himself claimed (Per.) *`ismat-i kubrā* (the greatest infallibility) which he also made applicable to the Bāb and the other *maẓhar-i ilāhī* and to other lesser past worthies such as the twelver Imams and various *anbiyā'* (prophets) of Israelite history. While supreme theophanies , the *maẓāhir-i ikulliyya* (universal manifestations) like the "Sun" have *`iṣmat-i dhātiyya* ( "essential infallibility") other sanctified individuals and groups like "moons" luminous with divine light, can only evince *`iṣmat-i sifātiyya* ("conferred infallibility") (SAQ. XLV: 129ff/171ff).

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[1] The Bahā'ī exegesis of the story of Adam and Eve as explained by AB* is wholly removed from the sphere of history. The story is symbolic of the plight of humankind in the material world. Adam represents of the *rūḥ-i Ādam,* the higher "spirit of Adam" (= humanity). Humanity (the first couple) fell from paradise when Eve who represents the *nafs-i Ādam,* the lower self of humanity, precipitated a "fall" from spirituality as a result of being enticed bythe "serpent" (= materiality). To eat of the "fruit" of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is to be engrossed in the material world by the satanic lower self (AB*, SAQ:92f /tr.122f cf. AB* explanation, "The Tree *(shajarat)* [of the knowledge of good and evil] of his eminence Adam is the reaching out to the [material] world *(bulūgh-i a`lam)* Ma'idih 9:128-9).

(4) The ability to perform of miracles *(mu`jizāt).*

Within Abrahamic scripture and tradition innumerable messengers of God, saints, Imams and others are credited with the working of miracles. Such supernatural acts are dealt with generally and specifically in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary literatures. Though the Bāb is credited with miracles in most 19th century Bābī-Bahā'ī hagiographical histories he most frequently highlighted as his miracle his ability to reveal divine verses through *waḥy.* For him this was the true hallmark of his claim to divine *maẓhar* status (Ar.+P. Dala'il) . The Bāb gave spiritual interpretations to the various "miraculous" deeds of past prophets (e.g. Muhammad's alleged the "cleaving of the moon" Q. 54:1f; P.Dal.13) and non-literally interpreted many cosmic eschatological signs including, for example, the rising of the "Sun of Reality" *(shams-i ḥaqīqat)* in the "West" which he related to his theophanic appearance in Shīrāz , (Fars, Iran) (P.Dal, 51-2).

BA* is also credited with numerous miracles in the Bahā'ī histories (cf. AB* SAQ IX tr. 34-5), miracles of revelation, prophecy, resurrection and human transformation, etc. Though in his *Ṣaḥīfa-yi shaṭṭiyya* (Scroll of Gushing Torrent c. 1857) BA* plays down the miracles attributed to him this phenomenon is discussed here (INBMC 57:10-18) as it is in other of his *alwāḥ* and in many writings and discourses of AB* (SAQ index). Miracles of past pre-Islamic divine messengers such as those ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels are very largely given "spiritual" interpretations in Bahā'ī sources. Examples of biblical miracles which are 'demythologized' or given "spiritual" interpretations include God's theophany before Moses (Exod. 33:18-23; Q. 7:143) the Exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 13:17ff) and the wars of the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 5ff),

> The miracles which took place during the war of the chidren of Israel with the ungodly which are mentioned in the Holy Bible *(kitāb-i muqaddas)* have a spiritual interpretation *(ta`wīl)* and meaning *(ma`anī).* Despite this Bahā'īs do not seek to outrule or alter the miracles of the prophets *(anbiyā').* (Ma'idih, 9:39).

Most NT miracles are allegorically interpreted in Bahā'ī primary sources, including the feeding

to of (4) 5,000 (Mk. 6:35ff + //s ; Jn 6:1-14), Jesus' walking on the water (Mk. 6:43ff+ //s Jn 6:15-21) various healing miracles and exorcisms, the raising of Lazarus, the resurrection of Jesus and the various resurrection appearances (Lk. 24:13ff, etc). Miracles attributed to Muhammad in various Islamic sources are likewise occasionally non-literally interpreted as are various qur'ānic apocalyptic "signs" mentioned in the Q. and traditions (Lambden, 1987).

The developed Bābī-Bahā'ī position regarding miracles is that they are accepted as within the power of the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* though most mentioned in biblical and qur'ānic scripture and tradition are of largely symbolic import. They are thus "spiritually" , non-literally interpreted. The directly or indirectly witnessed power of *waḥy* (divine revelation) is seen in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture as the supreme miracle, the hallmark of the divine providence.

In conclusion it can be stated here that Bahā'īs greatly revere the numerous aforementioned *maẓhar-I ilāhī* and affirm their ability to perform supernatural miracles. This to such a degree that, transcending even Islamic norms, they consider their true station incomprehensible to human intellects (BA* L. Hirtik). Modern Bahā'īs do not exhibit pictures of the Bāb, BA* or any of the other the *maẓhar ilāhī* (divine manifestations) out of respect for their sublimity and as a safeguard against worshipping the form or person of the *maẓhar* instead of the transcendent God who called (indirectly) manifested them. The Bahā'ī interpretation of Abrahamic scripture and Isrā'īliyyāt traditions attempts to preserve the high theophanological status of the divine messengers who are deemed infallible agents of the transcendent Deity. In the Bahā'ī view they have a human body but all other aspects of their Logos-like Being are said to transcend worldly limitations.

Chapter Three

THE BIBLE AND ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT PT.1 : *TAFSĪR, (QUR'ĀN COMMENTARY) AND AḤADĪTH / AKHBĀR* (TRADITIONS) IN ISLAMIC AND BĀBĪ-BAHĀ'Ī PRIMARY SOURCES

■ 3. 0 The Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī sources.

Islamicate (pseudo-) biblical citations and Isrā'īliyyāt traditions appear in numerous Islamic sources. In the pages to follow (--> 2.1ff) some details will be given about select sources rich in such materials along with a summary of their assimilation within Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources. Numerous Islamic literatures have a relationship to Abrahamic scripture and religious tradition. Though the Judaeo-Christian origins of such assimilated materials has sometimes been played down in reaction to the 19th-20th century missionary and orientalist attempts at demeaning Islam by identifying its alleged pre-Islamic substrate, Islamicate Bible citations and Isrā'īliyyāt streams of tradition are widely attested. Biblical motifs, citations and paraphrases in Islamic sources as well as Isrā'īliyyāt rooted traditions are often fully Islamicate. They often express a symbiosis, an Islamic intertextual re-creation having become an integral part of an Islamic universe of discourse.

The Bāb and BA* rarely identified their precise Islamic and other literary sources. They sometimes drew upon Abrahamic scriptural materials and pseudo-biblical texts which were subsequently reinterpreted thus adding a further Bābī-Bahā'ī level of meaning. As will be seen, the Judaic-rooted, Islamic *al-sm al-aʿẓam* (mightiest Name of God) concept is interpreted in this way. So also aspects of the biblical-qur'ānic Joseph story. Drawing on Islamic prose and poetical sources, Bābī-Bahā'ī writings give post-Islamic messianic, theophanological and other senses to biblical and Islamic traditions.

A selection of closely interrelated Islamic literary sources showing the presence or influence of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt will now be surveyed. This in the first four of the following fourteen literary divisions all of which include significant bodies of biblical and /or Isrā'īliyyāt rooted

materials. The following list is not in any strictly historical order:[1]

[1] *Tafsīr* (Q. commentary) and associated works;
[2] *Aḥadīth / Khābar* (Compendia of traditions);
[3] *Sīrā* (biographical works) and other forms of *Tārīkh* (history writing);
[4] Folklore traditions and *Qiṣaṣ al-'anbiyā'* (`Stories of the prophets') works;
[5] *Faḍā'il* (Excellences) and associated works;
[6] Islamic messianisms, eschatological traditions and apocalyptic works;
[7] Early Shī`īsm, the *ghulāt,* (extremist factions), (proto-) Ismā'īlism, etc.
[8] Arabic gnomological traditions, wisdom literatures and philosophical compendia
[9] *Adab* (belles lettres), encyclopaedias and associated doctrinal-theological works;
[10] The *'ulūm al-ghayb,* (Islamic esoterica);
[11] Islam and the encounter with religions:
(a) Islamicate pseudo-biblical and pseudepigraphical texts;
(b) *K. al-masā'il* (`Questions and Answers') and *Iḥtijāj* (Religious disputation) works;
(c) The *Mu'tazila* ("Seceders") and the *Mutakallimūn* (Rationalist theologians): Muslim exponents of *'ilm al-kalām* (Dogmatic Theology) works and expressions of dialogue;
(d) *Dalā'il* (Testimonia), Muslim Proof texts.
(e) Polemical refutations of pre-Islamic religions;
(f) Islamic heresiographical and associated works.

[12] Sufi hagiographical, mystical, Ishrāqī and theosophical (irfānī) literatures;
[13] Persianate Sufi and poetical writings;
[14] Devotional texts and literatures: *Ṣalāt, Namāz, Du'a, Munājāt, Ziyārat-nāmih.*

Though most of these Islamic literary channels in which Isrā'īliyyāt including (pseudo-) biblical materials are found were drawn upon within Bābī-Bahā'ī primary texts, only the first four sections (3.1-2; 4:1-2) of this list can be discussed here. A very limited portion of materials falling within 5-14 (above) will be utilized within the chapters to follow . Chapter 5 below will cover aspects of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in connection with select literatures of the Safavid and Qajar periods as well as dimensions of the dialogue with missionaries. Paragraphs in chapter 6 on the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in early Shaykhī writings will bring aspects of these issues up to the early Qajar period when the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions emerged.

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[1] Prophetological and *qisas al-anbiyā'* motifs, stories and associated materials exist within a very large variety of Islamic literary sources including the 14 categories listed above. They are encapsulated within a variety of literary forms and subjected to diverse hermeneutical transformations. In his *All the King's Falcons* Renard usefully listed the following categories into which such Islamicate prophetological materials might be divided. With an indication of where they correlate with my own (above-mentioned) list they are [1] Qur'ānic prophetology (--> 3.1,4- 5), [2] Historical prophetology (-->3.3), [3] Philosophical prophetology (-->3 .8), [4] Theological prophetology (-->3. 2. 9,11), [5] Theosophical prophetology (--> 3.12-13) and [6] Mystical prophetology (--> 3.10+12-13). The difference between Renard's categories (5) and (6) is not particularly distinct.

■ 3.1 The Bible and *Isrā'īliyyāt* in *Tafsīr* (Qur'ān commentary)

Undue reliance on Judaeo-Christian traditions relayed by *ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book) for exegetical and other purposes came to be frowned upon in certain early Muslim circles (<--1.1). Such caution, however, failed to prevent the widespread exegetical use of Isrā'īliyyāt in numerous early and later *tafsīr* works.[1] As one might legitimately speak of Isrā'īliyyāt traditions in the Q., `Tafsīr Isrā'īliyyāt' is a phrase used to indicate Muslim commentary by means of Abrahamic religious scripture and tradition. In this connection Newby has stated that "during the first century, material from the haggadic and midrashic sources of Judaism and the hagiologic writings of Eastern Christianity were assiduously collected for commenting on the Qur'an and for constructing histories of the pre-Islamic world" (1980:685 [Abstract]).

Early *tafsīr* works rich in Isrā'īlyyāt, including Islamicate bible citations and paraphrases, were composed by many Muslim Q. commentators. No comprehensive or detailed history of the presence (or absence) of Islamicate (pseudo-) biblical citations in *tafsīr* literatures has yet been written though Goldziher (1878), Goldfield (1988, etc –>bib.) and others have touched upon it as will be noted below.

■ Early *tafsīr* works

`Abd Allāh b.`Abbās (d. c.68 /687), a paternal first cousin of Muhammad, was known as *al-ḥi[a]br al-`arab* (Rabbi of the Arabs). Many Muslims have regarded him as the father of *tafsīr* because he is thought to have written the first Islamic *tafsīr* work (Goldziher,1970:65f; Sezgin GAS I:25; Goldfield,1981). Exegetical traditions stemming from Ibn `Abbās are especially rich in lexicographical insights and the Islamification of Isrā'īliyyāt. A knowledgeable companion of the Prophet, he was an important collector and transmitter of biblical legends stemming from the Yemeni Jewish convert Ka`b al-Aḥbār (<-1.1, Rippin 1991:166). Many of his associates and students were important second century *mufassirūn* (Q. commentators) who also transmitted

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[1]The following tradition recorded by Dawūdī in his *Ṭabaqāt al-mufassirīn* illustrates this, "A man asked al-A`mash [2nd century], `Why do men avoid the *tafsīr* of al-Mujahid?' He answered, `Because they think that he used to ask the people of the Book" (Dawudī, II:307 cited Ayoub 1:30)

exegetically influential *Isrā'īliyyāt.* A number of versions of his (reconstituted) *Tafsīr* entitled *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr Ibn `Abbās* are in print.[1] At the very beginning of his *Tafsīr* the following Judaeo-Christian rooted *ḥadīth* is cited relative to the first word *bism* of the first qur'anic *basmala,*

> The "B" *(al-bā')* is the splendour [beauty] of God *(bahā' Allāh),* his delight *(biḥjat),* his adversity *(bilā'),* his grace *(baraka)* and the commencement of his Name *al-bārī`* (The Creator) ..." (*Tanwīr,* 3; Lambden,1986:1ff; Wasserstom, 1995:165-171).

Like other early *mufassirūn* (Q. commentators) Ibn `Abbās made frequent use of non-literal, interpretation. Goldfeld has noted that his view that without being allegorized the Q. "might have no meaning to later generations" (1988:17, 25-27). There seems to have been a close relationship between the (first Imam) `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and Ibn `Abbās. The latter is reported to have said, "What I took from the interpretation of the Quran is from `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib". The possibly proto-Shī`ī companion, Ibn Mas`ūd, allegedly stated that `Alī was heir to both "the outward and the inward" dimensions of the Q. (Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr* 1:189-90 cited Nasr, ed. 1987:29). Traditions expressive of the Shī`ī affirmation of deep, inner senses in the Q. are especially found in statements of the fourth and sixth Imams, Muhammad al-Bāqir (d. c.126/743) and Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (d.c.148/765). They allegedly held that

> If the revelation of the Q. only had meaning with regard to the person or group of people to whom one or another verse was revealed, then the entire Q. would be dead today. Nay, rather! the sacred Book, the Q., is alive. It will never die for its verses will be fulfilled among the people of the future just as they have been fulfilled among those of the past (Ibn `Āmilī al-Iṣfahānī, *Tafsīr mir'āt al-anwār,* I:5-6; Corbin [paraphrase in]1995:90; cf. Lawson, 1993:195f).

In the *Tafsīr* ascribed to him Imam Sādiq has stated that deep senses and mysteries are enshrined in the Q. His *Tafsīr* contains a statement to the effect that the Q. consists of *`ibāra* (expression) and *ishāra* (allusion). The former is essentially the *ẓāhir* (exterior) and *bāṭin* (interiority) aspects of the Q. which are the preserve of the common believer. Its deeper allusive *(ishāra)* dimension is the inward delight of the *khawaṣṣ,* the privileged elect (Ja`far al-Ṣādiq,

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[1] *Dharī`a,* IV:244 No 1186; Smith, 1970:58-9f; Ayoub 1984 = 1:27-32 Though there are continuing doubts as to its authenticity a recent printing is Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya,1412/1992.

Tafsīr, 123, cf. Nwyia. `Ishāra EI^2 IV:114, Exégèse,156ff).

From the earliest times, a non-literal, hermeneutical orientation has been maintained in Imāmī, Sufi, Ismā'īlī, Twelver Shī`ī and other *tafsīr* works. Exegetical authority is vested in the prophet and the Imams who are believed to have sanctioned non-literal modes of qur'ānic exegesis (Bar-Asher, 1999:87ff). By means of allegory, typology and other forms of exegesis-eisegesis, the Q. was held to enshrine levels of meaning appropriate to successive generations. It has *bāṭinī* (inner, esoteric) dimensions as well as *ẓāhirī* (outer, exoteric) senses. This is the case in those Shī`ī sources in which the *mutashābihāt* (needing interpretation, Q. 3:7) verses of the Q. are given imamological or esoteric significances (Lawson, 1993; Habil, IS1:24-47; Bar-Asher, Elr. X:116-119).

Sunnī and Shī`ī sources regard Mujāhid b. Jabr al-Makkī (d. c.104/722) as a diligent, apparently proto-Shī`ī Q. commentator and an avid collector of expository pre-Islamic lore. A rationalist pupil of both Ibn `Abbās and Imam `Alī, he collected Abrahamic and related materials expository of the Q. (Ibn Sa`d, *Tabaqāt,* 5:344, 467). Mujāhid is even said to have travelled to Babel (Babylon) in order to more adequately expound the qur'ānic legend of the fallen angels Hārūt and Mārūt. Isrā'īliyyāt traditions linked to him are found throughout the *tafsīr* tradition. They are registered in the influential *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī (-->). Probable [Judaeo] -Christian influence through Mujāhid is seen in exegetical traditions pointing to Muhammad being, like the divine Jesus, "seated" upon the celestial Divine Throne (cf. Ps.110:1; Rev. 3:21).[1]

The possibly Zaydī (Shī`ī) commentator Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Khurāsānī (d. Baṣra, 150/767) was a very important early transmitter of Isrā'īliyyat. In his historically oriented *Tafsīr* he gave much attention to the "biblical pre-history" of verses, as Versteegh refers to the Isrā'īliyyāt.[2] Muqātil cited many exegetical traditions that can be traced back to the *ahl al-kitāb* (people of the Book). His *haggadic* type exegesis leaves little unexplained. The name, for example, of the *namla*

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[1] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* I:375f; etc.; Rosenthal, tr. Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh,* 1:75ff; Dhahabī, *Siyār A'lām,* noted Sālīḥī, 199X:10; Rippin, Mudjāhid, EI^2.

[2] See Lawson,1990:214f, 1993:130; Plessener [Rippin] `Mukātil b. Sulayman' EI ^{2} VIII: 508-9.

(female ant) with which Solomon held converse is given as *jarmī* (Muqātil, *Tafsīr* III:299 on Q. 27:18).

That God taught Adam all the "names" is taken by Muqātil to mean those of the (post-) Edenic animals (ibid, I:98 on Q. 2:32).The name of مُوسَىٰ (Mūsā = Moses) is divided into two and given a Coptic etymological meaning: مُو *mū* (= water) + سَىٰ *sā* (=`tree) (Tafsir III:337). Rooted in Judaeo-Christian tradition (Josephus, *Antiq.* Ii.9.6; Philo *Vita Moys,* I.4, etc) this exegesis was repeated and developed by later Muslim commentators including al-Ṭabarī and Ibn `Arabī.[1] It is an etymological exegesis repeated in the Shaykhī writings of Sayyid Kāẓim and in at least one Bahā'ī source (Rashtī, Qāsida, 9; AB* cited in Ishrāq Khāvarī, QI.IV:1543).

A good example of Muqātil's *tafsīr* Isrā'īliyyāt is the following comment upon a phrase of the celebrated `Throne Verse' *(āyat al-kursī* = Q. 2:255). Without *Iṣnād* Muqātil quotes the following from Wahb b. Munabbih as deriving from the *ahl al-kitāb* :

> "Four angels *(arba`at amlāk)* bear the [divine] Throne [Seat] *(kursī);* every angel has four faces. Their legs are situated beneath the [foundational] Rock *(al-ṣakhra)* which lies beneath the lowest earth *(al-arḍ al-suflā)* extending [for the distance of] a 500 year journey; and between all [of the seven] earth[s] is a 500 year journey!
>
> (1) [There is] an angel *(malak)* whose face has the appearance of a man [human form] (*alā ṣūrat al-insān)* which is the archetype of forms (*sayyid al-suwar).* Of God he requests sustenance for the progeny of Adam *(al-rizq li'l-ādamiyyīn).*
>
> (2) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of the exemplar of cattle *(`malak wajhihi alā ṣūrat sayyid al-an''ām)* which is the Ox *(al-thawr).* Of God he requests sustenance for the cattle [animals] *(al-bahā'im).*
>
> (3) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of the exemplar of the birds *(sayyid al-ṭayr)* which is the Eagle [Vulture] *(al-naṣr).* Of God he requests sustenance for the birds *(al-ṭayr)...*
>
> (4) [There is] an angel whose face has the appearance of the exemplar of beasts of prey *(ṣūrat sayyid al-sibā`)* which is the Lion *(al-asad).* Of God he requests sustenance for the beasts of prey *(al-sibā`).* (Muqātil, Tafsir I:213 on Q. 2:255b cf. V:222)

This exegetical tradition is rooted in a version of the quasi-cosmological Merkabah (`throne-chariot') vision of the first chapter of Ezekiel which is foundational for later Jewish merkabah mysticism (cf. Ezek.10). While Ezekiel 1:10 mentions "the four faces of the four creatures which

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[1]Tabarī, *Tafsīr,* I:280 on Q. 2:51/ tr. Cooper, 309 ; *Maḥādarat,* 130; *Fuṣuṣ,* 197f / tr. Austin, 254.

he visioned" the Ezekiel Targum understands this to signify four multi-faceted faces (4X16) equalling 64 faces (tr. Levey, AB13:20; cf. Rev 4:6b-9). That the qur'ānic image of the celestial Throne of God was of central cosmological and mystical importance is evidenced by the `Throne verse' (Q. 2:255). This text was given a variety of symbolic and esoteric significances by the twelver Imāms and by numerous Sufi and other exponents of the `ulūm al-ghayb (Islamic esoterica).[1]

Reputed master of the *`ulūm al-ghayb* ( the esoteric sciences) the sixth Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (d.148/765) is believed to have authored an allegorically oriented *Tafsīr* work (al-Ṣādiq, *al-Tafsīr*; Habil, 1987 ch.3; Sells, 1996:75f). One of his several acrostic interpretations of بِسْم (*bism* ، "In the name..") of the first *basmala* in the opening Sūrah (*al-fātiḥa* ,Q.1) of the Q., states:

> The *bism* ("In the name [of]") is composed of thee letters: the ب ("b") signifies his Eternity *(baqā),* the "s" (*al-sīn)* his Names *(asmā')* and the "m" *(al-mīm)* his Dominion *(al-mulk).* Thus the faith of the believer is mentioned by him throughout his Eternity *(bi-baqā'ihi)* while the servitude of the aspirant *(al-murīd)* is indicated through his Names *(al-asmā')* and of the gnostic *(al-ārif)* in his transcendent abstraction *(fanā')* from the kingdom by virtue of His Sovereignty over it *(Tafsīr al-Ṣādiq,* 1978:125 cf. Tabarī, Tafsīr 1:53-55;T. Ṣādiq, 125; cf. Biḥar [2] 9:238).

Certain of Ja`far al-Ṣādiq's interpretations of the Q. interpret prophetological themes including Moses' request to see God (Q.7:143, cf. Exodus 33:18-23). The Imam makes Moses a prototype of the *`ārif* (gnostic, `mystic knower') while the request to see God becomes an interior event within the reality of Moses. The negative response to Moses' request, the *lan tarānī* ("Thou shalt not see me [God]"), is interpreted as indicating the impossibility of direct beatific vision because mystical *fanā'* (annihilation of the "self") precludes "seeing": "How can that which passes away *(fānin)* find a way to that which abides *(bāqin)* ?" (trans. Sells, 1996:80). Through non-literal exegesis the transcendence of God is maintained.

Sufi allegorical-mystical *tafsīr* is very closely related and at times identical to Shī`ī *tafsīr.*

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[1] The relationship between Merkabah mysticism and Islamic thought awaits detailed (Halperin, 1988, App. 2). Both the `arsh (Throne) and the *kursī* (Seat) are mentioned in the Q. In his *Mirāt al-anwār* (Mirror of Lights) the Shī`īte theologian and qur'ān exegete Abū'l-Ḥasan al-`Āmilī al-Iṣfahānī (d.Najaf 1138/1726) records that *al-`arsh* (among other things) is borne by the the Prophet and the Imāms etc who are the bearers [custodians] of the knowledge of God, the locus of which is the *`arsh* ("Throne") (`Āmilī Iṣfahānī, *Mirat,* I:236-7)

A non-literal hermeneutic is often adopted. The *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* attributed to Sahl al-Dīn al-Ṭustarī (d. 283/896) is perhaps the oldest continuous Sufi *tafsīr.* It is related to but goes beyond the tradition of Ibn `Abbās (<--). Commenting upon the isolated letter *al-qāf* in the *sūra* of the same name (Q. 50), Ṭustarī reckons that it outwardly *(ẓāhir)* indicates the first created, world - surrounding, Mt. Qāf *(al-jabal, Tafsīr,* 92). The creation in six days mentioned in the *Sūrat al-ḥadīd* (Iron, Q. 57:3 cf. Gen.1) is expounded relative to the "He is the First and the Last" and associated with the *al-sm al-a`ẓam* (most mighty Name of God), with the six verses which commence sūra 50. (ibid, 98).

Tustarī's exposition of Q. 7:172 revolves around the concept of the pre-eternal covenant (Q. 7:172f; 33:7) which became highly significant in Shī`ism, Sufism and Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources (e.g. QA 69:281; BA* HWP:Nos.19&71). It is presupposed that a pre-existent, archetypal Adam was the primogenitor of a proto-humanity which mystically existed in the "loins" of this archetypal human. This Adam was further related to the Logos-like pre-existent *nūr al-Muḥammadiyya* (Light of Muhammad) (Bowering,1980:145ff; Sells 1996:92-95).

■ The Arabic Tafsīr of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/ 922) and its Persian recreation.

Bypassing other early *tafsīr* works, the foundational, massively erudite *Jāmi` al-bayān `an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* (The Assembling of the Exposition of the Exegesis of the verses of the Q.) of Abū Ja`far Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī demands mention. It is cited approvingly in many Shī`ī sources including the *Biḥar* of Majlisī (-->2.2). Drawing on the accumulated mass of exegetical traditions, al-Ṭabarī incorporates paraphrased biblical history and Isra'iliyyāt exegetical traditions often as relayed by Wahb b. Munabbih from the *ahl al-kitāb* (Newby 1980: 688). Though he avoids the direct citation of both the Hebrew Bible and the NT he does make considerable use of biblical paraphrase including a "detailed account of the story of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua"[1] and of Gospel narratives of Jesus' life and miracles. In upholding the post-qur'ānic notion of the literal *taḥrīf* ("corruption", "falsification") of both parts of the Bible, he had a negative effect on the Muslim

[1] See Hirschberg `Bible:Religious Impact' in Islam' EJ., 4 [CD]; Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh,* 514ff; trans. Brinner, *History* III:96ff.

view of the Bible (-->).

The Arabic *tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī was early, freely "translated" (actually recreated) into Persian prose by a group of *`ulamā* including Abū `Alī Muhammad Bal`amī (d. c. 387/997). This for Manṣūr b. Nūḥ (d. 365/976), the Samānid ruler of Transoxiana and Khurasan who found the Arabic difficult. The translation was apparently authorised by a *fatwa* rooted in Q.14:4 which had it that all pre-Ishmaelite prophets and kings had spoken Persian (*Tarjumah-yi tafsīr-I Ṭabarī* 1:5; Storey,1:2).[1] Aside from the qur'ānic text, relatively little of the Arabic *tafsīr* is directly translated into Persian. Instead, the translation is interrupted by Persian versions of stories of the prophets and even legendary tales culled from the *Shāh-nāma* epic of Firdawsī (d. 411/1019-1020). Numerous Isrā'īliyyāt in the form of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* stories absent in Ṭabarī's Arabic original are scattered throughout and central to the reworked Persian *Tasfīr* work of Bal`amī.

In the Persian Ṭabarī Moses' request to see God in Q. 7:143 is literally translated then commented upon in some detail. The shattering divine theophany is seen as an indirect vision of God's *amr* ("Logos") which caused Mount Sinai to be split into six pieces. Three pieces were translocated to Mecca and three to Medina (*Tafsīr* [Per.] 2:534-7). Within this Persian *Tasīr* select Judaeo-Christian and Zoroastrian traditions are registered. This perhaps with the aim of consolidating recent converts in their Islamic faith and /or inviting `people of the Book' into the Islamic fold (Meisami, 1999:35-37).[2]

■ Select Sunnī *Tafsīr* works

Bypassing many Arabic and Persian *tafsīr* works, mention should be made of the still largely unpublished *Tafsīr* of al-Tha`labī (al-Nīsābūrī, d. 427/ 1035) entitled *al-Kashf wa'l-bayān `an tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (`The Unveiling of the Exposition of the Commentary on the Qur'ān) which has been highly praised by Muslim scholars and biographers (Goldfield, 1981:134). Like Tha`labī's better

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[1] In Abrahamic (Jewish and Islamic) traditions God and/or the ancients are reckoned to have spoken Hebrew, Syriac or Arabic.

[2] Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' are fundamental to this Persian *Tafsīr*. The *Sūrat al-nūr* (Q.24), for example, is wholly replaced by the partially exegetical story of the `Slander of `Ā'isha'.

known *`Arā'is al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*(-->3.2) it contains much representative of the early *tafsīr* tradition and thus much Isrā'īliyyāt -- which to some degree accounts for its remaining unpublished.[1]

Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī (d.555 /1111) wrote a massive, now lost Q. commentary, *Yaqūt al-ta`wīl* (The Ruby of Spiritual Hermeneutics; so Habil, 1987:320-3) and other works important in the evolution of Q. Commentary. His famous *Mishkat al-anwār* (The Niche of Lights) is largely an interpretation of the `Light verse' (Q. 24:35) and the `verse of darkness' (Q. 24:40) along with the associated *ḥadīth* of the seventy thousand veils. It may be gathered from BA*s *Haft-Vādī* (Seven Valleys c.1858) and other works that from the late 1850s he had some familiarity with Sunnī and Sufi exegetes including al-Ghazālī.[2]

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) wrote an important rationalist *Tafsīr* work, variously entitled *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb..* (Keys of the Unseen) and *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (The Extensive Commentary). It incorporates multi-layered theological and rationalist philosophical speculations on qur'ānic verses and has been examined by a number of scholars interested in Judaeo-Christian and biblical matters (e.g IsChr. 4 :249 no. 31.1). Al-Rāzī's first-hand use of the Bible, especially the Gospel of John, has been noted. More than a century ago Goldziher gave examples of his citation of Islamicate biblical texts. These citations include a woe of God / Jesus (allegedly contained in sūrah 17 of the *Injīl* , Gospel) against such as seek knowledge *(`ilm)* but who are unable to differentiate it from ignorance *(al-jahhāl).* The following statement of Jesus is cited in al-Rāzī's *Tafsīr* from Muqātil b. Sulaymān (<--):

> O Jesus! Magnify the learned *(`ulamā')* and be conscious of their distinction for it is I [God] who has magnified them above all my creatures, apart, that is, from the prophets *(al-nabiyyīn)* and the sent messengers *(al-mursalīn).* This even as the distinction of the sun above the stars, the hereafter *(al-ākhirā)* compared to this world *(al-dunyā')* and my distinction above everything that exists (Mafātīḥ 1:403ff cited Goldziher, 1878:384-5; cf. Margoliouth, ERE 9:482).

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[1] Only indirectly in the Egyptian (Būlaq) edition of 1294/ 1877 (and later editions) has it apparently been made partially, indirectly available through the condensed version of the Shā'fi`ī traditionist and commentator Muḥyī al-Sunna al-Baghawī (d. 526/1117) entitled *Mu`ālim al-tanzīl* (`Instruction in the Revelation'; 4 vol. ed. Beirut:Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya, 1414/1993).

[2] See further Abdurrahman Habil's chapter `Tradition Esoteric Commentaries on the Quran' where important figures of the `Central Asian School of Najm al-Dīn Kubra' are mentioned (1987:33).

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was among those who denied the whole scale textual corruption *(taḥrīf)* of the biblical books. For him *taḥrīf* was a hermeneutical misunderstanding, a distortion of *ma'ānī,* ("meaning") not a textual alteration.

Born to the north of Shīrāz at Bayḍā', the polymathic Sunnī traditionalist `Abd-Allāh b.`Umar al-Dīn al-Baḍāwī (d.c.700/1300) produced a well-known condensed though critical reworking of the influential Q. commentary of the Mu`tazilite exegete and philologist Abū al-Qasīm al-Zamakasharī (d. 538/1144).[1] In this commentary al-Baḍawī shows an occasional knowledge of biblical data. In his commentary on the third sūra of the Q, for example, he makes use of the Matthean genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:1-17).

■ Select Shī`ī and Sufi mystical *Tafsīr* works

Among the foundational Shi`ī *tafsīr* works mention should be made of the partially extant though influential Shī`ī *tafsīr* works of Abū'l-Naẓr Muhammad al-Ayyāshī (fl-9th-10th. cent. CE) and the *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* of `Alī b. Ibrahīm al-Qummī (d.10th cent.). It must suffice here to note that the latter work, includes comments upon the first set of isolated letters A-L-M (*Alif-Lā—Mīm,*Q. 2:1), holding that they indicate "a portion of the letters of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (The mightiest Name of God)" (Qummī, *Tafsīr* 1:43). Qummī's *Tafsīr* includes many non-literal, imamologically oriented interpretations. Rippin has noted that Qummī did not simply define "Islam" as "submission" to God but reckoned it submission to the authority of the Twelver Imams (Enc.Rel.14:241).[2]

These two abovementioned early (9th-10th cent. CE) Shī`ī *Tafsīr* works had some influence upon the Bāb.[3] So too the *Tafsīr al-`Askarī* (Bar-Asher, 1999:34), a little studied Tafsīr

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[1] Abū al-Qasīm al-Zamakasharī's influential and linguistically profound rationalist commentary was entited *al-Kashshāf `an Ḥaqā'iq* (The Disclosure of Realities).

[2] Qummī's interpretation of A-L-M (Q. 2:1 etc) was repeated in later Shī`ī Tafsīr works including the lengthy Persian *Tafsīr Sharīf* of the philosopher-theologian student of Mullā Ṣadrā, `Abd al-Razzāq al-Lāḥījī (d. c.1072/1662). Lāḥījī explained these three isolated letters as an acrostic expressing the phrase *anā Allāh al-mulk* (I am indeed God, the Sovereign)` (*Tafsīr Sharīf* I:7).

[3]T. Kawthar, 40a; P.Dalā'il, 48-9 drawing on `Ayyāshī / Qummī *Tafsīr,* on Q. 2:1; cf. T.Hamd 69:145.

work attributed to the 11th Imam, Ḥasan al-`Askarī (d. c.260/873-4).[1] About half way through his *R. Dhahabiyya* the Bāb utilizes al-`Askarī's comments upon a verse of the *Sūrat al-Baqara* (Q. 2) in connection with the *ummī* [an] ("unletteredness") of Muhammad and his own relinquishing the *fitra*, (innate, God-given identity, R. Dhah. 86:84).

Muhammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d.460/1067) in his bulky (20 vol.) Shī`ī *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (The Clarification of Qur'ān Commentary) explains the verse "When the Lote-Tree was covered with that which covered it" (Q. 53:16) as allusion to that which emanates from or covers the *Sidrat al-muntahā* (Lote-Tree of the Extremity). He states that "the *Sidra* (Lote-Tree) was covered with *al-nūr* (Light), *al-bahā* (Splendour), *al-ḥusn* (Beauty) and *al-safā'* (Purity) so delightful that there is no end to its depiction" (Tibyān, 9:432).

■ **The Tafsīr works of the Bāb**

Letter by letter exegesis-eisegesis according to various *zāhir* and *bāṭin* levels of meaning was much utilized by the Bāb in various of his neo-*Tafsīr* works, e.g. T-Basmala, T- Aṣr, T-Kawthar. He had a special interest in the *`ilm al-ḥurūf* (the science of letters). Precedent for this exists in numerous works of Islamic atomistic, qabbalistic exegesis including works of al-Ḥallāj (d.304/922), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna d.428/1037 ) and various Sufi and `irfānī Shī`ī gnostics associated with the tradition of Ibn `Arabī, as well as that of the Ḥurūfis, Nuqṭawīs and Bekhtashis. Something of an example of this is provided by the following exegesis of the word *shajarat* "Tree" found in the Persian *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-taṣawwuf* (The Light of Sufism) of the proto-Ḥurūfī (Shafī`ī, Sufi) and Shī`ī inclined associate of Najm al-Dīn al-Kubra (d. 617/1220) and (indirectly?) Ibn al-`Arabī (d.638/1240), the much travelled Sa`d al-Dīn Hammūya (d. 650/1252):

> Know that [the letter] *shīn* (ش) of the tree *(shajara)* alludes to the testimony of martyrdom *(shahādat).* And [the letter] *jīm* (ج) indicates the paradise of the beauty of the Divine Countenance *(jannat-l jamāl-l vajh).* The letter *rā* (ر) points to the greatest Riḍvan (Paradise, *riḍvā–l akbar)* while the three dots of the [letter] *shīn* (ش)

[1] Towards its beginning the al-`Askarī *Tafsīr* contains an interesting dialogue between Moses and God partially rooted in this prophet's request to see "his Lord" (Q. 7:143). Without going into details God instructs Moses to the effect that Muhammad and his (Shī`ī) family and community, are the most honoured among the prophets *(al-anbiyā')* and all other creatures (al-Askarī, Tafsīr, 15ff).

allude to [1] the Spirit of God *sūh Allāh),* [2] the Holy Spirit *ṣūḥ al-quds)* and [3] the Faithful Spirit *ṣūḥ al-amīn* = Gabriel).

The letter *thā* (ث) of the fruit *(thamara)* is an allusion to the outbursting of meaning *(thawarā–l ma`nā)* which is the form of the tree *(ṣūrat-l shajarat).* The [letter] *mīm* (م) points to the eschatological return *(al-ma`ād)* and the [letter] rā (ر) to the Lord of the return *(rabb-l ma`ād).* And those three points of the [letter] *thā* (ث) are allusive of (1) hearing , (2) vision and (3) articulate speech.

Thus, in reality the tree *(shajara)* is the Tree of the divine unity *(shajara-` tawḥīd).* The fruit *(thamara)* is the fruit of unicity *(thamara-' vaḥdat)*. In its essential createdness *(khalqiyyat),* the "root", the "trunk", the "branch" and the "leaves" express the multiple forms. Then observe the multiplicity from the oneness *(vaḥdat)* and observe the oneness in the multiplicity *(vaḥdat dar kathirat)* (Hammūya, *al-Miṣbāḥ,* 124).

Though his own detailed and massive *Tafsīr* on the whole Q. remains unpublished, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-`Arabī wrote numerous *tafsīr* works (Yahya,1964 vol. 2: nos. 725-736)[1] including a *Tafsīr sūra yūsuf* (Commentary on the Sūra of Joseph; Yahya, 1964, 2:484 no 734a) and a *Qiṣṣat yūsuf fī'l-ḥaqīqa* ('The inner reality of the story of Joseph', ibid ii: 422-3 no. 574). Both the terminology and Sufi hermeneutical style of Ibn al`Arabī's non-literal, often gnostic type exegesis, is frequently reflected in the writings of Bāb and BA*. Though they condemned *waḥdat al-wujūd* (existential oneness) they show very considerable influence from the Great Shaykh and his disciples.

Influential also were the works of Ibn al-`Arabī's mystically inclined pupil `Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d.c.730/1330) whose *Tafsīr* is often printed as if that of his master (Loiry,1980). The following is an extract from Kāshānī's commentary on the Sūra of the Mount *(al-ṭūr,* Q. 52:1-5);

"By the Mount!" *(wa'l-ṭūr).* The "Mount" *(al-ṭūr)* is the mountain on which Moses conversed with Him [God]. It [symbolically] signifies the human brain *(al-dimāgh al-insānī)* which is a seat of intellect and articulation *(maẓhar al-`aql wa'l-nuṭq)....* its Being is the locus of the divine Command *(maẓhar al-amr al-ilāhī)* and the seat of the eternal decree *(al-qiḍā' al-azalī).* "And the Book Outstretched" *(wa'l-kitāb al-masṭūr)* is the all-encompassing form *(ṣūrat al-kull)* according to what interfaces with Him of the established order *(al-niẓām al-ma`lūm).* It is what is engraved in the tablet of the decree *(lawḥ al-qiḍā')* and the Most Great Spirit *ṣūḥ al-a`ẓam)* ... (Ibn `Arabī/ al-Kāshānī,Tafsir 2:553).

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[1] Ibn al`-Arabī also wrote a *Tafsīr āyat al-kursī* (Commentary on the Throne Verse, Q. 2:256 = Yahya ibid. ii no. 728) and *a Tafsīr āyat al-nūr* (Commentary on the Light Verse; Q. 24:35). See also *Yaḥya* ibid ": 482, no 729 (unfortunately these works remain unpublished).

Returning to a Shī`ī tafsīr work, the *Majma` al-bayān li-`ulūm al-Qur'ān* (The Compilation of the Explanation of the Sciences of the Qur'ān) of the Shī`ī theologian Abū `Alī al-Ṭabarsī (d. c. 548/1153) has been called a Shī`ī " encyclopedia of Qur'ānic sciences" (O.A. Abdul, 1977:78). Here al-Ṭabarsī presents in Arabic characters a Hebrew transliteration of the biblical etymology of the tetragrammation (יהוה = Y-H-W-H, Yahweh), אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (= `ehye `āsher `ehye, Exod. 3:14a, loosely), "I am that I am" (RSV). He considered it one of the forms of the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name [of God]), said in Arabic to be *yā ḥayy yā qayyūm* (O Living One! O Self-Subsisting!) (Ṭabarsī, *Majma`* XIX:226). In one of his many *alwāḥ* to oriental Jews, BA* reflected such sources when he used the Arabic transliteration اهيه اشر اهيه for אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה and transliterated the (unvowelled) tetragrammaton يهوه (= Y-H-W-H) (BA* Ma'idih 4:40; Lambden, 1983:22ff; 1988:66f,155f).

The important Shī`ī, esoterically inclined *tafsīr* works and *ḥikmat al-muta`āliyya* (Transcendent wisdom) formulations of (Mullā) Ṣadrā al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d.1050/1640) deserve mention (Peerwani , 1991-->4.2). His massive *irfānī* (gnostic) *Tafsīr al-kabīr* (Weighty Commentary) expresses something of an integration of Avicennan thought, the theosophy of Ibn al-`Arabī and the *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* perspectives of Yaḥya Suhrawardī. Islamicate biblical citations can be found in various of his works including his commentary on the *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* (-->4.2). This integration was also furthered by Mullā Ṣadrā's student and son-in-law Mullā Muḥsīn Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d.1091/1680) whose *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfī fī tafsīr kalām Allāh al-wāfī* (The Pristine *Tafsīr...*) was particularly influential[1]. So also the Persian and Arabic *`irfānī* commentaries on select *sūrahs* of the Q. of the philosopher and polymathic pioneer of Judaeo-Christian dialogue Sayyid Aḥmad al-Alawī (d.c.1050/1650). His works have been "considered to be one of the outstanding gnostic, theosophical commentaries in the Shī`īte world".[2] Those relating to the bible and dialogue will be

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[1]Nasr, CHI 6:688-690; Achena, EI[2] Supp. `Fayḍ-I Kāshānī', 305; Lawson, 1993:180ff.

[2] Abdurrahman Habil, IS 1:37+fn.59, 46 ; Corbin EIIr., 3:228 n. 58 cf.1:644-646.

commented upon below (--> 4.2).

Various Akhbārī (`tradition centred') Shī`ī commentators utilized and highlighted the importance of a non-literal hermeneutic (Elr.1:716-18; Lawson, 1993). On occasion they set down interesting interpretations to Q. rooted Isrā'īliyyāt materials as found in the traditions (*akhbār*). Only passing mention can be made here to such exegetes. They include `Abd `Alī al-Ḥuwayzī (d.1112/1700), author of the *Kitāb tafsīr nūr al-thaqalayn* (The Book of the Commentary on the Light of the Twin Weights) and Sayyid Hāshīm al-Baḥrānī (d. c.1110 /1697) who wrote the *Kitāb al-burhān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (The Book of the Evidence in the Commentary on the Qur'ān).

The *Mir'āt al-anwār wa mishkāt al- asrār fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Mirrors of Lights and Niches of Mysteries in Commentary upon the Qur'ān) of al-`Āmilī al-Iṣfahānī (d.1138/1726) contains an extensive prolegomenon highlighting and expounding the deeper hermeneutics of qur'ānic exegesis. Included in its extensive alphabetical glossary of key Shī`ite terms are expositions of many biblical-qurānic figures including Gabriel, Adam, Abraham, Lot, Gog and Magog (Yājūj and Mājūj), Joseph, Israel (Isrā'īl), Solomon (Sulaymān) and Jesus. Corbin described this volume as "one of the monuments of Iranian theological literature, furnishing inexhaustible material for comparative research on the hermeneutics of the Book among the "People of the Book"" (Corbin. Elr. I:931-2; *Dharī`a* 20:264f., no. 2893; Lawson, 1993:195f).[1]

Before concluding this section mention should be made of the huge and widely-respected early 19th century commentary of the `Alīd Sunnī Abū al-Thanā', Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d.1270 /1854) entitled *Rūḥ al-ma`ānī fī tafsīr al-qur'ān al-`aẓīm..* (The Spirit of the Meaning in Commentary upon the Mighty Qur'ān).[2] A one-time *muftī* of Baghdad, Ālūsī was aware of both early Shaykhism and Bābism. Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī the second Shaykhī leader (–>4.4) appears to have corresponded with him (Fihrist:323 No. 256; Nicolas, Essai II:35 no. 100). Though Ālūsī condemned Bābī heresy

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[1] Various Ismā'īlī *tafsīr* works also contain interesting allegorical and other non-literal, sometimes esoteric modes of exegesis. Such is the case with the fragmentary *Mizāj al-tasnīm* (The Condition of *Tasnīm*) of Ibn Hibat Allāh (d.1760).

[2] Written in the 1200s/ 1800s this work has been published in Egypt in six volumes, Cairo: al-Maṭba`at al-Amīrah, 1870; Bulaq 1301-10/1883-92 and also recently reprinted (-->bib.).

at the time of the trial of Mullā `Alī Bastāmī (d. Istanbul,1846), the Bāb invited him to embrace his religion in an Arabic letter written from Mākū (1848) in which he claimed divinity and to be the awaited Mahdī: "I, verily, am God, no God is there except I myself, I manifested myself on the Day of Resurrection... I am the Mahdī" (Zā'im al-Dawlā, *Miftāḥ,* 212-15). For a few months in the early 1850s, Alūsī accommodated under house arrest the learned and revolutionary female Bābī, Fāṭima Baraghānī, better known as Ṭāhira (d.1270/1852) who may also have had a role in the evolution of Bābī-Bahā'ī missions to the Jews its emergent bible exegesis (Āyatī, Kawākib 1:118; Mazandarānī, ZH 6:703-4). Ālūsī's commentary and other writings apparently contain passing reference to the first two Shaykhī leaders as well as to the Bāb and Ṭāhira whom he is said to have greatly admired (cf. Noghabā'ī,1983:137).[1]

The *Rūḥ al-ma`ānī* is a wide-ranging compendium of pre-19th century Islamic *tafsīr* works. While *isnād* details are registered sparingly select Shī`ī and some mystical perspectives are sometimes recorded. Al-Alūsī's occasionally modernistic commentary shows some knowledge of the Bible. It exhibits a traditional yet ecumenical viewpoint registering a wide range of opinions (Smith, 1970:2251-9).

Considerable attention is paid by al-Alūsī to theological aspects of Isrā'īliyyāt traditions related by such persons as have been mentioned above (<--1.1). The story of Moses' request to see God (Q. 7:143), for example, is discussed at length *ṣūḥ* 5:43-52). Attention to detail is evident in the comments upon the *alwāḥ* (Tablets) which God gave to Moses on Sinai *(al-ṭūr).* Expounding the words, "And We wrote from him [Moses] upon the *alwāḥ* (Tablets) something of everything (*min kulla shay'*; Q. 7:145a) Alūsī records various opinions as to the number of *alwāḥ*, their *jawhar* (substance), their *miqdār* (measure, scope) and their *kātib* (inscriber):

> "[Regarding] their number, it is said that there were ten and [also that there were] seven or two... the *alwāḥ* were [made of] green emerald *(zumurrud akhḍar).* The Lord, exalted be He, commanded Gabriel and he brought them from [the Garden of]

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[1] I have not been able to locate these references in either the edition printed in or the CD version though the Arabic text is cited by Noghabā'ī. This Bahā'ī writer has Alūsī refer to Ṭāhirih as "one in whom I witnessed grace and perfection the like of which I had not perceived in most men.." (1983:137). Gulpayigānī, *Kashf al-Ghiṭa,* 95-6; Māzandarānī, ZH III:356-9; AB* *Tadhkirat,* 194/ Memorials, 194-5).

> Eden... Others say that they were [made] of ruby.. And I say that they were of emerald.. It is related from the Prophet, `The *alwāḥ* which were sent down unto Moses were from the Lote-Tree of Paradise *(sidr al-jannat)* and the length of the Tablet(s) was twelve cubits" *(Rūḥ al-ma`ānī* V:55).

Finally, brief mention should be made of the Egyptian moderniser, reformist and commentator Muhammad Abdūh (d.1322/1905). He wrote an influential, incomplete *Tafsīr* work revised and completed by his pupil Rashīd Riḍā (d.1935) and also put out a short-lived periodical entitled *al-`Urwa al-wuthqā'* (The Firm Handle) with the Iranian reformer Jamāl Asadābādī [al-Afghānī] (d.1897) who had probably spent some time with BA* and the Bābīs in Baghdad (Cole, 1998, index). Abdūh also wrote a *Risāla al-tawḥīd* (Treatise on the Divine Oneness, 1897) and a work on Christianity and Islam *al-Islām wa'l-Naṣrāniyya* (Cairo, 1902). He aligned himself with those who rejected the Islamic concept of *taḥrīf* as the total corruption of biblical scripture and had some acquaintance with the Bible . Abduh gave great weight to rationalism. Like AB* whom he had met he argued that the existing bible must be authentic because it cannot have been universally corrupted.

■ The Bible, Isrā'īliyyāt and Bābī-Bahā'ī *Tafsīr*.

> God revealed the Qur'ān according to the likeness of the creation of all things *(bi-mithl khalq kulli shay')*.. For every single letter of the Qur'an, as accords with its being totally encompassed by the knowledge of God, to the level of its existent particles *(min dhawāt al-ashyā')*, there is a *tafsīr* (interpretation). For every *tafsīr* (interpretation) there is *a ta`wīl* (deeper sense). For every *ta`wīl* there is a *bāṭin* level (`deep inner sense'). For every *bāṭin* there are also further deep inner senses *(bāṭin)*, dimensions to the extent that God wills.. (B* T.Kawthar, fol. 8b).

Bābī-Bahā'ī spiritual hermeneutics mostly follow the aforementioned Shī`ī-Sufī-Irfānī-Shaykhī non-literal hermeneutical methods. They accept *ẓāhir* (outer) and numerous *bāṭin* (inner) senses of the Q. as did Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim (Sh-Qaṣīda,169-70). As indicated in the above passage from the Bāb, BA* and the Bābī-Bahā'ī leaders generally upheld the position that the sacred word has an infinite number of deep senses, even down to the qabbalistic level of its letters and beyond. Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources have it that past sacred texts derive their ultimate meaning in and through the theophanic person and religion of the latest *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (divine Manifestation'). The existence of *ẓāhir* (literal) and *bāṭin* (inner) senses of sacred writ are affirmed

(BA*T.Shams; T.Ta'wīl–>bib.) as are innumerable even deeper sometimes eschatologically meaningful scriptural senses. Such deep levels are often referred to as the *bāṭin al-bāṭin,* the interior of the interior, the most inward of the esoteric senses (<–B*,*Kawthar* ; BA* KI:198/ [SE*]163).

The importance of the Q. to both the Bāb and BA* can hardly be overestimated (<--1.0). Both cited it thousands of times and frequently commented upon portions of it. In his Persian and Arabic Bayāns the Bāb divided the totality of his writings into five "modes" ("grades", "categories", *shu'ūn),* the fourth of them being *tafsīr* type revelations, Arabic verses in some sense expository of or comparable to qur'ānic revelations. For the Bāb the revelation of qur'ānic like Arabic verses constituted a true miracle, the touchstone of assured prophethood.

From the outset many of the writings of the Bāb were distinctly neo-qur'ānic in form; having isolated letters, being divided into sūrahs and written in rhyming prose. The Bāb associated his revelations with the *ta'wīl* (inner sense) or *bāṭin* (interior dimension) of the Q. The use of non-literal *ta'wīl* in his first major work, the *Tafsīr sūrat yūsuf* (= QA; mid.1844) suggests that he saw this work as unlocking the messianic *ta'wīl* or deeper senses of the entire Q. "O people of the earth", the Bāb writes towards the end of this neo-Tafsīr, "This Book (= QA) is the *tafsīr* of everything *(li-kulli shay')* (QA 111:448; cf. 104:414 41:151; 38:142; 44:164; 61:242).

In an early letter the Bāb refers to his partially extant and originally 700 sūra *Kitāb al-rūḥ* (Book of the Spirit, 1845) as a work which he "revealed upon the ocean on the return of the *Dhikr* (to Shīrāz after the Ḥajj) in seven hundred sūrahs, in definitive, expository verses *(muḥkamat āyāt bayyināt)* expressive of the *bāṭin* of the Qur'ān.." (INBMC 91:89-90). This work is thus identified with the *muḥkamat,* the established dimension of the (revealed) verses, though it is also an exposition of the *bāṭin* of the Q. Here as elsewhere the Bāb subtly challenges qur'ānic *'ijāz* (inimitability):

> Yea indeed! We have sent down in the Book [K. Rūḥ, Bāb's revelations] certain verses which are the *bāṭin* (interior meaning) of the Qur'ān" (ibid).

In another early (pre-June 1845) work addressed to Muslim clerics, the *Kitāb al-'ulamā'*, the Bāb

again associates the *bāṭin* (interiority) of the Q. with revelations sent down through himself ("Our servant `Alī") as a "proof" *(ḥujjat)* from the eschatological Baqiyyat-Allāh (Remembrance of God)" for the faithful (Ar. text, Afnān, 2000:107).

The Bāb authored several *tafsīr* works only a few aspects of which have been the subject of academic analysis (Lawson, 1986+ bib.->). Aside from nine lost complete qur'ān commentaries dating from the time of the Bāb's imprisionment in Mākū (1848, DB:31), the extant, major, all Arabic *tafsīr* works of the Bāb are, according to the sūra numbers commented upon (cf. McEoin, Sources, index, tafsīr) as follows:

(1) *[Ḥurūf al-] Basmalah (Bismillāh al-raḥman al-raḥīm),*
(2) *al-Hā'* (the letter "H") in two versions (I & II--> bib.)
(3) *al-Ḥamd or al-Fātiha* (The Opening, Q.1)
(4) *al-Baqara* (`The Cow', Q.2;; incomplete) dating to early 1260/1844.
(5) *al-Yūsuf* (Q. 12 Joseph), the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (= QA). Mid 1844
(6) *Ayāt al-Nūr* (Light Q. 24:35), (`the light Verse') and a few others verses of Q. 24.
(7) On Q. 50:16 and Q. 112:4 (for Ḥasan Waqā'ī`-yi-Nigār).
(8) *Laylat al-Qadr* (Q.97 `The Night of Destiny').
(9) *al-`Aṣr* (Q. 103 The Era [Afternoon])
(10) *al-Kawthar* (Q. 107, `The [Eschatological] Abundance').

Aside to some degree from the 1259-60/1843-4 *T. Baqara*, most of the *Tafsīr* works of the Bāb are not exactly comparable to classical Islamic *tafsīr* compositions. In form and content they are often more neo-qur'ānic than *tafsīr* works. Exhibiting rewritten *tafsīr* characteristics often in a revelation *(waḥy)* mode the Bāb's often eisegetical works challenge the inimitability *(I`jāz)* of the Q. Innovative post-qur'ānic dimensions and eschatologically suggestive levels of meaning are subtly or boldly in evidence in many of the *Tafsīr* works of the Bāb.

Several of the commentaries listed above interpret biblically rooted qur'ānic narratives. The best example of this is the multi-faceted story of Joseph. In the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (= QA), this *aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ* (`best of stories') is given a complex, multi-faceted imamological and gematric level of eschatologically suggestive senses. Other narratives directly or allusively interpreted by the Bāb, include verses dealing with episodes in the lives of Abraham, Dhu'l-Qarnayn, Moses, David, Jesus and others (-->). Qur'ānic prophetological motifs and narratives along with occasional Isrā'īliyyāt traditions are given post-Islamic senses meaningful within the new Bābī theophany.

In line with numerous *ḥadīth* of the prophet and the Imams and like the Bāb, both BA* and Abd al-Bahā' (= AB*) again accord multiple meanings to the sacred books of the past. BA* often expressed this as the following extract from one of his earlier writings illustrates:

> Know that the words of God *(kalimāt Allāh)* and his scriptures *(sufarā')* have inner sense upon inner sense *(ma`ānī ba`du ma`ānī),* allegorical meaning *(ta`wīl)* after allegorical meaning *(ta`wīl),* cryptic senses *(rumūzāt)* and allusive significances *(isharāt)* as well as evident proofs *(dalālāt).* There are, furthermore, clear regulative meaning(s) *(ḥukm/ḥukum)* that are without end. No single person is aware of even a letter of the inner meanings [of scripture] save such as your Lord, the All-Merciful has willed (BA*, Tablet for Jawād Tabrīzī, INBMC 73:[179-186]173).

BA* as well as `AB* also wrote many often non-literal commentaries on select sūrahs and / or verses of the Q. (-->). Like the Bāb they frequently utilized an allegorical hermeneutic. The orientation of these *tafsīr* works is often eschatological fulfillment and doctrinal renewal through a new Bābī-Bahā'ī universe of discourse. Though less well-known as a Q. commentator, BA* expounded a very large number of qur'ānic verses, though few complete qur'ānic sūras. Like the Bāb he occasionally gave a detailed atomistic exegesis-eisegesis to particular phrases, words and letters of the Q. A characteristically Bāb-like qabbalistic, letter by letter, *`ilm al-ḥurūf* exegesis seen in the Bāb's *T. Basmalah* and *T. `Aṣr* is evident in certain early works of BA* (INBMC 56:24ff). Among the not yet fully collected and catalogued distinctly *tafsīr* works of BA* are,

(1) *L. Kull al-ṭa`ām* (the Tablet of All Food) on Q. 3:87 ©. 1853/4?).

(2) *T. Ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa`a* (The Isolated Letters [of the Q.] c.1858) also known as T. *āyāt al-nūr* (Commentary on the Light Verse).
(3) *T. Basmala,* on the *basmalah* and its component letters, etc.
(4) *T. Yūsuf,* on passages, verses and motifs of Q.12 or on the QA of the Bāb.
(5) T. Q. 68:1a including the letters of the *basmala,* the isolated letter ن *(nūn)* and verse 1a , "By the Pen!"
(6) T. Q. 13:17-18a & 18:60-90 contains a detailed exposition of the story of Moses and Khiḍr and of Dhū'l-Qarnayn and Yajūj and Mājūj (Gog and Magog).
(7) *T. Sūrat wa'l-shams* (Q. 91)

Certain of BA*'s *tafsīr* statements refine, supplement or develop those of the Bāb. There thus exists in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture what might be called multiple, progressively expounded texts of the (Bible-) Q. This cumulative, multi-faceted *tafsīr* of the Bāb and BA* is sometimes also further

interpreted by AB*[1] and less frequently by SE* or members of the Bahā'ī community. A *tafsīr* notice of the Bāb touching upon qur'ānic *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, for example, is not infrequently given further levels of interpretation by BA*, AB* and others. Developed Bābī-Bahā'ī Q. commentary expresses several dimensions of meaning evolving over a period of more than a century (1844-1957>). A few examples of this evolving *tafsīr* are found in connection with the Bābi-Bahā'ī exegesis of the Joseph story and that of Dhū'l-Qarnayn. It is often in *tafsīr* contexts that Isrā'īliyyāt traditions are interpreted or reinterpreted beyond their Judaeo-Christian, Abrahamic roots.

■ **3. 2 The Bible and *Isrā'īliyyāt* in *aḥādīth / akhbār* (Compendia of traditions).**

In the first few Islamic centuries *tafsīr* works and *ḥadīth* compilations were hardly differentiated. Ayoub has stated that it was from a very early period that the *ahl al-kitāb*

> .. played an important and controversial role in the development of *ḥadith* and *tafsir* tradition. A need was felt from the beginning to know more about the prophets of old and their generations than the meagre information which the Qur'an provided" (1984:30).

Both Sunnī and Shī`ī Muslims give tremendous weight to *ḥadīth (pl. aḥādīth), khabar* (pl. *akhbār*) literatures though relative to the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt only select Shī`ī compilations can be considered here.[2] For the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* (twelver) Shī'īs authoritativee prophetic traditions are supplemented by those deriving from the `Alid Imāms, from `Alī up till Ḥasan al-`Askārī and his allegedly occulted son Muhammad (d. c. 260/874). These Twelver Shī`a give especial weight to "the four books" three of which are predominantly legalistic.[3] They are supplemented by three other

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[1] BA* sometimes asked his son AB* to respond to questions regarding *tafsīr.* issues. Among AB*'s *tafsīr* works is a commentary on the *Basmala,* on the *Sūrat al-Rūm* Q.30:1-5 (The Byzantines [Romans], probably dating to the late 1880s) and various commentaries on passages within the Bāb's QA relating to the Sūrat Yūsuf (Q.12). AB* wrote various *Tafsīr* letters in Persian, Arabic and Turkish.

[2]Traditions are valued for doctrinal guidance and for patterns of life-style they set down for emulation. Though Sunnī and Shī`ī collections of tradition have much in common, as the Bāb does not seem to have specifically cited Sunnī *ḥadīth* collections and BA* only did this sparingly in his latter years, the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in specifically Sunnī sources will be bypassed (Goldziher, GS [1971]; Schwartzbaum, 1982:29-38+fns.).

[3] The legalistic books among these four are (2) the legal textbook *[Kitāb] Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh* (The Book for whomsoever is without a lawyer) of Muhammad b. Bābūya al-Qummī (= al-Ṣadūq, d. 381/991) (9,000+ traditions) and the two works (3) *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* (The Correction of the Judgements) (3,000+ traditions) and (4) *al-Istibṣār.. al-akhbār* (The Examination.. of the Reports) (5,000+

massive compendia one of which is again distinctively legalistic (Librande, `Ḥadīth' Enc. Rel. 6:150-1). Out of these seven (4+3 supp.) compendia it is the following three large works which include some material relating to the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt:

(1) [K.] *al-Kāfī fī `ilm al-dīn* ( [The Book of] What is Sufficient for the Knowledge of Religion' ) of Abū Ja`far Muhammad b. Ya`qūb al- Kulaynī [Kulīnī] (d.c. 329/941) (15,000+ hadīths);
(2) The commentary on the *Kāfī* of Kulīnī (= Kulaynī) by Ṣadrā al-Dīn Shīrāzī (= Mullā Ṣadrā d.1050/1640) and
(3) The *al-Wāfī* (The Comprehensive) of Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d.1090/1679), a compilation with commentary on the "four books" (<--).

The early and lengthy *al-Kāfī fī `ilm al-dīn* of Kulīnī (d.c. 329/941) was written during the *ghaybat al-sughrā* (lesser occultation) and was specifically cited by both the Bāb and BA* [1] as was certain of its six supplementary volumes, the compendium of miscellanea, entitled the *Rawḍat al-kāfī* (The Garden of the Kāfī). The eighth volume is of particular interest in that it contains a large collection of traditions touching upon prophetological, eschatological, imamological and other matters associated with pre-Islamic prophets. Sections within it record traditions of the Imams dealing with Adam and the Tree, the story of Cain and Abel as well as Shī`ī sayings of Jesus and other pre-Islamic prophets. There are also traditions dealing, for example, with the cosmological secrets of the celestial Domes *(ḥadīth al-qibāb)*, Yājūj and Mājūj (Gog and Magog) and much more besides (*Furū`* 8:97ff).

Ayoub has translated some traditions reflecting the Shī`ī image of Jesus and his sayings in the *Rawḍat al-kāfī* (Ayoub,1976). An example of a Shī`ī Jesus logion reads, "Verily, I say to you, Moses commanded you not to swear by God, truthfully or falsely, rather to say, "Yea" or "Nay" (cf. Exod. 20:7; Matt 5:34; Ayoub, 1976:184). Also recorded in the *Rawḍat al-kāfī* is a series of beatitudes of Jesus (VIII·141f, Ayoub 1976:177).

Vajda has discussed aspects of the post-biblical, Talmudic-Midrashic Jewish substrate of several Shī`īte Isrā'īliyyāt informed traditions found in the *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* of al-Kulīnī. These traditions

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hadiths) of Muhammad b. Ḥasan al-Tūsī (d.460/1067).

[1] In his *K. īqān* BA* cites traditions from both the *Kāfī* and the *Rawḍat al-kāfī* (KI:190-1 / 56-7).

uphold the authority of the twelver Imams or set out various other Shī`ī perspectives. Nine Isrā'īliyyāt passages are identified by Vajda, including, [1] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* I:383, on the nature of the flowering rod of Solomon (see Num.17:1ff [16-24]; 1 Sam 16:1ff ), [2] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* II:265, recording words of Imam `Alī related by Ja`far al-Ṣādiq, "Poverty *(al-faqr)* is a supreme ornament *(azyan)* for the believer *(mumin)*" which has midrashic precedent ( B.Ḥagīga 9b, cf. Lev. Rabba, 13, 4), [3] *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* II:270 which records the following prophetic saying relayed by Ja`far al-Ṣādiq parallelled at Deut. 27:18-21, "Cursed! Cursed be whomsover is the servant of money *(al-dīnār wa'l-dirham).* Cursed! Cursed! Be whomsover leads the blind astray! Cursed! Cursed! Be he who copulates with a beast *(behīma)"* (Vajda, 1981:46f).

Aside from the abovementioned repositories of Shī`ī tradition, the encyclopaedic *Biḥar al-anwār* (Oceans of Lights; 2nd ed.110 vols) of Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1111/1699-1700) is a further very influential thematized collection of Shī`ī traditions. It is quite frequently cited in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary scripture.[1] In the new 110 volume edition it includes four volumes totalling over 1, 500 (394+ 388+ 407+522) pages making up the *K. al-nubuwwa* (Book of Prophethood; 2nd ed. vols.11-14). Within it numerous qur'anic verses are expounded, Isrā'īliyyāt influenced traditions cited, and other Islamicate materials related from a wide variety of sources. Much is said about prophets believed to have lived between Adam until Muhammad. Rich in Isrā'īliyyāt the *K. al-nubuwwa* cites, for example, Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* and a lengthy extract from the *K. al-kharā'ij* of Quṭb al-Dīn Rawandī (d. Qumm 573/1177-8) which includes several citations of Islamicate (pseudo-) Johannine paraclete sayings such as the following,

> And he (Jesus) says in another narrative, `the *fāraqlīṭ* (> Gk παράκλητος the Paraclete), the Spirit of Truth *sūḥ al-ḥaqq)* whom he [God] will send in my [Jesus'] name shall teach you all things *(kulli shay')* (Biḥār, 15:211; cf. Jn 14:26; 16:13).

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[1]The Bāb and BA* as well as AB* and SE* sometimes challenged the authenticity of Islamic traditions recorded by Majlisī and others. Citing eschatological proof texts in his (Persian) *Dalā'il-I Sab`ih,* for example, the Bāb directs his (Shaykhī?) questioner to the *Biḥār* though he boldly has it that the authenticity of such traditions is suspect *(taḥqīq-I īn aḥādīth ithbāt nīst,* DSP:51). Going further in a complex commentary upon the prophetic import of certain isolated letters of the Q., the Bāb cites then disagrees with Majlisī holding that he had failed to grasp the true *ẓāhir* (outer) import of the qur'ānic isolated letters which he had applied to his own time (Biḥār^2 52:107; INBMC 98:35ff).

Aside from the *Biḥār* of Majlisī, the Bāb and BA* also quote a wide range of traditions from sometimes obscure Shī`ī compilations. In his *T. Kawthar* , for example, the Bāb cites lengthy eschatological traditions including some ascribed to al-Mufaḍḍal ibn `Umar Ju`fī ( d. c. 762- 3), a companion of Ja`far al-Ṣādiq from whom he is said to have relayed traditions and treatises (T. Kawthar, fols. 38b-39a; 55a; 57a, etc). These include a work of al-Mufaḍḍal, the *K. al-tawhīd al-Mufaḍḍāl* (*Dharī`a* IV:482 No. 2156; GAL 1:530 No. 9; *T. Kawthar,* fol.108aff).[1]

Many examples could be given of the considerable influence of specific *ḥadīth* upon the doctrines of the Bāb and BA* some of which are Isrā'īliyyāt rooted traditions. The `Ḥadīth of the Cloud (*al-`amā'*) record's Muhammad's response to a question posed by Abū Razīn al-`Aqīlī about God's location "before he created the creation";

> He [God] was in عماء (*`amā'*, a "cloud") with no air above it [Him] and no air below it [Him]. Then he created His Throne upon the [cosmic] Water (cited al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* 1:36).

Regarded as "especially sound" by al-Ṭabarī this prophetic *ḥadīth* reflects passages in the Hebrew Bible where God is said to dwell in "thick darkness" (Heb. עֲרָפֶל *araphel* Exod. 20:21b) and whose theophany was at times in a "pillar of cloud" (Exod. 33:9ff; cf. 1 Kings 8:12; Ps. 97:2; Jud. 13:22). It is also strongly reminiscent of the apophatic theological speculations of the Cappadocian Father Gregory of Nyssa (d. c. 395 CE) some of whose works were early translated into Arabic. His *On the Life of Moses* states that the "divine cloud" which led the Israelities (Exod. 13:31-2) was "something beyond human comprehension" (Life of Moses, tr. 38; cf. Philo, Vit. Mos. I.29.166).

Through the influence of the above Islamic tradition upon his cosmology, Ibn al-`Arabī made considerable use of the term *`amā'* (lit. "blindness", "cloud") and of genitive phrases containing it (*al-Futūḥāt*; 1:148; 2:310; 3:430 etc; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu`jam,* 820f ). So likewise the Bāb whose QA makes frequent use of *`amā'* and related genitive expressions (100+ times). In this work the Bāb included addresses to a mysterious *ahl al-`amā'* (denizens of the Divine cloud) associated with the

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[1]There were a number of 19th cent. editions of works ascribed to al-Mufaḍḍāl /Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq. Among them a Persian translation by Majlisī of an Arabic work entitled *Tawḥīd-I Mufaḍḍāl* (Tehran, 1860 + Najaf 1375/1955).This Arabic text was also recently printed as *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍāl,* Maktabat Aḥmad `Īsā' al-Zawād, Suyahāt: Saudi Arabia. 1403/1983.

celestial Sinaitic realm (Lambden1984;1988). A commentary on the `Tradition of *'amā"* was specifically written by the Bāb for Sayyid Yaḥyā Dārābī, Vaḥīd (d.1850 CE) (--> bib.). BA* likewise utilized this terminology extensively. His first major poetical writing was entitled *Rashḥ-I 'amā'* (`The Sprinkling of the Divine Cloud', late 1852) after its opening hemstitch.

While the Bāb wrote commentaries upon the gnostically inclined *Ḥadīth Kumayl ibn Ziyād al-Nakhā'ī* (-->bib.) and the tradition sometimes ascribed to Imām `Alī, *naḥnu wajh Allāh* ("We are the Face of God"; -->bib.), BA* commented upon the widely attested, *man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbubu* (Whoso knoweth himself shall surely know his Lord ;--> bib.) and that which has it that `The [true] believer is alive in both the [two] worlds *(al-dārayn)'* (MAM:346-361).

At one point in his *K. Īqān* BA* cites a prophetic tradition from Ja`far Ṣādiq contained in the *Yanbū* (Wellspring) of Ibn Junayd al-Iskāfī (? d. 381/991; QI. IV:1866-7; KI:189/ tr. [SE*] 155). In the same source he also cites from the massive (100+vols; larger than Majlisī's Biḥār) *Awā'lim al-'ulūm* of Shaykh `Abd-Allāh b. Nūr Allāh al-Baḥrānī [al-Iṣfahānī] (d. early 18th cent. CE?) an important pupil of Majlisī (Dharī`a 15:356-7, No. 2282).[1] This work appears to have been a key source of messianic proof texts for the early Bābīs, including Mullā Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī (d. 1849; see INBMC 80:1ff). Twice cited as a source of eschatological traditions by BA* in his *Kitāb-I Īqān*, Baḥrānī's *Awālim* was referred to as among "the well-known and respected books." (BA*, KI:187).[2]

■ The *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn* of Rajab al-Bursī (d. c. 814 /1411).

Among the numerous often *'irfānī* (esoteric-gnostic) collections of tradition significant in esoteric Shiism and the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions is that revolving around traditions ascribed to Imām `Alī in the *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-mu'minīn* (The Dawning-Places of the Lights of Certitude in the mysteries of the Commander of the Faithful') of Rajab al-Bursī (d. c. 814 /1411; Lawson, 1992:261-276; Borsi [Lorey+ Corbin],1996). A number of arcane Shī`ī traditions cited by

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[1] The massive (K.) *[al-]Awā'lim al-'ulūm wa'l-ma`ārif wa'l-aḥwāl min al-āyāt wa'l-akhbār wa'l-aqwāl.*. of al-Baḥrānī seems to have been partially published at least three time (-> bib.).

[2] Also cited in the same context in the *Kitāb-I Īqān* is a [K. al-] *'Arba'īn* ([Book of the] Forty [Traditions], a common title of compendia of treasured traditions.

the Bāb and BA* originate with this compilation. In his *Kitāb-I īqān,* for example, BA* cites a tradition about Imām `Alī having been with one thousand Adams, each 50, 000 years apart, and having repeatedly declared his *walāya* ("successorship") before them (KI:130/tr. [SE*]107-8).

Bursī's *Mashāriq* contains important sermons and traditions which were very highly regarded by the first two Shaykhī leaders as well as by the Bāb and BA*. A considerable number of important Imāmī traditions about *walāya,* the *`ilm al-ḥurūf* (the science of letters) the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* and other esoteric matters are scattered throughout the *Mashāriq.* The influence of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt is evident throughout this seminal esoteric tract.

Among the influential discourses ascribed to Imam `Alī contained in the *Mashāriq* of Bursī is the arcane *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya / taṭanjiyya* (Sermon of the Gulf) allegedly delivered by the first Imam between Kūfa and Medina (Mashāriq: 166-170). This oration is a quasi-extremist *(ghuluww)* sermon which was partially commented upon by Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī who regarded it very highly. So too the Bāb and BA* who quote and selectively comment upon it quite frequently. They were markedly influenced by its at times high imamology and abstruse yet suggestive apocalyptic. The *Kh. Ṭutunjiyya* incorporates Islamicate motifs deriving from Isrā'iliyyāt including many Arabic "I am" sayings at times incorporating apparently pseudo-Hebrew/ Aramaic names such as "I am B-A-R-Ḥ-I-U-N (pointing uncertain).

In the *Kh. Ṭutunjiyya* many utterances of an all but deified `Alī echo the gnostic and predominantly Johannine NT "I am" logion of Jesus. Like Jesus, `Alī at one point, in a loose Arabic transliteration of the Greek, claims انا علیو شو ثا (= Gk. Ἐγὼ..[ἡ] ἀλήθεια , *ego eimi aletheia,* Jn 14:6a), "I am the Truth" (Bursī, *Mashriq,* 169). Numerous other theophanic claims of the deified Imām `Alī cast in the form of "I am" sayings are present in this sermon (Mashāriq, 166-170) as well as in other texts collected in Bursī's *Mashāriq.*[1] Only a few of these sayings can be translated here:

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[1]The Sermon which follows the *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* consists of over 100 such "I am.." sayings of `Alī several of which are translated above (Bursī, *Mashāriq* 170-172). Certain of Shāh Ismā'īl's (the founder of the Safavid dynasty d. 930/1524) Turkish poems contain similar such "I am" sayings (Minorsky:1942 esp. 1042a).

I am the one who presideth over the two gulfs *(waqif `alā al-ṭutunjayn)..*
I am the Lord of the first flood *(ṣāḥib al-ṭūfān al-awwāl);*
I am the Lord of the second flood [of Noah?] ;
I am the one who raised Idrīs [Enoch] to a lofty place [cf. Q.19:57]
I am the agent whereby the infant Jesus cried out from the cradle [Q. 19:29, etc]
I am the Lord of the Mount [Sinai] *(ṣāḥib al-ṭūr)* ..
I am the one with whom are the keys of the unseen *(mafātīḥ al-ghayb)..*
I am Dhū'l-Qarnayn mentioned in the primordial scrolls *(ṣuḥuf al-awwālī)*
I am the bearer of the Seal of Solomon *(sāḥib khātam sulaymān)*
I am first First Adam; I am the First Noah... I am the Lord of Abraham, (*ṣāḥib ibrahīm),*
I am the inner depth of the Speaker [Moses] *(sirr al-kalīm)...*
I am the Messiah [Jesus] = *al-rūḥ*] *(al-masīḥ)* inasmuch as no soul *ṣūḥ)* moves nor spirit *(nafs)* breathes without my permission...
I am the Speaker who conversed *(mutakallim)* through the tongue of Jesus in the cradle...
I am the one with whom are one thousand volumes of the books of the prophets *(alf kutub min kitāb al-anbiyā')..* (Bursī, Mashariq, 166ff).

From the very beginning of his messianic career the Bāb quite frequently cited and creatively refashioned lines of the *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya,* sometimes as interpreted by Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (-->3.3f). In expressing his own claims he often used "I am " proclamatory sentences and dual formations echoing the sayings ascribed to `Alī in the *ṭutunjiyya* and elsewhere (see QA). This especially in his claim, "I am one presiding over the *ṭutunjayn ... al-khālijayn* ("the two gulfs") (QA:93:374-5; 109:434-5).

The opening lines of the Bāb's early *Khuṭba al-Jidda* (Homily from Jeddah) are basically a rewrite of the opening words of the *al-Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* (INBMC 91:60-61; cf. Ibid 50 [untitled]). Both the Bāb and BA* saw themselves as the eschatological theophany of the Sinaitic speaker *(mukallim al-ṭūr)* whose future advent is predicted by `Alī in the *Sermon of the Gulf* (Bursī, Mashariq, 168; Lambden 1986). The distinctly esoteric influence of this sermon is obvious in the following lines from the Bāb's commentary upon the qur'ānic phrase *al-lawḥ al-ḥafīẓ.* (Q. 85:22), (The preserved Tablet):

> .. God assuredly made this [person the *Bāb*] to be that Book, a supremely great Tablet *(lawḥ al-akbar).* And he foreordained therein whatsoever was called into being at the beginning and at the [eschatological] end *(fī'l-bad` wa'l-khatm).* God destined for that Book two Gates *(bābayn)* unto the mystery of the two Gulfs *(li-sirr al-ṭutunjayn),* through the water of the two channels [gulfs] *(mā' al-khalījayn).* One of these two [streams] is the water of the Euphrates of the realities of the Elevated Beings *(mā' al-firāt ḥaqā'iq al-`aliyyīn)* [streaming] from the inmates of the two easts *(min ahl al-mashriqayn)* from the two [regions] most proximate [unto God] *(min al-aqrabayn* [sic.]). The second of the two [streams] is the water of the fiery [hellish]

> expanse of the saline bitterness *(mā' al-mulḥ al-ajjāj [ujāj] ?)* [streaming] from the inmates of the two wests *(min ahl al-maghribayn)*, from the two [regions] most remote [from God] *(min al-ab'adayn* [sic.]). And God fashioned above every entrance *('alā kull bāb)* the triangular form *(ṣūrat al-tathlīth)*, and within the threefold form is the Threefold Personage [= Jesus?] *(haykal al-tathlīth)* [which leads] unto the depth of the gates of Gehenna *(li-tamām abwāb al-jaḥīm).. (B*Q.* Hafiz, 80)

Numerous Shī`ī traditions deriving from the Twelver Imams are reckoned to be inspired *(ilhām)* or divinely inspired *(waḥy)* in the writings of the Bāb and BA*. Summing up the developed Bahā'ī perspective AB* wrote in response to an enquiry about *waḥy* (divine revelation):

> the sanctified pure [twelver] Imams were the dawning-places of *ilḥām* (divine inspiration). The manifestations of the bounty of the presence of the All-Merciful are the *rasūl* (sent messengers), who are singled out as recipient of *waḥy.* Consequently, we do not say that the word *(kalām)* of the sanctified [twelver] Imams is other than inspiration from the All-Merciful *(ilhā—l raḥmānī)* (Ma'idih 9:122).

Prophetic and Imāmī traditions are thus often cited as authoritative texts in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources. This perhaps indicates Akhbārī influence which also seems reflected though transcended in the mystical imam-centred unveiling *(kashf)* of the first two Shaykhi leaders (3.4). The Bāb and BA* cited as authoritative many Shī`ī traditions though their non-literal hermeneutic meant that they bypassed any notion of Akhbārī literalism. Many *akhbār* are commented upon in considerable detail and many others are merely allusively drawn upon. Items of Shī`ī ḥadīth set out or inform many aspects of the hermeneutical orientation as well as the legal-doctrinal Bābī-Bahā'ī universe of discourse.

■ The *ḥadīth qudsī* (lit. `Sacred Hadīth', `Divine Saying')

The *ḥadīth qudsī* are an important category of extra-qur'ānic revelations found in canonical *ḥadīth* collections, in early *ṣuhuf* collections and in many Sufi writings. They are very highly regarded in both Sunnī and Shī`ī Islam. Numerous compilations and commentaries upon these *ḥadīth* were made from early times right up into the Safavid period (1501-1722 CE) and beyond (Graham,1977 App. A). Among the influential Shī`ī collections is that written in 1056/1645 by al-Ḥurr al-`Āmilī (1104 /1693) entitled *al-Jawāhir al-saniyyah fī'l-aḥādith al-qudsiyya* (The Essences of the Splendours in the Sacred Traditions) which sets down from a wide range of Shī`ī sources over one

hundred pages of sacred traditions communicated by God between the time of Adam and that of Jesus *(al-Jawāhir,* 9-117). Most compilations of *ḥadīth qudsī* include directives and statements which God allegedly communicated to pre-Islamic figures and sometimes also to Muhammad and the Imams. The *ḥadīth qudsī* are closely related to and are often distillations of the Isrā'iliyyāt or biblical tradition. Two examples from a Sunnī and a Shī`ī sources are:

> I heard the Apostle of God say, relating from his Lord: "`Those who love one another in God *(mutaḥābbun fi Allāh)* shall be upon platforms of light *(manābir min nūr)* in the shadow of the [Divine] Throne on a day in which there shall be no shade except His [its] shade'" (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* V:239; Ibn `Arabī, *Mishkat,* 22. Graham, 1977:144).
> ... O Jesus! Commemorate me within thy Self and I shall commemorate thee in Myself. And bring Me to remembrance in the gathering of thy devotees, in the meeting of the good among the concourse of the children of Adam *(al-ādamiyyīn)* (al-Ḥurr al-Āmilī, *al-Jawāhir,* 108).

The *ḥadīth qudsī* were very influential upon the Bāb and BA*. In his early *K. al-rūḥ (Book of the Spirit,* 1261/1845?) and K. *al-Fihrist* (1261/ 1845) the Bāb explicitly cites as a sacred utterance of God (*al-ḥadīth al-qudsī)* the famous Sufi tradition known as the *ḥadīth al-nawāfil* (*ḥadīth* of supererogatory works) (*K. al-rūḥ* 64-5). In this *ḥadīth* the servant is represented as so assiduously engaging in devotions *(al-nawā'fil)* and drawing nigh unto God that God himself loves that servant to the degree that he becomes the "ear wherewith he hears", etc. (*Fihrist,* 343, cf. Nasr, IS1:108-9).

With respect to BA* and *ḥadīth qudsī* it is clear that his *Kalimāt-I maknūnih* (Hidden Words) is essentially a collection of Sufi-type, pre-Bābī divine wisdom. Over 150 brief Arabic and Persian divine sayings consist of utterances largely cast in the literary form evident in many key *ḥadīth qudsī* commencing *yā ibn al-insān* ("O son of Man") at root a Semitic-Aramaic phrase (cf. Jesus' `Son of Man' sayings) which introduces numerous Islamic *ḥadīth qudsī.* Initially from around 1858 CE entitled the *ṣāḥifa-yi Fāṭimiyya (The Scroll of Fāṭima)* then a decade or so later coming to be entitled the `Hidden Words' by BA* himself, this compilation is basically modelled upon collections of the *ḥadīth qudsī* so cherished and much cited by Sufis. Occasionally echoing Gospel sayings the Hidden Words are introduced by BA* as a distillation of pre-Bābī divine inspiration:

This is that which was sent down [from God, *nuzzila)* from the omnipotent realm

> *(jabarūt al-ʿizza)* through the Tongue of Power and Might unto the prophets of the past *(ʿalā al-nabiyyūn min qabl)...* (HW. Ar., 32).

These words seem to refer to Islamic *ḥadīth qudsī* traditions. As far as the form and content of BA*'s *Hidden Words* goes, items within the Arabic of the *kalimat-I maknūna* can be profitably compared and contrasted with *ḥadīth qudsī* found many Islamic sources including the section of Majlisi's Persian *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* (The Life of Hearts) where Islamicate versions of beatitudes, woes and other sayings ascribed to Jesus are recorded (Majlisī, Hayat, 2:1160-1175).

Chapter Four

THE BIBLE AND ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT PT. 2 : *SĪRA / TĀRĪKH* (HISTORICAL) AND *QIṢAṢ AL-ANBIYĀ'* (STORIES OF THE PROPHETS) IN ISLAMIC AND BĀBĪ-BAHĀ'Ī PRIMARY SOURCES

■ 4.1 The Bible and *Isrā'īliyyāt* in *Sīra - Tārīkh,* historical works.

> Historical, or pseudo-historical, material centering around biblical events and personalities gained the right of entry into Islam through the Qur'ān and its interpretation... the biblical tradition occupies a special place in the history of Muslim historiography. It provides Muslim historical writing with some of its most significant elements (Rosenthal, 1962:40,43).

From the earliest Islamic centuries folkloristic and (quasi-) historical writing informed by Isrā'īliyyāt were important factors in the emergence of Islamic piety and historiography. A need was felt to place the piecemeal qur'ānic salvation history in a wider, more structured historical context. The meagre *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* elements in the Q. were expounded, contextualized and supplemented. For apologetic purposes the advent of the prophet Muhammad had to be shaped on biblical lines and be seen to fulfill Abrahamic religious expectations. The conviction that Muhammad delivered the Q. at the apex of a predestined chain of prophets had to be inspiringly set forth (Rubin,1995).

Early Islamic historical writing was fuelled by Arab genealogical, poetic and other interests. It was also a result of the Muslim interaction and dialogue with Jewish, Zoroastrian Christian and other converts (the *ahl al-dhimma,* Duri, 1984; Humphreys, 1989; Khalidi, 1994). Hagiographically oriented biography writing and associated literary activities were indulged in by converts from the Abrahamic religions traditions. They contributed significantly to emergent Muslim historiography. (Sezgen, GALS, 247ff; Donner, 1998, App. 297ff).

Among the earliest, now lost examples of Islamic history writing are a number of works detailing the lives of pre-Islamic prophet figures. In various ways they were seen as typologically anticipating and predicting the advent of Muhammad and Islam. Attributed to Ka`b al-Aḥbār (<--1.1), for example, are an early *Book of Adam and Eve,* a *Wafāt Mūsā* (Passing of Moses) and a *Sīrat al-Iskandar* (Life of Alexander). Wahb b. Munabbih and others produced similar works (<--1.1; Donner, 1998:299-306 [= App.]) Early sagas about the Ḥimyarī kings

mixed with tales of pre-Islamic biblical and other figures including Abraham, Noah, Luqmān son of `Ād, Khiḍr, and Bilqīs (the Queen of Sheba) are apparent in Wahb's *K. Al-mulūk wa'l-akhbār al-māḍīn* (Wahb, *K. Tījān,* 1347/1928) as extant in the recension of Ibn Hīshām (d. 213/828) entitled *K. al-Tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyār* (The Book of the Crowned Kings of Ḥimyār). Norris has referred to this work as a "rich mine of Arabian fable, legend and garbled chronicles" in which can be seen "the influence of Rabbinical, Syriac and Persian lore in both poetry and prose" (CHAL 1:385).

Inspired by the person and times of Muhammad, *Sīra* (Biographical) literature quickly became popular from the 2nd century AH (Sezgin I:275-302; Donner 1998:297-306). It was influenced by Judaeo-Christian motifs and pre-Islamic prophetological materials. The impact of Isrā'īliyyāt traditions is evident as are Islamicate apologetic and hagiographical concerns (Rubin,1995). Wahb b. Munabbih wrote one of the earliest, largely lost *Sira* compilations. Kister has stated that his work "contains an unusual amount of miraculous stories as attested by the fragments of the papyri" (CHAL 1:357). These early biographies drew heavily and creatively on biblical legends and motifs and registered Islamized *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* traditions which eventually formed bodies of Islamic literature in their own right (-->3.2).

The well-known *sīrat al-nabī* (Biography of the Prophet [Muhammad]) of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150 /767) as redacted in the epitome of Ibn Hishām (d.828/233?)[1] contains many points of interest (Montgomery Watt 1962:23-34) including an attempt to show how Muhammad was predicted in the Bible by means of a very early (pre-151/767) citation rooted in Jn. 15:23-16:11. Muhammad is the expected prophet as "the *Munaḥḥemana* ("Comforter")' which in Syriac is Muhammad.. in Greek *Baraqlīṭis* (Paraclete)" (Ibn Ishaq tr. 03-4; Griffith, 1992 [I] 138-141) Probably originally known as *al-Mubtadā'* (The Beginning) the first part of this *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq has recently been reconstructed by Newby (1989) from citations found in al-Ṭabarī and

[1]The Egyptian philologist Ibn Ḥishām was, as noted, not only responsible for one of the surviving recensions of the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq but also the *K. Al-Tijān fī muluk Ḥimyar* which derives from Wahb b. Munabbih.

others. It contained `Stories of the Prophets' ranging from the first couple (Adam and Eve) till the supposed martyr [St.] Geoge Megalomayrtos (d. early 5th Cent. CE) pictured as a prophet of destruction sent to a disbelieving people (1989:231-241).[1]

The earliest extant *tārīkh* (Annalistic History), is the work of the chronicler, genealogist and *ḥadīth* specialist Khalīfah Ibn Khayyāt al-`Uṣfurī (d. 241/855). He saw *tārīkh* (history) as something ever before humankind from the time of "the fall of Adam from paradise" up to his own day around the middle of the 9th cent. CE. For him the pivot of pre-Islamic (biblical) and later history was the *ḥijra* (flight) of the Prophet (622 CE) which served as the fulcrum for his annalistic *Tārīkh* (al-`Uṣufī, *Tārīkh,* 23-25; Zakkār, `Ibn Khayyāt al-`Uṣfurī' EI^2 III:838; cf. Rosenthal, 1968:71-2). Other Muslim historians set out pre-Islamic history dealing with the creation, biblical history, prophetology, Persian history and more besides.

The early biographical compilation of Ibn Sa'd (d. Baghdad, 230/845) entitled *K. al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (Great book of the Classes) includes a biography of the Prophet with an almost fifty page account of the pre-Islamic era (Ṭabaqāt 1:5-54). Like other early *Sīra* works that of Ibn Sa`d opens with genealogical data relating to Adam then traced through Abraham, Ishmael and others from whom Muhammad was believed to have descended. The biblically rooted genealogical notices were supplemented by those configured according to Iranian, Zoroastrian and Shī`ī expectations aspects of which lie behind later Safavid and Bābī-Bahā'ī genealogical notices and charts. The Bāb as the Mahdī was linked to the family of the Muhammad (via Fāṭima and the Twelver Imams) and BA* with Zoroaster and Yezdigird III as well as Abraham's third wife Keturah.

An important historical manual and survey of world history by Abū Muhammad Ibn Qutayba (276/889) entitled *Kitāb al-ma`ārif* (The Book of Knowledge) "enjoyed tremendous popularity" (Rosenthal, Elr. VIII:47). Like Ibn Qurayba's *Ta`wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* and *`Uyūn*

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[1] Cited by later Muslim writers including Ibn Ishāq the earlier possibly historical sage and antiquary `Abīd [`Ubayd] b. Sharya al-Jurhumī, (fl. 2nd cent. AH) is said to have had his quasi-historical narrations about ancient Arab, Persian and biblical history recorded at the order of the `Umayyad Caliph al-Mu`awiya (Rosenthal, EI^2 III:937; Sezgin, *Geschichte* I:260; Abbott, *Studies* I:9ff).

al-akhbār it contains accurate bible quotations from the Torah as well as the Gospels. Passages cited include verses from several chapters of Genesis (1:2-8;9-13, 14-19, 20-23, 26-31, etc) and many from the Gospel of Matthew (Matt.1:17-21; 2:22-3, etc) (Lecomte,1958; Vajda, 1935; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:79f; Adang 1996:30-36).

The *K. al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl* (Book of the Long Narratives) of Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī (d. c. 281/894) is the oldest extant (Arabic) history written from a Persian point of view. Rosenthal, at the outset of his coverage of 'World Histories', aptly describes this work as 'a synchronized presentation of Biblical, Persian and pre-Islamic Arab history, followed by an early Islamic history.." (1968:133). Its opening section, 'From Adam until the Islamic conquests *(al-futūḥāt al-islāmiyya)'* has nine subdivisions the first three of which are entitled 'The rulers of the earth *(mulūk al-arḍ)* from Adam until the reign of Darius' (7-27); 'Narratives of the Reign of Darius and Alexander' (28-39) and 'Narratives of the Kings of Yemen and the commissioning of Jesus' (40-46). Brief notices are included about many pre-Islamic prophets and Persian figures including Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, 'Aristotle and Alexander', 'Gog and Magog', Zoroaster and Jesus (Dīnawarī, *al-akhbār* 7ff; Bosworth, Elr. I:715-6; Pellat, Elr. VII:417).

■ **Two Imāmī Shī'ī historians, al-Ya'qūbī (d.c. 292/905) and al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956)**

The Shī'īte historian al-Ya'qūbī has recently been called the "first historian of world culture in Islam" (Khalidi,1994:2). In presenting a "culturally and intellectually oriented tableau of pre-Islamic nations" (Humphreys, 'Ta'rīkh' EI^2 X:272) he drew on the Bible and other non-Islamic sources not holding to any theory of the wholescale *taḥrīf* (corruption) of the biblical text. The first volume of Ya'qūbī's two volume *Ta'rīkh* (Chronicle) deals with the pre-Islamic era devoting over seventy pages to the period from the first couple till the time of Jesus (*Tā'rīkh* 1:5-80). In addition to the Bible, Ya'qūbī was influenced by various extra-biblical sources such as the originally Syriac (+ Arabic) apocryphal and sometimes genealogical *Me'ârath Gazzê* (Book of the Cave of Treasures, 4th cent CE?). This to some degree

bolstered Ya`qūbī's Shī`ī interest in issues of *waṣiyya* (successorship).[1]

Ya`qūbī evidently had a considerable regard for the integrity of biblical scripture. He taught that king Zerubbabel rescued the Hebrew bible from a well into which Nebuchadnezzar had cast it and considered the NT a trustworthy source (Adang, 1996:226-7). For him the Gospels have it that after travelling to Jerusalem, Jesus communicated to his disciples a distinctly messianic, Paraclete promise:

> The hour has come at which the Son of Man (*ibn al-bashar* = Jesus) must withdraw unto his Father ... [then] there will come unto you the Paraclete *(al-fāraqlīṭ)* who will be with you as a prophet *(nabī)... "(Tā'rīkh* 1: 72)

A one time student of al-Ṭabarī (-->) in Baghdad, the amazingly prolific al-Mas`ūdī did not wholly share his teachers' negative views regarding pre-Islamic scripture. He was much travelled and had frequent dialogue with Jews, Zoroastrians, Christians and the Sabeans of Harran. Most probably a Shī`ī Muslim like Ya`qūbī he authored several highly influential historical works replete with detailed accounts of pre-Islamic history and rich by Isrā'īliyyāt traditions (Shboul1979 Ch.IV). Notable in this respect are his two digests of larger works, the *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma`ādīn al-jawhar* (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Jewels) and the *K. al-Tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf* (The Book of Indication and the General View) which are "both part of a series of seven works in which al-Mas`ūdī combined history, geography, astronomy, ethnography and religion" (Adang, 1993:46 ; Shboul, 1979:68ff).

The abovementioned works of al-Mas`ūdī both draw heavily on biblical history and several times give an account of the fate of the Torah, a book which al-Mas`ūdī claimed to have directly consulted (*Murūj* I:45, *Praries* I:32 Adang 1996:124). Shboul thought that al-Mas`ūdī was familiar with several Arabic translations of the Torah and aware of the Greek, Septuagint (LXX) version as well as the existence of the targumic tradition (Shboul, 1979:288). He certainly had an impressive knowledge of Christianity though he held back from giving NT citations. As he saw the matter, neither the Q. nor the Prophet had explicitly confirmed the Ǧospel

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[1] Bezold,1883-8; Budge, 1927; Adang 1996:38 ; Ebied & Wickham, 1970; Ferrê, 1977.

narratives (Shboul, 1979:290f; Adang, 1996: 44-48, 122-126; Pulcini, 1998:32-35).

■ **The *Tārīkh* of al-Ṭabarī and its Persian recreation by Bal`amī (d. c. 387/997) .**

The massive *Ta'rīkh al-rusūl wa'l-mulūk* (The history of prophets and kings) of the famous Q. commentator al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/ 923)(<- 2.1) is universally recognised as an extremely important Arabic historical source. Drawing on numerous earlier sources it covers Israelite and Persian pre-Islamic history in considerable detail (800+ Arabic pages).[1] Though a certain amount of biblical data informs this seminal work, Ṭabarī "ostensibly relied on the traditional Muslim material" (Rosenthal, 1962:42). In both his *Ta`rīkh* and his *Tafsīr* Ṭabarī was of the opinion that Jewish leaders willfully distorted the Hebrew Bible (trans. Cooper, 1987, 403ff; Adang, 1993:2983,107; Pilcini, 1998:29-32). His and similar negative perspectives regarding the Bible were specifically challenged in two early works of BA*.

al-Ṭabarī's Arabic history was early freely translated into new Persian (c. 963 CE) by Abū Alī Muhammad, Bal`amī for the Samānid ruler Manṣūr b. Nūḥ (d. 365/976). More a transformation of the Arabic than a translation, it amplifies, reworks and sometimes `corrects' Ṭabarī's original text at times in line with Samānid legitimacy and the incorporation of Judaeo-Christian material (Meisami, 1999:23ff). The Persian Ṭabarī is best viewed as an independent literary entity (Daniel,1990). Following the Persian preface in the introductory section, Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions about the age of the world are registered (*Tārīkh* [Per.]).

The Persian Ṭabarī expands, alters and to some extent Persianizes aspects of the Arabic legend of the *Aṣḥāb al-kahf* (Companions of the Cave). In line with Islamic tradition al-Ṭabarī held that the sleepers entered and left the "cave" at the time of Jesus (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* trans. Perlman, IV: 156-7). The Bal`amī version holds that this happened after the time of Dhū'l-Qarnayn (= Alexander the Great) though prior to that of Ardishīr [I] b. Bābak, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty (?-242 CE; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* (Per.) I:179-80; cf. trans. Zotenburg, II:39-40).

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[1] It is exactly 811 pages in the Ar. Leiden edition (Brill, 14 vol. + index, 1879-1901). The English translation of this portion fills vols.1-4 of the Yarshater (ed) translation (--> bib.).

The aforementioned Shī`I historian al-Maqdisī (fl.10th cent. CE ) authored his wide-ranging *K. al-bad` wa'l-tārīkh* (<--1.2) for a Samānid prince around 355/966. Basically a universal history it incorporates much pre-Islamic data in its twenty-six sections (in the published edition). Subjects covered include God and the creation, prophecy, Adam, the prophets (II:74-132+III:1ff), the Persian kings and the end of the world (Morony, EIr. III:352). The *Tā'rīkh-I Maqdisī* is a richly detailed book widely read in eastern Islamic countries. It includes important information about Iranian religion and history and cites copiously from Jewish, Christian and other sources (Maqdisī, K. al-Bad`; Goitein, 1968:142-3; Morony, `al-Bad` wa'l-Tarīkh' EIr. IV:352).

Bypassing the Persian general history entitled *Mujmal al-tavarīkh wa'l-qiṣaṣ* (Compendium of Histories and the Prophets; written around 520/1126) which sums up historical data from many previous Persian and Arabic sources and the historical works of the jurisconsult, historian and Ḥanbalī preacher of Baghdad Abu'l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī (d.597/1200) it will be important to mention the Jewish convert to Islam and physician to certain Mongol Sulṭāns, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl-Allāh (d. 718/1318). He composed an extensive Arabic and Persian *Jāmi` al-tawārīkh* (Assembling of Histories) which is a wide ranging general history of the world from "the earliest beginnings" (Storey, 1/II:72ff). Schwartzbaum refers to it as a "turning point in Islamic presentation of Biblical history and Biblical heroes". Its author was "reared in Jewish Orthodox tradition, and nurtured upon the vast Talmudic-Midrashic-Aggadah". His history has a detailed section dealing with the history of the "Children of Israel" *(Banū Isrā'īl)* and covering both the Biblical and post-Biblical periods. He was "the first Islamic historian who draws on the Hebrew text of the Bible, being well-versed in the Hebrew language" (Schwartzbaum 1982: 42-3, fn. 98,141).

Several important histories written during the Ilkhānid (Mongol) period (1256-1335 CE)

commence with Adam and the pre-Islamic prophets[1] cannot be summarized here though the contribution of `Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Āthīr (630/1233) should be noted. This writer viewed history as the "unfolding of God's purposes" for humankind (Richards, Elr. VII:671-2) and authored an important universal history entitled *al-Kāmil fī'l-tārīkh* (The Complete History) ending at 628/1231. Much indebted to Ṭabarī, Rosenthal has pointed out that the pre-Islamic portion of this "well balanced" history "deals with the creation of the world, Biblical history (which is synchronized with that of the Persians), and the stories of Christians, saints, and pre-Islamic Arabs." (Rosenthal1968:146).

The Syrian, `Ayyūbid prince, historian and geographer Ismā'īl b. `Alī Abū'l-Fiḍā' (d.732/ 1331) has been well-known in the west as a result of the 17th century publication and Latin translation of his Universal history, the *Mukhtasar tā`rīkh al-bashar* (An Abridgement of the History of Humankind [until 729/1329]).[2] Mainly based on Ibn al-Āthīr's history (<--), the sections on pre-Islamic history cover the period from Adam until Muhammad. Cole has argued on the basis of paraphrastic citations in the *L-Ḥikma*, that BA* was familiar with this work (Cole 1979). .

The rather negative attitude towards Isrā'īliyyāt evident in the writings of the conservative historian and exegete Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) has already been noted (<--1.1). Nonetheless, his *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-`aẓīm* and weighty *al-Bidāya wa'l nihāya* (The Beginning and the Culmination [of History]) contain numerous examples of Isrā'īliyyāt traditions.[3]

The farsighted Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 /1406) pioneered the philosophy and sociology of history and is well-known for his rejection of trenchant views of biblical *taḥrīf*

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[1] Note the *Zubdat al-tavārīkh* (Quintessence of Histories) by Abū al -Qasīm al-Kāshānī (early 14 th century CE?) and the *Tārīkh-I Guzīdah* (composed 1330) of Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī (d.c.744/1334).

[2] The several eighteenth century editions include that of J. Gagnier, *Die vita.... Mohammedis,* (Oxford, 1723). The complete Arabic text was apparently first published in 2 vols. In Istanbul in 1286/1869-70 (Gibb, `Abu'l-Fidā' EI^2 1:118-9).

[3] In its recent 7 (14) volume printing over 450 pages are allotted to biblical and other figures of the pre-Islamic era (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidayā* vol.1 [1-2])

the ;like of which was advocated by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). In his *Kitāb al-'ibar* (Book of Admonitions) Ibn Khaldūn upholds the genuineness of the Bible in the light of the implications of Q. 5:43[7] ("..they have the *Tawrat* which contains the decree of God *(ḥukm Allāh)..*") and in view of a tradition handed down from Ibn `Abbās to the effect that a religious community is unable to wholly, materially corrupt their sacred book (Fischel,1958; Rosenthal, `Ibn Khaldūn). For Ibn Khaldūn scriptural *taḥrīf* indicates the inability of religionists to understand the meaning of their sacred book. In his *Muqaddima* (Prolegomenon to his abovementioned multi-volume work) Ibn Khaldūn wrote much that indicates his polymathic learning including the following defence of the alleged *taḥrīf* of the Torah

> .. the statement concerning the alteration (of the Torah by the Jews) is unacceptable to thorough scholars and cannot be understood in its plain meaning, since custom prevents people who have a (revealed) religion from dealing with their divine scriptures in such a manner. This was mentioned by al-Bukhârî in the *Ṣaḥīḥ..* Custom, in the proper meaning of the word, would prevent anything of the sort from happening to other peoples.. (*Muqaddima,* trans. Rosenthal 1:20-21).

According to Rosenthal the 13th century saw a "steady flow of Arabic and Persian universal histories" (Rosenthal 1968:148). Despite their sometimes considerable use of Isrā'īliyyāt they cannot be mentioned here. Notable, however, among the pre-Safavid chronicles is the *Rawḍat al-ṣafā fī sīrat al-anbiyā' wa'l-mulūk wa'l-khulafā'* (Garden of Purity respecting the Lives of the Prophets, the Kings and the Caliphs; 7+1 vols.) of the late Tīmūrid writer Muhammad b. Khwāndshāh b. Maḥmūd, Mīrkhwānd[1] (d. 903/1498). This lengthy work has a long opening section `On the beginning of creation, the stories of the Prophets *(qiṣaṣ-l payāmbarān)*, the circumstances of the Iranian kings and of the sages of old *(ḥukamā-yi pīshīn)'*(ed. `Abbās Zaryāb,1:15-198).[2] It cites around forty Arabic and Persian histories and exists in numerous often confused manuscripts. Apparently lacking an autograph mss. (?)

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[1]The *Raḍwat* was supplemented and extended in Qājār times by Riḍā' Qulī Khān Hidāyat (d. 1288/1871) as the *Rawḍat al-ṣafā-yi Nāṣirī.*

[2]Refer Storey, 1:92-101 (342); Zaryāb, `preface' [1:xff] Beveridge [Manz], `Mīrkhwānd..' EI^2 VII:126-7; Quinn, 2000:14

variant texts are represented by several 19th century lithograph editions (Bombay, 1845, 1848; Tehran, 1853-56; Lucknow, 1874;1883) some having been translated into Turkish, Latin and other European languages.[1]

Mīrkhwānd's grandson the Persian historian Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Khwāndamīr (d.c. 941/ 1534-5) summed up and supplemented his grandfather's *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'* in his *Khulāṣat al-akhbār* (905/1499).[2] He also authored another more extensive, multi-volume general history covering the period from the creation until just after the death of the Ṣafavid Shāh Ismā'īl (d. 930/1524 CE). This latter work is entitled *Tārīkh ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrād bashar* (The Beloved of Histories regarding the traditions of the most singular of mortals; 930/1524). In an independent manner it draws on sources additional to the *Rawḍat* for the pre-Islamic era and other periods.[3] (Storey, I:101ff; Beveridge & deBrujin,EI^2 V:1020-1022; Quinn, 1996 :3-5).

Numerous Safavid historical chronicles, including the partially published *Takmilat al-akhbār* of Zayn al-`Ābidīn `Alī Abdī Beg Shīrāzī (d. 988/1580) and the late Safavid *Tārīkh-I sulṭānī* composed in 1115/1703 during the reign of Sulṭān Ḥusayn by Husayn b. Murtaḍā Ḥusayn Astarabādī (d. ??), contain large amounts of pre-Islamic history and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* materials (cf.Storey 1/1:134). More recent among histories is the Persian general history entitled *Nāsikh al-tawārīkh* (Supplanter of Histories, around 14 vols.) of Muhammad Tāqī Kāshānī, Sipihr (= `Celetial Sphere'; d. 1297/1880). Completed in the early 1850s[4] this extensive work contains much about pre-Islamic prophets, sages and nations, spanning (in the Tehran [Amīr Kabīr 1958-?] edition) almost 1,000 large and dense pages (vol.1 has 600+

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[1] The Rehatsek 1891-2 partial translation of the first volume of the *Rawḍat al-ṣafa* is an English rendering of the Bombay Lithograph printing of 1271/1854. It includes passages not found in the recent (1375 Sh./ 1996) Zaryāb edition printed in Tehran.

[2] Khwāndamīr also completed his grandfather's *Rawḍat al-ṣafā'* writing a seventh volume and a conclusion.

[3] In the 1333/1954 edition of Khwāndamīr edited by Humā'ī (4 vols.) in excess of 250 pages are devoted to pre-Islamic history.

[4] There have been many 19th century printings of the *Nāsikh* including Tehran 1860; 1888-9; early 1890s; Bombay, 1892, etc. (Storey. 1:152f, 1247; Minorsky, `Sipihr' EI^2 IX:658).

pages and vol. 2 has 338 pp.).

The *Nāsikh al-tawārīkh* is a very wide ranging work. There are, for example, sections on America (cf. I:27) and ancient Chinese figures (I:475f). It claims to have drawn on a huge array of over two hundred (listed) Arabic, Persian, European and other historical sources including a good many works dealing with pre-Islamic religion, scripture and Isrā'īliyyāt-*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* such as the *Tārīkh-I tawrat va injīl* (The history [historical potions] of the Torah and the Gospels'), Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh, a Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* work[s] (of Tha`labī?), a `History of *(Tārīkh-I)* Wahb b. Munabbih (!), the (abovementioned) *Rawḍat al-safā',* Majlisī's *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* , a work entitled *Kamāl-I aḥadīth-I qudsiyyah-yi āl-I isrā'īl* (The Perfection of the sacred traditions of the family of Israel) and the book of *Dhū'l-Qarnayn* ascribed to Mīrzā Faḍl Allāh, a *Tarīkh-I banī Isrā'īl* (History of the children of Israel) as well, among numerous other miscellaneous titles such as the *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* (presumably of that of Pfander) (*Nāsikh al-tawārīkh* [195? ed.] I:29-32).

Throughout the *Nāsikh* there are very precise though idiosyncratic chronological datings "after the Fall [of Adam]" *(hubūṭ-I Ādam;* loosely *anno mundi*) for hundreds of pre-Islamic figures and events. Siphir has it, for example, that Jesus was born 5, 595 years after the fall (see II:1) while Mānī son of (the Parthian prince) Qātan (*sic.* Pātrik; founder of the Manichean movement) is described as "among the non-Arab sages" *(āz jumlih-yi ḥukamā-yi `ajam)* and dated to 5,804 AM (Nasīkh, II:112f).[1] Like the updated *Rawḍat al-ṣafā,* the *Nāsikh al-tawārīkh* was very probably known to Bābī-Bahā'ī leaders and writers; in part because their updated supplements contain inaccurate and critical accounts of Bābī beginnings.[2]

In conclusion to this section it might be pointed out that neither the Bāb nor BA* were historians in any modern sense nor did they themselves write histories. As far as I am aware,

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[1] Mānī's dates were actually 216-274[77?] CE.

[2] In an unpublished letter of `AB* to Lotfullah Ḥakīm the *Nāsīkh al-tawārīkh* is strongly criticized.

the Bāb and BA* did not explicitly quote from any of the previously mentioned histories. It appears though that they were influenced by several of them. BA* may have known Masūdī's *K.Tanbīḥ* (<-- or a related source?) and the history of Abū al-Fiḍā' (<--) as well perhaps as the *Nāsikh al-tawārīkh.* While the Bāb to some extent refashioned Islamic chronology BA* at times followed Islamicate chronologies in such works as his *Lawḥ-I ḥikmat.* The founders of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions occasionally set down episodes of past sacred history. In this they mostly drew upon *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* materials in ways that communicated lessons for prospective converts and / or devotees. Their often neo-Islamic religious communications make quite frequent references to past prophets and messengers and aspects of their troubled history.

In his *L. Qabl-I ādam* (Tablet on the pre-Adamic era--> bib.), BA* responded to a question about the apparent non-existence of historical records of pre-Adamic prophets and kings. In reply he pointed out that such an era existed as do records relating to it though they appear undecipherable, lost or destroyed on account of changes to humankind and the earthly terrain. Diverse estimates of human history he continues, have been made. Some reckon an 8,000 year pre-history, others a12,000 year era (= Zoroastrians), not to mention such details as are given in the (Hindu) *Kitāb-I* جوك *yūka,* ("Book of the Ages" = Skt. *yūga*).[1] After mentioning such details BA* directs his questioner, `Abd al-Razzāq, to disregard such conflicting details and focus instead upon the sublime panorama of his revelation *(manẓar al-akbar)* (BA* IQ:77).

In this Persian *L. Qabl-I Ādam* BA* also appears to show direct (or indirect - via al-Ya`qūbī?) familiarity with an Isrā'īliyyāt tradition relating to Abraham and the origins of the

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[1]There is little doubt that the Arabic, جوك *jūk* transliterates the Sanskrit *yuga* (="ages[s]) and is indicative of a period of time relative to the four ages (Skt. yugas) of the world expressed in divine years though representing many thousands of human years (see the great Hindu epic *Mahābhārata* and the *Mānū-Samhitā,* "Lawbook of Manu" where these *yugas* are set out). The transliteration of BA* is that which al-Birūnī used in his *Taḥqīq li-l-hind* ("The Reality that is India", 3rd ed. Beirut:`Alam al-kutub, 1403/1983), 279 (trans. Sachau, 1910:367).

Hebrew language (-->), perhaps as it is registered in the aforementioned *K. Tanbīḥ* of al-Mas`ūdī (<-):

> Henceforth he [Abraham] spoke that [language] which is called Hebrew *(`ibrānī)* because it originated at the time of the crossing *(`ubūr):* it is derived from the word *`ibr...* (*K.Tanbīḥ,* 1965:79, tr. Adang 1996:126 cf. Gen 14:13).

In his the Tablet about the Pre-Islamic Era' [1] BA* reflects this tradition when he states that Abraham spoke Hebrew (Ar. *`ibrānī)* at the (Per.) *ḥīn–I `ubūr az nahr-I urdūn,* "the very moment of the crossing of (*`ubūr az* ) the river Jordan" ( IQ:75; cf. GWB*115/173). He thus derives *`ibrānī* (Hebrew) from *`ubūr* ("crossing"). Though there are minor differences in Mas`ūdī's and BA*'s statements, it seems clear that BA* is restating this popular Jewish-Islamic etymology. It is also found, for example, in the *Tārīkḥ* al-Ṭabarī (<--) in detailing aspects of the life of Abraham. The following version of this etymological tradition is related from Ibn `Abbās:

> When Abraham fled from Kūthā and came out of the fire, his language was Syriac, but when he crossed the Euphrates from Ḥarrān, God changed his language and it was called Hebrew (`Ibrānī) because he had crossed *(`abara)* the Euphrates. Nimrod sent men to look for him, telling them, "If you find anyone who speaks Syriac, do not leave him, but bring him to me."They met Abraham, but left him because he spoke Hebrew and they did not understand his language. (Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh: 347, tr. Brinner, History II:128).

This popular etymology registered by al-Mas`ūdī, al-Ṭabarī, BA* and others, has no explicit basis in either the Hebrew Bible or the Q. In Gen 14:13, however, Abraham is referred to as "Abram the Hebrew". An ancient, popular etymological understanding of עִבְרִי (`ivrī, "Hebrew") here relates the word "Hebrew" to the verbal root ע־ב־ר (`-b-r = `to pass, cross' = Ar. cognate ر ـبـ ـ, *`abara* = ` to cross, traverse') or to the preposition עִבְרִ (= "across", "beyond"). This is evident in the Gk (LXX., 3rd cent.BCE?) rendering of the Hebrew (MT) where

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[1] This Tablet was in reply to a question of a certain `Abd al-Razzāq and was partially translated by SE* in Gleanings (No.LXXXVII). BA* was asked about the existence of extant records *(dhikr-I anbiyā' qabl az Ādam abū bashar va salaṭī–I ān ..)* of pre-Adamic prophets and kings (text in IQ:68-78).

"Abram the עִבְרִי *(`ibrī* = "Hebrew)" is interpretively rendered Αβραμ τῷ περάτῆς, "Abram, the *perātes,* one from across../ the region beyond / the wanderer". What exactly is meant by the "across" or the region beyond is not clear. It could indicate beyond the Jordan or the Euphrates (cf. Gen 50:10; Num 21:13, Josh. 24:2).

Almost a century ago the above etymology was registered in the (1st edition) of the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* (1907; JE VI:304-5). Today, however, the etymology of עִבְרִי *(`ibrī)* has become something very complex, a linguistic puzzle having little or nothing to do with words indicating "to cross". Abraham's family "beyond the river" were not in fact Hebrew but Aramean (Gen 25:10). "Hebrew", עִבְרִי *(`ivrī)* remains of unknown, uncertain derivation though it is often thought to indicate ethnicity or be indicative of a period of marginalised "slavery" (cf. Exod. 21:2) as may be hinted at by the (pre-biblical, 2nd mill. BCE) cuneiform word *Hab/piru/ Habiru* (= `Apiru).

To conclude this section with a brief note relating to concrete history. It was in the late 1880s that BA* commissioned his amanuensis Mīrzā Āqā Jān, Khādim-Allāh (d.1901) and subsequently Nabīl Zarandī (d.1892) to write detailed Bābī-Bahā'ī histories. Though BA* himself never set out to accomplish this historical task, his numerous writings do contain interpretations of historically oriented *qiṣaṣ al-anbiya'* episodes (-->4.2) and hagiographically oriented historical materials. Additionally, there are numerous historically informed Arabic and Persian *Zīyārat-nāma* ("Visiting tablets"), commemorative texts largely written for significant believers of the early years of the Bābī-Bahā'ī era. These very extensive writings remain unassembled and largely unstudied.

It was `Abd al-Bahā' and his successor Shoghi Effendi who consciously wrote theologically informed sacred history as well as numerous historically and hagiographically oriented texts and epistles. The best known examples are the originally anonymous *Maqāla-yi shakhsī sayyāh* (Travellers Narrative, 1st ed. Bombay, 1875) of AB*, and the centennial surveys of Bābī-Bahā'ī history, the Persian *Lawḥ-I qarn* (Centennial Tablet) and English *God*

Passes By of SE* (1st ed. 1944 CE).

■ 4.2 The Bible and *Isrā'īliyyāt* in *Qiṣaṣ al-'anbiyā'* and in Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources.

Pre-Islamic accounts of the lives of prophet figures exist in the biblical books of Job and Jonah as well as in Ben Sirah (44-49[50]) and the Pseudo-Pauline book of Hebrews (ch. 11:1ff) as well as in numerous extra-biblical sources. Examples are found within works representative of the Jewish/Judaeo-Christian Elijah and Daniel cycles as well as in the originally Jewish (1st.cent BCE/CE?) (Pseudo-Epiphanius =) *Vitae Prophetarum* which contains core sketches of 23 Israelite prophets (OTP 2:385ff; Charlesworth,1981:175f). Many pseudepigraphical works also present legendary accounts of the lives of primordial, patriarchal and later figures including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaiah and Daniel (Charlesworth Bib.; OTP., 2 vols.). Legends and motifs contained in these sources contributed to the qur'ānic and post-qur'anic *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* compilations (Wasserstrom, in Reeves ed. 1994, 87-114).

■ Qur`ānic prophetology and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*.

> It would be difficult to imagine the Qur'an with all references to the Bible and biblical characters and events removed... The biblical stories in the Qur'an are *not* as in the Bible simply, neither those of the Torah nor those from the Gospel. Both categories reflect later developments by Jews and Christians alike (Bowman, 1972:111).

Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' (Stories of the prophets) legends are centrally important crystallizations of qur'ānic salvation history. As Khalidi puts it, "the historical sections [of the Q.] .. are largely devoted to the histories of the prophets, Biblical and non-biblical" (1994:68). Aspects of the lives of the traditional `twenty-eight' prophets and others besides are registered in the Q. While one Meccan sūra is named *al-anbiyā'* (the Prophets, Q. 21 cf. Q.78 *al-nabā',* `The Announcement') nine other *sūras* are named after specific prophets. Q. sūra titles often derive from key terms associated with *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* episodes e.g. *baqara,* Cow (= Q. 2); *naml,* Ant (= Q. 27); *ṭūr* (=Mount [Sinai] Q. 52). The lengthy sūra of Joseph is pictured as the

aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ (Q.12:3a) "the most marvellous of narratives". Such stories are partly typologically indicative of the veracity of the lifestyle and mission of Muhammad. They foreshadow aspects of Islamic piety. Islamic sources often picture see pre-Islamic prophets as proto-Muslims proclaiming Islamicate truths. According to a few NT texts the mighty deeds and words of Moses foreshadowed the mission of Jesus (Jn. 5:46, etc). In similar fashion the Q. represents Moses and other prophets as major antitypes of Muhammad. Object lessons are enshrined in qur'ānic *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* stories. They tend to point to that piety which results in faith and good works.

■ Post-qur'ānic *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā '* works.[1]

Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' gradually came to indicate a literary genre (<--1.1) inclusive of materials and texts incorporating biblical citations and Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works were to some extent compilations of materials utilized in Islamic moralistic preaching ultimately expressed in various of the Islamic languages, including Arabic, Persian and Turkish. They became important repositories of prophetological legend and myth. They placed prophets and others in a salvation, meta-historical context. Events surrounding biblical and qur'anic prophet figures were interpreted and contextualized. Scriptural lacunae were variously filled. Linguistic, geographical and other obscurities were piously clarified. Moral object lessons were underlined and miraculous deeds glorified to the possibly greater faith of the believers. Difficult contradictions were smoothed away in *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works. So too the faults and limitations of God's chosen ones. Figures of little or no importance in the Bible or the Q. were sometimes given a key role in Islamic salvation history. Numerous prophets unmentioned in the Q. are given detailed coverage in *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literatures; including, for example, Balaam b. Beor, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, the *Aṣḥab al-Kāf* (Companions of the Cave) and St. George.

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[1] Some have thought *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and Isrā'īliyyāt virtually synonymous terms (Nagel, 1967) As a literary genre though *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* is probably best understood as a sub-category or development from Isrā'īiyyāt.

It was preeminently Yemenite Jewish converts to Islam of the Umayyad and `Abbasid periods who sifted and arranged epics, cycles and legendry chronicles (<--1.1). Their work became foundational for later Muslim storytellers, geographers, historians and others. Pre-Islamic Arabian lore, legend, and epic tales were merged with Jewish-Rabbinical, Christian-Syrian, Zoroastrian-Persian and other legendary streams of tradition (Norris, CHAL. ch.19). This often in illustration and clarification of qur'ānic rooted materials such as mentions of Bilqīs, the traditional "Queen of Sheba" (1 Kings 10:1-13; II Chron. 9:1-12; Q. 27:15-44), the post-deluge king Nimrod (Gen. 10:8; Ar. Namrūd), the non-biblical sage Luqmān and the immortal `Green One' al-Khaḍir (<--1f). Important in this respect is Wahb b. Munabbih's aforementioned (<--1.2) record of the Ḥimyārī kings, Bilqīs the Queen of Sheba and others in Ibn Ḥishām's recension of his *Kitāb al-Tijān fī mulūk Ḥimyar* (The Book of the Crowned Kings of Ḥimyar' [Markez al-Darāsāt: Ṣan`a', 1347/1928]).

As early as the 2nd century AH Egypt had several historians who utilized and incorporated all manner of biblical and post-biblical materials into their works (Donner, 1998:224-5). Some idea of this can be gleaned from the text and citations incorporated into the *Futūḥ Miṣr* (Conquest of Egypt. ed. Torrey, 1922) of Ibn `Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871). This lengthy work incorporates legendary and biblically informed narratives about the association of prophet figures with Egypt, including Abraham's entrance therein and Joseph's association therewith (*Futūḥ Miṣr,* 10-19).

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) in his *K. al-ma`ārif* considered *Mubtada al-khalq wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* (The Beginning of Creation and the Stories of the Prophets) literature "the first branch *(fann)* of the branches of knowledge" (cited Pauliny,1999 [15]:313). Perhaps the earliest Islamicate example of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literary genre is the 2nd cent. AH only fragmentarily extant *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* work ascribed to Wahb b. Munabbih (<--1.1; Huart, 1904; Khoury, 1972; Donner 1998:301). Great quantities of early *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* materials exist in a wide range of early exegetical *(tafsīr)*, historical and other Islamic writings (<--1.1; Nagel 1967:10-25). Early *qiṣaṣ* traditions formed an integral part of emergent *tafsīr, ḥadīth, sīra- tarīkh* and other bodies

of Islamic literature (<--2.1ff).

■ Abū Rifā`a `Umāra b. Wathīmā (d. 289/902). [1]

An important early compilation of the tales of pre-Islamic prophets is the (largely extant) *Kitāb al-bad` al-khalq wa qiṣaṣ al-anbiya'* of the early historian `Umāra b. Wathīmā b. Mūsā al-Fārisī al-Fasawī (GALSup.1:217; Khoury,1978). Aside from creation legends and traditions this work contains instructive and entertaining versions of stories of the prophets. Sometimes unique details are given such as the supernatural power of Aaron's garment (Schwarzbaum 1981:62). God is said to have revealed the following address to Jesus son of Mary:

> O Son of the Virgin *(al-`adhrā')*, the Virgin Mary *(al-batūl)!* I brought you forth and I begot you [through] your mother. So take hold of the Book! with power and expound it for the people in Syriac *(al-suryaniyya)*.

Having related this Wahb b. Munabbih explained that,

> Syriac is the first of the languages spoken by humanity. The people [on] the Day of Resurrection *(yawn al-qiyāma)* shall be taken to account through it. But when they enter Paradise *(al-jannat)* they shall converse in Arabic... (Khoury1978 [Arabic]130).

■ The *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of al-Kisā'ī (d. 3rd-5th/9th-12th cent CE?).

The full identity and exact dating of the al-Kisā'ī who authored an important *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* work is uncertain. [2] Thackston reckoned that it "must have been written not long before 1200" (1978:xix; xxxi n.29). More recently Brinner (1998) has left the matter open (EAL2:453).

Commencing with a notice about the primordial Tablet *(lawḥ)* and the Pen *(qalam)*, the creation of the primordial "Water" upon which the divine Throne rests as well as an account of the creation of the earth and heaven, the *Qiṣaṣ* of Kisā'ī contains much prophetological material that is of interest. The stories of Joseph and Job, for example, are narrated at length

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[1] The aforementioned Muhammad b. `Abd-Allāh Sahl al-Ṭustarī (d. 283/986 <--2.1), it is relevant to note here, most probably authored a Sufi oriented *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* text, entitled *K. Laṭā'if al-qiṣaṣ fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Böwering, 1980:16-17; Habil, in Nasr, ed. 1987:30-31; Rippin, ERel.14:241).

[2] In line with the 17th cent. CE bibliographer Ḥājjī Khalīfah some have identified him with the Qur'ān reader 'Alī b. Hamza al-Kisā'ī (d. c.189 /805) (Schussman, 1981 followed by Milstein et al.,1999). Others, including Brockelmann (EI III:1037) and Nagel (1961) consider this al-Kisā'ī to have been Muhammad b. `Abdullāh al-Kisā'ī (10th cent. CE?; cf. Thackston, 1978:xxxiii, n.29). An early version of al-Kisā'ī's *Qiṣaṣ* was published by Eisenberg under the title (Lat.) *Vita Prophetarum* .. (2 vols.1922-3-->bib.). This text has been translated into English by Thackston (Jr. 1978).

as is that of the Queen of Sheba and of Jesus son of Mary. Included is an account of the child Jesus' first day at school when he explains the significance of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This story of the wise child Jesus is widely replicated in variant Islamicate forms and is partly rooted in a Christian apocryphal tale of Jesus and his teacher Zacchaeus (cf. Lk. 19:12;the 3rd--> 6th cent. CE? *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, Ch.6). An Islamicized form of it was applied to the all-knowing Shī`ī Imam al-Bāqir and to an episode in the childhood of the Bāb (Lambden, [1983]1987).

■ The *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of al-Tha`labī (d. 427 /1036).

The Qur'ān commentator and historian Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad b. Muhammad al-Nīsābūrī, al-Shāfi`ī, widely known as al-Tha`labī (d. 427 /1036), wrote a massive, still unpublished *Tafsīr* work very rich in Isrā'īliyyāt and related *qiṣaṣ al-anbiya* traditions. He may have written his more influential *Arā'is al-majālis qiṣaṣ al-`anbiyā'* (The Brides of the Sessions, Tales of the Prophets) to serve the needs of the early *quṣṣaṣ*, the Muslim preachers. Partly chronologically organized after the biblical scheme, it may have emerged from the mystically oriented circle surrounding Junayd of Baghdad (d.297/910) (Thackston 1978:xvi; Nagel 1961:80-102). This *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* work has been taken to indicate that by the 5th/11th century the literary genre *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* had "reached maturity, both in content and in style" in the Arab speaking Islamic world (Milstein, et. al. 1999:8). More so than the popularist work of al-Kisā'ī, al-Tha`labī's Qiṣaṣ "utilizes the techniques of traditional Muslim scholarship" (Brinner. EAL2:766).

Many prophet figures, worthies and demoniac entities are commented upon by al-Tha`labī. In addition to the usual twenty-eight prophets, for example, he includes sections dealing with the biblical figures Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and has a ten page section on Jirjīs (St. George). In the *Arā'is* Tha`labī not only records the recently focussed upon story of Bulūqiyyā ascribed to `Abd Allāh ibn Salām, (<--1.2; Dalley1994 239-269; Wasserstrom 1995:178-80) and the legend of Khiḍr but records an interesting tradition about a receptacle containing portraits of a succession of pre-islamic prophets from Adam until Muhammad. Referred to as the *ṣandūk al-shahāda* (Chest of Witnessing) it centres upon Adam as the first

calligrapher, Daniel as the originator of portraiture and portrays Alexander the Great as an artist. This tradition was later registered and developed in diverse ways including, for example, in the *Rawḍat al-safā* of Mīrkhwānd (<--3.1; Roxburgh, 2001:183ff).

Tha`labī's *Arā'is* contains much that is supplementary to `tales of the prophets'. The beginning of creation as well as the eschatological era of the Mahdī are both touched upon. In the latter connection Tha`labī includes a brief section entitled `The descent of Jesus from heaven a second time .. at the end of the age'. Towards the end of this work Tha`labī mentions Mary Magdalene, an "Israelite from one of the villages of Antioch", a pious but unceasing menstruate cured by God through Jesus. A week after his ascension Jesus descended from heaven and Mary Magdalene *(maryam al-majdalāniyya)* had a luminous experience of him upon a mountain. After this she summoned the disciples *(ḥawāriyūn)* to evangelize the world (Qiṣaṣ, 401-2). It may have been the influence of this passage which directly or indirectly induced BA* to beam with joy at the mention of Mary Magdalene and AB* to frequently delight in picturing her as the first perso n to voice post-resurrection Christianity (Diary, Juliet Thompson, cited WO (Fall,1971), 65, TAB 2:467; 3:601 SWAB:105,123, etc).

The two *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works of Kisā'ī and Tha`labī were widely copied and read for entertainment purposes. Many others wrote similar works including, for example, the early *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* work ascribed to Abū `Abd-Allāh b. Muṭarrif al-Kinānī and another by Ṭārafī of Cordoba (d. 453 /1062) (Nagel, 1961:103-119; Thackston, 1978; xvi+ xxxi fn.22).

■ Shī`ite *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works

Only a few of the major Arabic Shī`īte *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works can be mentioned here before a few examples of those written in Persian. In volume 17 of the *Dharī`ā,* fifteen or so Arabic and Persian *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* texts are listed (*Dharī`a,* XVII esp. Nos 560-576). There are of course very many other Shī`ī works which include stories of prophets and related hagiographical legends. Shaykh `Alī ( a son of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī,--> 5.1), for example, wrote a treatise entitled *Risāla fī qiṣṣat Mūsā wa'l-Khiḍr* (*Dharī`a* XVII, No. 531, 98). As will be seen, his erudite father often responded to questions on *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and related subjects.

■ Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī (d. Qumm 573/1177).

The Shī`īte legist Abū al-Ḥusayn Quṭb al-Dīn Sa`īd b. Hibat-Allāh al-Rāwandī (d. Qumm 573/1177) wrote a [K.] *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' al-Rāwandiyya* (GALS I:624; *Dharī`a* 17 No. 574, 105; Pampas, 1970:176; Kohlberg1992:166).[1] Like other Shī`ī *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works it contains details of Israelite prophets and associated matters in treating of the era between Adam and Muhammad. Following a section about `The prophethood of Jeremiah (Irmiyā') and Daniel (Dānyāl)' there are sections about various celestial signs, a twelve month solar eclipse *(khusūf al-shams)* and a year long lunar eclipse *(khusūf al-qamar)* (Rawandī, *Qiṣaṣ* 222f). There then follows a section about (St) George *(Jirjīs),* Ezra *(`Uzair),* Ezekiel *(Ḥizkīl)* and Elias *(Iliyā)* (ibid, 238ff) supplemented by another about `Isaiah (sha`ayā), the `Companions of the Trench *(aṣḥāb al-ukhūd)* (Q. 89:4), Elijah *(Ilyās),* and Elisha *(Ilyasa')* as well, for example, as legends relating to Jonah *(yūnus)* and the Companions of the Cave and their dog' *(aṣḥāb al-kahf wa'l-raqīm)* (ibid, 238-244).

A section in the Rāwandī Qiṣaṣ `On the proofs of the prophethood of Muhammad, both miraculous and otherwise' includes Islamicate prophecies rooted in pre-Islamic holy books (Qiṣaṣ, 271-315). Here, for example, it is noted that in his *Kamāl al-Dīn* Ibn Bābūya records that the *injīl* contains the words "I, verily am God, no God is there except Me, the Eternal, the Everlasting' (cf. Jn 1:1-2?) which is somehow unceasingly confirmatory of the *al-nabī al-ummī,* the foreign or unlettered prophet Muhammad -- whose nature is spelled out in highly majestic terms in this alleged NT prophecy. Jesus is also said to have asked God, `Oh! my Lord. What is *Ṭubā?'.* He is told that it is a celestial Tree in paradise planted by God which provides shade for the righteous *(al-akhyār).* Its foundation in [the Paradise of] al-Riḍwān and its water derived from the [celestial pool of nectar named] al-Tasnīm (cf. Q. 83:27f). Jesus is also told that the *al-nabī al-ummī,* Muhammad and his community, are to be the first of those to partake of these paradisiarchal wonders (Rawandī, *Qiṣaṣ,* 282-3).

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[1]This al-Rāwandī should not be confused with Abū al-Riḍā Faḍl Allāh al-Rāwandī (d. ?) who also authored a *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' work (see Dharī`a 17, No. 569,104)*

■ Ni`mat Allāh Jazā'irī (d.1113-4/1701).

Majlisī's pupil Ni`mat- Allāh ibn `Abd Allāh Jazā'irī (d.1113-4/1701) authored *al-Nūr al-mubīn fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' wa-al-mursilīn* (The Perspicuous Light respecting Stories of the Prophets and Messengers) as well as an introduction to a Shī`īte recension of the *Malḥamat Dāniyāl* also known to Majlisī (Dharī`a 17 No. 576, 105; *Biḥār* [2] 90:72) and Ibn Ṭāwūs (Kohlberg, 1992:143; cf. Fodor 1971). In his lengthy *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* a wide range of Shī`ī sources and traditions are drawn upon. The work opens with a consideration of aspects of prophethood including the number of *nabī/rasūl,* which of them brought a new *sharī`a* and were among the *ūlū al-`azm.* The number of revealed sacred books is reported as 124. Those in possession of portions of the multi-lettered *al-ism al-a`ẓam* (the Mightiest Name of God) are also named and listed (->7.1). An exposition of the *'Iṣmat al-anbiyā'* (the immaculacy of the prophets) is followed by a 500 or so page synopsis of the circumstances of the major pre-Islamic prophets.

Jazā'irī's *Qiṣaṣ* work includes an account of the creation and primordial events and has many interesting sections including material on Balaam b. Beor (Bal`am ibn Bā`ūrā'), "the progeny of Lot", details regarding another Ismā'īl, what was uttered by the *al-nāqūs* (The clapperboard, "bell"), and an account of the ascension of Jesus to heaven.

■ Persian *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works

From the time of the highly *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* oriented 10th cent. CE reworkings of the Ṭabarī *tafsīr* and *tārīkh* (<--2.1; 3.1), the eastern, Persianate Islamic lands showed a marked interest in *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* traditions. Persian writers expanded, Persianized and paraphrased numerous aspects of the stories of the prophets. They introduced non-Abrahamic historical and prophetological materials such as traditions relating to Zoroaster. The scheme of pre-Islamic world history was broadened. This through three major Persian *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works those of [1] Ibn Khalaf Naysābūrī, [2] Muhammad Juwayrī and [3] Muhammad al-Daydūzamī (->). These works are all closely related to the Arabic historical tradition of Ṭabarī and the abovementioned *qiṣaṣ al-`anbiyā* traditions of al-Kisā'ī and al-Tha`labī. These three are all

closely related Persian *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* texts. In the later ms. tradition they show some overlapping and conflation (Milstein et.al. 1999:11).

■ **Ibn Khalaf of Naysābūrī [Nīshāpūrī] (5th cent./11th cent).**

One of the oldest Persian works detailing the prophetic tales is that of Ibrāhīm Ibn Khalaf of Naysābūrī [Nīshāpūrī] (5th cent./11th cent. ed. Yaghmā'ī, 1961; Storey I/1 no. 197, 159-60; Milstein et, al. 1999:10-11). Interesting, sometimes unique details about prophet figures are found within this work. Moses and Khiḍr seem to be identified with Yasa` (Elisha) and Ilyās (Elias). Both are pictured as immortals who had quaffed the water of eternal life *(āb-I zindagī).* It is stated that they will remain engaged in their supervisionary, angelic tasks over land and sea until the Day of Resurrection (*Qiṣaṣ,* 338). The section of this work giving account of Mary and Jesus' birth, life and ascension is quite lengthy (Naysābūrī, Qiṣaṣ: 364-389). Chronological details are occasionally given. It is related that some hold that when Jesus was one month old Mary took him to the land of Egypt (cf. Matt. 2:13f) where he stayed for three years (ibid, 3669-70). When Jesus was considerably older Mary took him to an instructor *(mu`allimī)* who came to ask the child Jesus to say *abjad.* This he largely explained as follows, the (letter) "A" *(alif)* signifies His (God's) *Ālā'* (= the Divine Blessings), the "B" His *Baqā* ("Eternity") and the "J" His *Jalāl* ("Grandeur") (ibid, 371; the letter "D" is not explained). The teacher is astonished. This account stands among the important Islamicate versions of the story of Jesus' first day at school existing in several languages (Arabic, Persian, etc). Such stories have been influential in filling out hagiographical accounts of the early schooling of all-knowing, divinely inspired children including certain twelver Imāms and the Bāb himself (Lambden, [1983]1987).

■ **Muhammad Juwayrī [= Ḥuwayzī] (10th cent. CE??)**

Possibly even earlier than the aforementioned work is the Persian *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' wa siyar al-mulūk* of Muhammad Juwayrī [= Ḥuwayzī?] which may have been reworked (?) by the Sufi, Abū Muhammad Jurayrī. It contains some archaic elements such as the name Ijnūḥ rather than Idrīs for Enoch though it is most likely later than the alleged 352/963 (Dharī`a 17,

No. 576, 105; Thackston, 1978:xxxi; Milstein et, al. 1999:12-13). It was lithographed at least four times in 19th century Iran and India (Bombay) though after the lifetime of the Bāb (d. 1850 CE).[1]

Erroneously considered a translation of the Arabic *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of al-Kisā'ī by Storey, Thackston and others (1978:xix,xxxiii n. 30), a probably 7th/13th cent. *Qiṣaṣ al-`anbiyā'* work, was composed in Persian by the little known Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Daydūzamī. In at least one mss. this *Qiṣaṣ* goes under the title, *Nafā'is al-`arā'is wa qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Gems of the Brides and Stories of the Prophets; Milstein 1999:12-13). According to Milstein this author stated that he "wrote a composition in the Persian language on the creation and the basic tenets of Muslim theology that would serve as a tool against the [Shī`ī?] heresy" (idem, 13). Here again lengthy sometimes novel chapters are devoted to the various prophets.[2]

■ **`Abd-Allāh al-Ḥusaynī (d. c.1243/1826)**

Among the early Qajar Shī`ī *Qiṣaṣ* works is that of `Abd Allāh b. Muhammad Riḍā' [al-Shubbar] al-Ḥusaynī (d.c.1243/1826) entitled *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' `alā ra'y al-Imāmiyya* (Dharī`a 17 No. 566, 103; GALS II:580). [3] This very large work on Shī`ī biblical legends is for the most part made up of traditions of the twelver Imams. The author derives much of his material from Majlisī's *Biḥar al-anwār* (<--2.2) (Nagel, 1967:119-121). It was studied by Walther Aichele in a pioneering 1915 article about biblical legends in this work of al-Ḥusaynī (--> bib).

Numerous *tafsīr, ḥadīth,* history and other Islamic literatures contain *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* legends and motifs in various languages including Persian, Arabic, Turkish. They add very

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[1] This work was lithographed three times in Tabriz from 1279/1862 and once in Tehran in 1284/1867 (Storey I/i:158; Thackston, xxxi). In some mss. this *Qiṣaṣ* work purports to have been translated from an Arabic original (by order of the fictitious) Sulṭān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muẓaffar though one early mss. dating to 1000/1591-2 is bereft of these details (Milstein et, al. 1999:12).

[2] On other Persian *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and associated works see Storey, I, I 29§2, 159, §196 and Thackston, 1978:xxxii.

[3] I wonder if this `Abd-Allāh b. Muhammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī (d.c.1243/1826) is the same person as Sayyid `Abd-Allāh ibn Muhammad Ridā' al-Shubbrī al-Kāzimī (b. Najaf, 1188/1774-5 -- d. Mashad 1242/1825-6) who wrote the recently published *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn fī ma`rifat uṣūl al-dīn* (Beirut:Mu`assassat al-a`lāmī, 1418/1997), and is also credited with a *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* volume (no 39 in a list of 63 in introd. to *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (<--11).

significantly to the wealth of Islamic *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* sources.[1] This is partially illustrated in the previous sections (2.1-3). Arabic and Persianate Sufī influenced poetry is especially rich in this respect. Numerous *qiṣaṣ* and prophetological elements are contained within the poetry of Fārid al-Dīn `Aṭṭār (d.618/1221), Ibn al-Fārid of Cairo (d. 632/1235), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273; Renard, 1994), `Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī (d. 898/1492) and others some of whom have been cited or alluded to by BA* (-->).

An example of a work rich in Shī`īte *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* traditions is Majlisī's massive Persian *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* (The Life of Hearts). Accounts of the prophets from Adam to Muhammad fill well in excess of one thousand pages (vols. 1&2 of 5 vols. --> bib). Here the influence of Isrā'īliyyāt / *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* traditions is widespread. One can read on the authority of the twelver Imam Ridā', for example, that Noah, hopeful of protection and salvation when in the Ark, was moved (on God's advice) to utter 1,000 repetitions of the *shahada,* (Ar. *lā ilāha ilā Allāh* = there is no God but God). This he did in Syriac, loosely transliterated in Majlisi as هلوليا الـ"ااالـ"ا يامريا اتقن (= [?] Hallelujah x 1000 [?], O Lord *(maryā),* Save!?). Noah ultimately wrote a version of the Arabic *shahada* on his finger for memorization purposes (Majlisī, Ḥayat,1:246). Later in the *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* there is a lengthy Persianized, Islamified translation of the beatitudes and various other woes and sayings of Jesus (Ḥayāt, , 2:1160-1175). As noted these sayings are sometimes reminiscent of the Persian Hidden Words of BA* (2.2f).

In concluding this overview of Islamic `stories of the prophets' it should be noted that they continued to be written in many parts of the Muslim world. According to Thackston Turkish *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works did not exist "before the fourteenth century either in Central Asia or in Anatolia" (1978:xxxii). Important in this respect though is the central Asian, East Turkish *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of al-Rabghūzī (710/1310), a rewritten compendium of earlier *qiṣaṣ* works including that of Tha`labī (<--). It covers the period from the creation to the martyrdom of Ḥusayn b. `Alī

[1] It should not be forgotten that Persian Jewry also produced significant prose and poetical texts in Judaeo-Persian about biblical prophet figures.

in Karbala (61 /680 CE),[1] from the creation of an Adam who was cognisant of all the names (Q. 2:31f) in all languages including "Arabic, Persian and Turkish" until the time of Muhammad and beyond (al-Rabghūzī, 2:14f). The early section of this *Qiṣaṣ* relating to Adam and other early figures is, like al-Damīrī's *Ḥayat al-Ḥayawān* (The Life of the Animals), rich in animal lore (Somogyi, 1937:263ff). It has also been observed that nearly one fifth of al-Rabghūzī *Qiṣaṣ* is devoted to Joseph and his relationship to Zulaykha, its latter part focussing upon the relationship between Muhammad and Khadija (Dankoff, 1997:118).

■ ***Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*** **materials in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources**

While, as far as I am aware, neither the Bāb nor BA* name or explicitly cite Islamic *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works it is obvious that they were much influenced by prophetological stories and motifs contained within these sources and within such closely related bodies of literature as Persianate Sufi poetry. Only a few examples of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* influences upon them can be detailed here.

In the Persian *Dalā'il-I sab'ih* of the Bāb there is an apologetic defence of his being one imprisoned yet still the awaited messianic Qā'im. The Bāb finds it necessarily to cite prophetological and associated precedents for this. He thus refers to Joseph among the *nabīyyīn* (prophets) as one imprisoned *(masjūn)* (in Egypt) and to the circumstance of the imprisoned seventh twelver Imām, Mūsā b. Ja`far (al-Ṣādiq) (d.183/799) among the *waṣiyyīn* (legatees). According to the Shī`a the latter was arrested, imprisoned and poisoned by the `Abbasids. In this connection a second pair of exemplars is also named by the Bāb from among the *nabiyyūn* and the *waṣiyyūn*. They are the ultra pious prophet Zakariyyā (father of Yaḥyā, John the Baptist) who in Shī`ī and other *qiṣaṣ* works is pictured as a martyr prophet. He is said to have met a very grizzly end by being sliced up inside a tree.[2] Then also the Sayyid al-

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[1] A Turkish mss. of Rabghūzī's *Qiṣaṣ* was reproduced 1948 by the Danish Turkologist Kaare Gronbech. In 1995 the edition and translation of Boeschoten and Vandamme was published (--> bib. cf. Malov, "Legendes musulmanes"; Thackston, 1978: xxxii; Dankoff, 1997.

[2] Majlisi, Biḥār[2] 14:161ff; Tabarī, Tārīkh (Per.) [Zotenberg] 1:569-79; Sidersky, 1933:139-40; Milstein, 1999:154-5).

Shuhadā' (Prince of Martyrs), Imām Husayn who suffered a tragic martyrdom near Karbala in 61/680 (P.Dalā'il:16-17).

In P.Bayān 7:15 (p. 262) obscure reference is made to a *khayyāṭ* (tailor) in an early religious theophany *(ẓuhūr).* This could be a reference to the first man, Adam or more likely to Idris (Enoch). The Bāb states that with every "theophanic era" *(ẓuhūr)* all previous theophanies *(ẓuhūrāt)* are evident. In his own era Adam/Enoch the *khayyāṭ* was marvellously apparent *(jawhar mīgardad).* The motif of Adam having been a tailor *(khayyāṭī),* could reflect the Muslim appropriation of Rabbinic traditions surrounding Gen. (2:25), 3:7 and 3:21 (Lambden, 1992; Ricks, 2000). Informed by these verses and related Rabbinic exegetical traditions al-Ṭabarī states in his *Tārīkh,* that it was with the wool of a slaughtered lamb that, like a good Muslim, Adam "made a coat for himself, and a shift and veil for Eve" (Tārīkh, 123/tr. Rosenthal, 294).

A tradition originating with Ibn `Abbās as cited in the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Kisā'ī details the trades or worldly occupations of nineteen prophets who lived between the times of Adam and Jesus. Here it is stated here that "Adam was a cultivator, Enoch [Idrīs] a tailor *(khayyāṭ)* and Noah a carpenter" (Kisā'ī,II: 61/ tr. Thackston, 67). The identification of Idrīs (= Ikhnūkh, = Enoch) with the work of tailoring is common in Islamic *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* works. Tha`labī refers to Idrīs as "the first to write with the pen and the first among such as tailor garments *(khāṭṭ al-thiyāb)* and sew with the needle *(labas al-mukhyaṭ)* (Qiṣaṣ, 49). The wide-ranging didactic work *Laṭā'if al-ma`ārif* (The Subtleties of Knowledge) of Abū Manṣūr al-Tha`labī (d.429/1038) contains some interesting passages about the pre-Islamic originators of things. Of Idrīs (Enoch) it is stated, ".. He was the first to use writing and to sew garments, whereas previously people had only skins and hides [cf. Gen 3:21] (Bosworth, 1968:39).

The section on Idrīs in the *Nūr al-mubīn* of the Shī`ī pupil of Majlisī al-Jazā'irī (<--) repeats with subtle changes parts of al-Tha`labī's account of Idrīs. He also records the tradition that Idrīs-Enoch "was first among such as tailor garments *(khāṭ al-thiyāb)"* specifically adding that he was a *khayyāṭ* (tailor) (al-Jazā'irī, *Qiṣaṣ* 71). The Persian *Qiṣaṣ* work ascribed to

Juwayrī (<--) also refers to Enoch as the first person to "sew the garment" (*jāmih-yi dūkht;* Qiṣaṣ, 47).

In a number of illustrated Persian *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* texts including a ms. of the Juwayrī Qiṣaṣ dated 1572 CE., Enoch is pictured as one associated with the craft of tailoring (Milstein et. al.,1999:204). Similarly, in an illustrated Istanbul located ms. of the *Qiṣaṣ* of Tha`labī, Idrīs-Enoch is pictured as "surrounded by angels" and "sewing a robe" (ibid,213). That Adam more likely Idrīs-Enoch were in some sense tailors may have been a tradition repeated by Jewish and/ or Muslim tailors in the bazaars and Vakīl Mosque of Shīrāz and hence known to the Bāb from his early years.

Like many Persianate poets including Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d.672/1273), BA* very frequently, in several major works and hundreds of prose and poetical *alwāḥ* drew religio-ethical lessons from stories and motifs rooted in the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* traditions. This for the edification of his predominantly Muslim and Bābī contemporaries. This is illustrated in several of BA*'s works of the later Iraq period; most notably his *Sūrat al-nuṣḥ* (Sura of the Counsel; c. 1859?), *K. Īqān* c.1862), and *L. 'Ayyūb* (Tablet of Job-->). In such works BA* succinctly details a succession of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* stories illustrating how past prophets were rejected or badly treated by their contemporaries. His purpose is primarily to enable the rejection of the Bāb to be understood and to pave the way for belief in his own theophanic message.

Job and his (unnamed) wife are greatly celebrated in the opening pages of the twenty-five page Arabic epistle of BA* variously entitled the *L. Ayyūb* (Tablet of Job) and *Sūrat al-ṣabr* (Surah of Patience, March 1863; Ar. text, AyyāmT: 282-313). Therein are registered Islamicate forms of originally Jewish-Hellenistic Job materials found, for example, in the *Testament of Job* (1st. cent. BCE/CE?; Kohler, 1897; OTP 1:829-868). Job, though not the biblical book, also figures in a few other *alwāḥ* of BA* (e.g. L.Sarrāj, MA 7:65). AB* occasionally interpreted verses of the biblical book of Job (SWAB: 171-2 on Job 19:25-27) and gave Q. 38:41 an allegorical interpretation. The "spring" *(mughtasal)* in this latter verse is interpreted as the "spring of divine prophethood" *(chashmih-yi nubuwwat-I ilāhī).* On entering

it Job was cured of both spiritual infirmities *(amraḍ-I rūḥanī)* and physical strictures *(taqayyād-I nafsānī)* (Ganj, 58-9).

Throughout BA*'s writings including his Arabic *Qaṣida-yi warqā'iyya* (Ode of the Dove, c. 1856) and Persian *Mathnawī* c.1860-2?) major motifs within *qiṣaṣ* legends are given non-literal meanings. Allegorical meaning is commonly suggested by genitive constructions. Examples from a few lines in the *K. Īqān* are:

> That holiness [Moses] appeared with the rod of the [divine] command [power]*(`aṣa-yi amr)* and the right-hand of gnosis *(bayḍā'-yi ma`rifat).* He came from the Paran of divine love *(fārā–I muḥabbat-I ilāhī),* with the serpent of power *(thubā–I qudrat)* and the all-enduring majesty *(shawkat-I ṣamādaniyya)* from the Sinai of light *(sīnā-yi nūr)...* (KI:8-9).

In some *alwāḥ* BA*, it should also be noted here, refers to Shī`ī forms of the stories of Bal`ām b. Beor (Balaam son of Beor), Ḥizkiel (Ezekiel) and others in making specific doctrinal and historical points (e.g. BA* L.Bahā').

The influence of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* materials is obvious in several of BA*'s major works. In the *K. Īqān,* for example, BA* briefly recounts the story of Noah in distinctly Shī`ī terms (KI:5f/5f). While the name Noah in Hebrew (Heb. נֹחַ = Nōah) most probably means `to rest or settle down' (cf. Majlisī, Ḥayāt 1:245) in Gen 5:29 it is given a folk etymological explanation derived from the Hebrew root N–H-M, signifying `to comfort, console'. In his account of Noah in the *K-Īqān* BA* immediately draws upon the Islamicate etymological explanation of Noah's title or name presupposing that it signifies `to wail, grieve, lament' (from the Ar. root N–W-H).[1] This he links with the extended Shī`ī period of Noah's pre-flood mission as set out, for example, in a tradition relayed (for apologetic reasons)[2] from Ja`far al-Ṣādiq in the *Kamāl al-*

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[1] See, for example, the Persian *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Juvayrī where Noah's name is actually Shukr ibn Lamak (= Lamech, Gen. 5:28) who came to have the name Noah (Qiṣaṣ, 59). The *Qiṣaṣ* of al-Kisā'ī states, "It is said that Noah was so called because he wailed (nāḥ)" (tr. Thackston, 98). SE*'s translation of the above passage "Noah... prayerfully exhorted his people..." fails to clearly register this Islamicate play on Noah's name or, it appears, the full 950 years of his period of grief. In Shī`ī sources the total length of Noah's life exceeds 950 years (Majlisī, Ḥayāt:246ff).

[2] The length of Noah's life is greatly extended in the light of the lengthy periods of *ghayba* (occultation) of the hidden twelfth Imam, the Qā'im. Hence the tradition originating with the 4th twelver Imam Zayn al-`Ābidīn (d.95/713), "In the Qā'im there is a sign from Noah which is longevity *(ṭawl al-`amr)*

dīn (Perfection of Religion) of Ibn Bābūya (d. 381/991): Noah's lived 2,500 years = 850 pre-prophetic years + 950 years summoning his people + 700 post-flood years (cf. also Ibn Bābūya, *'Ilal,* 32; Majlisī, Ḥayāt, 1:247-8). This Islamic tradition greatly extends the biblical-qur'ānic period of Noah's 950 year lifespan (950 years = 1,000 minus 50; Gen. 9:29; Q.XX) (---->):

> Among the prophets *(anbiyā')* was Noah (نُوح). For 950 years he was stricken with grief (نُوحه *nawḥa namūd)* and summoned the servants to the right-hand side of the [Sinaitic] vale of the Spirit *(vādī-yi ayman-I rūḥ).*

Following these words BA* underlines Noah's intense suffering and rejection and states that he repeatedly "promised victory to his companions". Allusion is made here to a Shī`ī *Qiṣaṣ* tradition not found in either the Bible or the Q. BA* has it that Noah had several times fixed an "hour of victory" *(naṣr)* which was deliberately unfulfilled by God (cf. Nu`manī, K. Ghayba, 153-4;Majlisī, Biḥar [2]11:326-8; Ḥayāt, 1:247ff; Kohlberg, 1991, XVI).

God, BA* continues, operated according to the (proto-) Shī`ī principle of non-realization stemming from a change in salvific circumstances. A change in the divine plan resulted through *badā'* (loosely), the divine 'change of mind' which is an important Shī`ī theological principle well-known to the Bāb. Shī`ī legends of the story of Noah sometimes make Noah a type of Imam `Alī (Kohlberg, 1991 XVI:50). It seems likely that Noah in the *K-īqān* is a type of the rejected `Alī, the Sayyid of Shīrāz, the Bāb who also utilized a theology of *al-badā'* which may well have been an issue for the uncle of the Bāb for whom the *K.īqān* was written in 1862.[1] BA* references, in other words, to Noah and *badā'* in his KI, probably result from concerns of the Bāb's uncle relating to the issue of a cancelled *jihād* episode in early Bābī history and to the Bāb's being the successful, militaristic *Qā'im bi'l-sayf* (with the sword) (Fayḍi, Khandan, 40-41, insert, Q. 4).

(cited Ibn Bābūya, *Kamāl,* 475).

[1] After his return from pilgrimage in 1845, the Bāb cancelled an earlier proposed Bābī congregation in Karbala, most probably for the initiation of an eschatological *jihād* (holy war). A prayer of the Bāb written in response to questions relating to the meaning of the *jihād* oriented tradition of Mufaḍḍal b. `Umar, makes it clear that eschatological expectations spelled out therein could be cancelled through *al-badā* (INBA Ms 6003C:173ff cf. Sachedina, 1981:165-6).

The story of Noah, as told by BA* in the *K.Īqān,* continues by explaining that he was repeatedly abandoned until, as set down in well-known books and traditions *(kutub va akhbār;* KI:6/6), only 40 or 72 of his followers remained and survived the flood. As BA* indicates these or similar figures are indeed found in most of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* legends of the story of Noah. Majlisī in the *Ḥayāt al-qulūb,* for example, mentions a remnant of around 80 persons which is eight (= Noah, his 3 sons and their wives = 4x2 = 8; Gen. 6:18, 7:7,13 cf. 1 Peter 3:20) above the standard `perfect number' 72, representative of the saved remnant of followers (cf. Majlisī, Ḥayāt 1:262). Forty as the number of the remnant differs from the biblical tradition (Majlisī, Biḥār,[2] 11:336ff; 13:285f; Mīrkhwānd, Rawḍat, tr. Rehatsek, 89).

Aside from his use of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* motifs in poetical writings of the Iraq and later periods, aspects of the Islamic and sometimes biblical stories of Jesus and John the Baptist were drawn upon in the period of his debate with Azalī Bābīs. This is evident in BA*'s Persian *Kitāb-I badī`* (Wondrous Book), his Tablet of the Pope *(L.-i pāp)* and other works of the Edirne and Acre or West Galilean periods. At times BA* communicates a theological point using motifs which have both qur'ānic and biblical roots. Chronological and other details in the lives of prophets, sages and philosophers are usually registered according to the Islamicate tradition.

Qiṣaṣ al-anbiya' rooted themes and motifs are common in the writings of the Bāb and BA* though they seldom refer to specific sources. Certain of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* legends and motifs registered or alluded to in the *alwāḥ* of BA* can be source critically analysed though few are sufficiently lengthy to invite detailed source critical analysis. Narratives touched upon and motifs utilized are often too wide-rangingly paralleled in *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and associated literatures to facilitate successful source critical identification. Comprehension of the meaning of prophetological motifs in the writings of the Bāb and BA* can, however, be greatly increased by an understanding of their Islamic literary trajectories and significances.

Chapter Five

THE BIBLE AND ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT IN SHĪ`Ī ISLAM

■ 5.1 Pre-Islamic revelations, the Bible and biblical *taḥrīf* ("falsification")

Although the Bible in the form of biblical and post-biblical materials, permeates the Q. leaving an unmistakable influence, very little of this Judaeo-Christian scripture is directly cited or straightforwardly duplicated. The Q. remains aloof from biblical scripture in expressing its neo-Abrahamic, "pure" Arabic religiosity. Many centrally important biblical teachings as expounded by Jews and Christians are not touched upon. If the canonical Bible were known to Muhammad and his contemporaries, it was largely bypassed. The archetypal reality of the Q. was not concrete Judaeo-Christian scripture but the *umm al-kitāb* (Q.13:39; 43:4, etc), a heavenly archetypal reality. Its concrete text is represented as an Arabic revelation, new and pre-eminently "clear" *(mubīn).*

Little of the Bible was deemed suitable for qur'ānic citation within the Arabic Q. There are only two reasonably exact quotations from the HB (-->). Relative to Judaism the Q. contains, "a large amount of repeated Biblical material together with Midrashic elaborations, and additions and adaptions based upon the laws and stories of the Pentateuch and the former Prophets of the Hebrew Bible" (Lazarus-Yafeh, EI [2] `Tawrāt'). Though there is "much material" in the Q. "which stands in some relation to the Old Testament" it is "hardly ever exactly reproduced" (Bell, 1945:1).

The Q. also registers very little of the NT *kerygma* though the influence of oriental Christian terminology and apocryphal stories is in evidence. Paul is not mentioned neither are (pseudo-) Pauline texts cited. The centrality of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection go unmentioned as does the theology of the Pauline corpus and of the Church Fathers (cf. Q.19:15, 34; 4:156, Parrinder,1982:105ff). Though variously transformed, only a few of the miraculous works and parables of Jesus are reflected in the Q. (Parrinder, 1982, Chps. 9 &10; Robinson,1991, ch.14). Many key Christian teachings have no place in the Q. Muhammad largely bypassed the intricacies of the Rabbinic discussions and the potentially divisive

Christological and related speculations of the patristic era.[1]

In representing itself as a Book of God, the Q. claims to legitimate, abrogate, confirm and clarify the three or four bodies of pre-Islamic revelation to which it refers (Q. 5:48); namely, (1) the ancient (pre-Mosaic) *ṣuḥuf (scriptures),* (2) the *tawrāt* (Torah [HB]); (3) the *zabūr* (Psalter) and (4) the *injīl* (Evangel/Gospel) which are seen to be representative of the pristine, original Bible (-->). These scriptures are often contrasted by Muslims with extant, canonical and for them often *taḥrif* ("corrupted") Judaeo-Christian scripture .

Little or no trace remains of a number of allegedly complete, very early pre-9th cent. CE Bible translations mentioned in Arabic sources (Polliack,1997:3ff).[22] The*Fihrist* of al-Nadīm, for example, records that a protégée of Harūn al-Rashīd named Aḥmad b. `Abd-Allāh b. Salām (fl.c. 800 CE?) asserted that he had

> ".. translated.. the *Ṣuhuf* (`[primordial] Scriptures'), the *tawrāt* (Torah), the *injīl* (Gospels), and the books of the prophets and disciples *(kutub al-anbiyā' wa talāmidha)* from Hebrew, Greek and Sabian (al-Ṣābiyya) which are in the languages of the people of each book, into the Arabic language, letter by letter..." (*Fihrist,* 37, cf. Dodge 1:42, 2:945)

There likewise seems no remaining trace of Bible translations made during the `Abbasid period, such as that allegedly made by the Nestorian Christian translator (from Syriac and Greek), Ḥunayn b. Ishāq (d. c. 873) ( Mas`ūdī, Tanbih,112). With a few exceptions, it was not until about the mid. 9th cent. CE. that biblical quotations begin to appear in Islamic literatures. Among the earliest is the Johannine paraclete prophecy (Jn 15:32f) cited by Ibn Ishaq (<–3.2). Over the next millennium and more select learned Muslim apologists and scholars gradually and sporadically came to have a sometimes detailed knowledge of the Bible by direct

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[1] By the time of Eusebius (d. 339) the saying had already arisen *Arabia haeresium ferax* ("Arabia fertile in heresies"). By the mid. 3rd Cent. CE Origen (d. 254 CE) had already had reason to address the tendencies of Beryllus of Bostra (now Jordan) and the Arabian bishop Heraclides. For the record of his dialogue with the latter and his fellow bishops see *Dialogue with Heraclides* c. 245) (trans. Daly, 1992:57-78; also Eusebius, HE VI, 33 and Spencer Trimingham, 1979[90]:55ff).

[2] It is difficult, for example, as Beeston remarks, to know what to make of the Alexandrian biblical scholar Origen's (d. 256 CE) reference to his having consulted existing "Chaldean [= Syriac] and Arabic" Bible versions in framing his lost polyglot Bible, the *Hexapla.* (CHAL 1:22). Only minor importance is now given to this and related issues of the Arabic Bible by twentieth century Islamicists and biblical scholars.

consultation of Arabic translations or mostly through oral means. The earliest extant, complete translation of the HB is the Judaeo-Arabic *Tafsīr* of the Jew Saadya Gaon (d. 942). Arabic biblical citations proliferated from the 9th cent. CE though they are often inaccurate or highly Islamicate. Aside from a few converts who collected biblical testimonia (e.g. `Alī b. Rabbābn al-Ṭabarī–>), Muslims writers often relied upon the oral transmission of biblical texts through mediatory "people of the Book" (Adang,1996).

Throughout Islamic history there was a widespread transmission of Islamicate (pseudo-) biblical citations. Many were loosely set down in early Islamic sources (<--1.2). They were cherished by Sufis, philosophers, mystics, theologians and other proponents of divine *ḥikmat* and *irfānī,* "gnostic" philosophies. A small proportion of these numerous Islamified (pseudo-) biblical texts have been collected by Islamicists, most notably by Ignaz Goldziher (d.1921), the Spanish Christian Arabist Miguel Asín Palacios (d. 1944 --> bib. 1919/26) and most recently by the Cambridge Islamicist Tarif Khalidi (–> bib. 2001).

Early Islamic Bible citations exhibit varying degrees of "accuracy" or levels of Islamic "rewriting" for apologetic, doctrinal or other reasons. Diverse levels of "Islamification" are evident. Very basically put, biblical citations in Islamic sources may be, (a) largely or completely literalistic ("accurate") biblical citations (e.g the Ibn Qutayba, Genesis texts -->); (b) partly "inaccurate" or showing a small amount of Islamicate rewriting (al-Ghazalī; al-Bīrūnī Deut 33:2 -->); c) alleged biblical citations having a very tenuous relationship to one or more biblical texts (e.g. Ibn al-`Arabī) and (d) pseudo-biblical citations which have no obvious relationship to any biblical text(s) as commonly transmitted (e.g. occasionally al-Ghazalī) and (e) pseudo-biblical citations which are so thoroughly Islamicate that they bear no relationship at all to biblical texts (al-Damirī; Mullā Ṣadrā-->). Select examples of such biblical citations have been given below (chs. 2 & 3), others will be set down in pages to follow.

■ **The charge of *taḥrīf* ("falsification") and Islamicate pseudo-biblical texts.**

Belief in the *taḥrīf* ("falsification") of the Bible became widespread in the post-qur'ānic Muslim world. It outlawed or inhibited Muslim Bible study and quotation. The following qur'ānic

verses most centrally bear upon the charge of the *taḥrīf* (falsification) of pre-Islamic scripture;

> ... a section of them [the Jews] heard the word of God *(kalimat Allāh)* and then, having understood, they deliberately falsified it *(yuḥarrifūna)* .. (Q. 2:75b)
> Some among the Jews distort the words out of their context [lit.` their place'] *(yuḥarrifūna'l-kalima `an mawāḍi`hi)* saying [in place of the right words]: `We have heard and we disobey' and `Hear, without hearing' and `Listen to us,' twisting their tongues and reviling the faith.. (Q. 4:46a).

Four qur'ānic verses and a few supplementary texts refer to a Jewish falsification or alteration *(ḥarrafū)* of the text and / or meaning of the words of the Torah (Q. 2:75b; 4:46a; 5:13a; 5:41b). It is implied that Jews deliberately altered, corrupted, misread or somehow perverted scripture by subjecting texts to *taḥrīf* (`falsification', Q. 4:46 5:13; 2:75; etc) and/ or *tabdīl* ("alteration", Q. 4:48; 5:16ff). Having analysed the relevant verses Montgomery Watt, Mahmud Ayoub and others have convincingly argued that the qur'ānic use of the imperfect active form *yuḥarrifūna* (`falsification', `corruption') does not support the post-qur'anic theory of the corruption of the whole Bible (Montgomery Watt, 1978:24; Ayoub 1986:3).

To some degree following earlier religious accusations of scriptural misreading and corruption voiced by Jews against other Jewish factions (including Samaritans and Christians) and Christians against Jews and others, Muslims also came to accuse Jews and Christians of championing an outdated or "false" scripture. This was to some extent born out of their early difficulty in debate with Abrahamic *ahl al-kitāb*. e.g. proving the prophethood of Muhammad from the Bible. For many centuries Sunnī Muslims and a good many 19th century and earlier Shī`ī Muslims, upheld the dogma of biblical *taḥrīf* on the basis of qur'ānic verses and a critical examination of biblical texts. Details cannot be gone into here save for brief mention of a few vehement Muslim upholders of the textual corruption of the Bible and of a few Muslims who rejected any thoroughgoing doctrine of *taḥrīf.* .

The prolific Andalusian theologian, jurist and ultimately Ẓāhirī (literalist) writer, `Alī ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 /1064) was perhaps the most virulent anti-Bible Muslim thinker. He authored his anti-biblical encyclopaedia, the *Fiṣāl fī'l-milāl...* (Differentiation of the Religious Communities) and several other works with a view to exposing the absurdity and falsity of

Jewish and Christian scripture and tradition. Ibn Ḥazm spelled out some of the many "errors" and "distortians" he felt underlined the to him obviously non-revealed nature of the Hebrew Bible and Christian Gospels / NT (Palacious, 1927; Arnaldez, EI^2 III:795; Chejne, 1982; Pulcini, 1998, Adang, 1996:237-248).[1]

In the 19th century Muslim world a recrudescence of polemical, anti-biblical writing was precipitated in response to evangelical orientalism in the form of anti-Islamic Christian missionary propaganda. Especially notable in this respect was the widely distributed *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* ("The Balance of Truth"; Armenian, 1831; 1st Persian ed. Shushy 1835; 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1839; Urdu, 1840; Turkish, 1862; Arabic, 1865) of the German Protestant missionary Carl Gottleib Pfander (1803-65). A notable response to his polemic focussed upon the issue of biblical *taḥrīf* was publicly argued in Agra (India) in 1854 CE and subsequently written down by the learned, universally respected Indian Shī`ī Muslim writer Raḥmat-Allāh ibn Khalīl al-`Uthmānī al-Kairānawī [al-Hindī] (d. Mecca, 1308/1891). He sought to underline the magnitude of biblical *taḥrīf* through his widely circulated *Iẓhār al-ḥaqq* ("The Appearance of the Truth", Ar. 2 vols. Istanbul 1284/1867; T urkish 1876-7; Eng. tr. 4 vols.1410/1989) (Schirrmacher, 1999:270ff). His detailed critique of biblical texts took some account of the "folly" of the ancient and pre-modern ideas about the biblical text (Powell, 1976:53). It had a very wide sphere of influence (Powell, 1993:295-6) being known and responded to in the Shī`ī world. It was very probably known to AB* as evident in certain of his statements about the biblical text and "higher criticism" (-->).[2]

Like Sayyid Aḥmad `Alawī during the Safavid period (-->) Shī`ī Muslims of nineteenth century Iran came to respond to the missionary endeavours and the translation activity of

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[1] On similar though even more focussed lines is the *Iẓḥār tabdīl al-yahūd wa'l-nasārā* (Exposition on the Alternation [of the Torah and Gospel] by the Jews and the Christians). According to Pulcini, Ibn Ḥazm's numerous Arabic biblical quotations which sometimes differ significantly from the Masoretic text and the Greek LXX are derived from a complete Christian produced Arabic Bible fundamentally based upon a Latin *Vorlage* (source document) (Pulcini, 185).

[2] See for example, the details contained in the Tablet of AB* to Rosenburg cited in Weinburg, *Ethel Jenner Rosenburg,* 78-81.

various western missionaries. Among them the English evangelical Henry Martyn (d.1812) who spent eleven months in Shīrāz and Bushire (1811-1812) a few years before the Bāb who was 25 + years in these two cities (1819-->1844+ esp. 1845-6). Henry Martyn did much to prompt Persian mullas and mujtahids to adopt a Shī`ī, anti-Christian stance. Many came to condemn Christian missionary activity and some pointed out the *taḥrīf* limitations and "corruption" of the Bible. Among these Shī`ī apologists was Mullā Muhammad Ridā' Hamadānī [Tabrīzī] (d. 1830s??). In his *Miftāḥ al-nubuwwah* (The Keys of Prophethood) he raised *taḥrīf* issues in great detail in the course of responding to the evangelical tracts of Henry Martyn (Lee 1824: 161-450; QU:129-30; Wolff: MJ3:156 No.1). Even the Oxford Semitic scholar Samuel Lee (d.1852) was moved to write a defense of this Shī`ī charge of biblical *taḥrīf* ("falsification") in his *Controversial Tracts* (Lee, CT:451-584).

Muslim accusations centering upon allegations of biblical *taḥrīf* to some extent made it irrelevant, unnecessary, even foolish for Muslims to become learned about and cite the Bible. Yet, when assembling prophecies anticipating the truth of Muhammad and Islam this was often viewed as a necessary task. Apart, however, from those entering Islam from an Abrahamic religious background, relatively few Muslims acquired a detailed knowledge of the Bible. Many, if not most, remained ignorant of its contents. Muslim commentaries upon canonical biblical books were, until very recent times, unknown. The *Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (2 pts., 1862, 65) by the Indo-Muslim "modernist" Sayyid Aḥmad Khan (d.1898) remains more or less unique (Rippin, 1990).

For Muslims the miraculous, inimitable superiority *(I`jāz)* and abbrogatory nature of the Q. along with the existence of "sound" supplementary *ḥadīth/akhbar*, all but rendered biblical learning alien and superfluous. Many Muslims understood *taḥrīf* in ways which negated the veracity of existing Abrahamic scripture. It is ironic today that while a large number of Muslims view the bible as "corrupt" a very considerable number give fantastic importance to the obviously forged pseudo-*Gospel of Barnabas,* often regarding it as the only extant "true" Injīl / Gospel (Ragg, 1907; Sox.1984).

For apologetic or polemical reasons biblical knowledge was distinctly advantageous. for Muslims. From the early Islamic centuries a number cited the bible (<--2.1ff) including, for example, Abū al-Rabī` Muhammad b. al-Laith (fl. late 8th cent. CE), `Alī b. Rabbān al-Ṭabarī (d. 241/855), Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), al-Birūnī (d.c [after]. 442/1050), al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111)[11] and the very linguistically equipped Safavid sage Aḥmad al-Alawī (d. c. 1060/1650). It was largely after the 15th century due to western printing and missionary activity, that the Bible became better known and more accurately cited by Muslim scholars (-->4.2ff).

In 19th century Persia and elsewhere relatively few Muslims adopted a positive attitude towards pre-Islamic scripture. In the course of attempting to prove truth of the mission of the Bāb to Muslims in the early 1860s, BA* found it necessary to cite the NT and reassert the occasional and largely forgotten earlier Islamic acceptance of the Bible. He radically modified the largely negative Islamic concept of biblical *taḥrīf.* ("falsification" -->).

■ **Islamicate pseudo-biblical and pseudepigraphical texts.**

Despite the Muslim accusation of biblical *taḥrīf* directed towards Jews and Christians some among them composed or cited what now seen obviously pseudo-biblical or pseudepigraphical Abrahamic texts. The Bible was not readily available in Arabic, (Persian or Turkish) translation throughout much of Islamic history especially during the early centuries AH (7th-->mid.10th cent. CE). The circulation of Muslim generated pseudo-biblical and pseudo-pigraphical writings was thus quite common.

Early ascetics and Sufis such Ibn al-Mubarak (d. 181/797), Abu Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996) and Abū Numayn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1039) cited texts representative of cherished Judaeo-Christian wisdom which they, to a greater or lesser degree, Islamified. It is often difficult to know which biblical text or texts (if any) inspired Islamicate, Muslim "Bible" citations. As Khalidi has recently put it, "Many Islamic texts prior to the ninth century A.D., texts of piety and asceticism in particular refer often to the "Torah" or Hikmah in such terms as "It is said in

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[1] The *Iḥyā `ulūm al-dīn* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) of al-Ghazalī cites numerous often quasi or non-biblical sayings of Jesu (see Khalidi, 2000). ,

the Torah or Hikmah" (*ja'a fi'l-tawrat; ja'a fi'l-ḥikmah)* followed by a moral maxim. Early Western scholarly attempts to locate the origins of these maxims concluded that very few of them were in fact traceable to the Bible" (Khalidi, 2001:21). That such early expressions of a Muslim "Bible" are seen in later writers will be evident pages below about citations in the *Mikhlāt* (Nose-Bag) and *Kashkūl* (Begging Bowl) of Shaykh Bahā'ī (-->).

Like other literary sources containing Isrā'īliyyāt, biblical wisdom was often incorporated into *ḥadīth qudsī* (<--2.2). A good many early Shī`ī traditionalists, philosophers, mystics and theologians quoted quasi-biblical or pseudo-biblical texts in their writings which often had little or no biblical precedent. This seems true for many Muslim writers of the Safavid and Qajar periods (16th–>19th cent CE). The Muslim *Tawrāt* is not exactly or always the Hebrew Bible; neither is the Muslim *Injīl* always the canonical NT. The Muslim "Bible" is often an Islamified or Islamicate phenomenon. Biblical texts are often recorded as voiced with a sometimes strong Islamic accent. From the time of the earliest Sufis (<--) right up until the time of the Bāb authoritative biblical citations were frequently pseudo-biblical citations often exhibiting a tenuous relationship to the biblical text.

Some Muslims claimed access to lost portions of pre-Islamic scripture (the "genuine" *Tawrāt*, the *Zabūr* etc). Others ascribed their favourite biblical texts and logion, sometimes their own pseudo-biblical compositions, to Abrahamic figures or Islamic worthies. Dimensions of pseudepigraphy remained very much alive throughout the Islamic centuries. For over a millennium sayings have been cited in a variety Islamic sources as if from the Bible or genuine pre-Islamic scripture. This was often done as if the texts came directly from various biblical books. Many of these texts were pseudo-biblical or non-biblical. Some were only vaguely, if at all, biblically rooted although they acquired a great status within various Islamic literary sources.

In 1910 the Christian Arab writer Cheiko wrote an article about "apocryphal legendary [biblical]" material and reproduced extracts from an Islamic *zabūr* (Psalter) version as well as a portion from an Islamic manuscript entitled "A copy of the *saḥīfas* of Abraham and Moses".

In an important 1986 article Sadan gave interesting details of various mss. locations of such Islamicate versions of pre-Islamic scripture including a *Munājāt Mūsā* mss. incorporating features that might be called pre or proto-qur'ānic. He also referred to a several chapter *tawrāt* (Torah) version contained in a Shī`ī-Ismā'īlī anthology (Sadan, in Sharon ed. 1986:373ff).

Such Islamic pseudo-biblical pseudepigraphon had a role to play in the Islamic encounter with the Abrahamic religions. While the subject of the Abrahamic pseudepigrapha in Islam has been touched upon (Wasserstrom, 1994), little detailed research has been done in this area. Like Jews and Christians, Muslims also composed pseudepigraphical texts (Reeves,1994). Attention has been payed in this connection to versions and recensions of a *K. al-malāḥim li Dāniyāl* ("The Book of the Apocalypse of Daniel" –> Fodor, 1974;Hoyland, 1997, index Daniel).[1]

Islamic pseudepigraphal writings include versions and recensions of a *K. al-malāḥim li Dāniyāl.* A number of Shī`ī recensions are known one with an introduction by Majlisī's pupil Ni`mat-Allāh al-Jazā'irī (d. 1112/1701) and another by known to Ibn Ṭāwūs. Certain Shī`ī versions of this work imply that it was knowledge of cryptic predictions in the *Malḥamat Dāniyāl* which enabled Abū Bakr and `Umar to bypass Imam `Alī and gain the successorship to Muhammad (Fodor 1974:85ff; Kohlberg, 1992:143).

■ 5.2 Isrā'īliyyāt and the Bible in early Shī`īsm.

Several important Imamī Shī`ī factions, including early Zaydis, Ismā'īlis and Sufi sympathizers as well as later twelver thinkers and Safawid philosopher-theologians, had a significant influence within Islamic history in that they nurtured a tradition of biblical awareness, citation and dialogue. An openness was shown towards the *ahl al-kitāb* and towards messianic and allegedly proto-Shī`ī dimensions of their sacred writings and traditions.

Little academic work has been done on Isrā'īliyyat and the Bible in specifically Shī`ī

[1]See Fodor `Malhamat Daniyal,' in *The Muslim East,..* (Budapest, 1974--> bib.), 85-133, which reproduces 26 pages of the anonymous (Najaf n.d. ed.) of Malhamat Danīyal.

sources though some useful late 19th and 20th century articles exist including, for example, key articles by Friedlander, Vajda, Corbin, Kohlberg, Wasserstrom, Moreen and others (--> bib.). It seems that from the earliest period Shī`ī converts and writers were open to the appropriation of biblical data and Abrahamic Isrā'īliyyāt. It has been observed that Ismā'īlī and Imami Shī`is were ""Biblicizing" in their attitude towards the past" (Wasserstrom, 1994 [IOS]: 299). Neither Kulayni's *Uṣūl al-kafī* nor Majlisi's *Biḥār al-anwār* appear to contain especially negative forms of the *ḥaddithū `an banī isrā'īla* or register trenchantly anti-Isrā'iliyyāt traditions (<--1.2; 2.1; Majlisī, Bihar^2 14:494f).

Neither Goldziher (d.1921) nor Goitein (d.1985), perhaps the two most learned representatives of earlier Judaeo-Arabic study, were sufficiently conscious of the magnitude of what has recently been called the "Judaeo-Shī`ī symbiosis" (Wasserstrom, 1994:297-324). Few took up Wellhausen's (d.1918) observation that "the dogma of Shi`ism... seems to stem more from the Jews than from the Persians" (ibid, 298). Recently, however, Wasserstrom has written a penetrating analysis of the Sunnī dictum, "The Shī`īs [*rāfiḍa* ] are the Jews of our Community [umma]" (idem, 1994). He has underlined the fact that Shī`ī and Jewish doctrine have a good deal in common.

There is no doubt that Islamified, biblical teachings played a significant role in the evolution and crystallization of Shī`ī doctrine. Judaeo-Christian traditions had a significant impact upon Shī`ī apologetics. This may be reflected in the following well-known saying of the prophet, "The *`ulāma'* (learned) of our community are even as the *anbiyā'* (prophets) of the children of Israel" (al-Aḥsā'ī,`Awali, 4:77; cf. 1:357; 2:241+fns). Several other Shī`ī traditions compare and contrast aspects of Islamic and Judaic religiosity. Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq, for example, is reckoned to have stated,

> The likeness of the weaponry *(al-salāḥ)* among us [Imami Shī`īs] is as the likeness of the Ark of the Covenant among the children of Israel *(al-tābūt fī banī isrā'īl)* who were the progeny of Israel *(banū Isrā'īl).* In other words the [Shī`ī] people of the House *(ahl al-bayt)* who discovered the Ark of the Covenant *(al-tābūt)* in their possession (? `upon their gate',*bāb)* attained prophethood *(al-nubuwwa).* Whoso among us attains this weaponry *(al-salāḥ)* has thereby attained the Imamate *(al-imāma)* (Bihar ^{2}1:238)

■ The proto-Shī`ism of the *ghulāt* ("extremist") factions.

Numerous early Shī`ī Muslims belonged to groups which have been inadequately labelled *ghulāt* ("exaggerators"). These highly diverse early Shī`ī factions greatly influenced evolving, and subsequent Imamī and twelver Shī`ī thought (Kohlberg 1973:320). While some controversial doctrines championed by the "exaggerators" came to be rejected (e.g. anthropomorphism and metempsychosis) others were accepted, including messianic beliefs and the concept of *raj`a,* "return". It was also among *ghuluww* thinkers that the Jewish rooted notion of an *al-ism al-a`ẓam* (mightiest Name [of God]) held central importance and came to be conceptually transformed within an evolving Shī`ī theology. Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrines of the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* would appear to have their Islamic roots in the theological speculations of early *ghulāt* groups (-->).

It has long been realized that mainstream, heterodox and heretical Abrahamic religious, groups including Jewish factions, Christian groups, Gnostics, Manicheans and Mandaeans as well perhaps as Qumran sectarians and Samaritan thinkers, influenced the development of Shī`ī doctrine and practise. Key Shī`ī messianic and imamological concepts including the Imami *ma`ṣūm* (infallibility) applied to the Imams , can be well accounted for as a result of influences from the above channels. The influence of gnostic and other cosmologies, prophetologies, messianisms and apocalyptic perspectives are often closely reflected in the thought of *ghuluww* ("extremist") factions (Wasserstrom, 1985; 96f; Cranfield, 1991:132-160).[1] Multiple forms of Islamic "gnosis" "remained very much alive and active in the early Islamicate period" (Wasserstrom, 1997 [IOS]:130-131). Similar *ghuluww* doctrinal tendencies, it should be remembered, had a significant impact upon the initially `heterodox Shī`īsm' of the early Safavid period (Babayan, 1994;1996).

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[1] To some degree in this connection mention has already been made of the alleged role of Imam `Alī in *tafsīr* (cf. --> 2.10? on dialogue), of the probably Zaydī Muqātil b. Sulaymān (<--1.1) and of the Shi`ite historians Ya`qūbī, Mas`ūdī, and Maqdisī.

From early times Sunnī writers have held the view that a most probably fictitious Yemenite Jewish convert to Islam named `Abd-Allāh ibn Saba' (or Ibn al-Sawdā' , `son of the black') was the fountainhead of early Shī`īsm. Nascent Shī`īsm was early considered an aberrant Isrā'īliyyāt informed offshoot of Judaism (Murtaḍā al-`Askarī`, *`Abd-Allāh b. Sabā'*--> bib.). This Ibn Sabā' is said to have deified Imam `Alī by teaching that God was incarnate in him. He apparently predicted his Christ-like *raj`a* ("return") in the clouds both before and after his death (by assassination in 40/661). Ibn Sabā' is pictured as one who held to the basically Christian concept of "return" which he linked to Q. 28:5 and the person of Muhammad (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* [2942] tr. Humphreys, 15:146+ index).

Only the Manṣūriyya among numerous other *ghuluww* groups can be touched upon here. These are the "extremist" followers of Abū Manṣūr al-`Ijlī (d.c.121 /738) who claimed to succeed Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir. Evidently again subject to Christian and other religious influences, al-`Ijlī regarded Jesus as the first created being (cf. Jn1:1), Imam `Alī being the second. Like the qur'ānic Jesus al-`Ijlī claimed to have been raised up to heaven where an anthropomorphic God "wiped his head with his hand" (cf. Isa. 25:8b; Rev. 21:4). The Deity addressed him in Persian or Syriac saying, "My son, go and teach on my behalf" (Madelung, *Manṣūriyya,* EI^2 VI:441). al-`Ijlī considered the early Imams to be messenger-prophets and, like the Bāb, claimed to have brought the *ta'wil* (interpretation) of the Q.

al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. Medina 246/860) was among the important early followers of Zayd b. `Alī ( d.122/740) (Madelung, 1965; Abrahamov,1988). He wrote a *K. al-Radd `alā al-naṣara* (Refutations of the Christians) which included a few NT citations (Di Matteo,1921-3). It is also clear from his `The Tabaristānīs Question' that he convened gatherings in his Egyptian home where he discussed theological and other matters with Christians from several different backgrounds (Abrahamov,1988). Such dialogue with various religionists is also reported of the Shī`ī Imams.

■ The Shī`īte Imams, Isrā'īliyyāt and the Bible

Many statements of the first, sixth, seventh and eighth Imams, indicate their impressive knowledge of the Bible and of the Jewish and Christian religions (Damad, *Thaqalayn,* 2/iii-iv, 99-100).This is especially clear from an examination of works of Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī (d. 280/901) such as his *K. Tawḥīd* (Book of the Divine Unity, c. 340/ 950), *Kamāl al-dīn* (The Perfection of Religion-->), the *'Ayūn akhbār al-Riḍā'* and various *iḥtijāj* (Religious Disputation) and related compilations. Important in this respect are the *Iḥtijāj* works of al-Ṭabarsī (d. c. 548/1153 <--2.1) and Majlisī (*Iḥtijājāt* = Biḥār[2] vols. 9-10)[1] some of whose Persian works are also significant in this respect, especially his *Ḥayāt al-qulūb* ("The Enlivening of the Hearts", see Ḥayāt II:1071ff). Like the closely related and widely dispersed *masā'il* (Questions and Answers) traditions an example of which is found in the Persian Ṭabarī *Tārīkh* (<--3.1), the rich in Isrā'īliyyāt Shī`ī *iḥtijāj* sources include details of religious confrontations between the prophet, various (twelver) Imams and members of the *ahl al-kitāb* (Jews, Christian, etc).[2] Isrā'īliyyāt traditions and Islamicate biblical citations are often numerous in these sources.

Twice translated into Persian during the Safawid period *al-Iḥtijāj `alā ahl al-lajāj* ("The Disputation against the People of Obstinacy") of al-Ṭabarsī records a tradition relayed through Ja`far al-Ṣādiq and Imām `Alī detailing a debate of Muhammad with a Jew, a Christian, an Atheist, a Dualist (Zoroastrian) and an Idolator (Ihtijaj, 1:21ff). Muhammad confounds Jewish and Christian assertions about the supposed Sonship (ibn Allāh) of Ezra and Jesus. Using his opponents logic he argues that if Ezra who revived the Torah is called Ibn Allāh (Son of God) why not Moses to whom this very book was revealed. Jesus could not be the Ibn Allāh because his own words contradict belief in his unique Sonship. Muhammad, it was pointed out, recalled that Jesus had said "I am going to my Father and to your Father" (cf Jn 14:16; Ihtijaj, 1:23-4).

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[1]Volumes 9 and 10 within the second edition of Majlisī's *Biḥar* form the *K. al-iḥtijāj* (Book of the Confrontation' = 345pp + 454pp) and reproduce material from a wide range of *Iḥtijāj* sources

[2] Bulky Shī`ī *Iḥtijāj* volumes date from the 3rd / 9th. century. The *Dharī`a* lists a dozen or more *al-Ihtijāj* (Religious Disputation) volumes (Dharī` 1:281-4 Nos.1471ff). Among them is one of Ibn Shahrāshūb (d.588/1191; Dharī`a no. 1472)

■ The Christian Patriarch Bārīha and the Shī`ī theologian Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179 / 796).

Among the *iḥtijājāt* (religious disputations) recorded in the *K. Tawḥīd* (section 37) is the record of an early Shī'ī- Christian debate located in Baghdad (Karkh) which Thomas has dated to the 140s / c. 765 and described as a "carefully dramatized narrative" (Thomas, 1988:60; 1992:190 fn.4). It took place between an otherwise unknown Christian Patriarch named Bārīha and the Shī`ī merchant and theologian Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/796). The debate is partly oriented around the Christian doctrine of the trinity and the error of "those who say that God is the "third of three" (Q.5:73; K. Tawhid, [sect. 37]: 270-275).

This early dialogue includes a brief account of the conversion to Shī`īsm of Barīha through Hishām b. al-Ḥakan through the seventh Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (d.183/799) then resident in Medina. Imam Mūsā allegedly questioned Barīha about his knowledge of *al-kitāb* (the Book, Bible, NT) and was told that Mūsā had an unsurpassed knowledge of its *ta`wīl* (exegesis, interpretation). The account highlights the miraculous biblical knowledge of Imam Mūsā. In Christ-like fashion he began to recite the Gospel *(qira`at al-injīl).* An astounded Barīha asked Imam Mūsā where he had obtained such knowledge of biblical recitation. Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq explained,

> `We [the Imams] have the [Abrahamic] books as a legacy from them. We recite them as they did, and pronounce them as they did... (K.Tawḥīd, 275; tr. Thomas 1988:54ff, 60). [1]

Barīha and his female attendant are said to have become devotees of Ja`far al-Ṣādiq ( and Imam Mūsā) around 148/765. This apologetically oriented *iḥtijāj* is instructive and may say more about the concerns of Ibn Bābūya than be an accurate reflection if a mid. 8th century Shī`ī-Christian debate (Thomas 1988:62ff). Whatever the case, the importance and example

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[1]Thomas notes that "It is known that Hishām b. al-Ḥakam was a merchant as well as an intellectual and that he moved from his native lacuna to Baghdad sometime in the mid-second/eighth century" (1988:60). Apart from the *K. al-tawḥīd* this religious encounter is cited the *Iḥtijāj* of Ṭabrīzī (<--) and, among other Shī`ī sources, in Majlisī's *Biḥar al-anwār*[2] (10:234ff).

of the Imam being supernaturally biblically aware is evident.

■ A debate of `Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā' (d. 203/818)

It is the eighth Imam, al-Riḍā' to whom biblical knowledge and skill in dialogue are especially attributed in the *Iḥtijāj* sources. The account of his debate of c. 202/817-8 set up and before the `Abbasid Caliph al-Ma`mūn (189/813-210/817?) is noteworthy.[1] This ecumenical debate was initiated when the Caliph ordered leading religious figures *(ahl al-adyān)* and upholders of diverse religious opinions *(aṣḥāb al-maqālāt)* to take part in a debate. The (Armenian) Patriarch *(al-jāthilīq),* the Jewish Exilarch *ṣā'is al-jālūt),* leaders of the Sabaeans *ṣū'asā al-ṣābi'ūn),* Zoroastrians and others were ordered to take part (Ibn Bābūya, Tawḥīd, 417). Imam al-Riḍā' is said to have debated with these leaders as an expert in all past sacred scriptures in their original languages (Hebrew, Persian Greek, etc). He exhibited a perfect knowledge of biblical prophecies fulfilled in Islam. He stunned the Jewish Exilarch by reciting verses of the Torah and citing a conflation of Isa 21:7 and parts of Ps.149 (Tawhīd, tr. Thomas, 1988:73+ fn.53,77).

During the debate al-Riḍā' raised the question of the early loss of the true Gospel(s). He asked the Patriarch to explain how "the first Gospel" was lost, rediscovered and reached its present form. The Patriarch stated that the Gospel was lost for a day, then rediscovered when John and Matthew communicated it. Claiming greater knowledge of Gospel origins than the Patriarch, the Imam explained as follows,

> I know that when the first Gospel was lost the Christians met together with their experts and said to them: 'Jesus son of Mary has been killed and we have lost the Gospel. You are the experts, so what can you do?' Luke and Mark said to them: 'The Gospel is in our hearts and we will produce it for you book by book, every one. .. we will recite it to you, each and every book, until we have brought it together for you completely'. So Luke, Mark, John and Matthew[2] sat down and wrote for you this Gospel after you had lost the first Gospel. But these four

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[1]Refer al-Ṭabarsī, *Ihtijaj,* II:415-432; Bihar[2] 10:299-307 cf.49:173ff and also *Ibn Bābuya, `Uyūn al-akhbār* (2:139f) and *K. al-Tawhīd* (sect. 65 417-441).

[2] It is of interest to note that this order of the four Gospels is also given al-Shahrastānī in the third prolegomenon to his *al-Milal wa'l-nihal* (Cairo 1968:15). In his commentary on the *Uṣul al-Kāfī* Mullā Ṣadrā also at one point lists the four Gospels (pl. *al-anājīl al-arba`a)* in this order in a citation from al-Shahrastani (= Lk., Mk, Jn., Matt.) (Sh-Kafi, 3:597; cf. Imam Ridā' in K.Tawhid, 426 cf. Bihar [2]10:306f)

were disciples of the first disciples...(K.Tawḥīd, 425-6 tr. Thomas, 74 cf. Biḥār[2] 10:306f).

That an original (single) *Injīl* was replaced by those of the four evangelists is echoed in other Islamic sources including al-Jāḥiz, (*Radd*, 24 II:8-20) and `Abd al-Jabbār (*al-Mughnī* V:143; *Tathbīt dalā'il* 152, 1:6-155; Thomas, 1988:74. fn.61) as well as al-Shahrastānī (<–fn.) Some of these sources reckon that the original Gospel was written in Hebrew or Syriac [Aramaic] and replaced by an inadequate version in Greek or some other language. Writing on the *Injīl* in his *Insān al-kāmil,* for example, the Shī`īte Sufi of the school of Ibn al-`Arabī, `Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428) held that God sent down the *Zabūr* to David and the *Injīl* to Jesus in the Syriac language (*bi'l-lughat al-suryāniyya).*

In the course of debating Jesus' power of resurrection Imam Riḍā' made the following Isrā'īliyyāt informed statement:

> ... Elisha (Alyasa') performed similar acts to Jesus, walking on the water, reviving the dead, healing the blind and lepers, though his community never took him as Lord, and no one ever worshipped him in place of God, great and mighty [cf. 2 Kings 2:12f;4:32f; 5:1ff]. The prophet Ezekiel *(Ḥizqīl)* performed similar acts to Jesus son of Mary, for he revived thirty-five thousand men sixty years after their deaths [cf. Ezek. 37:1ff] (K.Tawḥīd, 422; tr. Thomas 1988:70).

The Christian Patriarch also affirmed Imam Riḍā's knowledge of Jesus' (conflated Johannine) Paraclete promises,

> I am going to my Lord and your Lord, [Jn 20:17b, cf. Jn 16:5a etc,] and the Paraclete will come [15:26a]. He it is who will witness to me [Jn 15:26c] about the truth as I have witnessed to him, and he it is who will explain to you everything [Jn 14:26b]; he it is who will expose the evil deeds of the peoples, and he it is who will shatter the designs of the unbelievers [cf. Jn 16:8] (ibid, tr. Thomas ibid, 73+fns., 78).[1]

This *iḥtijāj* episode detailed in his *K.Tawhīd* and elsewhere has been reckoned by Thomas "the earliest surviving compendium of theological discussions from a Shī`ite author" and seen as an "artificial", creation designed to "secure the [Shī`ī] groups position within the Muslim

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[1] With such Shī`ī biblical citations from one allegedly learned in the Hebrew writings [sic.] of the Sabaeans, the Persian texts of the Zoroastrians and the Greek writings of the philosophers problems of *taḥrīf* ("falsification") are obviously compounded.

intellectual community" (Thomas, 1988:53,80; cf. 65ff K. Tawḥīd: 417ff). Whatever their historical veracity such Shī`ī *iḥtijājāt* accounts contain often conflated Islamicate Bible citations which certainly influenced post-10th century Shī`ī Bible awareness and attitudes towards the people of the Book.

Shī`ī data from various *Iḥtijāj* episodes seems to be reflected in the writings of both BA* and AB*. In an epistle addressed to a Jewish covert named Ḥakim Ḥayyīm in response to a question about the absence of a Gospel reference to the promised Aḥmad of Q. 61:6, BA* stated that many of Jesus' revelations were not included in the extant, post-apostolic Gospels assembled by the four evangelists. In saying this he may be influenced by the assertions of Imam Riḍā' or by other similar Islamic statements (e.g. <-- Shahrastānī). AB* not only drew upon *iḥtijāj* accounts involving Muhammad's debating with Christians but, in certain of his *alwāḥ,* held that the original *Injīl* Gospel(s) was in Hebrew being later rewritten in Greek *(bi-lisā–I `ibrānī va yunānī)* (Ma'idih 9:22, 27).

■ **Some proto-Ismā'īlī and later Ismā'īlī sources**

The originally Arabic perhaps proto-Ismā'ilī Persian treatise *Umm al-kitāb* (The Archetype of the Book) may be representative of an early phase of "Central Asiatic Ismā`īlism" (Filippani-Roncalli, 1977:105; Halm 1996:82). It takes the form of a discussion between Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (d.c.126/743) and three luminous initiates *(roshanian)* (ed. Ivanow, Der Islam XXIII). Apparently transmitted by the Ismā'īlīs of Badaskshān, it reflects late 2-3rd/7-8th century Shī`ī gnosis associated with Abū'l-Khaṭṭab (d.c.138 or 147/755/764), a disciple of Ja`far al-Ṣādiq. Materials within the *Umm al-kitāb* express the Shī`ī appropriation and Islamization of Iranian, Abrahamic, Hellenistic and other streams of tradition. It reflects aspects of the gnosis of antiquity as crystalized within an early Iraqi Shī`ī faction (Filippani-Ronconi, 1964; Halm, 1996).

In the *Umm al-kitāb* creation is associated with the hubris of an exalted angel named `Azāzi'īl who is familiar in Jewish, Shī`ī and Shaykhī angelology (-->5.1f). In this work a non-literal understanding of the `Fall of Adam' (Per. *ādam-I mu`tarrid)* and of his (humanity's)

subsequent *qiyāma* ("resurrection") as the *ādam-I qā'im* is registered *(umm al-kitāb,* 112, 350ff; 393ff; Filippani-Ronconi, 1977:108ff). Other biblical motifs such as the four rivers of Paradise (Gen. 2:10f) and the biblical-qur'ānic Sinaitic theophany are also utilized *(Umm al-kitāb,* 112; Filippani-Ronconi, 1977:108ff). Christian influence is evident in the prologue of the *Umm al-kitāb* where a pericope highlights the superior knowledge of Imam Baqir in matters of *jafr,* gematric mysticism and prognosis (Corbin, 1983:154; Lambden, 1986:16f). Letter mysticism is also evident and is strongly reminiscent of data within the Jewish *Sepher Yetsira* and the anthropomorphic symbolism of the *Shi'ur Qomah* traditions. The 19 letter *basmala* is referred to as a sacred Arabic ejaculation representative of the 12 *ummuhāt* ("mothers") and 7 "intelligences" which form the (Per.) *shakhṣ* ("Person") of the Godhead (ibid, 22ff, 60ff: Filippani-Ronconi, 1977:115).

After the time of the sons of Ja`far al-Sādiq, Ismā'īlī Muslims were such as gave centrality to the Imamite of this sixth Imam's (younger) son Ismā'īl (d.145/762) from whom their name derives. By the 4th-5th/11th cent. the Ismā'īlīs adopted aspects of a Neoplatonic, apophatic theology and cosmology. An allegorical hermeneutic was much favoured amongst them. Ismā'īlī hermeneutical *adwar* (cyclic), prophetological and other doctrines have a good deal in common with Bābī-Bahā'ī perspectives. Their allegorical approach to pre-Islamic scripture is often similar to that of the Bāb and BA* as well as subsequent Bābī-Bahā'ī writers.[1]

As will be demonstrated, several early Ismā'īlī thinkers show a good knowledge of the Bible. Ismā'īlī non-literal biblical exegesis played a part in medieval and later apologetic writing. In his list of `Non-Ismā`īlī works used by Ismā'īlīs' under the heading `Admonitions and Exhortations', Poonawalla includes the *Kitāb al-tawrāt,* the *Kitāb al-zabūr* and *aḥadīth banī Isrā'īl* (= Isrā'īliyyāt; Poonawalla, 1977:359f). Isrā'īliyyāt traditions about the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) were registered and interpreted within Ismā'īlī literatures. Interesting

[1]No detailed discussion of the relationship between Ismā'īlī Islam and the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions can be attempted here. There are several doctrinal and hermeneutical similarities which may be accounted for by virtue of the Shī`ī-Irfānī and Shaykhī appropriation of Ismā'īlī doctrines.

commentary upon graphical forms of the mightiest Name of God are found in Ismā'īlī literatures which are parallelled and developed in Shaykhī literatures and Bābī-Bahā'ī scriptural writings. In his 1943 *Gnosis-Texte der Ismailiten,* for example, Strothmann published a *Risāla al-ism al-a`ẓam* (Treatise upon the Mightiest Name). This work expounds in detail a sevenfold graphic form of this incomparable Name incorporating forms of the Arabic letters هـ *(hā')* and a distorted, inverted letter و *(wāw)* (Strothmann, 1943:171-180). Esoteric commentary upon such elements of the Mightiest Name is important in Shī`ī and Shaykhī texts and is fundamental to Bābī and Bahā'ī religious identity (-->6.1).

■ The *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-safā'* (The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity)

`The identity of the probably 4th/10th cent. Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (Brethren of Purity) is not known with any certainty. The fifty-two *Rasā'il* ascribed to them evidence a close relationship to Ismā'īlī doctrines, they "rewrote Neoplatonic and Pythagorean natural philosophy and metaphysics in Islamic terms" (Murata,1992:329). Their exposition of semi-esoteric "realities" sometimes goes beyond Islamic doctrinal norms. The authors of the *Rasā'il* were influenced by numerous streams of thought including Hermetic "wisdom" and the syncretistic "gnosis" of the Sabaeans of Ḥarrān. Yet these rasā'il "occupy a place in the first rank of Arabic literature", having had an influence within both Sufism and Shī`īsm (Marquest EI^2). The missionary Wolff, it is relevant to note here, reported that the *Rasā'il* were studied by the learned in early 19th century Shīrāz (MJ III:53-4). This was doubtless also the case in other Iranian locations. The vocabulary of the Bāb at times appears to reflect that of certain of the *Rasā'il.* [1] Some of the *Rasā'il* are indebted to the Bible, Greek philosophy and aspects of Jewish and Christian doctrine (Netton,1982:53ff; Marquet, EI^2). The Ikhwān cited the HB and Rabbinic lore and had

[1] e.g. R 2:277 *a`lā al-`aliyyīn,* "The most elevated of the exalted ones" (-->), although this matter is beyond the scope of this thesis.

a some knowledge of the NT in several textual traditions. Moses and aspects of pentateuchal history and Islamo-biblical prophetology are occasionally present in the *Rasā'il* (R1:156-7; 186; 2:279ff; 4:16, 32). The reading of Abrahamic scripture and the Injīl (Gospel[s]) is recommended for these scriptures are said to result from angelic [divine] inspiration *(bi'l-waḥy min al-malā'ika* ṣ. 4:42, 245; 1:363; 3:246; Netton 1983:54). The following citation allegedly mentioned in "certain of the books of the prophets of the children of Israel", is given in the form of a double post-qur'ānic revelation (*ḥadīth qudsī),*

> "God, exalted be He said,
> `O son of Adam, I created thee for all eternity *(li-l-abd),* for I am the Living One *(al-ḥayy)* who dieth not. So be obedient unto whatsoever I command thee and turn aside from whatsoever I prohibit thee. Then shall I make thee to be one who liveth eternally and dieth not *(ḥayy^{an} lā tamūt abad^{an}).*
>
> O son of Adam! I am Powerful (*qādir* ^{an}) such that I need only say to a thing, 'Be!' and it is *(kūn fa-yakūn).* [= Q.3:59, 6:72, etc] Then obey Me regarding whatever I have commanded thee and turn aside from whatever I have forbidden thee. Then shall I make thee one powerful *(qādir* ^{an}) such that thou need only say to a thing, `Be! and it shall be' *(kūn fa-yakūn)* (R1:298).

Rewritten Genesis texts are clearly in evidence here (e.g Gen 3:22a). This is a scriptural citation which is obviously Islamicate possibly also reflecting a gnostic exaltation of the primordial man.

The authors of the *Rasā'il* were aware of Jesus and of Christian doctrines and denominations (Monophysites, Jacobites [Ar. Ya`qūbī] and Nestorians R2:283-4). Jesus is quite often mentioned in the *Rasā'il* (R4:19;2:232, 280; 3:287; 4:19, 42, etc). He is once designated by the Johannine, non-qur'ānic epithet "Son of the Father" *(ibn al-āb,* 2 Jn1:3). His "humanity" and "divinity" are referred to by means of the Syriac Christological loan words *nāsūt* (Syr. *`nāšūthā)* and *lāhūt* ( Syr. *`alāhūthā)* respectively.[1]

The reality of the bodily crucifixion of Jesus is accepted in the *Rasā'il.* Jesus was taken before the "king of the children of Israel [Jews]" who ordered his crucifixion *(bi-ṣalbihi).* When

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[1]These terms were early utilized by al-Ḥallāj (Massignon 1997:31) and subsequently used by many Sufi writers and in Bābī-Bahā'ī mystical cosmologies (R2:283-4;R2:367; R3:161; Netton 1982:55,122:fn.23).

carried out Jesus' *nāsūt* (humanity) was crucified *(fa-suliba nāsūtihi).* It is explicitly stated that his two hands were driven with nails *(summarat)* upon two wooden pieces of the cross *(`alā al-khashabatayi al-ṣalīb).* Jesus remained hanging crucified *(maṣlūb*[an]) from forenoon until the afternoon (cf. Jn 19:31; R4: 31). These teachings obviously differ from the mainstream Muslim denial of Jesus' bodily crucifixion though they are echoed in a tradition highly regarded and much cited by the Bāb (T. Baqara, 195;Q. Zavarih, 69:425, etc–>).

Important references to the Paraclete styled the *baraqlīṭ al-akbar* (Greatest Paraclete) are found towards the beginning of the fifty-two *Rasā'il* (I:40) and twice in the related *Risālat al-Jāmi`a* ("Comprehensive Epistle", II:354, 365). This Islamic Paraclete is twice associated with the expected Mahdī in the Rasā'il *(al-mahdī al-muntazar;* R. 1:40; J. 2:365, Netton, 1982:68).

■ Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1021)

The prolific, polymathic philosopher-theologian Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1021) was an important Ismā'īlī thinker well acquainted with pre-Islamic scripture. He cited the Hebrew Bible and the Syriac Gospels in Arabic transliteration (Kraus,1931; Baumstark, 1932). This in at least four of his works perhaps implying that he had some knowledge of pre-Islamic scripture in their original languages (Kraus, 1931:244; Walker 1999:55). Written around 404/1013 for the Buyid Shī`ī vizier of Iraq, Fakhr al-Mulk, Kirmānī's *K. al-Maṣābīḥ fī ithbāt al-imāma* (`The Book of Lamps in the Establishment of the Imamate') cites Deut. 33:2-3 and Isa 21:7 (well-known Islamic testimonia) in proof of the mission of Muhammad (ibid; Cortesse, 2000: 37-8).

In an article about Fāṭimid propaganda among Jews, Stern has pointed out the significance of certain of these biblical citations of al-Kirmānī (Stern, 1983) [1] In one of his works Kirmānī relates Zech [not Isaiah] 9:9 to the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥakim bi-Amr-Allāh (d.

[1] Cited in the *K. `Uyūn al-akhbār* of the Ismā'īlī *dā`ī* Idrīs of Yemen. This passage appears to be identical with a part of al-Kirmānī's *Risāla mabāsim al-bishārat bi'l-imām al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh* (written, 405-6/1-14-5). See Hamid Ḥajī, 1998:45-54; cf. Cortesse, 2000:42-3.

996/1021). He is "Zion" in the phrase בת־צִיּוֹן ("daughter[s] of Zion") and "Jerusalem" in בַּת יְרוּשָׁלִַם ("daughter of Jerusalem", Zech 9:9a). In proof of this it is argued that the mighty al-Ḥākim and not Jesus of Nazareth is the one who appears as מַלְכֵּךְ ("thy king"), "riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass [sic.] " (Zech 9:9b).

The Bahā'ī leader AB* gave very similar interpretations to Isaiah 11:1ff when applying prophecies of the HB normally applied to Christ reckoning them more adequately fulfilled in BA* and his age (SAQ. XIIff; cf SWAB :166-7). The 1335 "days" of Daniel 12:12 as "years" of the Selucid era (commencing 311-12 BCE) were applied by al-Kirmānī to the time of the messianic Caliph al-Ḥākim (Stern, 1983: 93ff).[1] This Ismā'īlī use of *ta`wīl* applied to the Bible has a close hermeneutical parallel in Bahā'ī, ("spiritual") Bible exegesis. AB* interpreted the 1335 "days" of Dan. 12:12 as solar "years" commencing at the Hijrah (622 CE) and thus yielding 1957 CE. This date is further understood by Bahā'īs as marking the centennial commencement of BA*'s mission in Tehran in 1853 CE, which gives 1963 CE considered indicative of the Bahā'ī establishment of the kingdom of God on earth (AB* cited PAB:31).[2]

■ **Some early Imāmī Shī`ī writers: Ibn Bābūya (d.381 / 991) and others**

The abovementioned Shī`ī apologist Ibn Bābūya [= Bābwayhi] al-Qummī was an important pillar of Twelver Shī`ism and an expert in Shī`īte legalism and the Imamī traditions. Several of his thirty or more extant works contain Islamo- biblical citations often relayed by the Imams as well as Isrā'īliyyāt traditions reworked in the service of Imamī Shī`īsm (<--2.2). His important *Ikmāl [Kamāl] al-dīn fī ithbāt al-ghayba* ("Perfection of Religion through the Establishment of the Occultation") makes very considerable use of biblical and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* materials surrounding the stories of Noah, Jonah and Idrīs (Enoch) in upholding the Shī`ī

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[1]Upon the death of the Caliph al-Ḥakīm in 411/1021 a break away faction remained faithful to this Ismā'īlī imam. With this factionalism lie the roots of the Druze movement some of the texts of which contain Biblical texts and interpretations.

[2]For Bahā'īs 1963 marks the end of a decade long Bahā'ī global mission (1953-1963) initiated by SE* in 1953 (SE*:GPB:151; UHJ. Comp. Prophecy of Daniel).

doctrine of the occultation of the hidden, twelfth Imam (Vajda, 1941-5). No reluctance or hesitation seems to be associated with Bible citation from the Imams in the works of Ibn Bābūya. Among numerous further examples reference can be made to that section of his *Thawāb al-a`māl* ("Rewards for Pious Deeds") dealing with the arrival at mosques. In this context Imam Ṣādiq cites the *tawrāt* (Torah) as follows,

> It is written in the *tawrat,* `My houses on earth are the mosques *(al-masājid).* So blessed be that servant who diligently purifies himself in his own house then visits me [God] in my House [in Jerusalem]' (Thawāb, 51).

The *tawrāt* is also by the same Imam a little later in the same work in connection with ritual purity on visiting the mosque: `Blessed be whomsoever purifies himself in his own house then visits me. The True One *(al-ḥaqq)* shall indeed be associated with such a shrine *(al-mazmūr)* and shall honour the visitor (Ibid, 52).

Centrally important is the wide-ranging *Fihrist* (Bibliographical Compendium) of the probably Persian Shī`ī, Baghdadī book dealer, Abū'l-Faraj Isḥāq b. Warrāq al-Nadīm (d.380/ 990). His *Fihrist* has been described as dealing "with almost every phase of medieval culture" (Dodge, 1970 1:xi). Peters reckoned it "the single most important document on philosophy among the Arabs" (1968:277). This encyclopaedic, "unique specimen of literature", (E.Ir. IX:465f) records a great deal relating to the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt. It is related from Theodore (Tiyādūrus, a commentator on Genesis), for example, that God addressed Adam in the Nabatean dialect because it was "purer *(afṣaḥ)* than Syriac *(al-suryānī)"* being spoken by pre-Babel humanity (Fihrist, 23 / Dodge1:22). In the very detailed and interesting section on biblical scripture (= Fihrist 1.2) Ibn Nadīm has it from a certain Aḥmad that the *alwāḥ* (tablets) revealed to Moses on Sinai were "green" in colour, with the writing on them "red like the rays of the sun" (ibid 38/Dodge, 43). Reeves has stated that "One of the most intriguing passages contained within Ibn al-Nadīm's entry is a Manichean exposition of Genesis 2-4 which exhibits numerous affinities with Jewish aggadic and gnostic exegetical traditions" (Reeves, 1999).

The polymathic Shī`īte scholar and scientist Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī (d.c. 442/1051) cited and was well aware of the text of the Bible. He evidently had "Arabic translations of the

Old and New Testaments, as well as of other Jewish and Christian writings, at his disposal" (De Blois, E.Ir. IV: 284). Affirmative of the considerable knowledge of the Bible possessed by al-Birūnī is *al-Āthār al-bāqiyya* tabulation of the divergent chronologies of the Hebrew, Greek (LXX) and Samaritan versions of the Pentateuch (Chron:XX). As pointed out below (<–4.1) it was probably his reference to Hindu chronological statements found in the "Record of Yūga[s]" (SE* "Book of Jūk" [sic.]) that led BA* to refer to this matter in his *L. Qabl- i ādam* (<–3.2).

■ **Shī`ism , Ishrāqī philosophy and mystical gnosis: Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 638/1240).**

The mystically oriented Ishrāqī philosophy of illuminationism to some extent developed as a reaction to the philosophical thought of `Alī ibn Sīnā, Avicenna (d. 428/ 1037), who is also credited with a number of mystical texts including a Persian *Mi`rāj-nāma*. The rich and influential thought of the Shaykh al-Ishrāq, Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, founder of the */shrāqiyyūn* (the `Illuminationist school'), at times combines elements of Shī`ī theology, Sufi gnosis, Islamic peripatetic philosophy, Zoroastrian thought and the Hellenistic-Hermetic tradition.

Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination is expounded in his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (The Wisdom of Illumination). Therein the probably Jewish rooted term هورقليا (often pointed *hurqalyā* but more likely *hawaqalyā*) is associated with the "eighth clime" and with the cosmic, supernatural cites of Jābulqa[ā] and Jābarsa[ṣā] (cf. Shaykh Aḥmad JK 1/ii, 103). Hurqalyā / hawaqalyā is referred to as something *dhāt al-ajā`ib* ("redolent of wonders", Hikmat,159-60). In his commentary upon Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq,* Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288) again associates this term with Jābulqā and Jābarsā. Commenting upon the "eighth clime" he writes that "Jābulqā", "Jābarṣā" [spellings vary] and "Hurqalyā" are "names of cities in the world of the *`ālam al-mithāl* ("world of similitudes") adding that Hurqalyā is differentiated by being the *`ālam al-aflāk al-muthul* (The world of the spheres of the [World of the] similitudes)" (Sh-Hikmat,xxxii; 574, 594-5).

Suhrawardī was apparently the first to use the mystical-cosmological term, ' *hurqalyā* [= havaqalyā] as Indicative of a luminous supernatural interworld. It may be a garbled (no letter

lām or 'ayn registered), Arabized transliteration of the biblical Hebrew הרָקִיעַ *(ha-raqi'a*, Gen 1:6f; with the Heb. definite article) meaning "the firmament". In the Hebrew Bible הרָקִיעַ denotes what lies between the cosmic "waters" and is the locality where God "set" the "sun" moon and stars (Gen. 1:6-8). Conceptually it is something of a cosmological "interworld" dividing the cosmic "waters" from the "waters" as well as a source of stunningly bright light. In Rabbinic texts and Jewish mystical traditions רָקִיעַ has a close association with the bright light and with the sun.[1] The "firmament" is understood to signify a dazzlingly radiant light beaming cosmic phenomenon, a kind of luminous "interworld" betwixt earth and heaven. The *Sepher ha-Zohar* of Moses de Leon (c.1240-1305 CE), several times identifies רָקִיעַ *ṣāqîa')* as a reality of stunning brightness (Zohar 1:15aff). This important Jewish mystical text appropriately cites Dan 12:3 in asserting that the מַשְׂכִּילִים *(mashkilīm*, the "wise") "shall shine *(yāzhiru)* like the brightness of the רָקִיעַ *(zohar hā-rāqîa')"* (*Berachoth,* 1.16aff). In view its cosmological and other senses רָקִיעַ would not have been inappropriately adopted in an Ishrāqī cosmology of light.[2] Hūrqalyā became important in Shaykhī hermeneutics as the future sphere of the eschatological resurrection "body" though it does not appear to have been directly adopted in the Bābī-Bahā'ī demythologization of latter day "resurrection" motifs (–> 5.1ff).[3]

Biblical and Isrā'īliyyat motifs and elements are found within Suhrawardī's fifty or more

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[1] Bab.Tal. *Ḥagiga* 12b; *Bershith* 17a, *Midrash Rabbah,* Gen. VI:6ff (cf. Samuelson, 1994[7]:118f.). The *Bab. Talmud* records that the following words were uttered by the Rabbis on parting from one of their learned associates, "may your eyes be enlightened by the light of the Torah and your face shine like the brightness of the firmament (רקיע) (B.Tal. Berachoth 17a).

[2] It may be that the traditional voweling Hūrqalyā', especially if rooted in biblical Hebrew, could be regarded as an interesting example of an *Isrā'īliyyah* motif. Contrary to the erroneous critiques of some Islamic anti-Shaykhi writers *hūrqalyā* is an Ishrāqī cosmological term and not invented by Shaykh Aḥmad.

[3] Suhrawarī's philosophy of illumination was also influential upon the Jewish convert to Islam Ibn Kammūna (d.c.1285) who cites the Bible frequently in his *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāthli'l-milāl al-thalāth.* (Perlman, 1971).

Arabic and Persian works. *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* imagery and motifs associated with love and beauty are creatively expounded with reference to Adam, Joseph the acme of *jamāl* (Beauty), Zulaykha and others in Suhrawardi's Persian *Treatise on the Reality of Enraptured Love (fī ḥaqīqat al-`ishq)* (Suhrawardī, Ishq, [1999]: 58-76).

A Johannine Paraclete reference is present in the 7th section *(haykal)* of Suhrawardī's (Arabic) *Hayākil al-nūr* (Temples of Light). Having cited Q. 29:43 and alluded to Matt 13:13, Suhrawardī refers to the *tā'wil* (inner sense) and *bayān* (exposition) of these texts extending beyond the prophets *(al-anbiyā')* unto that *maẓhar al-a`ẓam* (mightiest theophany) who is the *al-fāraqlītā,* the eschatological Paraclete and supreme expounder (Ar. Hayakil, 88), This paraclete reference was commented upon by Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (d. 907/1501)(Dawwānī, Shawakil, 215f). He saw the *maẓhar al-a`ẓam* as the "supreme Light theophany" closely related to the Spirit-Paraclete which was also identified with the twelfth Imam or Mahdī (Qā'im) (Corbin, 1970:39-50; 1971-2b:257; Corbin /Suhrawardī,1970:41f/ 84-108 [Per.]).

Prior to Dawwānī, Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d.787/1385) in his influential *Jāmi` al-asrār manba` al-anwār* (Book of the Compendium of Mysteries and the Source of Lights), had cited and commented upon a Paraclete saying ascribed to Jesus,

> We bring unto you outer revelation *(al-tanzíl);* but, as for the inner revelation *(al-ta'wíl),* this the Paraclete *(al-fáraqlíṭ)* will bring in the latter days *(fí ákhir al-zamán).'* The term Paraclete *(al-fáraqlíṭ)* in their [the Christians'] language signifies the Mahdí [eschatological Messiah].. who will bring the inner exegesis *(al-ta'wīl)* of the Qur'ān (Āmulī, Jami` §205, III:5, 103-4).

Ḥaydar Āmulī and others after him held that "the coming of the Imam-Paraclete will inaugurate the reign of the purely spiritual meaning of the divine Revelations -- that is to say, the true religion which is the eternal *walāya"* (Corbin, 1993:73). The purely spiritual sense of religion will be brought by the messiah in the age of the eternal *walāya* (<--1.3 (Lambden, 1997:85f).

A century or so after al-Āmūlī a similar view was expressed by Muhammad b. Zayn al-Dīn better known as Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Ishrāqī al-Aḥsā'ī (d. late 15th cent.). He was important for achieving a synthesis of Shī`ī scholastic theology, Avicennan philosophy, Ishrāqī theosophy and the mysticism of Ibn al-`Arabí (d. 638/1240). In his *K. al-Mujlī* the Christian *al-*

fāraqlīṭ (Paraclete) is identified with the hidden twelfth Imam, the *ṣāḥīb al-zamān* (Lord of the Age), who will bring the *ta`wīl* of sacred scripture (Mujli, 308 cited Corbin. 1970:55). This same writer's annotated compendium of Shī`ī traditions, entitled *`Āwālī al-la`āla* quotes several Islamicate biblically rooted traditions. Among these texts are passages from the Islamicate (pseudo-HB) *tawrāt* (Torah) which begins "O son of Adam!" and calls humankind to the fear of the Lord and the honouring of parents (`Awali,1:270, cf. 3:536; 4:78). Another quotation from the Muslim, Islamicate Bible is a version of the Johannine paraclete promise as relayed from Muhammad alleging that , "Jesus said, `We bring you the outer revelation *(al-tanzīl)* but as for *al-ta`wīl* (the inner revelation) it will come with *al-Fāraqlīṭ* (the Paraclete) at the end of the age *(ākhir al-zamān)'* (Awali, 4:124). Expectation of an eschatological Paraclete identified with the twelfth Imam, Mahdī-Qa'im became an integral part of Shī`ī messianism. It was also taken up and developed in Bahā'ī biblical exegesis (Corbin 1970; Lambden 1997).

■ Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 638/1240) and his Shī`ī followers.

Perhaps the greatest mystical philosopher of Islam, Ibn al-`Arabī wrote several hundred works many of which were deeply studied by influential Shī`ī mystics and philosophers. His role was especially great in the realm of Iranian Shī`ī spirituality, gnosis and mysticism. Despite concerns over the monistic underpinning of the *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("existential oneness") inclined mysticism of some of his devotees, this did not repel those enchanted by the labyrinthine magnitude of his mystically and intellectually challenging thought (Knysh, 1999, Sells, 1994).

A number of the works of Ibn al-`Arabī compile, draw upon or interpret Isrā'īlīyāt rooted qur'ānic verses, traditions and extra-qur'ānic revelations *(ḥadīth qudsī). His Muḥaḍarāt al-abrār* (Conference of the Pious and the Conversations of the Perfect) is largely made up of Isrā'īlīyāt and related traditions, especially *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* episodes and "chronicles of times gone by, the lives of the Ancients and of the Prophets, the history of kings both Arab and non-Arab" (*Muḥāḍarāt,* 1:2, trans. Addas,1993:100). Within this text are found a number of Sufi type sayings of Jesus which have little gospel precedent (Muḥāḍarat, 2:2, 30, 253).

Ibn al-`Arabī doubtless knew the Jewish / Christian Bible but avoided citing it as part of his Islamic mystical universe of discourse. Biblical quotations are absent in many (if not most/ all?) of his key writings. It is likely that he saw the Q. as the locus of all past sacred books including the *tawrāt* and *Injīl.* His mystic quest early on led him to encounter and claim direct advice from the celestial Jesus, with whom, as the "seal of the saints" *(khatm al-awliyā'),* he had a deep though Islamocentric relationship (Gryphon,1999:593f). In his *Futūḥāt al-makiyya* Ibn al-`Arabī writes: "He [Jesus] is my first master on the Way*; it is in his hands that I was converted.* He [Jesus] watches over me [Ibn al-`Arabī] at all hours, not leaving me for even a second.. I often met him in my visions" (Futuhat III:341; II:49 tr. Addas 2000:25-6).

Ibn al-`Arabī's mystical intercourse with the celestial Jesus perhaps made citation of the concrete pre-qur'ānic Christian NT/ Bible relatively meaningless. His mysticism of the sacred and archetypal *Kitāb* (Book) embraced many levels including that of the Perfect Man *al-insān al-kamil.* This all but made the citation of pre-Islamic scripture irrelevant (al-Ḥakīm, Mu`jam, 939ff). For the Great Shaykh words indicative of scripture can have meanings other than the obvious. *Al-kitāb al-jāmi`* ("the Comprehensive Book) can mean Adam "who gathers into his essence all the differentiated realities of the world (Futuhat, II:67). For Ibn al-`Arabī the terms *tawrāh* and *injīl* may indicate modes of *al-kitāb* (the Book) or other realities and conditions of being.

A mystic totally unlike the literalistic, anti-biblical Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn `Arabī's need to cite or consult existing biblical texts was probably negated before the scintillating "Logos-Light" of the Prophet, the *al-nūr al-muḥammadiyya* and the Q. not to mention his constant mystical nearness to Jesus, the fountainhead of the *Injīl.* Ibn al-`Arabī quite frequently cited divinely revealed verses from the heritage of Sufi generated Jesus sayings or from quasi-biblical *tawrāt* and *injīl* versions though he appears to have completely (?) bypassed citation from existing Islamic Arabic, Jewish or Christian versions of the Bible.

An example of Ibn al-`Arabī's quotation of the non-canonical, conflated, rewritten, Islamized "biblical" text is the following *tawrāt* citation found in his *K. al-jalāl wa'l-jamāl* (Book

of the Divine Majesty and Beauty). Commenting upon Q. 51:56, Ibn al`Arabī quotes this extra-qur'ānic revelation *(ḥadīth qudsī)* allegedly contained in "His [God's] Torah" *(tawrāt)*,"

> Allusion *(al-ishāra):* If you desire to comprehend the parameters of gnosis *(ḥadd al-ma`rifa)* ...in this verse then gaze upon what He [God] has created for your sake.. within yourself.. And if you are unable to accomplish this.. then realize it by means of what God... revealed in His Torah" *(tawrāt)*, "O Son of Adam. I created everything *(al-ashyā')* for thy sake and I created thee for my sake. So do not subjugate what I created for my sake to that which I created for thine own sake (Affifi, *Rasā'il,* 15). [1]

Begun in Mecca in 598/1201 Ibn al-`Arabī's massive (560 chapter) theosophical compendium *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (`The Meccan Inspirations', 2,500+ pp.) contains many mystical interpretations of both qur`anic and post-qur'anic prophetology and *Isrā'īliyyāt* influenced traditions. Despite its vastness the *Futūḥāt* does not include canonical biblical citations. The dozen occurrence of *tawrāt* and the around half that number of *Injīl* do not introduce biblical or even pseudo-biblical quotations. As in the *Muḥaḍarāt* (<--) there are quite a few Sufi type Jesus sayings, utterances of *al-masīḥ* (the messiah) in the *Futūḥāt* (I:368-9; I:652; III: IV:633).

Among the most influential and important of Ibn `Arabī's later works is his relatively brief (around 200 pp.) yet very influential *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* ("Ringstones of Wisdom", 627/1230). Its author claimed that each of its twenty- seven chapters were given to him in a vision of Muhammad. Each "bezel" revolved around one of the aforementioned 27 prophets (cf.<--1.2) who enshrine a particular divine attribute, mode *(maqām)* or wisdom central to engagement with the divine (Chittick, Elr. VII:665; Izutsu, Enc.Rel. V:554). Relative to possible biblical influence section six, the Isaac bezel, *Ḥikmat ḥaqīqat fī kalimat `Ishāqiyya* (The Wisdom of Reality in the Word of Isaac) may show biblical influence in that Isaac and not the (usual) Islamic Ishmael is the one made ready for sacrifice (Fusus, 84f/tr.98f).

In excess of one hundred Arabic and Persian commentaries have been written upon

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[1] Such non-canonical citations from pre-Islamic prophets can also, for example, be found in the *K. al-Isrā'* (Book of the Night Ascent) and the *K. al-tajilliyāt* (Book of the Epiphanies) of Ibn al-`Arabī.

the *Fuṣuṣ.* Especially influential were the commentaries of Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Jandī (d.c. 700 /1300) and Muhammad Dāwūd Qayṣārī (d.672 /1274). Qayṣārī cites John 14:28 as an utterance of Jesus, the "revealer of divine secrets, the seal of the universal sainthood" in his *Sharḥ fuṣūs al-ḥikam* (so Margoliouth ERE 9: 482). Commenting upon *nubuwwiyya* (prophethood) in the *kalimat 'Īsāwiyya,* in the same work Qayṣārī expounds the various significances of *nubuwwa khaṣṣa* and *nubuwwa 'amma* as used by Ibn al-`Arabī (<--1.3 Qayṣarī, Sh.Fusus, 843).

Ibn al-`Arabī himself wrote a summary exposition of the essential ideas of the *Fuṣuṣ* entitled *Naqsh al-fuṣūs.*. (The Imprint of the Ringstones; HIP 1:516) which also came to be much commented upon in both Arabic and Persian. The Persian commentary of the poet and mystic `Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī (d. 898 /1492) was very influential. It was the Great Shaykh's disciple and stepson Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d.673 /1274-5) through whom Ibn `Arabī's teachings "reached the Persian speaking world" (Chittick, ibid 666). He also commented upon the prophetogical-theosophical chapter headings of the *Fuṣūṣ* in his *K. Fakk al-fukūk* ("The Unsealing of the Constituents").

Biblical-qur'ānic prophet figures are given multi-faceted interpretations by Ibn al-`Arabī and by many of the representatives of his "school". They had a wide-ranging influence on ways of non-literally interpreting prophetological motifs. Joseph, son of Jacob, for example, is often associated with that bright luminosity which is the Logos of Light and Beauty (Ibn `Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ,* 99-106; *Naqsh* [trans. Chittick] 58). For al-Qūnawī the *Fuṣūṣ* brought the quintessence of the *dhawq* (mystical "tasting") of the prophetological gnosis of God (*al-Fukūk,* 184 tr. Chittick in HIP 1:515). The influence of this mystical prophetology is evident in some of the *ifrānī* (esoteric) prophetological statements found in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture (BA*, INBA 56).

The Bāb and the first two architects of Shaykhism (-->6.1f) occasionally cited Ibn al-

`Arabī.[1] The Bāb held back though from the affirming anything associated with pantheistic monism *(waḥdat al-wujūd)* or *ḥulūl* ("incarnation"), preferring and frequently underlining a strictly apophatic theology (Lambden, 1997:54ff). Critically commenting, for example, on the concepts of *basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa* ("undifferentiated reality") and *waḥdat al-wujūd* in his *R. Dhahabiyya* the Bāb wrote that, "All of this is unadulterated heresy (`idolatry'; *shirk maḥad)* in the estimation of family of God " (INBMC 86:96-7).[2] Despite this critique there is little doubt that the vocabulary and certain doctrinal dimensions of the Bāb's teachings echo the gnosis of Ibn al-`Arabī. The *`ilm al-ḥurūf* aspect of Ibn al-`Arabī's esoteric *jafr* (gematric prognosis and numerology) as set forth towards the beginning of his *al-Futūḥāt* and in other writings, directly or indirectly influenced the Bāb when he set down dimensions of his talismanic cosmology, prophetology and gnosis.[3]

Though they differ in a good many doctrinal respects it is clearly the case that various writings of both the Bāb and BA* show the influence of the theosophical Sufism of Ibn al-Arabī and members of his "school" including, for example, Dāwūd Qayṣārī (<--), Sayyid Ḥaydar `Amulī (d. 787/1385 ) and `Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428). The style and vocabulary of the Bāb's *R. Dhahabiyya* and the *L-Ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭ`a* of BA* are at times affirmative of a very close direct and/ or indirect relationship to the mystical gnosis of Ibn al-`Arabī.

■ 5.3 The Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt: the `School of Isfahān' and the Safavid period.

A vast array of texts and literatures relating in one way or another to the Bible and

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[1] While Shaykh Aḥmad, for eample, commented upon Ibn al-`Arabī and the science of *jafr* in one of his epistles (JK1/2:86f), Sayyid Kāẓim cited the *Futūḥāt* in writing about the elevated status of Muhammad in his *Sh.Qaṣīda* (unpaginated).

[2]Though the *Fuṣuṣ* of the Great Shaykh was one of the few works which the Bāb specifically cited ("Muḥyī al-Dīn in his *Fuṣuṣ* mentions" ,T.`Aṣr. 99-100) he is very dismissive of the *waḥdat al-wujūd* (existential oneness) associated with Ibn al-`Arabī.

[3]Positive aspects of the *shakl al-tathlīth* (" the form of threefolnesss") are quite frequently mentioned by the Bāb. In this one is reminded of Ibn al-`Arabī's doctrine of the "third entity" in such writings as his *Inshā' al-dawā'ir* (The Genesis of the Circles). There the Great Shaykh elaborates *al-shay' al-thālith* (the third entity) which, as a cosmological principle, is centered upon the relationship between God and man (Ibn `Arabī, Insha, cf. Takeshita, 1982:243f-260).

Isrā'īliyāt traditions date to the Safavid and Qajar periods. This is particularly true of the *irfānī* literatures of the so-called `School of Isfahān' which flourished during the earlier Safavid period. The later Shī`ī encounter with the Abrahamic and related religions in Iran, Iraq and elsewhere caused some Arab and Persian writers to examine the scriptures and traditions of Judaism and Christianity. In this section a few of the Shī`ī writers of these periods who cited the Bible and dwelt upon Isrā'īliyyāt traditions will be mentioned.

■ **Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī (d.1041/1641), Mīr Dāmād.**

Mīr Dāmād styled himself "Ishrāq" after Suhrawardī and was known as the "Third Master" succeeding Aristotle and al-Farābī. A central, foundational figure of the philosophical-theological `School of Isfahān' his often complex, frequently gnostically oriented Persian and Arabic works include materials of central interest. His Persian treatise *al-Jadhawāt* ("Particles of Fire"), for example, responds to an Indian scholars' enquiry as to why Moses was not consumed by the Sinaitic fire attendant upon the divine theophany *(tajallī).* In addition to the cosmological-theophanological implications of Moses' experience of the divine, this multi-faceted work also contains interpretations of the qur'ānic *al-ḥurufāt al- muqaṭṭa`a* (isolated letters). Interesting reference is made in the sixth firebrand of *al-Jadhawāt* to the sphere of هورقليا *Hawaqalyā / Hūrqalyā* (<--loosely, "interworld"), a term which (5.2 <--as noted) probably has (Judaic-) Ishrāqī roots and became important in Shaykhī cosmological gnosis (–>6.1f);

> An established group among the Islamic Pythagoreans and Platonists and a body of the Islamic Ishrāqīs, have it that there exists a world centrally situated *(`ālamī muttawasiṭ)* betwixt the hidden world *(`ālam-I ghayb)* which is the world of the Intellect *(`ālam-I ma`qūl),* and the world of evident reality *(`ālam-I shāhadat)* which is the perceptible world *(`ālam-o maḥsūs).* And such a world they have named Hurqalyā' which is a perceptible world though a shadowy, spectral world, a realm disembodied which they have named the world of the isthmus *(`ālam al-barzakh)* and the eighth clime *(iqlīl thāmin),* the earth of reality *(arḍ-I ḥaqīqa),* something disembodied, disengaged *(khiyāl munfaṣil)* (Jadhwat, 47).

This interworld named Hūrqalyā (= Havaqalyā) is important in connection with the Shaykhī view of the sphere of the hidden Imam and the "earth" of the realm of supra-bodily,

spiritual, resurrection. In all likelihood this is an item of Isrā'īliyyāt in the sense of its being rooted in cosmologically suggestive biblical Hebrew terminology interpreted in Rabbinic and mystical Judaism as a scintillant realm of celestial light (-->6.1f).

■ Bahā' al-Dīn al-`Āmilī (d.Isfahān c.1031 /1622)

A contemporary and friend of Mīr Dāmād, the erudite, polymathic and prolific (in both Arabic and Persian) Bahā' al-Dīn al-`Āmilī (= Shaykh Bahā'ī[1]) was by some considered the *mujaddid* ("Renewer") of the 11th century (Qummī, *Kunyā, 2:100*). Widely travelled through Syria, Anatolia, Egypt and elsewhere, al-Āmilī must have interacted with middle-eastern Jewish and Christian communities in these places as well as within Lebanon where he was born and in Iran his adopted homeland.

Shaykh Bahā'ī was revered and at home in both the Ottoman Sunnī and Safavid Shī`ī worlds of his day. He had Sufi ascetical and mystical proclivities. There is little doubt that he had positive interactions with Jews and Christians and a considerable knowledge of their scriptures and traditions (Moreen, 1987:129f; Bosworth, 1989:52f). His short *Risāla fī dhabā'iḥ ahl al-kitāb*, a treatise prohibiting the consumption of meat slaughtered by the *ahl al-kitāb.* does not refer to the Bible but illustrates Āmilī's wide knowledge of Shī`ī traditions and of Jewish and Christian practises (cf. Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at,* 21; Kohlberg, E.Ir. 3:429).

Shaykh Bahā'ī is best known for his literary anthology *Kashkūl* (Begging Bowl). That this compilation includes Islamicate Bible citations had been noted long ago by Goldziher (1878:385-6). More than a century later in his *Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī and his literary anthologies* (1989), Bosworth observed that al-Āmilī shows a "good acquaintance with the Judaic background of Islamic civilization" as evidenced in his reasonably accurate listing of the books of the Hebrew Bible and occasional citations therefrom (Torah/Hebrew Bible, e.g. Prov. 14:11;

[1] The designation of Mullā Muhammad Ḥusayn, Bahā' al-Dīn as Shaykh Bahā'ī seems to be based upon the (common) epithet, Bahā' al-Dīn (Splendour of Religion) and has nothing to do with his being a kind of proto-Bahā'ī or 'timeless' follower of BA*.

Bosworth 1989:32f). Like many other Safavid scholars Shaykh Bahā'ī cited a number of Islamo-biblical passages. In his *Kashkūl* there exist passages allegedly rooted in the *tawrāt* including around seven *ḥadīth qudsī* mostly addressed to humanity as the "Son of Adam [Man]" *(yā ibn ādam).* A few examples,

> From the *Tawrāt* ("Torah"):
> Whoso is not content with My decree, is impatient over My [sending] calamity and lacking in thankfulness for My providence shall assuredly be taken away by a lord aside from Me *(rabb[an] sawā'ī);* from being one most radiant *(aṣbaḥ)* [that one shall be] one that weepeth over the world...
>
> O Son of Man! There is never a new day save He [God] betoweth upon thee a measure of thy providence and there is never a new night save there is brought by the angels before me some [news of] thy repugnant action. My good unto thee descends while thy evil ascends unto Me.
>
> O Moses! Whoso loveth me shall never forget me and whoso is hopeful of my knowledge shall urgently beseech in questioning me ...
> (Kashkul, 2:318; cf. Goldziher 1878:385-6).

Possibly reflecting Shaykh Bahā'ī's own smattering of Hebrew (?) there exists a passage in the *Kashkūl* cited as being *min al-tawrāh* ("From the Torah"). It consists of an Arabic transliteration of the Hebrew letters of Gen.17:20, a verse which mentions Ishmael's begetting שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר נְשִׂיאִם = (Per.[Āmīlī]) *duvazdih-I surūr* ("twelve princes") evidently understood by Shaykh Bahā'ī (as by other twelver Shī`īs) to be a prophecy of the twelver Imams in connection with (Heb.) לגוי גָּדוֹל (= Per. [Āmīlī]) *ummat-I `aẓīmī,* the "great nation" of Islam (Ishmael being a prototype of Muhammad) (Kashkul, 3:473; cf. Bosworth 1989:15, 52f). Statements of Jesus and Mary are also found in the *Kashkūl* with a discussion on the three *aqānīm* (divine hypostases) and a list of the Christian sects, the Melkites (`Orthodox') Jacobites/ Monophysites and Nestorians (Bosworth, 1989:53).

Another literary anthology of Shaykh Bahā'ī earlier than the *Kashkūl* is entitled *Mikhlāt* (Nose-Bag). Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d. c. 91/ 709) is therein cited as having said, "It is written in the Wisdom: `My son let thy word be good and thy face cheerful; thou shalt be beloved by men more than one who gives them a gift". This reflects Ecclesiasticus 18:16-17 and 35:9. In the *Mikḥlat* Malik b. Dinar (d. c. 125/742) is also cited as having stated "It is written in the

Wisdom: it is forbidden to every heart that loves money to speak the truth". This again echoes Eccles. 26:29-27:1. (Margoliouth 1915:404-7).

Among Shaykh Bahā'ī's further works of interest is his *Mathnavī* poem, *Dar rumūz-I ism-I aʿẓam* ("On the mysteries of the Mightiest Name") which contains some interesting prophetological motifs. It is the *ism-I aʿẓam* which is the Mightiest Name through a *partrū* ("sunburst") of which Moses experienced the luminous Sinaitic theophany. This theophanological concept is also found in the writings of the Bāb and developed in the light of an esoteric interpretation of Exod. 3:13 and 6:3f by BA* (B* INBA 6003C:173-188; BA* Mā'idih 4:38-41, tr. Lambden 1986: 37-40; idem., 1988:104ff +169, fn.115). It was by reciting this miraculous all-powerful Name that Jesus resurrected the dead and himself rose from the dead. For Shaykh Bahā'ī the *ism-I aʿẓam* enshrines the *kunūz-I asmā* ("treasures of the Divine Names") (Rumūz, 94)..

Isrā'īliyyāt rooted motifs understood numerologically are registered in al-Āmilī's *Khulāṣat al-ḥIṣāb* ("Summary of Arithmetics"). Rooted in neo-Pythagorean "gnosis" is the fact that the sum of the integers until 9 (1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9) is 45 which is also the *abjad* numerical value of the name Adam ('=1 +D=4 +M=40 = 45). It is also the case that the sum of the integers until 5 (1+2+3+4+5) yields 15, the *abjad* numerical value of the name Eve (Ar. Ḥawā = Eve = 8+6+1= 15). The qur'ānic detached letters Ṭ (= Ṭā'= 9) and H (= Hā' = 5) prefixed to Q. 20 yield *(abjad)* 9 and 5 respectively which also multiply to give 45, the number of Adam. The two numbers 9 and 5 are also the sides of the rectangle 45, Eve, being 5 as its left side, the "rib" of "Adam" (*Khulāṣat*, 171-4; Bausani, 1981:25).

To some degree indebted to Shaykh Bahā'ī, Shaykh Aḥmad and the Bāb, in a letter to a French (?) enquirer about the *ism-I aʿẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) on the Bahā'ī ringstone symbol, AB* pointed out that the summation of the integers till 5 indicates the Bāb who corresponds to Eve (= Bāb = 2+1+2 = 5= 15 = Eve) and until 9 indicates BA*, the loçus and personification of the *al-ism al-aʿẓam* as *bahā'* (lit. "Splendour"; *abjad* = 2+5 +1+1= 9 = 45 = Adam) which corresponds to Adam. For AB* the Bāb and BA* were thus primogenitors

of a new humanity in the Bāb-Bahā'ī era (AB* Mā'idih, 2:101-3 B*., R. NubuwwaK.14:335f;--> 7).

■ Ṣadrā al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Mullā Ṣadrā (d.1050/1640)

Within certain of his works the important Shī`īte philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā commented upon Isrā'īliyyāt materials and cited an Islamicate Bible. In his important *Sharḥ al-uṣul al-kāfī,*[1] for example, he quotes the whole range of pre-Islamic scripture in commenting upon the following saying of the fourth Imam, `Alī Zayn al-Ābidīn (d. c. 96/713) in the form of a *ḥadīth qudsī* relayed from the prophet Daniel:

> 'If the people knew what was involved in the search after knowledge *(al-`ilm)* they would assuredly seek it even though it involved the shedding of one's life-blood or plunging down into the abyss.'Thus did God inspire Daniel with the words; `Abhor my servant the ignorance of such as look despairingly upon the truth of the custodians of knowledge *(bi-ḥaqq ahl al-`ilm);* denounce mere imitation of others. The most beloved of my servants are such as incline towards the fear of God *(al-taqwā)*, those who seek after an abundance of merit before the learned *(`ulamā'),* subordinate to the wise *(al-ḥukamā')* who speak out wisdom' *(al-ḥukamā')* (Sh-Kafi, 3:86).

After quoting a saying taught to Alexander the Great and some advice which Luqmān bequeathed to his son, Mullā Ṣadrā makes the following highly ecumenical statement, "Know that the rest of the books of God *(kutub Allāh)* are [also] articulate the grace of wisdom *(nāṭiq bi-faḍl al-`ilm).* He next cites a saying from the Islamicate (pseudo-) *tawrāt:*

> With respect to the Torah he [God] said to Moses, "Magnify wisdom *(al-ḥikmat)* for I shall not place wisdom in the heart of any servant unless he desire that I forgive him. So teach it and act in accordance therewith... (Sh-Kafi, 3:99).

Mulla Ṣadra then cites the *Zabūr* (Psalter), introduced in the following way,

> And as for the *Zabūr,* God (exalted be He), said [therein],`O David! Say unto the learned [Rabbis] *(aḥbār)* of the children of Israel and their monks *(ruhbān):* `Speak of such people as are God-fearing *(al-atqiyā').* And if you do not find among them the fear of God *(taqīy[an])* then converse with the learned ones *(`ulamā').* And if you do not find it with them, converse with the wise *(al-`uqalā').* The fear of God *(al-taqā),* knowledge *(al-`ilm)* and wisdom *(al-`aql)* are three realities which exhibit a degree of oneness such that if but one of them is not

[1]At times this work is reminiscent of Ibn Qutayba's *K.Ta`wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* (Disputed Traditions <--3.1) which cites the Bible in attempting legitimate Islamic traditions (Adang 1996:4-5).

> found in any one of My creatures I have desired his destruction (Sh-Kafi, 3:99-100).

After commenting upon this *Zabūr* citation Mullā Ṣadrā writes, "As for the *Injīl* (Gospel[s]), He -- exalted be He [God] -- says in the seventh *sūra* [of ?]:

> Woe unto whomsoever heard knowledge *(al-`ilm)* yet failed to seek after it! Such are fit to be gathered up with the ignorant for [casting into] hellfire *(al-nār).* So seek ye knowledge and instruct therein! Knowledge, if it does not delight you it will not oppress you. And if it does not elevate you it will not put you down. If it does not make you independent it will not impoverish you. If it does not benefit you it will not injure you. God will say on the Day of Resurrection, `O concourse of the learned (`ulamā')! What is your opinion regarding your Lord? And they will reply, `We suppose that Thou art merciful towards us and forgiving towards us'. Then he [God] will say, `I have assuredly taken such action. I have indeed entrusted you with My wisdom *(ḥikmatī)*. This I did not do to accomplish some evil. Nay rather, I desired it for good to be established among you. So enter then into peace, into My Paradise through My Mercy (Sh-Kafi, 3:100).

After this Islamicate *Injīl* citation Mullā Ṣadrā quotes another pasage from the *Tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Sulayman (<--2.1);

> Muqātil said, `I found in the *Injīl* that God -- exalted be He-- said to Jesus, `Magnify the learned *(`ulamā')* and be aware of their bounty *(faḍl).* I have bestowed grace upon them above all my creatures except the prophets *(al-nabiyyīn)* and the messengers *(mursalīn).* This even as the bounty of the sun above the stars, the bounty of the hereafter above this mortal world and even as My Bounty above everything else (Sh-Kafi, 3:100).
>
> Finally, Mullā Ṣadrā cites a highly Shī`ī statement from Jesus:
>
> Out of the community of Muhammad -- upon him and his family be peace -- are the *`ulamā'* (the learned), *hukamā'* (the wise, philosophers). In view of (their) [legal] comprehension *(al-fiqh)* they are even as prophets *(anbiyā').* They will be made content by God with but little providence *(al-rizq)* and God will be satisfied with them through a mere token of [their] action. They will assuredly enter Paradise *(jannat)* through `There is no God but God' *(bi-lā ilāha illā Allāh)* (Sh-Kafi, 3:100).

This citation from Mullā Ṣadra from Muqātil is a good example of how a much older pseudo-biblical citation can appear in a highly respected source of the mid 17th cent. CE. It is followed by Islamicate pseudo-biblical texts which obviously says more about Mullā Ṣadrā than anything Jesus might have uttered.

■ Sayyid Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Ābidīn al- Alawī (d.c. 1050/1650).

An Isfāhānī first cousin, son-in-law and student of Mīr Dāmād, Sayyid Aḥmad (d. c. 1050/1650) was a major philosopher, theologian and polemicist. Equally an Avicennan peripatetic *(mashshā'ūn)* and an Ishrāqī Platonist (Ishrāqīyān), Sayyid Aḥmad was also especially expert in the Abrahamic religions having made a detailed study of the scriptures of the pre-Islamic *ahl al-kitāb.* According to Corbin, Sayyid Aḥmad had a "perfect knowledge of Hebrew", frequently cited the HB in Arabic characters and was able to translate the text word for word into Persian (Corbin, 1985/ E.Ir.1:645). Giving precedence to qur'ānic scripture in the light of Shī`ī hermeneutical and doctrinal norms, Sayyid Aḥmad wrote four Persian volumes in dialogue with Jews, Christians and their sacred scriptures:

- *Laṭā'if-I ghaybī* (Subtleties of the Unseen realm), some hermeneutical preliminaries.

- *Ṣawā`iq-I raḥman* (The Thunderbolts of the All-Merciful). A disputation with Judaism and the Torah (HB).

- *K. Lavāmi`-I rabbānī fī radd al-shubba al-naṣrāniyya* (The Lordly Brilliancies in refutation of Christian misconceptions;1031/1622). A confrontation with Christianity, an affirmation of biblical *taḥrīf* and an attempt to prove the superiority of Islam.

- *Miṣqal-I ṣafā dar tajliya va taṣfiya-yi ā'īna-yi ḥaqq-namā dar radd-I madhab-I naṣārā* (The Polisher of purity to burnish and make clear the mirror showing the truth in refutation of the Christian faction'; 1032/1622).

This fourth work was a response to the *Āyīna-yi ḥaqq namā* ("The Mirror showing the Truth", 1609) by the Portugese Jesuit missionary Girolamo (Jerome) Xavier (d. 1617).[1] Not the only Safavid `Ālim to respond to Xavier (Lee, 1824:cxiiiff; Hairi, 1993:155), Sayyid Aḥmad apparently wrote this work after a "dream-vision" of the twelfth Imam as a supplement to the *Lavāmi`* (<--). Therein he referred to Xavier's volume as *kalām bī-farjam* ("useless discourse") (Hairi, 1993:156). Responses to Sayyid Aḥmad's polemic were written by Phillipus

[1]Xavier was also the author of a Persian life of Christ based on the Gospels entitled *Mir'āt al-qūds* (The Mirror of Sanctity) and also referred to as *Dāstā–I Masīḥ* as wellas a life of the Apostles, *Dāstā–I Aḥwāl-I Hawāriyyān.*

Guadagnolus and the Italian Pietro Della Valle (d.1652) who had met Mīr Dāmād (<--) in Iṣfahān and presented him with his own Persian *Risāla* (Ellis, BMCat. 1:col. 592; Rossi, 1948:32ff; Gurney, 1986)

Within the works listed above `Alawī makes considerable us of the messianic, Islamo-biblical Paraclete *(fāraqlit)* motif as found in various Johannine texts. Like others before him he related this figure to the messianic twelfth Imam and knew a "twofold manifestation of the Paraclete" in the persons of Muhammad and the eschatological Twelfth Imám (Corbin, 1976:232f; 1985 [Elr.] 1:644f). [1] On the basis of his direct reading of John 14:26 towards the beginning of the *Lawāmi`-yi rabbānī* he identified the *Fāraqlīṭ* (Paraclete) with the *rūḥ al-quds* ("Holy Spirit") who will come *bi-nām —i marī* ("in My name") and teach *jami` chiz-hā* ("all things" Jn. 14:26a) (Lawāmi`, 3-4; 15a-b,102; cf. Lee, 1824:xliff).

The *Lavāmi`* includes some details regarding biblical predictions of name Muhammad. Sayyid Aḥmad cites an Arabic phrase from one of the Psalms *(mazmūr az mazāmīr)* which is actually a loose, rewritten Arabic version of Psalm 50:1b (Heb.) מִכְלַל-יֹפִי אֱלֹהִים הוֹפִיעַ מִצִּיּוֹן which (in the literalistic RSV translation reads) "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth". The Arabic version cited by `Alawī (identical with that cited in the *K. Dīn wa'l-dawla,* of al-Ṭabarī) reads (translated in the light of the intended meaning),

> God manifested from Zion (*min ṣihyūn)* a praiseworthy *(maḥmūd*[an]) crown (*iklīl*[an]) (cf. the root of the Heb מִכְלַל).[2]

The interpretation of Sayyid Aḥmad reads, "It is evident that Zion indicates the name Mecca and *maḥmūd* ("praiseworthy") the patronymic *(kunyā)* of Muhammad as one crowned *(iklīl).*

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[1] Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkivarī (d. c. 1075/1664-5) not only identified the Paraclete with the twelfth Imám but also with Astvat Ereta (Av. "He who embodies righteousness", see Yasna 43:3) who is the Saoshyant ("Future Benefactor"), the ultimate eschatological saviour of Zoroastrianism (Corbin, 1971:56f;1976:232).

[2] The quotation is translated in the light of the sense given the phrase by Sayyid Aḥmad who is very likely directly or indirectly drawing on the *K. Al-dīn wa'l-dawla* (Book of Religion and Empire) of `Alī b. Rabbān al-Ṭabarī (d.c.251/865). The latter quotes this phrase from the beginning of Psalm 50 as a prophecy of Muhammad. His Arabic translation is identical (DDawla140; tr. Mingana 89).

Here is struck a similitude of rulership and imamate" (Lawami`,14b). Other titles of Muhammad in biblical prophecy are elsewhere set down by Sayyid Aḥmad including his Tawrāt (Toraic) "name" *M^{e}od M^{e}od* (actually the adverbial phrase "exceedingly" in Gen. 17:20b AV & RSV) interpreted in Persian as meaning "Great, Great" (Per. *buzurg, buzurg).* [1] Despite, or in view of his linguistic awareness, Sayyid Aḥmad upheld a form of biblical *taḥrīf* ("corruption") (Lavami` / Lee 1824:IXvff).

■ **Muhammad Sa`īd Sarmad (executed Moghul India, 1072/1661) and the Dābistān.**

The person and poetry of Muhammad Sa`īd Sarmad, a Persian (Kāshānī) Jewish convert to Sufism who went around naked after the example of the prophet Isaiah (*Dābistān,* 1:215-6; cf. Gen. 2:25 [3:7, 21]) are highly regarded examples of Persian poetry. Sarmad is an interesting link between Safavid-Moghul mystico-religions culture, Shī`ī Islam, Hinduism and Rabbinic Judaism. In the *Dābistān–I madhāhib* (The School of Religious Doctrines) it is said that on converting from Judaism to Islam he acquainted himself with the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā and Mīr `Abū'l Qāsim Findiriskī (d. 1050/1641). He subsequently became "one of the outstanding masters of the Persian quatrain" (Schimmel, 1978:362) and "for the sake of commerce" *(ayyī–I tujjāra)* took a sea voyage to India. Whilst at Thatta he became enraptured with a Hindu boy named Abhai Chand *(`āshiq-I abhai* [= Abī] *chand hindū-I pisarī)* who became his ardent disciple. With Sarmad's assistance Abhai Chand fairly literally translated Genesis 1-6 from Hebrew into Persian. Headed by the *basmalah* and referred to as the `Book of Adam' in the *Dābistan,* it concludes the section about the `Doctrines of the Jews' (Per. vol.1:218-233 tr. Shea and Troyer 1901:303). [2]

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[1] Cf. Bihar[2] 15:208ff. The Hebrew *m^{e}od* basically means "power", "strength", "force". Many Islamic writers register this as a "name" of Muhammad in the Torah. It probably became a "prophecy" in connection with an Is hmael-Muhammad ty pology. The numerical *(abjad)* value of "exceedingly" (2+40+1+4+40+1+4 = 92), it was observed, is the equivalent of Muhammad (40+8+40+4 = 92). Such use of numerological *(abjad)* equivalents is common in both Shī`ī and Bābī religious literatures.

[2] Omitting the *basmalah,* the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1 *Bereshit bara `elohīm et-ha-shamayim va et-ha`aretz* ("[When] In the Beginning God created the heavens and the earth"), can be compared with the Persian of Abi Chand which reads, *Dar awwal āfrīnish āfrīd khudā mar āsmā–rā va mar zamī–rā.* Rahim Ridāzāda Malik the editor and annotator the the recent 2 vol edition of the *Dābistān,* highlights the importance of this Abi Chand's translation (*Dābistān* 2:207f).

An important text of the Ādhar Kayvānī pseudo-Zoroastrian faction, the *Dābistān–I madhāhib* ("The School of Religious Doctrines") may have been authored during the decade prior to 1068/1658 by Mīr Dhu'l-Fiqār Ārdistānī (E.Ir.VI:532-4). Published in Calcutta (1224/1809) Tehran (1260/1844) and Bombay 1264/1848 (also 1267/1851) in the 19th century, this work became an important source of information about world religions in Persia, the Middle East and elsewhere (Rieu, *Cat.* I:141-2). Whilst In Shīrāz in 1825 Wolff listed the *Dabistān* among twenty-two Persian and seven Arabic " authors "most read by the learned Muslims of Shīrāz" (MJ III:53-4). The *Dābistān* contains, twelve main sections *(tā`līm,* lit. `teachings') dealing with Parsīs (Zoroastrians), Hindus, Tibetans, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Ṣādiqiyya, Wāḥidiyya, Roshaniyyan, Ilāhiyya, Philosophers and Sufis. Numerous other religious and philosophical subgroups are also mentioned. By modern standards the *Dābistān* contains, numerous "errors". There are a few hints of its influence upon Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources though this possible source of influence is minimal and outside the scope of this thesis. The Bāb, BA* and AB* probably knew and occasionally drew upon this unusual Persian work.[1]

■ **Sayyid Muhammad Mahdī Ṭabāṭa'bā'ī, Baḥr al-`ulūm (d.1212/1797)**

Brief mention of a cordial *munāẓara* (debate) between the influential Shī`ī mujtahid *Bahr al-`ulūm* ("The Ocean of the Sciences") and representatives of a small Jewish group of Dhu'l-Kifl (20 miles south of Hilla, Iraq) must conclude this highly selective overview of aspects of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt on the eve of the Qajar period. In was in 1796 that the aforementioned Shī`ī mujtahid, famous for his great polemical skills and ability in converting Jews (Algar, E.Ir. III:504), held debate with a few Jews or Jewish leaders named Dā'ūd (David) and `Azrā (Ezra). This possibly historical debate (?) is recorded on the basis of original documents (?) in introductory sections of various editions of the *Rijāl al-Sayyid Baḥr al-`ulūm* (Rijal:[49] 50-66; Moreen 1999).

It appears that Baḥr al-`Ulūm had a very considerable knowledge of Muslim polemical

[1] References by to the ancient figure Māh-Abad could, for example, be ascribed to the influence of the Dabistan.

and *Iḥtijāj* literatures touching upon the Bible and Judaism although he appears to have lacked any direct knowledge of either the HB or the (to him) "reprehensible" Rabbinic literatures (Moreen 1999:575-6). His quoting paraphrases of biblical texts such as 1 Kings 11-12 and Exodus 32:1f most likely derived from his mastery of such Islamic sources as Ibn Bābūya (4.2 <-- *Kamāl al-dīn*, cf. Vajda, 1941-5: 131f) and earlier Sunnī and Shī`ī polemicists. Like Sayyid Aḥmad he upheld biblical *taḥrīf* ("corruption") at one point in this debate refers to *al-taḥrīf wa'l-ziyāda* ("corruption and addition") (Bible) (Rijal: tr. Moreen 1999:583). His influence can be seen by the fact that several of his pupils engaged in the debate with Henry Martyn (-->).

■ 5.4 Bible translation and dialogue up to the early Qajar period

The following notes must suffice to illustrate the availability of Persian and Arabic Bible translations up until the early Qajar period along with a few details of those who were involved in the early 19th century Shī`ī dialogue with western missionaries. It was during the Safavid era (1501-1722) that biblical translation and knowledge of the Abrahamic religions became better established, at least among certain of the learned and literate ruling class. The 19th century missionary engagement with Islam and the distribution of many Persian and Arabic Bible translations increased biblical awareness among Shī`ī Muslims.[1]

According to Patristic testimony partial or complete (Middle) Persian Bible translation was accomplished in pre-Islamic times (Chrysostom *Homily on John* PG LIX col. 32). Very much later, from the 11th cent. CE., partial, then complete biblical translations into New Persian from the original Hebrew and Greek or indirectly from Syriac or other languages, began to appear (EIr IV:199-214; esp. 203-4). During the 14th-16th centuries CE important New Persian and Judaeo-Persian translations of biblical books were made.

A Persian translation of the Pentateuch was made by Joseph b. Moses in 719/1319, then another Judaeo-Persian Pentateuch translation dating to 952-3/1546 by Jacob ben

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[1] Details regarding many of the Arabic and Persian translations of the Bible or its various testaments and books can be found Darlow and Moule, 1903-13 and E.Ir III:199-214. See esp. Thomas 'Chronology of Bible translations' E.Ir IV.iii :203-204+bib. 205-6.

Joseph Tāwūs, a Persian professor at the Jewish Academy at Constantinople. This version was published in Constantinople in 1546 within a Jewish (Soncino) Polyglot Bible (Elr. IV:203-4). Just over a century later in 1657 this version (of the Pentateuch) was transliterated into Persian characters by Thomas Hyde and published within the London Polyglot Bible (D&M 2:1202; Fischel 1952:5-7; Elr. IV:204). In 742/1341 the Gospels were translated into Persian from Syriac by Yūḥannā b. al-Khāṣṣ Yūsuf al-Ya'qūbī.[1] And came to be the NT text within the London Polyglot Bible (1657) of Brian Walton (Elr. IV:203). Persian or Judaeo-Persian biblical books thus circulated through being published in European and other Polyglot Bibles (Darlow and Moule 2:1201-1211).

Both Shah 'Abbās I ṣ. 995-1038/1587-1629) and Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn I (r.1105-1135 / 1694-1722) had a role in the appearance of Persian translations of the Gospels (Elr. IV:204). For the latter Shāh it was the outstanding translator Mīr Muhammad Bāqir ibn-I Ismā`īl Ḥusaynī Khātūnābādī (d.1127/1715) who made a Persian translation, expository sketch and paraphrase of every chapter of all four Gospels entitled *Tarjuma-yi anājil-I arba`a* (Translation of the Four Gospels). In collaboration with Christian priests of Isfahān he apparently checked his rendering against several Arabic versions as well as Latin and Hebrew texts (Khātūnābādī,1996; Arjomand, 1984:154-5).[2]

Nadīr Shāh Afshār (r.1148-1160 /1736-1747) was generally well disposed towards Christians (Jesuits, Carmelites or others) and Christian missionaries resident at Isfahān, Gilan and elsewhere. Apparently roused by the reference to the Bible (as *tawrāt* and *Injīl)* in Q. 48:29 and informed that these scriptures were extant during his Indian expedition, Nadīr Shāh ordered his then secretary and court historian Mīrzā Muhammad Mahdī Khān Astarābādī to arrange for a Persian translation. This task took just over a year being completed in 1154/ June

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[1] This version was reworked with reference to the Vulgate by Xavier though it is apparently lost (<--Elr. IV:204).

[2] Khātūnābādī's *Tarjuma-yi anājil-I arba`a* was first edited and published in Tehran in 1996 by Rasūl Ja`fariyān.

1741. It involved the translation of both the Gospels and the Q. which was accomplished by eight Muslim clerics, three Europeans and five Armenian priests (Netzer, Elr. III:298). Rabbi Bābā`ī ben Nūrī'el of Isfahān and three other Rabbis translated the Pentateuch and Psalms and Mīr Muhammad Ma'sùm Ḥusaynī Khātūnābādī and his son 'Abd-al-Ghānī had a role in the translation of the NT (Netzer, Elr. IV:298). Lockhart has noted that on becoming aware of the translations Nadīr Shāh came to ridicule Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Lockhart 1938:278, Elr. IV:204).[1]

While portions of the Gospels were translated into Persian in the 18th century (1744 and 1793 <--) and earlier centuries, it was the 19th century which witnessed a much greater volume of Persian Bible translation largely accomplished by western Protestant Christian missionaries. The stream of such translations was headed in 1804-5 by the translation into Persian (+English) of John 1-3 (D&M 2:1202) and the Gospel of Matthew by Mīrzā Muhammad Fiṭrat (under the supervision of R. H. Colebrook).[2] Five years later in 1809 under the direction of Henry Martyn (then chaplain of the East India Company), an Arab from Baghdad named Nathaniel Sabat translated Matthew's Gospel into Persian (pub. Serampore: BFBS, 1809) (Elr. IV: 205; D&M 2:1202). Also translated by Sabat was an inadequate complete Persian translation of the NT which also appeared under the direction of Henry Martyn in 1810 (Eir. IV:204-5).

The years 1227-8/1812-13 saw the completion and subsequent publication of several partial or complete Persian translations of the NT/ Gospels (BFBS: Calcutta,1813) including the Pauline Epistles by the Catholic missionary Leopoldo Sebastiani (D&M 2:1203). More importantly 1812 saw the completion of what is perhaps the most famous of all 19th century Persian NT translations, that of Henry Martyn (with the assistance of Mīrzā Sayyid `Alī Khān

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[1] Lockhart notes that a copy of the Persian translation of the Gospels, made under the supevision of Pèrre Lagarde in Gilan in 1746 , exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris (see Blochert's *Catalogue des Manucrits Persans* . . . Vol. 1:6, No. 7).

[2] Colebrook was "professor of Sanskrit at the College of Fort William in Bengal, and surveyor-general of Bengal, pub. by College of Fort William in Calcutta" (Eir. Ibid. see also Darlow and Moule, 2:1202).

Shīrāzī) who died in 1812 soon after its completion (D&M 2:1203). Made directly from the Greek it was initially published in 1814 (and 1815) by the Russian Bible Society of St. Petersburg. Thereafter it was frequently republished: in Calcutta by the BFBS (+ the Psalms) 1816 and in London from 1837. A Judaeo-Persian NT version transliterated by Lugīn at Herat was also published by the BFBS in London in 1847 (D&M 2:1203; Elr. IV:205).

Subsequent to the publication of Henry Martyn's NT translation, parts of the Hebrew Bible began to be published in Persian and Judaeo-Persian.[1] A number of revisions of his NT translation and further Persian NT versions came to be made.[2] The Persian translation work of Thomas Robinson (d. 1869, chaplain at Poona then Archdeacon at Madras) and William Glen (d. Tehran, 1849) of the Scottish mission at Astrakhan is important in that it led in 1846 to the first complete 19th century Persian Bible publication (D&M 2:1203ff; Thomas Elr. IV:203ff).

Robinson completed his translation (from the Hebrew) of the Pentateuch, the *Kutub-I khams-I Mūsā-yi nābī,* in Madras in 1836 (pub. Calcutta: BFBS.,1828). Following other partial translations (1835-->38) a complete Persian translation of the HB appeared in 2 vols. in 1838 (D&M 2:1204-5; Cat. Ind. Off. Vol. II-Pt. VI, Persian Books; Elr. IV:205). William Glen (& Ḥajī Mīrzā Ṭālib) translated the book of Psalms (rev. by W. Greenfield, London: BFBS,1830; London, 1834; D&M 2:1205). In 1845 he translated the Hebrew Bible with Mīrzā Muhammad Ja'far (historical books) a revised version of which was published in Edinburgh in 1846 by the BFBS (United Associate Synod) along with the Henry Martyn Persian translation of the NT. D&M 2:1206).) Resident in Iran for six years (1868-1875) the British missionary Robert Bruce (d.1912) with various assistants also revised Henry Martyn's 1812 NT translation (D&M 2:1207). The complete Bible translation of Glen and Martyn was also revised by Bruce (and

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[1] Henry Martyn's translation of the Psalms was also published in London in 1824. In 1831 and 1834 the books of Jonah and Isaiah were also translated into Persian. (Elr. IV:205 ; D&M 2:1205)

[2] Worth noting is the 1827 Persian translation (from the Arabic) of Genesis by Mīrzā Ja'far, a lecturer in Persian and Arabic at the University of St. Petersburg which was revised by Samuel Lee and Mīrzā Ibrahim (D&M 2:1204; Elr. IV:205).

others) between 1893 and 1895 (D&M 2:1209-11).

■ The Arabic Bible in Qajar Iran.

A number of Arabic Bibles were available to the Shī`ī `ulamā' and others in Qajar Iran and 19th century Ottoman Iraq, Turkey and Palestine. Arabic printed editions of the NT (16th century CE onwards) were for the most part varieties of a 13th century Arabic recension known as the "Alexandrian Vulgate". This lies behind the Arabic version in the ten volume Paris Polyglott (1625-45). Many pre-19th century partial or complete Arabic printed Bibles are adaptions or revised reprints of this Paris Polyglott including the Arabic texts printed in the *Biblica Sacra Polyglotta* (1653-7) of Bishop Brian Walton (d.1661) known as the `London Polyglot' (<–). Widely distributed in numerous reprints, the 1671 Rome published Arabic Bible was also printed and distributed by Protestants in Europe. In part hoping to supercede the weaknesses of earlier versions a printed Protestant Arabic NT appeared in 1727 through Sulayman ibn Ya`qūb al-Salbānī (of Damascus = Solomon Negri). These, and a few other Arabic Bibles/NT's, such as that of Nathanial Sabat (<– early 19th cent.) were circulating and distributed by missionaries in Iran in the first half of the 19th century. Later many printings came to be superceded, for example, by the complete Arabic Bible translation of Eli Smith (d. 1857) and Cornelius Van Dyck (d. 1895) which became partially then wholly available in print from the early 1860s (-->7.2).

■ Missionary activity in early Qajar Iran

Henry Martyn (<--) arrived in Shīrāz in June, 1811 where he hoped to produce a lucid Persian NT translation, revise Sabat's unsatisfactory Arabic version, and engage in evangelical activities amongst the Shī`ī `ulamā', resident Sufis and other inhabitants of Shiraz and elsewhere. His missionizing and polemical writing of several Persian tracts, attracted the critical interest of a number of leading mullas, mujtahids and Sufis. They led Mīrzā Ibrāhīm (Fasā'ī?), "the preceptor of all the moolas" in 1226/late July 1811 to compose a treatise calling him to Islam (Wolff MJ III:67; tr. Lee, 1824:1-39; Algar 100-1). The exchange led a considerable number (25+?) of further written responses to Martyn from sometimes prominent

Shī`ī `ulamā' some apparently written at the prompting of Fatḥ `Alī Shāh (r.1797-1835 CE).[1] In his letter of 1229/1814 this Shāh expressed delight on receipt of the Martyn translation (via Gore Ousley, the then British Ambassador at Tehran) though he evidently hoped for learned responses to western anti-Islamic missionary polemic (Smith 1892:486-7). Aside from Mullā [Mīrzā] Ibrāhim (<--) the following are a few notes about the Shī`ī learned who wrote responses to the Christian "Padre", Henry Martyn.

Important among these written responses to Martyn was that of Mīrzā Abū'l-Qāsim, Qā'im Maqām (d. 1237/1822), the prime minister to `Abbās Mīrzā and a friend of BA*'s father Mīrzā `Abbās Nūrī (d.1839). His *Miftāḥ al-nubuwwa* (Key to the Prophethood) in refutation of Martyn's missionary work was probably among those commissioned by Fatḥ `Alī Shāh (Algar, 1967:101 fn.123).[2] The response of Hajjī Mullā Muhammad Riḍā' b. Muhammad Amīn Hamadānī (d. 1247/1831) was also entitled *Miftāḥ al-nubuwwah* (The Keys of Prophethood) of which a full English translation is found in Lee's 1824 *Controversial Tracts* (1824:164-450). Therein much space is devoted to biblical prophecies allegedly fulfilled by Muhammad, including some Hebrew passages identified as the "Revelation of the Hebrew Child" (Lee 1824:cxviiiff, 302-26; QU:129-30; Wolff: MJ III:127; 156 cf. 111; Algar 1967:101).

A fourth person to engage in this debate was Mullā `Alī Nūrī Isfahānī (d. 1242/ 1826-7) whose response to Martyn was entitled *K. Ḥujjat al-islām* (Book of the Proof of Islam) incorrectly listed in the *Dharī`a* as a work in "refutation of the *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* by Henry Martyn" (VI:207 No.1408).Tunukabunī reckoned that this work established the reality of the *khātam al-anbiyā'* (= Muhammad as `seal of the prophets') (QU:130; Wolff, MJ. III:67,121, 156; Algar 1978:101). Fifthly, there was the response of Mullā Aḥmad b. Muhammad Mahdī

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[1] In the third volume of his *Missionary Journal* Wolff gives two lists of Shī`ī clerics who responded to the missionary challenge of Henry Martyn. In December 1826 a certain Mullā Muhammad `Alī told him that various "Doctors of Persia" wote in reply to "Henry Martyn's book" (MJ III:67). Five months later (May 1825) Wolff reports that a Persian Shaykh resident in Urumiya told him that Henry Martyn had "written a book against the prophet" (Muhammad) and that various Mullas had "completely answered" this book. Seven `Mullas' are listed (<--) (Wolff, MJ. III:156; Lee,1824:cxv; QU:129-30; Algar 1978:100-101).

[2] This text is apparently contained in Muhammad Ṣādiq Ḥusaynī, Makhzan al-Inshā, Tabrīz, 1274/1857 (Algar, 1969:100 fn.115).

Narāqī Kashānī (d. c.1245/1829), a pupil of *Baḥr al-`Ulūm* (<-- ) entitled *Sayf al-ummā wa burḥān al-umma* (Sword of the Community and Vindication of the [Muslim] Community) which was twice printed in Iran (in 1267/1851 and 1331/1913). Dedicated to Fatḥ `Alī Shāh this author in preparing it "called together ten of the rabbis of Kāshān, and with their help translated into Persian a number of passages from the Old Testament and Jewish theological works which he included in his tract refuting Henry Martyn".[1]

A sixth person to engage in this debate was Mullā `Alī Akbar b. Muhammad Bāqir Isfahānī (RawdatJ: 416; Algar,1967:101) and a seventh Hājjī Mullā Muhammad Taqī Burghānī Qazvīnī, the Shahīd Thālith (`Third Martyr') (d.1263 /1847). The Bābī heroine Fāṭima Baraghānī, Ṭāhirih, was his niece, the daughter of (his brother) Ḥajjī Mullā Muhammad Ṣāliḥ Baraghānī (Tunukābunī,QU:19-66;MacEoin,E.Ir.III:740+bib.). It is particularly interesting that this man was among those who responded to Henry Martyn in that it might hint at a possible source of Tāhira's alleged biblical learning mentioned in a few Bahā'ī sources (Āvarih, Kawākib 1:118; Māzandarānī, KZH IV:703-4).

An eighth person mentioned by Wolff to have taken part in this debate was Sayyid Muhammad Karbalā'ī, "son of the late Sayyid `Alī", apparently the "grand Mujtahid of Karbala" who thought it worth "writing an answer to a book composed by a kafir [unbeliever ] like Martyn" (Wolff MJ III:156). A ninth figure was Hajjī Mullā Ibrāhīm Kalbāsī (d.1262/1845),(MJ III:156), another pupil of Baḥr al-`Ulūm who apparently followed the example of his teacher in engaging in religious debate. A few more figures are also known to have taken part in this debate, including a certain Hājj Mullā Mūsā Najafi (MJ III:156 Shaykh Musā b. Shaykh Ja`far Narāqī (= No. 6?) and Mirzā Muhammad Akhbārī another pupil of Baḥr al-`Ulūm (d. 1233/ 1818?; Wolff, MJ III:156l; Algar 1967:101).

In addition to Arabic and Persian Bibles, the 19th century also witnessed an increasing

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[1]Tunukābunī, QU:129-39; Khwansarī, RawdatJ, 3:172; Algar 1978:101; Momen, 318; al-Dharī`a 12:286 No.1922.

flood of Arabic and Persian evangelical tracts. Aside from the several works of Pfander [1] (<–5.1) there appeared, for example, a Persian version of the *Evidences of Prophecy* of Alexander Keith (d.1880) entitled *Risāla kashf al-athār fī qiṣaṣ-I anbiyā-yi banī isrā'īl,* translated at Urumiyya by J. L. Merrick (1803-66) and published in Edinburgh in 1846 (Graf, GCAL. 4:237ff). A range of Arabic Christian polemical works and translations were also available in 19th century Iran, including E. Pocock's translation of book six of Hugo Grotius' *De Veritate religionis Christianae* with the acerbic title *al-Muqalāt fī ibṭāl al-Islam* (Discourses on the Futility of Islam, 1731) (in the 1820s Wolff distributed a version of part of this book in Iran). In 1824 Shaykh Ḥasan, a leading mujtahid of Shiraz, distributed copies of Grotius' polemic among his students inviting them to write refutations. Aware of biblical *taḥrīf* he also commissioned these students to search the Bible for Muhammad's "name" "Mad-mad" (<--) (MJ III:59-60; cf. 53).

In his *Religion and State in Iran* Algar observes that during the reign of Fatḥ 'All Shāh "the dual role of the `ulama.. of opposing the state, and that of countering the impact of foreign powers" was already evident and was "to become more explicit and active as the century progressed". (Algar, 1969:102). Having briefly surveyed the role of the ulamā' in response to the missionary polemic of Henry Martyn, Algar also writes, "It was an age of intense theological activity, and powerful tracts against Sufism and Akhbārism, as well as Christianity were commonplace" (Algar: 1969:102)

That many among the early-mid.19th cent. Shī`ī `ulamā' responded to Christian missionary activity and polemic is confirmed by the fact that both leading Shaykhis Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d. 1843) and Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1871) wrote works on these lines (-->5.2). Though the Bāb did not write *istidlāliyya* tracts like the aforementioned and above listed writers, he quite frequently took Sufis and Christians to task for their heretical theological beliefs, making a direct *rabṭ* ("link", "connection") between God and humanity and believing in forms

[1] Among Pfander's works are the *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq* (Balance of Truth), Persian trans. published in Shusha (Trans Caucasian Georgia)in 1835; *Ṭarīq al-ḥayat* (The Path of Life) and *Miftāḥ al-asrār* (Key to the Mysteries) all of which appear to have been printed in either Persian or Arabic.

of the Trinity and (literal) Sonship of Jesus. It should be clear from the above that the Bāb had relatively easy access to the Bible in either Persian or Arabic translation. During his early years Bible translation and distribution by Christian missionaries in and around Shiraz was quite common. Wolff and others constantly distributed Bibles in Shiraz and other Iranian localities. In 1824 Wolff was told that the Gospel was "much read" in Shiraz especially among the Sufis (MJ III:35). It will be argued below that the lack of biblical citation by the Bāb was not due to ignorance or inaccessibility but to a deliberate choice, most probably dictated by his very elevated view of the Q. and his own revelations.

Chapter Six

THE BIBLE AND ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT IN EARLY SHAYKHISM

■ 6.1 The Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in works of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī (d.1241/1826)

The Shi`ite faction known as Shaykhism derives from the polymathic, theosophically oriented philosopher-theologian Shaykh Aḥmad b. Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'ī. Born in the eastern Arabian province of al-Aḥsa (= Ḥasā), he lived most of his life in the Shi`ite shrine cities of Iraq (1790s-early 1800s) and in Iran (from 1806) where for several decades he was favoured as a leading authority. Through correspondence the then Qajar ruler Fatḥ`Alī Shah (r.1797-1834) induced Shaykh Aḥmad to write a number of treatises. A prolific and influential author, he wrote in excess of 150 mostly Arabic works. At times the Shaykh claimed direct knowledge through supernatural communication with various occulted (twelver) Imams seen as eternal loci of reality. He championed high imamological perspectives. Though he seems not to have sought to bypass acceptable (Ākhbārī-) Uṣūlī positions he was accused of going beyond Shī`ite hermeneutical and doctrinal norms.[1]

Shaykh Aḥmad reduced to three the normative five pillars (pl. *arkān*) or bases *(uṣūl)* of Shi`ism; namely, [1] *tawḥīd* (The Divine unity), [2] *nubuwwa* (prophethood), [3] *ma`ād* (lit. 'return'= resurrection, eschatology), [4] *imāma* (the Imamate) and [5] *`adl* (Divine justice). He thought that pillar [1] presupposed pillar [5] while pillar [2] incorporated pillar [3]. The importance of living centre[s] of Shi`ite guidance indicated by the phrase *al-rukn al-rābi`* (the Fourth Support), was furthermore, related to learned *mujtahids* and / or the `Perfect Shī`ī [Shi`a] (MacEoin, 1982:35f+ sources).

In Shī`ī-Shaykhī theosophy the locus of the Fourth Support was to some extent the microcosmic exemplar of *al-insan al-kāmil* (`The Perfect Human', Lawson, 1998:148-9). This Fourth Support was regarded as an individual figure by Sayyid Kāẓim and could thus be understood messianically by the Bāb. Conceived as a single individual superior to any exalted *marja al-taqlīd* (source of emulation), the Fourth Support became evocative for the Bāb's self-

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[1]Ibrāhīmī, *Fihrist*; MacEoin, `Aḥsā'ī...' EIr. 1:674-9;1992:165; Aḥsā'ī, DMI 6:662-8.

understanding. He represented himself as the "Hidden [Fourth] Support" in his *T. Kawthar* (1846) from whom all should seek guidance (T.Kawthar, fol. 36aff; McEoin, ibid, 36-7).

Like others before him, Shaykh Aḥmad held to a complex non-gross bodily *mi`rāj* of Muhammad and had a spiritualistic understanding of the eschatological resurrection body (Sh-Ziyāra, tr. Corbin, 1990:180f). At times influenced by Sufi, Ishrāqī and various philosopher-theologians of the `School of Isfahan', the multi-faceted range of Shaykh Ahmad's learning was very wide ranging. He was especially learned in the doctrinal traditions of the twelver Imams as well as all imamological and philosophical learning including *ḥikmat-i ilāhi* ("theosophical Shi`ism") and the esoteric or occult sciences. Testifying to the immensity and universality of Shaykh Aḥmad's learning, Sayyid Kāẓim in his *Dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn* (The Stunning Evidence) listed around thirty branches of knowledge in which he believed him adept including "the main occult sciences of astrology, alchemy [kimiya], numerology, gematria, *jafr*, and the four disciplines known as *limiya, himiya, simiya and rimiya"* (MacEoin 1985:78-79+fn.13).

Evidence of this polymathic, often arcane learning is evidenced throughout the *Jawāmi` al-kilam.* It is also evident, for example, in Shaykh Aḥmad's *Risāla al-Rashtiyya* (1226/1811), a reply to Mullā `Alī ibn Mīrzā Jān Rashtī dating to 1226/1811. Therein Shaykh Aḥmad responds in detail to several complex issues and statements made by al-Būnī (<--) and Ibn al-`Arabī about *`ilm al-ḥurūf* (letter mysticism). He dealt with a saying asserting that *al-Jafr* (<-- letter divination) will appear in eschatological times with the Imam Mahdī who alone is cognisant of its truth. Several complex angeological questions in relationship to letter mysticism are also dealt with, including the association of the letter "A" (*alif*) with Israfil and "B" (al-*Bā'*) with Gabriel, etc., as well as the derivation of the names of various angels.

About four years before his passing Shaykh Aḥmad was accused of heresy by a number of contemporary Shī`ī authorities including the Qazvīnī cleric and uncle of the Bābī poetess Ṭāhira, Mullā Muhammad Taqī Baraghānī (d.1263/1847). (Tunikabūnī, *Qiṣaṣ*, 19ff). Following this *takfīr* (excommunication) the Shaykh migrated to Iraq apparently intending to settle in Mecca though he passed away in Medina before this was possible. The charge of

heresy levelled against him included the accusation that he went beyond the bounds of Shī`ī orthodoxy in teaching such doctrines as the non-physical nature of the *isrā'-mi`rāj* ("night ascent- journey") of the Prophet Muhammad and of the resurrection body of the faithful.

The lengthy (often 4 volume, 34,000 verse) *Sharḥ al-ziyāra al-jāmi`a al-kabīra* (Commentary upon the Greater General Prayer of Visitation) is a phrase by phrase Arabic commentary on a prayer of visitation for the tenth Imām `Alī al-Hadī (d. c. 254/868). It is widely acknowledged as Shaykh Aḥmad's most significant work[1] and was completed in 1230 /1815 for Sayyid Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad Qāsim Ḥusaynī Ushkurī Jīlānī.

The *Sharḥ al-ziyāra* of Shaykh Aḥmad contains a few Islamicate biblical citations and other points of exegetical interest. Moses-Sinai motifs receive interesting non-literal interpretations as do the major pre-Islamic prophet figures Israel and Moses. At one point Shaykh Aḥmad sanctions allegorical interpretations of certain qur'ānic verses mentioning Moses and the *ummat Mūsā* (community of Moses). They can signify Muhammad and the Islamic "community of Muhammad". Moses is seen as a prototype of Muhammad and the *banū Isrā'īl* ("children of Israel") of the Shī`ī "family of Muhammad" *(āl Muḥammad).* A confirmatory tradition from Ja`fa r Ṣādiq is cited as recorded in the *Tafsīr* of `Ayyashī (<--2.1) about the qur'ānic address, "O children of Israel" *(yā banī Isrā'īl).* This address is specifically said to refer to the "Us" of the Shī`ī community,

> Now as for the fact that "Israel" has the sense of the servant of God *(`abd-Allāh)* [then know] that Muhammad is the servant of God *(`abd-Allāh)* ... And as for the fact that "Israel" *(Isrā'īl)* is a similitude *(mathal)* of him [Muhammad]... [know that] it has been related from the prophet [Muhammad] that he was heard saying, "I indeed am Thy servant, my name is Aḥmad, I am the servant of God *(`abd-Allāh),* my name is Israel *(Isrā'īl)* for He [God] did not command him [Israel] [in the Q.] but had [actually] commanded me [Muhammad]... (*Sh-Zīyāra,* III:278).

Other important works of Shaykh Aḥmad include the *al-Fawā'id* ("Lessons") dating prior to 1216/1801 in which twelve lessons are presented, including one on the creation of all

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[1] This general *Ziyāra* can be found in Ibn Bābūya's *Man lā yaḥduruh al-faqīh* and al-Tūsī's *Tahdhīb* (Momen, BSBM1:42).

things in six days as recorded in the Q. (cf. Genesis 1 etc). Shaykh Aḥmad himself and certain of his disciples wrote commentaries or *hashiyya* (marginal glosses) upon this work. The Shaykh also wrote a lengthy *Sharḥ al-fawā'id* (Commentary upon the *Fawā'id*) which was completed in 1233/1818 (Fih.:20). Shaykh Aḥmad's commentaries upon the *Mashā`ir* and *`Arshiyya* of Mullā Ṣadrā are also among his best known writings. His multi-volume *Sharḥ al-ḥikma al-`arshiyya* (Commentary upon the Wisdom of the Throne) is a commentary on the *al-Ḥikma al-`Arshiyya* of Mullā Ṣadrā , was completed in Kirmānshāh in 1236/ 1820-1 (Pub: Tabriz, 1271 [+ 78-9] /1854/61-2; Fihrist 53; cf. Morris, 1981). Passages from certain of these works will be cited below.

Interesting often non-literal interpretations of Islamic scriptural materials occasionally centering upon *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and associated matters are found within the large, 19th century, two volume lithographed compendium of Shaykh Aḥmad's writings entitled *Jawāmi` al-kilām* (Comprehensive Utterance). This compendium contains over ninety sometimes lengthy *rasā'il* (treatises) detailing Shaykh Aḥmad's responses to a very wide range of doctrinal and other enquiries largely posed by Shī`ī individuals (Momen, BSBM1:12-13). The richness of this source will be evident in the following pages.

A *Risāla* of Shaykh Aḥmad contained in the *Jawāmī` al-kilām* responds to questions about the significance of a tradition stating that prophets are made from the supernal clay of *`aliyyīn* (exaltedness) as opposed to the base clay of *sijjīn* (cf. Q.83:7f). Other traditions commented upon by Shaykh Aḥmad have it that in creating Adam God sent Gabriel out on the first hour of Friday (cf. Al-Ṭabarī, 111f; Rosenthal, tr. 282f) and that the clay from which the first man was made was kneaded with both Divine "hands for forty days (cf Q. 38:76) (JK, 2:104-110; Majmū`a, 30:194-215; cf also JK 2: 69-75).

In another *Risāla* probably written in reply to a group of religious students Shaykh Aḥmad was asked to reconcile two traditions; one stating that Moses transported the body of Joseph to Jerusalem and another indicating that Noah transferred the bones of Adam to Najaf. He was also asked to explain how they relate to traditions recorded in the *Tahdhīb* of al-Ṭūsī

(<--2.2) about the bodies of the prophets and the Imams remaining either 3, 30 or 40 days in the grave. This in the light also of Shaykh Ahmad's own assertion that people cannot see the Imams in their graves (JK 2:131-134).

A *Risāla* written in reply to Maḥmūd Mīrzā takes up the significance of the well-known *ḥadīth* stating that "God created Adam according to His form" as well as another mentioning the *ra's al-jālūt* ("head of Goliath") and dating before 1227/1812 (JK,1276: 276-279). A further *Risāla* of 1223/1188 addressed to various brethren discusses whether the punishment of the inmates of Hell is everlasting or not. The issue of whether or not Pharaoh had become a believer was a question most likely dictated by statements made on this subject by Ibn al-`Arabī (JK1:110-115; Majmū`a, 30:218-235). An interesting *Risāla* dating to 1231/ 1815-16 replies to the significance of the *ḥadīth,* "Three winds came to Solomon, he chose two of them and left the third for the Qā'im" (JK:1276:32-7). The *Risāla al-Ṭāhiriyya* (236/ 1821) responds to sixteen questions of Mullā Muhammad Ṭāhir Qazvīnī including two about what within Islam can be seen to parallel the miracle of the fatherless, virgin birth of Jesus and the story of Jonah (BSBM1:110)

A *Risāla* in response to Mullā Ḥusayn Wā`iz Kirmānī includes Shaykh Aḥmad's response to questions relating to the manner of Eve's being created from the left rib of Adam (Fihrist No.103; BSBM1: No. 116; JK 2:116-125). That addressed to Mullā Ḥusayn Bafqī (of Yazd?) responds to the significance posed by a *ḥadīth* about God instructing Moses to bring the bones of Joseph out from Egypt (BSBM: No.117). A brief *Risāla* responding to questions of Sayyid Ḥusayn ibn `Abd al-Qahir al-Baḥranī (written in 1214/1799-1800) expounds aspects of the story of Moses and Khiḍr as well, among other things, as the eschatological return (Fihrist, No.102; text, JK 2:46-8).

■ Shaykh Aḥmad and the Bible

None of the sources I have examined indicate that Shaykh Aḥmad had a detailed or direct knowledge of the canonical Bible. As with other learned Shī`ī Muslims of his day he knew various Islamicate Bible citations from various sources including *ḥadīth qudsī* such as are

found in the *Rawḍat al-kāfī* of Kulaynī (<–3.2; Ayoub, 1976). Islamicate biblical citations of Shaykh Aḥmad exist in his published and unpublished writings. In his *Kashkūl* (Begging Bowl),[1] for example, the Shaykh cites a lengthy passage from Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī's *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (`The Reality of Certainty' c. 1110/1629). This citation in the *Kashkūl* includes several passages from the HB in Arabic transliteration and translation along with brief exegetical comments. Several well-known Islamicate testimonia are evidenced in this way. Deut 18:15,18, for example, is said to relate to Muhammad, the Seal of the prophets *(khātam al-anbiyā')* and not, as some Jews maintain, the biblical Joshua. Gen 17:20b is also cited and the (Heb.) בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד *(bi-m^{e}'od m^{e}'od)* is fairly accurately transliterated ماد but understood as ماد بماد (Ar. *bi-mād mād).* Masjlisī holds that some Jewish exegetes maintain that the proper name Aḥmad as the Arabic word *`aẓīm,* meaning "Mighty" (a loose rendering of Aḥmad = "most praised") is twice indicated. A little later in his *Kashkūl* a few other books of the HB are referred to including five or six Islamicate, quasi-Johannine paraclete passages (*Kashkūl,* II:538ff; cf. Lambden 1997:115.fn.68). Finally it should be noted in this connection that the *Kashkūl* of Shaykh Aḥmad also cites a saying of Jesus beginning "O children of Israel! Do not say that knowledge *(al-`ilm)* is [lodged] in heaven for whoso ascends unto heaven shall [indeed] produce it! It is not found in the garbage heap of the earth *(kawm al-arḍ)"*. This saying has no exact NT source though it perhaps calls John 3:13ff to mind (Kashkūl, II:103).

Islamicate, expanded forms of Q. 5:116b are cited from Jesus in many Islamic sources. Since the time of al-Ṭustayrī (d. 283/896), Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī (d.606/1209) and beyond, variant forms of this qur'ānic verse have been put into the mouth of Jesus. They have been important in moulding Muslim thought about the mystery of the divine colloquy (Bowering,1980:188-190). Such a passage is cited from Jesus by Shaykh Aḥmad in his 1226/1811 epistle in reply to questions posed by Sayyid Abī al-Ḥasan al-Jilānī (JK 1:141-5).

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[1] In this latter tome numerous often arcane texts are gathered including passages from Muḥyī Dīn al-Būnī, Ibn al-`Arabī and the *Kalimat-i maknūnih* of al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī.

Discoursing upon the mysteries of the level of *al-nafs al-lāhūtiyya al-malakūtiyya* (the divine angelic Self) the following saying of "Jesus the Messiah" *(ʿĪsā al-masīḥ)* is quoted,

> I know not what is in Thy Self for Thou indeed art the Knower of things unseen *(ʿallām al-ghayb).* (Q. 6:116b) For it [the *nafs,* Self of God] is the transcendent essence of God *(dhāt Allāh),* the "Blessed Tree" *(shajarat al-ṭūbā),* the "Lote-Tree of the Extremity" *(sidrat al-muntahā)...'* (Majmūʿa 30:97).[1]

An example of a an alleged passage *fi'l-injīl* ("from the Gospel[s]") is found in Shaykh Aḥmad's *Sharḥ al-Ziyāra.* Commenting upon the phrase "And thy selves *(anfus)* are in the selves" *(wa anfusikum fī'l-nufūs)* the following Islamicate Gospel text is set down, "I created you for My sake and I created things *(al-ashyā')* for your own sake." *(Sharḥ al-ẓiyāra* IV:26). At another point in the same work Shaykh Aḥmad cites the following *ḥadīth qudsī* -- subsequently said to be contained in the *injīl:*

> "I [God] created existing things *(al-ashyā')* for thy sake and I created thee for My sake for while your inner reality *(bāṭin)* is I Myself *(anā)* thine outer self *(ẓāhir)* is for destruction *(li'l-fanā')"* (Sh-Ziyara III:352-3).

After citing this saying the Shaykh goes immediately on to quote *al-Injīl* (The Gospel) exactly as it is found in Bursī's *Mashāriq,*

> Know thyself, O mankind! then thou shalt know thy Lord for thine outer self *(ẓāhir)* is for destruction *(li'l-fanā')* while thine inner reality *(bāṭin)* is I Myself *(anā)* (ibid., III: 353).

Elsewhere in the *Sharḥ al-ziyāra* the words "I created thee for My sake and I created existing things *(al-ashyā')* for thy sake" (IV:26) are specifically cited from the *injīl* though the word order is slightly different to that given above.

■ **Shaykh Aḥmad on Isrā'īliyyāt motifs and prophetological mysteries.**

The sometimes abstruse Arabic writings of Shaykh Aḥmad contain interesting non-literal interpretations of Isrā'īliyyāt motifs, *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* narratives and associated materials

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[1] Versions of Q. 5:116b are also found scattered among various writings of the Bāb and BA*. An example from BA* can be found in one of his Riḍwān Tablets: "Thou [God] knowest what is in me, but I know not what is in Thee. Thou art the All-Knowing, the All-Informed" (AyyāmT:255).

especially as they are found in the Shī`ī traditions of the Imams. His knowledge of such matters is illustrated in his major works and in his responses to the often detailed questions put to him during the course of his residence in Iran and Iraq (Ibrahamī, Fihrist; Momen, BSBM1).

Scattered throughout the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad are statements about the first Adam and the first couple or about there being a myriad Adams. Responding to a question of Mullā Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Anārī al-Aḥsā'ī makes a variety of cosmological statements and continues,

> God, exalted be he, created a thousand, thousand worlds and a thousand, thousand Adams. You are in the last of the worlds and of these Adams. And in all of these worlds there exists the likeness (similitude, *mathal)* of what is in our world respecting the heavens and the earth, the mountains, the oceans and the fishes, the trees and the fruits, and the deserts. So too what is in it of wild beasts and birds and other assembled things. And these worlds are all within this world *(al-dunyā)* and in the hereater (`world to come' *al-ākhira).* On the Day of Resurrection the people shall multiply in both earth and heaven... (*Majmū`a* 30:312-3; cf. Sh-Ziyāra 3:301f; 361f).

At one point in his *Sharḥ al-ḥikma al-`arshiyya* Shaykh Aḥmad comments upon a statement about the relationship between the Q., and a "Book" *(kitāb)* in the light of an Adam and Jesus analogy. He refers to Adam as "the Hidden Book of God" *(ādam kitāb Allāh al-maknūn)* on one level inferior to Jesus who found existence through the command of God *(min amr Allāh).* Jesus is presented as the cosmic "Pen" with which God wrote the secrets of destiny on the primordial "Tablet" *(al-lawḥ)* as well as God's "Intellect" *(`aql)* identified with the Q. and a "Light" bestowing guidance unto the "straight Path" (Sh-`Arshiyya, 206ff).

Commenting a little later upon a statement about the origin of speech Shaykh Aḥmad disassociates the transcendent God and His Speech *(al-kalām).* When God conversed with Moses it was indirectly, through the instrumentality of the Sinaitic "Tree" *(shajara)* or bush:

> God, praised be He, actualized speech *(al-kalām)* through the (Sinaitic) Tree *(bi'l-shajarat)* before Moses for the "Tree" was a book (*kitāb* [an]) and his speech *(kalām)* rose up from within it. Thus, the agent of speech *(al-mukallim)* is Moses through the "tree" *(shajara)* [indirectly] from Him [God]. The speaker was he through whom speech rose up [= Moses]. So the "Tree" is the speaker although the speaker was [also] he who originated the speech [i.e God through Moses]. The speaker [in reality is thus] God, praised be he, for he created that one through which the "Tree" became articulate... (Sh-`Arshiyya, 210-211).

Quite a number of other writings of Shaykh Aḥmad comment upon Moses' Sinaitic encounter with God and associated motifs. In an epistle to a certain Mullā `Alī Tawbalī (written in 1211 A.H., 1797) he responded to a number of questions which required that he explain Moses/Sinai motifs. Asked about the significance of various trees mentioned in the Q. he wrote:

> And the Tree (*shajara)* which is in the "Holy Vale" *(al-wād al-muqaddas)* and the "Tree issuing from the Mount of Sinai *(ṭūr sīnā')"* [Q. 25:20] is the Primordial Reality *(al-awwalī)* through which the [divine] Word *(al-kalām)* had precedence. The "Holy Vale" is the "Tranquil Soul" *(an-nafs al-muta'inna)* and the "Mount" *(al-ṭūr) is* the obedient, patient body *(al-jasad al-muṭī` al-ṣābir).* And the "Holy Vale" is [also] the secure heart *(al-qalb al-salīm)* and the "Mount" the upright intellect *(al-`aql al-mustaqīm)* (JK 1:25).

After making detailed comments on the "trees" mentioned in Q. 14:24ff. Shaykh Aḥmad explains the significance of the Siniatic "Holy Vale" and the "Holy Land,":

> . . . the "Holy Vale" *(al-wād al-muqaddas)* is the "secure heart" *(al-qalb al-salīm)* which is filled with contentment *(al-riḍā')* and submission *(al-taslīm).* The "Holy Land" *(al-arḍ al-muqaddas)* is the "tranquil, satisfied, contented soul." The "Holy Vale" the "house of procreation and marriage" *(bayt at-tawlīd wa'l-tanākuḥ)* and the "Purple Lights" *(al-anwār al-firfīriyya).* The "Holy Land" is the "New Body" *(al-jasad al-jadīd).* (JK1:26).

Having thus indicated the mystical import of the Sinaitic "Tree", "Holy Vale," and "Mount," the Shaykh quotes a saying to the effect that the "Tree" planted on Mount Sinai is possessed of the power of articulate, rational speech (*al-ḥayawānī al-nāṭiq).* It is, he states, a "Tree" symbolic of the "substance of Noble Man" *(hayūlā al-insān al-karīm).* Drawing on some rather arcane traditions, the Shaykh also comments on the "Tree" of Q. 25:20, in the light of its having been set in the zodiac by Balṣiyāl [?] ibn Ḥūr, the bearer of the "Dome of Time" *(qubbat al-zamān).* An herbal substance *(al-ḥashīsha)* associated with this cosmic "Tree" *(shajara)* is represented by an obscure cryptogram. When treated alchemically it leads to the production of pure gold (Lambden, 1988:87).

In his *Sharḥ al-zīyāra* and other treatises, Shaykh Aḥmad comments on Q. 7:143 in the light of the tradition that it was a proto-Shī'īte cherub *(al-karrub)* that was manifested before Moses and shattered the mountain. According to tradition the sixth Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq said of the cherubim:

> ...The Cherubīm *(al-karubiyyūn*), are a people of our [Shī`ī] party among the primordial creation things (al-*khalqal-awwāl).* God established them beyond the divine Throne *(al-`arsh).* If but a portion of the light *(nūr)* of one of them should reach the people of the earth it would surely suffice them. When he [Moses] asked his Lord what he asked [to see him, Q,7:143] God commanded one of their men *(rijāl* [an]) and he divulged his transfigured glory *(tajallī)* before him [Moses] only to the extent of the eye of a needle. And thus was the mountain *(al-jabal)* crushed and Moses fell into a swoon" (cited the Bāb, T. *al-hā'*(I):245).

This motif of the cherub (Ar. *karūb*; pl. *karūbiyyūn*) in Shī`ī tradition is rooted in (post-) biblically informed Shī`ī Isrā'īliyyāt. Perhaps one time sphinx-type guardians of the sacred, the כְּרוּבִים (Heb. pl. k^{e}rūbīm, cherubīm), (Ar) كروبيون (*al-karūbiyyūn*) are Judaeo-Christian angelic figures mentioned 91 times in the HB. They guard the sacred (e.g. "tree of Life", Gen. 3:24) and perform various functions as bearers of the Divine Throne (Ezek 1,10:20, etc; Mettinger, DDD^{2}:189-92). These beings became angelic figures of great significance in post-biblical angelology, *merkabah* mysticism and other forms of Jewish esotericism not to mention their occasional role in Shī`ī gnosis and Ismā'īli cosmology (Gruenwald 1980; Halperin 1988; Stern,1983:3ff). The cherubim seem only obliquely mentioned in the Q. as the *muqarrabūn* (`those nigh unto God', Q. 4:70; 21:20; cf. 3:40). At one point in his *Futūḥāt* Ibn al-`Arabī mentions the elevated *al-karūbiyyūn* as the first angels to appear from that "Light" which was named the primordial "Intellect" ( *`aql)* (Futūḥāt 1:148).

It was an infinitesimal portion of the "light of the [divine] Veil" *(nūr al-siṭr)* or the "light of [God's] Grandeur" *(nūr al-`aẓīmat)* obscured by God's seventy thousand "veils of Light" and related to the primordial, divine "Light" of the Imams, that beamed forth before Moses from the mysterious cherubic "Speaker" on the Sinaitic Mount. It was also in view of Imam Ṣādiq's having stated that "God manifested himself *(tajallā)* unto his servants through his Speech [or Word] *(al-kalām)* but they did not see Him [God]" that Shaykh Aḥmad also taught that God's theophany before the "mountain" was the theophany of "the Speaker" *(al-mutakallim)* through His "Speech" *(al kalām)* and not God's a personalistic theophany of God's Essence.

In was in the form of "Light," that the divine "Speech" was revealed upon the sacred

"mountain", which for Shaykh Aḥmad can (among other things) be symbolic of the "heart" of Moses. While, however, Moses' Sinaitic experience of God was a mystical experience of a mere glimmer of the Divine Light, Imam Ja'far is said to have had an experience of its fullness whilst wrapt in prayer. Both literalistic and mystical interpretations of Q. 7:143 are found in the vastly erudite writings of Shaykh Aḥmad. This Sinaitic aspect of the Shaykh's writings had a tremendous impact upon the Bāb and probably contributed to his own self-understanding and experience of God. In line with Shaykhī perspectives in various of his writings, the Bāb understood the Sinaitic theophany to be a cherubic Shī`ite angelophany (T. Hā' (1) 14:245).

The *Jawāmi` al-kalim* (= JK) contains six important treatises resolving questions posed by Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Ṣālīḥ ibn Tūq al-Qaṭifī (d. after.1246/1830). Several of them are centered upon matters associated with pre-Islamic prophets (BSBM1 Nos. 8, 87,102, 109, 128,129). Among the lengthiest is the *al-Risāla al-Qaṭifiyya* in which the Shaykh responds to 71 questions. Among the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* matters touched upon are: the nature of Adam's creation and the birth of Eve from his left rib; the houris, the jinn and of the birth of Adam from dust; the reality of paradise, the tree, the serpent, Iblis, heaven, the angels and the story of Adam and his eating from the tree; the story of Job and how Satan overcame a messenger of God; Moses as intercessor for the *umma* of Muhammad and the obligatory prayers being five; the all-encompassing nature of the storm of Noah relative to later lesser punishments associated with other prophets; aspects of Abraham's aborted sacrifice of his son (Q. 56) (Fihrist No.114; BSBM1:129f; JK,1/ ii:114-147).

At one point within the *R. al-Qaṭifiyya* Shaykh Aḥmad makes the following statement pertinent to satanic activity and the effect of the Prophet Muhammad upon it,

> I say that the satans *(al-shayāṭīn)* are the manifestations of primal ignorance *(maẓāhir al-jahl al-awwal)* just as the angels *(al-malā'ikat)* are the manifestations of the First Intellect *(al-`aql al-awwāl).* They were assuredly born of Iblīs whose pre-fall [`archangelic'] name was `Azāzīl (= "Empowered of God"). When he was expelled his name became Iblīs (JK 1/ii :126).

Here satanic beings become symbols of ignorance while angelic figures are indicative

of the (Neoplatonic) First Intellect *(al-`aql al-awwāl).* Most likely derived from the Greek diabolos (διάβολος = `the slanderer') the demoniac adversary Iblīs is one of the qur'ānic names of the mythic being who, after refusing to bow down before Adam, became the source of evil (Q.2:34, 7:11; 15:31-2, etc).[1] Jewish traditions associate Azazel with the Levitical scapegoat (Lev.16:8,10; Azazel= Heb. עזאזל, "Fierce of God", Wright, AB 1:536). Originally among the archangelic watchers `Azāzīl ultimately became a demoniac figure associated with the primordial [Arch] angelic fall.[2] Black associates Azazel with Leviticus 16 and notes that he "appears in fact as the forerunner or prototype in Hebrew demonology of Satan or Belial in later traditions." (Black,1985:121).

It is likely that Shaykh Aḥmad derived his information about Azazel from Isrā'īliyyāt informed *tafsīr* works. His comments are echoed, for example, by al-Ṭabarī (<–3.1) in his massive *Jāmi` al-bayān* (1:100) and by al-Ṭabarsī in his *Majma` al-bayān* where the following prophetic tradition is recorded:

> Before he comitted rebellion Iblīs was one of the angels whose name was Azazel (`Azāzīl) He was reckoned among the watchers [inhabitants] of the earth *(sākin al-arḍ);* such watchers of the earth *(sākin al-arḍ)* were among the angels designated as *jinn.* When he waxed proud before God and refused to prostrate before Adam, he renounced him, cursed him, made him [a] Satan and named him Iblīs." (*Majma`* 1:83 on Q. 2:34)

A *Risāla al-Ja`fariyya* was written by Shaykh Aḥmad for Mīrzā Ja`far ibn Aḥmad Nawwāb Yazdī in Yazd in 1222/ 1807 (JK 1:130-5 = *Majmū`a* 30:13-28). It contains replies to a question about God's blessing Muhammad and his family as he had previously blessed Abraham and his family as well as about the purpose of God in sending Messengers and Holy Books to mankind. The significance of the eschatological prophet's possessing a "crimson [red], she-camel" *(al-nāqa al-ḥamrā')* is also expounded. Shaykh Aḥmad reckons the "crimson she-camel" as the most beautiful of she-camels *(aḥsan al-nūq).* Among other things this red,

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[1] Algar,`Eblīs' EIr. VII:656-661; Awn, 1983:25f

[2] 1 Enoch 8:1; 9:6; 4 Q180 1 7-8 ; Milik,1976:314; *Apocalypse of Abraham* (c. 100 CE? originally Hebrew?) 13:6-14; etc; Janowski, `Azazel' DDD:240f; cf. Enc.Jud. 3:999-1002.

crimson colour is related to one of the "lights of the Divine Throne" which causes the redness of all things red.

Another *Risāla* writen in reply to inhabitants of Isfahan in 1223/1808 dwells upon the significance of the tradition of Imām `Alī about the Divine Throne *(al-`arsh)* and its tetradic constituent lights. Allegedly dialoguing with a primate of an oriental (Armenian) Christian Church *(al-Jāthilīq)* about the manner of God's being the bearer of the Throne *(ḥāmil al-`arsh)* (Q. 35:41) and Q.69:17b where eight angels are said to perform this task, Alī stated,

> The [divine] Throne *(al-`arsh)* was created by God...from four Lights *(anwār)*: a Crimson Light *(nūr aḥmar)* by means of which redness *(al-ḥumra)* was reddened; the Green Light *(nūr al-akhḍar)* by means of which greenness *(al-khuḍra)* was made green; the Yellow Light *(al-nūr al-aṣfar)* by means of which yellowness *(al-ṣufra)* was yellowed and the white Light *(al-nūr al-abyaḍ)* through which whiteness *(al-bayḍ)* was [whitened] realized. This [Light of the Throne] is the knowledge *(huwa al-`ilm)* which God, the Bearer *(al-ḥamla)* has borne aloft [between] that Light *(al-nūr)* which is of the Light of His Grandeur and of His Power. It is thus through His Grandeur and His Light that the hearts of the believers are made perceptive...So all that has been born aloft *(maḥmūl)* has been born aloft by God by virtue of His Light, His Grandeur and His Power... (al-Kulayni, *al-Kāfī* I:129-130; Majlisi, *Biḥār*[2] 58:9-10).

This tradition is commented upon several times in Shaykhī literatures. In one work Shaykh Aḥmad interpreted the four Lights as the four laudatory exclamations (1) *subḥān Allāh* (Glorified be God) being the white [Light-Pillar] *(al-abyāḍ)* (2) *al-ḥamdu lilāh* (Praised be God), being the Yellow [Light-Pillar] *(al-aṣfar);* (3) *lā ilāha ilā Allāh* (There is none other God but God), being the Green [Light-Pillar] *(al-akhḍar)* and (4) *Allāh al-akbar* (God is Greatest) being the crimson [Light-Pillar] *(al-aḥmar).* These four Pillars *(al-arkān)* constitute the totality of established existence *(jamī` al-wujūd al-muqayyad)* whose beginning is the First Intellect *(al-`aql al-awwal)* and whose end is the dusty earth *(al-thurā)."* God established an [Arch-] Angel *(malak)* "for every Pillar so as to bear it"; namely [1] Gabriel [2] Michael [3] Seraphiel [Isrā'fīl] and [4] Azazel (`Azrā'īl).

Additionally, Shaykh Aḥmad reckoned that "The meaning of [`Alī's saying] "He [God] bore it aloft" is that His gravitas was focused into the archangelic beings each having subsidiary hosts of angels *(junūd min malā'ika)* "the number of which none can estimate except

God..." (al-Aḥsā'ī, *Majmū'a* 30:193-215). These colour speculations were very influential upon the Bāb as is evident from the earliest period reflected in the opening paragraphs of his *T. Baqara.* Many of the subsequent writings of the Bāb develop these colour correspondences and aspects of the tetradic Bābī-Bahā'ī mystico-cosmological colour schemata. It probably lies at the root of the frequency and symbolism of *aḥmar / ḥamra* (= "red" or "crimson" as SE* frequently translated it) in Bābī-Bahā'ī texts. This latter word was certainly important for the Bāb and BA*. The former, for example, even used the four isolated letters *(ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa'āt)* Ḥ-M-R-A (= "red" when conjoined and vowelled) before three *sūras* of his first major book the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (--> QA sūras 34, 56, 57, 76) and reckoned the *ahl al-bahā'* ("people of beauty-glory") to be inmates of an eschatological "Crimson Ark" *(safinat al-ḥamrā').* The latter ark dwellers were regarded by BA* as alluding to his followers (Bahā'īs) who subscribed to a covenant known as the "Crimson Book".

Shaykh Aḥmad made considerable use of the obscure Ishrāqī rooted term (<-- 5.2) هورقليا, Hūrqalyā / Hawaqalya (loosely, "interworld"), the origin and etymology of which remains uncertain. Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Mandaean, Syriac and Arabic-Persian etymologies have all been proposed (Dehkhoda *Lughat-nāmih, Ḥurqalyā;* Muhammad Mo'in,1955). Recently Macuch has suggested that Hūrqalyā may be a garbled form of the Mandaic **anhūr qalyā* (= "the burning light",1982:19f). Alternatively, as argued below and despite the absent Arabic ل ("l", *lām*) and the Hebrew ע, هورقليا, could be a slightly garbled transliteration of the biblical Hebrew הָרָקִיעַ *(hā-rāqíya',* with the definite article), traditionally translated "the firmament" (AV). Echoing Mīr Dāmād Shaykh Aḥmad has explained the significance and linguistic derivation of *hūrqalyā* in the following manner:

> As for the expression هورقليا (hūrqalyā) and its meaning. It is another dominion since what is indicated thereby is the world of the isthmus *(`ālam al-barzakh*) and this mundane world (*(ālām al-dunyā).* It is indicative of the world of bodies *(`ālam al-ajsam),* that is to say, the mundane world *(`ālam al-dunyā)* and the world of souls *(`ālam al-nufūs);* the world of the kingdom *(`ālam al-malakūt)* and the world of the ithmus *(`ālam al-barzakh)* which is the

> intermediary [sphere] between the mundane world *(`ālam al-dunyā)* and the world of the kingdom *(`ālam al-malakūt)* which is another dominion... it is in the eighth clime *(al-iqlīm al-thāmin)*..
>
> As for what language this term is in. It [هورقليا] is derived from the Syriac language *(al-lughat al-suryāniyya)* and is a Sabean term *(lughat al-ṣābi'a)* and they [the Sabeans = Mandaeans] are now living in Baṣra... Know also that the world of the isthmus *(ālām al-barzakh)* is intermediary between this mundane world and the world of the hereafter *(al-dunyā wa'l-ākhira)*. It is the imaginal world [world of similitudes] *(`ālam al-mithāl)* [existing] between the world of the kingdom *(`ālam al-malakūt)* and this mundane world *(al-dunyā)*.. (al-Aḥsā'ī, *Majmū`a,* 30:308-9; cf. Corbin, 1990:103).

As far as I am aware Bābī and Bahā'ī primary sources do not use the term هورقليا . They do, however, mention multi-worlds and take eschatological events like individual bodily resurrection non-literally relative to a spiritualistic cosmology rooted in Shaykhī-Bābī writings. Bahā'ī texts express belief in subtle bodies and a spiritual understanding of individual and collective resurrection as well as of the *mi`raj* (Night Journey) of Muhammad. BA* affirmed the reality of the concept of *`ālam al-mithāl* explaining like Shaykh Aḥmad that the (Per.) *`ālam-i mithāl* exists between the exalted world of *jabarūt* (the "empyrean") and this mortal realm of *nāsūt* (Ma'idih 1:18-19). The Báb, BA* and his son AB* all in various ways commented upon the significance of the qur'ānic cosmological term *barzakh* (isthmus, Q. 23:100; 25:53; 55:20; AB* Tablet to Mīrzā Qabil of Abadih in StarW 5/7: 7ff ; BSB 6:2-3 (Feb. 1992).

■ 6.2 The Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in works of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī (d.1260/1844).

With the passing of Shaykh Ahmad in 1241/1826, his charismatic disciple and appointed successor Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī defended his master against charges of heresy and wrote over 100 works in continuation and development of Shaykh Aḥmad's perspectives. Preference for the deep, sometimes arcane dimensions of gnostic Shi`ism are evident in his Arabic and Persian writings the bulk of which remain unpublished (Fihrist, Pt.2: 288-359; Nicholas, 1914 [Pt.II] 32-36; MacEoin, Rashtī, EI^2). Among his most important works is the bulky *Sharḥ al-qaṣīda al-lāmiyya* (Commentary on an Ode rhyming in the letter L'). Written in 1258/1842 it is a commentary upon a *qaṣīda* of `Abd al-Bāqī Affandī al-Mawṣulī (d.1278/1861). The often abstruse *Sharḥ al-khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* comments on about half of the Sermon of the Gulf

(2.2<--; lithographed, 1270/1853-4) ascribed to Imam `Alī. Sayyid Kāẓim's commentaries on qur`ānic texts and Shī`ī traditions include his *tafsīrs* on the *basmala* and upon the Shī`ī graphic form of *al-ism al-a`ẓam* (the Mightiest Name of God) as well as the *Tafsīr āyāt al-kursī* (Commentary on the Throne Verse, Q. 2:255) and the *Sharḥ du`ā al-simāt* (Commentary on the Prayer of the Signs). As with the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad those of Sayyid Kāẓim contain novel interpretations of prophetological, angelological, eschatological and other facets of Islamic learning.

Non-literal, spiritualistic interpretations of Isrā'īliyyāt motifs and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* episodes are quite common in the writings of Sayyid Kāẓim. Allegorical, typological and imamological interpretations of interest are found scattered throughout his writings. The nature of his possible knowledge of the Bible is currently unknown, partly due to the scarcity of available writings. It seems likely that it was subsumed by a Shīite qur'ānocentric and imamocentric stance that rendered knowledge of the canonical Judaeo-Christian Bible irrelevant. I have not been able to find any definite evidence of his explicit knowledge of the Bible.

Important in this respect would be an examination of Sayyid Kāẓim's *Risāla ḥujjat al-bāligha* (Compelling Demonstrative Treatise) completed on the 25th Rabī` 1, 1257 / 17 May 1841. Ibrahīmī in his *Fihrist* describes it as written `In reply to Sayyid Aḥmad, in refutation of the Jews and Christians and the establishment of the prophethood and *wilāya* of the [twelver] Imams... and on the baseless nature of their divisive factions and the inconsistency of their party (*Fihrist,* 310 No.193). The Sayyid Aḥmad addressed here cannot be Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817-1898) but might be the Shī`ī mujtahid and Amīr Sayyid Aḥmad of Lucknow (India [Pakistan] d.??) who was involved in dialogue with Jews and Christians.[1]

At one point in his *Sharḥ al-qaṣīda* Sayyid Kāẓim dwells at some length upon several

[1]Apparently printed in the 19th century, I been unable to locate a copy of this text. The Sayyid Aḥmad of Lucknow referred to above had a good knowledge of the Bible. This is evident in his correspondence with Joseph Wolff dated 1833 (Wolff, R&ML [1835]: 385-391.

qur'ānic terms representative of pre-Islamic scripture mentioned in the *qaṣīda* of `Abd al-Bāqī (d.1278/1861):

> This *Zabūr* (Psalter) and that Torah *(al-tawriyya)*, and the Evangel *(Injīl)*. Nay! indeed! such is the Qur'ān revealed.

Making no reference at all to the Bible, Rashtī comments that revealed scripture, is given to all prophets and sent messengers who deliver it according the languages and the capacity of their peoples. Viewed spiritually, with the "eye of God", there would be evident "the mystery of the testimony of wisdom and the unveiling the divine secrets *(arsār al-ilāhiyya)"*. This such that all revelation could be seen as the expression of a single "point", a singularity realizable by the seeker of the type referred to in the *ḥadīth al-nawāfil* who is especially beloved of God (<–3.2). Bypassing many esoteric details about various worlds, their locations and an account of the fall of Adam and the subsequent decadence of humanity after Cain's murder of Abel, Rashtī comes to underline the myriad, the "seventy and seven" exterior and interior levels of meaning which aspects of reality may have. He then returns to the numerous significances of the archetypal term "Book" *(kitāb)* which can indicate a generative reality *(takwīnī)* as well as something integrative and holistic *(tadwīnī)* like the Q. *(Sh-Qaḍīda,* 167-71).

The single, yet holistic, all encompassing Q. is viewed as the locus of reality. It retains its uniqueness despite its having been outwardly written in various languages (Kufic, Syriac and Greek, etc) and in diverse handwriting styles or scripts (Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Indian scripts, Ethiopic, etc). Though there may be myriad expressions of the Q. as the "Speaking Q." *(al-nāṭiq)* it remains a single reality, as the "Silent Q." *(al-sāmit).* This holistic *(tadwīnī)* unitative, singular qur'ānic reality may also be expressed by the terms Torah *(tawrat),* Evangel (Gospel/ *Injīl)* and *Zabūr* (Scripture/Psalter) (Sh-Qaṣīda, 170-f).

On the *Zabūr* (Psalter) Sayyid Kāẓim comments that it is a book sent down unto David though not one establishing a religious law *(sharī`a)* thereby abrogating what preceeded it, a *qanūn* [an] (`legal code') or a *nāmūs* [an] (`divine law' cf. Gk. *nomos*) supplementing it. Books

establishing a *sharī`a* law are listed as *tawriyya* (Torah, HB), Injīl (Gospel[s]), *Ṣuḥuf* (Scrolls) of Abraham, *Ṣuḥuf* (Scrolls) of Noah and *Ṣuḥuf* (Scrolls) of Adam as well as the Q. of Muhammad. O ther prophets communicated non-legalistic books of various kinds *(Sh-Qaḍīda,171)*. The basis of all these books is said the be the Q. which is an all-encompassing book according to its own testimony. A tradition from Imam `Alī begins, "All that is in the world *(al-`ālam)* is in the Qur'ān" (Sh-Qaṣīda, 172-3).

This holistic view of the Q and pre-Islamic scripture asserted by Sayyid Kāẓim in his *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda* is very similar in focus to that articulated by the poet and mystical theosopher `Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī when commenting upon as aspect of one of the "ringstones" of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of Ibn al-`Arabī. It will be argued below that this integrative, holistic view of divine revelation is also the Bāb's view of pre-Islamic sacred scripture (-->7.1f)

Islamicate, often Sufī oriented citations from the Bible / Injīl are also found in Sayyid Kāẓim's writings. They often appear to have no straightforward relationship to NT texts. Like those of Shaykh Aḥmad they originate in earlier, often esoteric Islamic literatures. In the course of commenting on the controversial words (toned down in a recent printing--> bib.) of `Alī, "I saw God and Paradise.." in his *Sh-ṭutunjiyya,* for example, Sayyid Kāẓim quotes a saying of the Injīl exactly as it is found in Bursī's *Mashāriq* but with the following addition,

> I am the theophany of the [divine] Essence *(ẓuhūr al-dhāt)* through the unique Word *(bi'l-kalām al-mutafarrid)."* (*Sh-ṭutunjiyya, 299,* cf, Bursī, *Mashāriq,*188).

This alleged quotation from the injīl seems a distinctly Islamicate corrective to John 1:1. Jesus is not God but a divine theophany through the "Word".

■ **Shaykhī allegorism and Moses-Sinai motifs**

The founding fathers of the Shaykhī movement were criticized by their more rigidly orthodox Shī`ī contemporaries for their allegedly unwarranted allegorism. In, for example, the *Tiryāq-l fānūq* (Discriminating antidote [for poisons]) of `Abd al-Ṣamad b. `Abdallāh al-Ḥusaynī al-Māzandarānī (written 1301./1883), the mystically-oriented Shaykhī interpretation of Q. 7:143 is singled out for critical comment. (Rafati, n. 6). The Bāb and BA*, as indicated however, both

drew on and creatively expounded early Shaykhī non-literal interpretations of this and other texts and trad-itions relating to Moses' Sinaitic experiences (-->). The importance the Bāb and BA* gave to Moses-Sinai episodes and motifs is closely related to the importance these matters were given by the architects of Shaykhism.

At various points in his frequently abstruse *Sh-ṭutunjiyya,* Rashtī touches upon Moses/Sinai motifs. Commenting on Imām `Alī's words, "He [God] created the oceans *(al-biḥār)* and the mountains *(al-jibāl),"* he has much to say about the "mountains", mentioning all kinds of supernatural peaks including a "mountain of red ruby" *(jabal al-yāqūt al-aḥmar)* and a "mountain of the mine of gold" *(jabal ma'dan al-dhahab)* which is the "seat of the beams of the sun" *(maṭraḥ ashi``at al-shams)* related to the "Mount of Moses" *(ṭūr mūsā),* the "Locale of Jesus" *(manzil`īsā),* the "Ark of Aaron" *(tābūt harūn),* the "Well of Daniel" *(bi'r danyāl)* and the "Station of Assent" *(maqām al-iqbāl).* Also mentioned is a "mountain of lead" *(jabal al-usrub)* with an exterior of iron and an interior of gold, Mount Qāf; the "Mountain of Light" *(jabal al-nūr);* the "Mountain of the One [God]" *(jabal al-aḥad)* and the "Mountain of Najāf" *(jabal al-najāf,* in Iraq) which is associated with Mt. Sinai, Mt. Seir and Mt. Paran (Cf. Deut 33:2; *Dū`a al-simāt;* Lambden, 1988:87f)

What Sayyid Kāẓim has to say about "Mount Sinai" *(jabal ṭūr sīnā')* is expressive of the importance of Najaf as the place of the shrine of Imam `Alī and the locale of the translocation of Sinai: "As regards Mount Sinai, outwardly and inwardly it is the `hill of Najāf' *(rubwa al-Najāf)".* Though he acknowledged that this mountain was traditionally located in Syria or the "Holy Land" he explained this in terms of a part of the "mountain of Najaf" *(jabal al-Najāf)* having become detached and reconstituted piecemeal in the "land of Syria" *(arḍ al-shām).* The "mountain of Najāf" is a part of the "mountain" on which God held converse with Moses, sanctified Jesus, took Abraham for a "Friend" and reckoned Muhammad as one "Beloved." It is the "greatest of the mountains of the world" closely related to Mt. Sinai, Mt. Seir, and Mt. Paran.

Following Shaykh Aḥmad, the Sayyid considered "Mount Seir" *(jabal sā`īr)* to be the

scene of Jesus's "sanctification" and intimate converse with God (he located it in the Hedjaz, Western Arabia) and an "edifice" (or dome, *qubba)* which was "with Moses and like a throne". The mountain on which God took Abraham for a Friend was either a hill on the slope of Mt. Mina (near Mecca) where a mosque is built or another mountain in Jerusalem, (Ilya) the Holy City, in Palestine (Israel). Allegedly a mountain near Mecca, Mount Paran *(jabal al-fārān)* was the place where "sanctified myriads" *(ribwāt al-muqaddasīn)* of angels beyond the ken of the Cherubim appeared to Muhammad. A scene of the divine theophany, "Mount Paran" is also further mystically interpreted and translocated in Bābī-Bahā'ī texts (Lambden, 1983b, Appen.).

In the course of expounding phrases within the *Sermon of Gulf,* Sayyid Kāẓim also makes occasional reference to Q. 7:143 and to the Shī`ī tradition about the proto-Shī'ī-Cherub being the agent of the Sinaitic theophany (<--). He largely follows what Shaykh Aḥmad had stated about this, namely that God created his prophets in the image of a specific Cherub and gave them corresponding names:

> Thus Noah... bore the image and name of one of them [the Cherubim], that is to say, Noah was named with his name. And Abraham bore the image and name of one of them. Moses also bore the image and name of one of them and it was the one which "revealed its glory before the mountain" *(tajallā li'l-jabal,* Q. 7:143b) at the time when Moses asked his Lord that which he asked [to see Him]. He reduced it to dust. Jesus likewise bore the image and name of one of them [the cherubim]. It was by virtue of that [specific] cherub that Jesus was able to cure the blind and the leprous and revive the dead" (al-Aḥsā'ī, *Sh. Ziyāra,* 3:361; cf. Majmū`a 30:64f).

Commenting on God's having singled out the Prophet Muhammad from the "Supreme Centre" *(al-buḥbūḥa al-`ulyā)* in the light of Q. 3:33 and other traditions, Sayyid Kāzim speaks of the "heart" *(al-qalb)* and the "self" *(al-nafs)* as pivotal realities. The core of the being of the Prophet Muhammad is his transcendent *al-nafs* (Self) which is the locus of the divine theophany *(al-mutajallī bi'l-aḥadiyya)* as the *nafs-Allāh* (Self of God). When God created Imam `Alī this elevated "Self" was further manifested in him. Both `Alī and Muhammad are associated with the same created, though divine, "Self" *(nafs)* and "Essence" *(dhāt).* On one level it was thus Imām `Alī who conversed with Moses from the Sinaitic Tree *(al-shajarat)* and uttered the words

"I, verily am God." He was the one who appeared "before and to Moses through his Light" as one of the "men of the Cherubim." The theophany *(tajallī)* of Imām `Alī before Moses from the "Tree" was "the essence of the theophany of God" *(`ayn tajallī Allāh)* within the Israelite Prophet (Sh-Ṭutunjiyya, 92)..

In further explaining the significance of the theophany unto Moses, Sayyid Kāẓim states that the proto-Shī`ī Cherub mentioned by Imām Ja`far (<--) is symbolic of the *nafs mūsā* ("Self of Moses"). He has disclosed this "mystery" in view of the fact that a theophany *(al-tajallī)* unto something is only possible through the "self" *(nafs)* of that thing (*Sh-Ṭutunjiyya*, 94). On similar lines is the Sayyid's teaching that the number and names of the angelic host of the Cherubim are the same as those of the prophets *(al-anbiyā):* "That man [Cherub] who revealed himself unto Moses *(tajallī li-mūsā)* such that Moses fell down in a swoon [-->Q.7:143] was named Moses". On another level however, the cherubic being who appeared to Moses was the reality of such Prophets as the "First and Last Adam" *(adam al-awwal wa'l-ākhir) (Sh-Ṭutunjiyya,* 94) The Cherubim are the archetypal realities of the prophets possessed of an essential oneness. Moses thus experienced the theophany *(tajallī)* of his celestial "Self" *(nafs)* as a cherub who may be thought of as Imām `Alī or one of the prophets who partake of the same pleroma of reality. In reality the theophany *(tajallī)* was the disclosure of an infinitesimal glimmer of the radiance that emanated from the angelic body of a cherub numbered among the messengers "possessors of steadfastness" *(ūlū al-`azm)* (ibid.,264). Alternatively, the theophanic radiance which shone forth before Moses on Sinai may be thought of as the "Light" *(nūr)* of Muhammad and his family (*Sh-ṭutunjiyya,* 316; cf. 102-116; 143, 161,168, 186f, etc).

In the light of the above, it will be evident that both Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim gave detailed symbolic and mystical interpretations to Moses/Sinai motifs, sometimes in line with those set forth by Ibn al-`Arabī and frequently informed by imamological speculations. On one level Mount Sinai all but becomes the interior reality of Moses or the inmost heart of the believer, and the theophany on the Mount the shining forth of the Divine Light upon it.

■ Other writings of Sayyid Kāẓim

The *Sh-Qaṣīda* of Rashtī is well-know for its abstruse, highly theosophical depiction of the levels *(maḥalla)*, regions and inhabitants of a spiritual universe, pictured as a celestial city *(al-madīna)*. The primary locale *(al-maḥalla al-ūlā)* of this "City" is the level of the divine Unity" *(maḥalla al-tawḥīd)* with its category of uniqueness and singularity. The second level is that of the locus of the Greatest Name *(al-maḥalla al-ism al-aʿẓam)* also named that of the most ancient Light *(al-nūr al-aqdam)*, the halting point of the world *(waqf al-ʿālam)*, the Interiority of the Mystic Meaning *(al-sirr al-maʿanī)*, and the secret cipher of the benevolent (*al-ramz al-munannam* ? text unclear) (Sh-Qaṣīda, 119-120). This illustrates the elevated status that the "mightiest Name of God" had for Sayyid Kāẓim (-->).

Different regions of this multi-faceted celestial, cosmic "City" according to the *Sh. al-qaṣida* are overseen by various named human or superhuman creatures who often have complicated Arabic names. The *Sh. al-qaṣida* appears to incorporate Islamicate motifs rooted in Isrā'iliyyāt traditions. The angelological names allotted certain of the masters of the "City" are often similar to those found in al-Būnī's *Shams al-maʿārif* (<--). They sometimes terminate with the Arabic transliteration of the suffix אל (ʿel = Ar. ال) indicative of the Hebrew name of God (cf. the biblical and qur'ānic Jibrā'il = Gabriel, the `Might of God'). Other "lords" of the celestial city have names that are both abstruse and appear to be esoteric neologisms. Level 119 has as its nexus (`knot', *ʿaqd)* the "lord of the verdant land *(ṣāḥibihi arḍ khuḍrāʾ*) in the ultimacy of beauty *(nihāyat al-bahāʾ)*whose name consists of the two words H-A-Ṭ-L-H-D (and H-M-A Ḥ-Ḥ [-Ḥ] Celestial level 144 is described as a nexus the overseer of which is "a man possessed of a mighty key *(miftāḥ al-ʿaẓīm)*, his name being Shamaʿshā'il (? pointing uncertain). Finally, celestial level 170 is governed by a humanoid being ("man", *insān)* who sculpts iron and whose name is a conjunction of the three words كراس (Karʾāsiyy, lit. = `chairs, seats') ثوطا Thūṭā (?) and ضححح (Ḍ-Ḥ-Ḥ-Ḥ).

Aside from these highly imaginative angelic and associated name ciphers in the *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda,* Rashtī several times refers to the *al-ism al-aʿẓam,* the mightiest Name of God. There are occurrences of this Name modified by several of the superlatives ***aʿẓam*** as it is in certain supplications of the (Twelver) Imams recorded in Majlisī's Persian *Zād al-maʿād* (Knapsack for the Eschaton) In one instance Sayyid Kāẓim makes reference to "the Point of Origination" *(al-nuqṭat al-intidāʾiyya)* which God summoned through his Greatest, Mightiest, Greatest Name *(bi-ismihi al-aʿẓam al-aʿẓam al-aʿẓam).* Later in the *Sh-Qāṣida* Rashtī again refers to this thrice supremely Great Name of God *(Rashtī, Sh. Qaṣīda,* 34, 90). In both his *Kh-Ṭutunjiyya* and in a specific treatise he comments upon one of the graphical forms of the Mightiest Name of God.

■ **Sayyid Kāẓim on Shīʿī graphical forms of the Mightiest Name of God**

Like Shaykh Aḥmad and other Shīʿī writers, Sayyid Kāẓim commented upon one of the poetical and graphical representations of the *al-ism al-aʿẓam* ("Mightiest Name of God") of the kind illustrated below (Fig.1). It sometimes refers to the graphic form of the mightiest Name the components of which are also given detailed explanations. Such is the case in Sayyid Kāẓim's *Sharḥ al-ism al-aʿẓam* (Commentary on the [Graphical form of the] Mightiest Name [of God]--> bib.)

Both Sunnī and Shīʿī sources and esoterica contain traditions which purport to set forth graphic, sometimes talismanic forms of the *ism Allāh al-aʿẓam* (Mightiest Name of God). A dozen or more variant alphabetic, qabbalistic, cryptographic representations of this all-highest Name are found in the aforementioned Islamic literatures (Winckler, 1930; Anawati,1967). Shīʿī representations of this mightiest Name are often based upon directives spelled out in a tradition relayed by Ibn ʿAbbās (<–3.1) from the first Imam ʿAlī. It is cited among others by Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Būnī the occult initiate of arcane computations surrounding the Names and Attributes of the

Godhead, in his *Shams al-ma`ārif*:[1]

Figure 1

[1] Three rods *(`uṣiyy)* in a row [|||] after
[2] a seal [*khātam* = ☆];
above them the likeness of a straightened lance [--].
[3] A blind [Arabic letter] M [*mīm* ـمـ] without a tail;
[4] then a ladder unto all that is hoped for, but which is not a ladder [#].
[5] Four things like fingers in a row, pointing to good deeds,
but without a wrist [||||]
[6] And a [letter] "H" *(hā')* which is cleft *(shaqīq)* [ـھـ]
[7] then an inverted [letter] *wāw* و =
like the syphon of a phlebotomist
(ka-anbūb ḥajjām, "tube of the cupper") though not a cupping glass *(miḥjam)*

This is [representative] of the Mighty Name *(al-ism al- mu`aẓẓim);*
If you knew it not aforetime, then know it now!
O bearer of the Mighty Name *(ṣāḥib al-ism al-`aẓīm),* take sufficiency in it for you shall be preserved from misfortunes and kept safe thereby.
It is the Name of God *(ism Allāh)* -- exalted be His glory -- unto all humankind whether pure Arab *(faṣīḥ)* or non-Arab *(a`jam).*[2]

The graphic insert (= Figure 1) to the right of the poem translated above is an example of the diagrammatic working out of this tradition from Imam `Alī describing seven though incorporating thirteen graphical elements making up the representation of God's Mightiest or Greatest Name. This *al-ism al-a`ẓam* has been the subject of complicated exegesis- eisegesis by Muslims, Shaykhīs, Bābīs and Bahā'īs.[3] Details cannot be registered here though it will be relevant to mention a few statements made in the Isrā'īliyyāt influenced *Shams al-ma`ārif* of

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[1] On the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* ("Greatest Name of God") see al-Būnī, *Shams al-ma`ārif al-kubrā* , sect.12:86ff; 99ff. On page 89-90 of the *Shams* there is a poem allocating 4 portions of the *ism al-a`ẓam* to the Torah and 4 to the Injīl. Then, on page 93 a prayer is included which commences, "O our God! I beseech thee by the *al-hā'* (letter "h") of Thy Mightiest Name and through the three Rods *(al-`uṣiyy)* and the *alif* (Letter A)...". This prayer spells out a different pattern of letters associated with the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam*, the mightiest Name of God (cf. Winckler, 69)..

[2] Arab. text cited from al-Būnī, *Shams,* cited Winckler, 1930:69-71 with German trans. 71 ; text and French trans. Anawati, 1967:24, 27; Eng. trans. MacEoin, 1982 [BSB 1/1:4-14] = 1992:93-97 = App. XXIII. I have adapted MacEoin's translation in the light of the other translations and al-Būnī's *Shams*.

[3] On some Shaykhī and Bahā'ī speculations see below (–> 7.1ff) and BA* and `AB* cited Ma'idih 1:12ff (cf. Vol.3:4-5); *Raḥiq* I:669-690. cf. idem, *Qāmūs* 4:1642f; Māzandarānī, *Asrār al-āthār* 5:238-41., MacEoin 1982:11-23.

al-Būnī (<--) and in select Bābī-Bahā'ī primary texts before turning briefly to the commentary of Sayyid Kāẓim.

In his *Shams al-ma'ārif* al-Būnī associates portions of the poetical-graphical representation of the Mightiest Name of God with the Bible seen as Judaeo-Christian scripture, the *Tawrat* (Torah, Hebrew Bible) and the *Injīl* ("Gospel[s]"). He states that six portions (letters, *aḥraf)* of the Mightiest Name (*al-ism al-a'ẓam*) are found in the Torah: namely (1) the deformed letter "h" ﻫ [= 6 above], (2) the inverted "w" و [= 7 above] and (3) the four finger-like lines IIII [= 5 above] (total = 6 elements). Two portions (*aḥraf)* of the Mightiest Name allegedly derive from in the *Injīl* ("Gospel"), (1) the "blind *mīm* ﻡ without a tail [= 3 above] and the "ladder" sign [= 4 above]. The five qur'ānic parts of the mightiest Name are (1) the initial pentacle ☆ or "seal" and (2) the "three sticks" *(`aṣa)* III with a line above like a "straightened lance" [= 1 and 2 above = 5 elements).

Both the Bāb and BA* were influenced by traditions to the effect that elements or portions of the *al-ism al-a'ẓam* go back to the Hebrew Bible and the Injīl (Gospel) or derive from pre-Islamic Isrā'īliyyāt traditions. In his *Tafsīr laylat al-qadr* (Q. 97) the Bāb refers to 3, 4, and 5 portions of the "Mightiest Name", existing in the Hebrew Bible [Torah] *(tawrat),* Gospel[s] *(injīl)* and Q. respectively (INBMC 69:17). Similarly, in a Tablet commenting on the *basmala* [1] and first verse of the Sūrah of the Pen (Q.68), BA* mentions that God divulged something (a "letter" *ḥarf* [an]*)* of the "Mightiest Name" understood as *bahā'* ("splendour") in every religious dispensation. In the Islamic era it is alluded to through the letter ب ("B") which is the first letter of both the *basmala* and of the word *bahā'.* In the *injīl* it is through the word أب = *āb* meaning "Father" in Arabic translations of the Gospels, that two of the

[1] The *Basmala* is an Arabic word indicating the oft-repeated qur'ānic phrase "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" (Ar., *Bismi'llāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm).*

letters of the *word bahā'* are located. BA* also states that it the *al-ism al-aʿẓam* as the word *bahā'* is clearly intimated in the Bābī scripture (= "the Bayān" lit. "Exposition"). The Arabic verbal-noun *Bahā'* as the Mightiest Name, it is added, is representative of the *nafs* ("Logos-Self") of God in the Bahā'ī dispensation (INBMC 56:25).

Sayyid Kāzim's imamologically oriented commentary on the poetical and graphic Isrā'īliyyāt rooted traditions regarding the symbol of the Mightiest Name[1] cannot be discussed in detail here save to note that he also draws upon allegedly pre-Islamic dimensions of traditions about the Mightiest Name of God. Rashtī commences his commentary by acknowledging his indebtedness to the upright, pious and sagacious master named Shaykh Muhammad Aḥmad (= Shaykh Aḥmad?/ Al-Būnī?). Through him he was informed that "certain of the religious communities *(al-millī)* are aware of portions of the words (*al-kalimāt)* constituting the Mightiest Name *(al-ism al-aʿẓam)".* It is stated that they are evident in "fourteen temples" *(hayākil),* apparently indicating the Shīʿīte pleroma of Muhammad, Fāṭima and the 12 Imams. Differentiated or subdivided into thirteen "letters" after the thirteen individual elements constituting the seven graphic sigla (<--) which make up the mightiest Name of God (counting from the initial pentacle (☆) to the inverted *wāw*) eight portions out of the 13 were known to the pre-Islamic communities. Four elements ("letters") derive from the *Tawrat,* (the Torah, Hebrew Bible) and four from the *Injīl* ("Gospel"), the other five derive from the Q. (4+4+5 =13). Sayyid Kāẓim's explanations of these components of the *al-ism al-aʿẓam* are distinctly imamological. (Rashtī, Sh-Ism, 271 aff). .

The Sayyid further explains how it is that the Torah has four "letters" of the Mightiest Name. He explains that this is so in the light of the following well-known prophetic *ḥadīth*, "O ʿAlī you are to me after the manner of Aaron to Moses". A typological relationship is thus set up between Moses and Muhammad. Moses [= Muhammad], it is explained, is foundational *(aṣl*

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[1]The diagram of the Mightiest Name at one point in the SOAS mss. of Sayyid Kāẓim's commentary (*Sh-Ism*, f.271b) has an extra pentalpha (☆) to the left of the inverted *wāw.*

[an]), the Reality *(al-ḥaqīqa),* while the Torah *(al-tawrat)* before him is his essential persona *(aṣāla dhāt[an]).* Moses the prophet *(al-nabī)* is essentially the Moses of the gate of reality upon reality *(ḥaqīqa).* In a metaphorical sense the reality of the Torah which was revealed before him consists of four letters which are the four lettered personal name Muhammad (= M-Ḥ-M-D). The manifestation of the name Muhammad before Moses took place at the Sinaitic theophany *(tajallī)* of the Lord (= Q. 7:143). The agent of this theophany is again said to have been an individual from among the cherubim *(rajal min al-karubiyyīn)* (<--) evidently one associated with the name Muhammad (Rashtī, Sh.Ism, 273b).

That four letters of the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* are found in "the *Injīl* of Jesus son of Mary" is also commented upon by Sayyid Kāẓim. He states, "And he [Jesus] is the likeness *(mithāl)* of [Imam] `Alī." This typological equation also has to do with the letters of the mightiest Name being imamologically realized. That Imam `Alī is equated with Jesus finds echoes in the writings of the Bāb (-->P.Bay. VIII:2). Five "letter" components of Mightiest Name are also allotted to the Q. They are imamologically understood as representing four twelver Imams, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Ja`far Ṣādiq, Mūsā and the prophet's daughter Fāṭima. At one point in his commentary on the *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* Sayyid Kāẓim also interprets the seven graphic sigla of the Mightiest Name imamologically, as [1] Muhamad, and six of the Imams, [2] `Alī, [3] Fāṭima [4] Ḥasan, [5] Ḥusayn, [6] Ja`far and [7] Mūsā. These seven are indicative of the fullness, the pleroma of the fourteen immaculate ones (Sh.Ttnj : 53).

It is also interesting to note that Sayyid Kāẓim gives the seventh item, the inverted letter *wāw* و a messianic significance stating that it "alludes to the [messianic] Proof *(al-ḥujjat),* the son of Ḥasan [al-Aśkarī, the 11th Imam, d. c. 260/874]". The central (hidden) letter "A" *(alif)* of the three letters of *wāw* when spelled out in full (= واو) represents the Qā'im (Ariser) as one "stationed between the two gulfs *(ṭutunjayn),* the isthmus *(barzakh)* between the two worlds". This mode of exegesis is also taken up in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture, most notably in the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* of the Bāb and (<--2.2) and, for example, the *al-Kitāb al-aqdas* ("Most Holy Book"

c. 1873) and *Lawḥ-i Hirtik* of BA* (-->bib.).

■ 6.3 The Bāb and the Bābī-Bahā'ī exaltation of the first two Shaykhs.

From the foregoing it should be evident that Bābī doctrine has its immediate and most central roots in Shaykhism. The Bāb sparked off an initially neo-Shaykhī millenarian faction. By the mid. 19th century this had evolved into a neo-Shī`ī but post-Shaykhī socially and doctrinally radical religious movement.

Siyyid `Alī Muhammad the founder of the Bābī movement was born in Shīrāz (S.E.Iran) on October 20th 1819 / 1st Muḥarram, 1235 AH. He was the only son of Fāṭima Bāgūm and Siyyid Muhammad Riḍā (c.1778?- c.1820/1826/7??), a descendant of Imām Ḥusayn and merchant in the Shīrāz bazaar (B*: K.Fihrist: 339-40). When his father passed away the youthful Bāb (then perhaps 5-6 years old?) was supervised by his maternal uncle Ḥājjī Mīrzā Siyyid `Alī (d.1850). The elementary schooling of the Bāb began around 1826 under the tutelage of a Shaykhī teacher known as Shaykh `Ābid (d. c.1846-7) in Shīrāz. The Bāb would doubtless have been instructed in rudimentary basics; special attention being paid to calligraphic excellence and the rote recitation of the Arabic Q. Like Muhammad, the Bāb in various later writings claimed to be *al-ummī* ("unlettered" Q. 7:157f) though one possessed of innate divine knowledge and subject to *waḥy* ("divine inspiration").

The Bāb's deep religiosity, visionary experiences and Shaykhī associations moved him, on the evening of May 22nd 1844 (1260 AH) to confide in the leading Shaykhī Mullā Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī that he was the "gate" (*bāb,* hence his title) through whom communication with the hidden, messianic twelfth Imām, the *Dhikr,* (`Remembrance'), was possible. He claimed to be his earthly representative *(nā'ib)* and the successor to Siyyid Kāẓim who had passed away in January 1844 without clearly nominating a successor. Though hesitant Mullā Ḥusayn accepted the Bāb's claims. So too several other of his Shaykhī associates and companions who constituted the bulk of the earliest disciples of the Bāb variously designated *sābiqūn* ("forerunners", Q. 56:10-11) and *ḥurūf-i ḥayy* (*ḥayy* = abjad 18 hence the 18 "letters of the living").

Though not merely neo-Shaykhī, Bābī-Bahā'ī origins, hermeneutics and doctrine were markedly influenced by the teachings of the first two Shaykhs, Shaykjh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim. Details of the extent of this doctrinal influence upon the Bab and BA* in their writings has yet to be adequately and systematically studied. The alleged messianically and eschatologically immanent stance of these first two Shaykhs along with their theosophical-imamological, Shī`ī hermeneutical perspectives underpin key aspects of Bābī and Bahā'ī doctrine. In particular their non-literal interpretations of qur'ānic texts and Shī`ī doctrines and practises foreshadow and echo subsequent Bābī-Bahā'ī demythologizations of Islamic and other teachings. As will be seen, certain of the first Shaykhs' citations from Islamicized Judaeo-Christian scripture, especially the *Injīl* (Gospels) are repeated in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Their interpretations of Moses-Sinai motifs and concepts surrounding the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* inform or are found in new forms in Bābī-Bahā'ī primary sources.

The Bāb attended Sayyid Kāẓim's classes in Karbala for between 6 and 9 months. He came to refer to him just prior to his 1260/1844 declaration in his *R. fī'l-sulūk* (Treatise on the Path) as "my lord, support and teacher" *(sayyidī wa mu`tammadī wa mu`allimī)* (R-Sulūk, 74). A while later in an early prayer in response to eschatological and other questions he referred to himself as a *ḥāmil al-`ilm* (bearer of knowledge) like Sayyid Kāẓim (TBA 6003C:188-9). Later in the course, however, of establishing his own theophanic claims and independent religion he distanced himself doctrinally from the Shaykhī leaders. He also invited his Shaykhī rival and first major opponent Karīm Khān-I Kirmānī (d. 1870) to embrace his path in a nuumber of important letters (MacEoin,1982:16ff).

As a Bābī (= follower of the Bāb) BA* referred to the architects of what became the Shaykhī school of Shī`ī Islam in very elevated terms. In his *Kitāb-I Īqān* (c.1861) they are the *nūrān–i nayyīrayn* ("twin luminous lights" KI:51/65). Using Sufi terminology in the same treatise BA* also applied to Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāẓim (as well as other harbingers of new religions) the epithet (Per.) *insān-i kāmil* (= Ar. *al-insān al-kāmil,* `The Perfect Human'), a term of central importance in the cosmology and theophanology of the school of Ibn al-`Arabī

indicative of the advanced gnostic (KI:51/ tr. 42 [66]). The first two Shaykhs of Shaykhism are the *shams-i huviyya* (The Sun of the Ipseity) and *qamr-i aḥadiyya* (Moon of the Divine Oneness)(KI 151/tr.65). In a much later Persian passage addressed to a certain Aḥmad BA* wrote:

> Out of the bosom of Islam many were submerged in the ocean of idle fancies of vain imaginings. Subsequent to [the era] of the seal of the prophets *(khātam-i anbiyā'* = Muhammad) and to the purified [twelver] Imams two souls attained unto the real truth *(bi-ḥaqq)* and were embellished with the ornament of awareness *(bi-ṭarāz-i agāhī),* [namely] the late Shaykh [Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī] and the Sayyid [Kāẓim Rashtī]... We [BA*] were [mystically] with these two and heard from them both what cannot have resulted from aught save God... They attained unto the dawning-point of grace and the dawning-place of knowledge.. (Mā'idih 4:134-5)

Numerous Bābī and Bahā'ī sources picture the twin founders of the Shaykhi school as being especially conscious of an imminent eschaton, the near advent of the messianic Qā'im or Mahdī whose nature and activities they variously predicted. Zarandī, for example, has Shaykh Aḥmad quit Arabia and Iraq as a result of the mysterious call of Iran, the birthplace of the Bab, Shiraz being especially redolent of the aura of the coming one (DB: 4f; cf. the (Shaykhi?) *Risala* of Qātil b. al-Karbalā'ī). The cryptic eschatology of early Shaykhism has yet to be systematically studied (-->). It is hard to back up many aspects of these alleged eschatologically charged dimensions to the teachings of the first two Shaykhs since no detailed study of their eschatology has been attempted. A recently published two hundred or so page *K. al-raj`at* (Book of the Return) of Shaykh Aḥmad does not differ markedly if at all from mainstream twelver Shi`ite eschatological-apocalyptic norms.

The third Kirmānī Shaykhī leader Ḥajjī Mīrzā Muhammad Karīm Khān Kirmānī (1232/1816-1288/1871) was a long-standing opponent of the Bāb and BA* against whom he wrote something like 15 books and treatises from 1845 until his death. A polymathic individual he also wrote a good deal on numerous subjects as well as on prophetological matters and on certain Isrā'īliyyāt traditions and the Bible. Aside from his fifteen or more anti-Bābī-Bahā'ī works he authored, for example, a tract on Yājūj and Mājūj (Gog and Magog) as well as a response to questions about biblical interpretation raised by the Bābī Mullā Jamāl in BA*'s *K.-l*

Īqān. (MRF 2: 207-59). Here he shows a remarkable and direct knowledge of the Bible and of certain 19th century Shī`ī polemical exchanges with missionaries.

Karīm Khān Kirmānī was also able to directly quote numerous passages from the canonical bible in his 1266/1849 Persian *Kitāb-i nuṣrat al-dīn* (Book of the Victory of Religion) which appears to have been written in response to the *Tarīq al-ḥayāt* (printed in Persian at Agra in 1847) of the Christian missionary, Carl Gottlieb Pfander (<–5.1), a work which is largely concerned with the evangelical exposition of sin and salvation.[1] At several points in his reply Karīm Khān applies biblical prophecies to Muhammad and the rise of Islam (K. Nuṣrat: 293-328 is wholly devoted to this subject). This, as will be seen, contrasts markedly with the Bāb who, as will be argued, appears to have chosen not to cite the Bible at all.

[1] In his *K. Nuṣrat al-dīn* Karīm Khān (see p. 2ff) does not clearly identify the "Padre" (a common designation for Christian missionaries) against whom he writes or the title of his book. Other later Kirmānī Shaykhī leaders also had some dialogue with Christian missionaries and cited the Bible (Lambden, 1983b: 22ff).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BĀB, PRE-ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE AND THE BIBLE

■ 7.1 Pre-Islamic scripture in the writings of the Bāb

That the Bāb had contact with Jews and Christians of Shīrāz and had been influenced by the NT in Persian translation has been asserted by some early European writers upon Bābism. Many were under the influence of statements made by the French diplomat and amateur orientalist J. A. Comte de Gobineau (d.1882). He underscored the derivative nature of the teachings of the Bāb in chapter six of his *Les Religiones et les Philosophies* (1st ed. Paris 1865 [1928]:133-4). Gobineau could not imagine, despite his very limited knowledge of the Bāb's writings, Bābism originating outside of a western, Judaeo-Christian sphere of influence. This is clear from one of his letters to Prokesch-Osten (d. 1876) (Momen, 1981:23-4).

Few, apart from the Turkologist Armin Vambery (d.1914), were aware of the meagre knowledge of Gobineau in matters philological, religious and "orientalist".[1] Persons influenced by him include, for example, the Italian physician Michele Lessona (d.1894) who states in his *I Bābī* (written 1870's? pub. Turin 1881) that the Bāb had contact with the Jews and Zoroastrians of Shīrāz and had read the NT in Persian missionary translation (Lessona [1881] 1981:11, 36-37, 46f).[2] Persian writers were also directly or indirectly influenced by Gobineau whose *Les Religiones...* was translated into Persian. The sentences alleging the Bāb's doctrinal indebtedness to Jews and to the NT are also reproduced by the Jewish writer Ḥabīb Lavi (d.1984) in his multi-volume *Tārīkh-i yahūd-i Īrān* ("History of the Jews of Iran, 3 vols) (Tarikh III:604-5).[3]

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[1] See Vambery's review of Browne's edition and translation of AB*'s *Sayyāḥ where* he makes some scathing remarks about Gobineau, reckoning him "no Orientalist at all". In his opinion Gobineau merely "worked with the assistance of a Mirza and a learned Akhond of Teheran" (Vambery, 1892:215).

[2] The unpublished trading accounts of the Bāb apparently confirm Zoroastrian connections as Browne had speculated in his index to the Persian Bayān (Browne, Nuqtat al-Kāf', XCIII-IV).

[3] The recent English abridged translation of this Lavi history (-->bib. Lavi / Ebrahami tr. Maschke) omits all of the considerable space given in the 3rd. volume original to Jewish and Bābī-Bahā'ī matters.

The supposition of Jewish and NT influence has been repeated in various ways throughout the late19th and 20th centuries. Even Edward G. Browne (d.1926) the renowned Cambridge orientalist and one-time expert on the Bābī religion, inaccurately furthered alleged NT links to the doctrinal teachings of the Bāb as will be seen in detail below (-->). The origins and doctrinal bases of the Bābī religion are rather more complicated than the often simplistic theories of the19th century orientalists with their limited access to primary sources. The doctrines of the Bāb cannot be wholly or adequately accounted for on the basis of Jewish associations, Western influences, Gospel study or even an alleged link with Zoroastrians or with such Russians as the diplomat Dmitrii I. Dolgorukov (d. Moscow 1867). It will be argued here that there is very little if anything in the Bāb's own writings that confirms NT influence, though high *irfānī* ("gnostic") theosophical streams of influence are much in evidence in his numerous, very largely Arabic, and Persian writings.

Concrete evidence in the primary sources for the Bāb's knowledge of the Bible/ NT is wholly lacking. There is not a great deal that presupposes either Jewish or Zoroastrian influence either.[1] He never directly cites the HB in Arabic, Persian or any Jewish writers or literatures of any period. It was the Bāb's mercantile associations with Jews or simply unfounded Muslim attitudes that in large measure account for these early European statements about the sources of the Bāb's inspiration and Bābī doctrine. Muslims generally, it should be borne in mind, viewed Jews with suspicion or contempt and regarded them as unclean *(najis).* Having Bābism derive therefrom was tantamount to dismissing it as unfounded nonsense of dubious origin.

Evidence is lacking in both the primary and secondary historical sources for sustained and direct contact between the Bāb and Jews. Jewish converts to Bābism during the Bāb's lifetime appear to have been non-existent. Though Bābism from the beginning presented itself as a neo-Shī`ī phenomenon with a message for all humankind (QA 1, etc) only a handful of six Khurāsānī Jewish converts of the early 1850s (?) are known (Bushrū'ī, T-Khurasan: 86ff; cf.

[1] It is not impossible that Gobineau's one-time Persian teacher and Jewish informant on Bābism, Mullā Lalizar (Eleazar) Hamadānī was aware of the Bāb's links with Jews and informed Gobineau accordingly.

Pata'ī, 1997:76f).

In this chapter the opinions of the Bāb about pre-Islamic scripture will be surveyed. In this light some idea of the nature of the Bāb's alleged knowledge of the Bible / Gospels/NT will be gleaned. After analysing the Bāb's own statements, the positive perspectives about his knowledge of the Bible/NT put forward by the Cambridge orientalist E.G. Browne (1864-1926) and the contemporary Yale historian Abbas Amanat will be shown to be without sound historical or textual foundation.

Islamic messianism has it that an expected Mahdī-Qā'im would be fully aware of the location of the lost, genuine pre-Islamic scripture and come to rule non-Muslims in accordance with its dictates. Both Sunnī and Shī`ī traditions state that he would be guided to this pristine, uncorrupted Judaeo-Christian scripture. Maṭār b. Muhammad Ṭahmān al-Warrāq (d. 125/743?) transmitted traditions from Ka`b al-Aḥbār to the effect that the Mahdī was so named because he would be guided *(yuhdā)* to find copies of the original texts of the Torah and the Gospel concealed in a cave in Antioch (Madelung EI^2 V:1232b). A parallel Shī`ī tradition from the 5th Imam, Muhammad al-Bāqir, as recorded by al-Nu'mānī (d.360/970-1) in his *Kitāb al-ghayba* (Book of the Occultation), reads as follows:

> When al-Qa'im from the family of the Prophet will rise he will distribute equally among the people and will establish justice among his subjects... he will be called al-Mahdī, the one who will guide, since he will guide to the secret matters *(amr al-khafī)* and will bring out the Torah and other books of God from a cave in Antioch and will rule the people of the Torah according to the Torah, and the people of the Gospel according to the Gospel, and the people of the Qur'an according to the Qur'an (K. Ghayba, 164; cited Sachedina, 61). [1]

Other Shī`ī traditions associate the Qā'im with varieties of the *jafr* about which there are numerous traditions.[2] It is sometimes portrayed as a divinatory, "unwritten" sacred scroll

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[1] Note also. "The Mahdī will... bring forth the Ark of the Divine Presence *(tābūt al-sakīna)* from a cave in Antioch in which are the Torah which God sent down to Moses and the Gospel which he sent down to Jesus, and, he will rule among the People of the Torah according to their Torah and among the People of the Gospel according to their Gospel".

[2] Imam `Alī, *K. Jafr al-jāmi`* (1987); Mullā Ṣadrā, Sh-Kafi 2:85-9; Majlisī, Bihar [2] 47:270ff; al-Bahrānī, *Awalim*; al-Bursī, Mashariq, 94, ; al-Aḥsā'ī, JK 1/ii [68-114] 87-8; Steingass, 365-6; Sachedina, 981:22.

inscribed upon cow hide containing the knowledge of the pre-Islamic prophets, learned Israelites [= Isrā'īliyyāt materials] and the secrets of future events (Biḥār[2] 1:238f; cf. 47:270ff). The messianic Qā'im was expected to appear in possession of varieties of this *jafr* described in Shī`ī traditions from Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq and others as;

(1) *al-jafr al-abyaḍ* (the white *jafr*), pure recensions of (Abrahamic scripture): the *ṣuḥuf* of Abraham, the *tawrāt* (Torah) of Moses, the *zabūr* ("Psalter") of David and the *Injīl* (Gospel) of Jesus as well as the *muṣḥaf* (Scroll) of Fāṭima;

(2) *al-jafr al-aḥmar* (the red *jafr*) a bag containing the weaponry *(al-salāḥ)* of the prophet Muhammad or the messianic Qā'im as the *sāḥib al-sayf* (bearer of the sword).

Responding to a question about *jafr* al-Aḥsā'ī (<--4.4) had it that this would be the exclusive inheritance of the messianic Qā'im. Imam `Alī had inherited the recognized *jafr* as the *`ilm al-ḥurūf* (science of letters) from Muhammad via Gabriel when upon Mt. Paran *(jabal fārān)* (JK. 1/ii:87-8). The Bāb claimed knowledge of the secrets of this *jafr* in the sense of numerical, talismanic or gematric insight (cf. K. Panj :310, 429ff).[1] He did not, as far as I am aware, refer to any cave in Antioch or to the concrete discovery of lost pre-Islamic scripture. In certain of his writings, however, he does claim that God taught him the knowledge of pre-Islamic scripture. Probably presupposing this we read in his *Sūrat al-`amā'* (Sūrah of the Divine Cloud"= QA 10): "We, verily, sent down [for the Bāb] the verses which are in the *ṣuḥuf* (ancient scrolls)" (10:32). In this same surah the QA is also represented as a "Book" confirming and summing up "all that God sent down upon the prophets and the righteous ones in all the [previous] *alwāḥ* (`revealed tablets') (10:32). In an exegetical rewrite of Q. 3:48 in QA 3 the Bāb states,

> God hath assuredly taught you [the Bāb] the knowledge of the Book *(`ilm al-kitāb)* from the Furqān [= Q.] the *Injīl*, the *Tawrāt,* the *Zabūr* and what preceded them of the *ṣuḥuf* (pre-Mosaic scripture) and with your Lord were you concealed and suspended above the Gate of the Point *(bāb al-nuqṭa)* of

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[1] Dimensions of *jafr* referred to by the Imams *as jafr al-jāmi`* ("Comprehensive Jafr") also indicates modes of gematric prognostication (see [pseudo-Imam] `Alī, 1987). This *jafr* is mentioned by BA* in his *L. Ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa`a* (-->bib).

the letter "B" *(al-bā')* (QA 3:11).[1]

In Islamo-Bābī and Bahā'ī belief all revealed scripture is an expression of the will and Word of God. The knowledge of one sacred book, especially if it is the most recent, is tantamount to a knowledge of all revealed scripture. A new sacred book is another expression of the essences of all past revelations. Babī-Bahā'ī scripture presupposes that a true understanding of the Bayān and Q. is tantamount to a full awareness of pre-Islamic scripture. Worth noting in this connection is that during the Bābī period BA* referred to his 1857-8 *Ṣāḥifa-yi Fātimiyya* (Scroll of Fātima) or *K. maknūnih* (Hidden Words) as the "inner essence" *(jawāhir)* of all pre-Bābī scripture sent down unto past prophets *(al-nabiyyūn)* and clothed by him in the "garment of brevity" (<-- 2.2.).

The Bāb not only mentions that Adam had a revealed *kitāb* ("Book") but, following mainstream Islamic tradition, affirmed the existence and inspired nature of the whole range of scripture originating in primordial and post-Abrahamic times. He refers to the *ṣuḥuf* of Abraham, the *Tawrāt* (Torah) of Moses, the *Zabūr* (Psalms) of David and the *Injīl* (Gospel) of Jesus. In some of his later writings, including the P.Bayān, the Bāb refers to these sacred books after their initial Arabic letters: *Tawrāt* = "book of T" *(tā')"; Zabūr* = "book of Z" (zā')" and *Injīl* = "book of *"A" (alīf)"* (P.Bay. 3:13, etc).

■ **Pre- Islamic scripture in the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (mid. 1844).**

References to pre-Islamic scripture in the QA of the Bāb (<--2.1) are largely rooted in the Q. as exegetically rewritten so as to express a neo-Islamic and post-qur'ānic, Shī`ī *ta`wīl* (non-literal dimension). In the QA *Sūrat al-rukn* (Sūra of the Pillar) the Bāb states that Moses received the *Tawrāt* on Sinai and Jesus personally received the divinely revealed *Injīl* direct "from heaven" *(min al-samā').* These works are said to contain eschatologically suggestive references to the *Dhikr* and to concealed Tablets:

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[1] Qur'ān 3:48 on which this is based reads: "And He (God) will teach him (Jesus) the Book *(al-kitāb),* the Wisdom *(ḥikmat),* the *Tawrat* and the *Injīl".*

> We, verily, gave Moses the Book and We preserved him in his youth until the time set in the book transpired... And We, indeed, gave Jesus, son of Mary the exposition *(al-bayān)* and aided him with a Spirit from Our Dhikr *(bi-rūḥ min dhikrinā).* We, indeed, sent down a Book *(kitāb* [an] upon the prophets *(al-nabiyyīn)* consisting of concealed tablets *(al-alwāḥ al-masṭūr* [an]) (QA 55:217; cf. Q. 2:87).

Probably addressing Sufis and speaking with the voice of God in the *Sūrat al-kitāb* (Sura of the Book = QA 41) the pre-existent Bāb affirms the revealed status of Abrahamic scripture. He associates his pre-existent Logos-Self with the quasi-messianic *Dhikr* (Remembrance) and the divine being who conversed with Moses on Sinai. He revealed the *Injīl* to Jesus who was subsequently taken up to the heaven of *baqā'* (permanent abiding in God). This until the *ḥujjat-Allāh* (Messianic Qā'im) appears at the time of second advent of Jesus and discloses the sealed mystery of the identity and purpose of the messianic *Dhikr* (= Bāb):

> O People of effacement *(maḥw)* ! Hearken unto my call, from the Point of Brightness *(nuqṭat al-ṣaḥw),* from this Arabian Youth who, with the permission of God, cried out unto Moses on Mount Sinai *(al-ṭūr al-sinā').* The Torah, in very truth, was assuredly sent down unto him on the part of God... With our hands did We beckon unto Jesus. The *Injīl* was indeed sent down from heaven unto his person in his allotted time. Then God lifted him [Jesus] up to heaven for eternal abiding [with Him] *(li'l-baqā'),* until, that is, the promised Day when the mystery will be disclosed from the sealed scroll *(al-ṣaḥīfa al-makhtūma)* in the platform of the courtyard *(dakkat al-qaṣā')* of the great Mosque of Mecca *(al-masjid al-ḥarām),* by the tongue of the Ḥujjat-Allāh (Proof of God, the Qā'im), the truth that is, regarding the mystery of the *Dhikr* who represents Muhammad, the Arabian Prophet (QA 41:153).

In the *Sūrat al-ghulām* (Surah of the Youth, QA 54) the Bāb refers to himself as the *al-bāb al-akbar* (Greatest Gate) and *al-ghulām al-`arabī* the Arabian Youth to whom reference is made in the *Tawrāt,* the *Injīl,* the *Zabūr* and the Q. as well as in the *umm al-kitāb,* the Archetypal Book (QA 54:214). This is in line with the Shī`ī notion that pre-Islamic prophets *(anbiyā')* predicted the identity of the future advent of Muhammad before his being born in this world. The same is said of the Bāb as the eschatological Joseph-like "youth". Both the Bāb and BA* believed their advent was specifically predicted in all past sacred books (Ibn Bābūya, *Risāla fī'l-ghayba,* IV [CD]).

There are several passages in the QA and other writings in which the Bāb refers to pre-

Islamic scripture as alluding to himself or to the awaited messiah. In the highly esoteric *Sūrat al-tarbī`* (Sūra of the Quadratic Talisman) of the QA, the Bāb, most likely referring to himself states

> You on the Mount *(al-ṭūr)* are in the Point of the Gate *(nuqṭat al-bāb)* in the vicinity of the [Sinaitic] Fire planted by the hand of God, the pre-existent in the earth of the divine Cloud *(arḍ al-`amā').* You are the shape of the talismans *(shakl al-ṭalismiyyūn)* in the Sinaitic Mount above the Light *(al-ṭūr `alā al-nūr).* You are as the Jesus-like Word *(al-kalimat al-`Īsā'wiyyūn)* in the *Injīl* (Gospel) and the *Zabūr* (Psalter), most assuredly inscribed in the form of the *taṣbīḥ* (= *subḥān Allāh* = `Praised be God!'). Say: I, verily, am the triangular [talismanic] Form *(shakl al-thulth* = `Alī?) written quadratic [fourfold = Muhammad?] *(marbi`^an)* in the sanctum of the divine Cloud *(al-quds al-`amā')* (QA 91:364).

In this passage the Bāb probably indicates his parentally bestowed name `Alī Muhammad (3 letters+4 letters). This was mystically registered in talismanic forms in Sinaitic pre-eternity. He was the locus of a Name *(ism)* written afore time by the hands of the eschatological *Dhikr* in the *Tawrāt* (Torah), the *Injīl* (Gospel) and the Q. (QA 50:195).[1]

■ **Pre-Islamic scripture in some later writings of the Bāb.**

Commenting on the letter "k" (*kāf*) of *li-rabbiḵa* (Q. 108:2) in his T.Kawthar the Bāb relates *kalām Allāh* (the Word of God) to various past sacred books including the *tawrāt* and *injīl;*

> Now concerning the letter "k" *(al-kāf).* It signifies the *kalām Allāh* (Word of God) in the Q. ... it signifies the Word of God *(kalām Allāh)* in the *Injīl* (Gospel) which God sent down through a letter of the exteriority of the Q. *(bi-ḥarf min `alāniyyat al-qur'ān)* unto whomsoever desired that he might believe in the All-Merciful in the realm of existence *(arḍ al-imkān).* It [ the letter "k"] also signifies the Word of God *(kalām Allāh)* in the *tawrāt* (Torah) as accords with what God sent down unto Moses, son of `Imrān, from every direction... (T.Kawthar :f. 21a-b.)

This passage makes it clear that the "Word of God" in the *Injīl* is subordinated to the Q. originating from a mere *ḥarf* ("letter") of the Islamic sacred book as is later echoed several times in the P.Bayān. (-->). The Bāb may here presuppose the *Injīl* being relayed to post-Jesus' disciples and others (?). This subordinate position of the *Injīl* (Gospel[s]) was doubtless

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[1]These statements may assume the pre-existent presence of letters of the *ism Allāh al-`aẓam* (the "Mightiest Name of God") in pre-Islamic scripture (cf. T.LaylatQ. 69:18--> 8).

a factor in the Bāb's non-citation of 19th century canonical Gospel texts. He never refers to the *anājīl* (four Gospels) but, like the Q., invariably uses the singular *Injīl* which does not appear to have plural implications or be indicative of the NT Gospels. Among other things this tends to put the Bāb outside of the category of those Shī`ī *'ulamā'* who debated with Christian missionaries (<--4.3).

None of the later writings of the Bāb,[1] including the P. Bayān contain NT or biblical quotations. There are though, several interesting references to the *Injīl* in its ideal, pristine essence. In this condition the *Injīl* is identical with the Q. and the Bayān (P.Bay. 2:15). It revolved around the word of Muhammad for whose sake it was written (P.Bay. 2:19; 3:3). Muhammad fulfilled and perfected the Injīl (P.Bay. 4:13). The *Injīl* was superceded or abrogated by the Q. and the Bayān which are more excellent and complete divine revelations (P.Bay. 3:4). This makes the copying and study of the *Injīl* of no avail after the messianic advent of Muhammad (P.Bay. 7:1). It is no wonder that the Bāb chose not to cite the NT.

Despite this subordinate position the *Injīl* is quite definitely assumed to be the "Book of God" *(kitāb-I khūdāvand)* and the *kalām Allāh* (Word of God <--). The Bāb, however, reckoned that the spiritual essence of the pristine *Injīl* mystically coalesced with the Q. (when it was revealed to Muhammad) and became something "mundane". The true spirit and sanctity of the Gospel became dependent on the more elevated Q.;

> There is no doubt that the *Injīl* was the *kitāb-i khudāvand* (Book of God). But after the descent of the Furqān [Criterion = the Q.] its real spirits *(arvāḥ-i ḥuqqih-yi ān)* were elevated through the instrumentality of the Qur'ān. What remained was other than the *aliyyīn,* the sublimely elevated spirits [of the divinely revealed verses of the Q.] (P.Bay. 7:7, 289).

None of the passages cited above should be taken to be indicative of the Bāb's direct knowledge of Abrahamic sacred writ or biblical texts. Rather, they point to his being the mouthpiece of God in receipt of divine revelation, inspired with the knowledge of all past sacred

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[1] Such scattered references to the *Tawrāt, , Injīl* and *Zabūr* as exist in the Bāb's *Dalā'il-I sab'a* (Per. & Ar.) *K. PanjS, K. Asmā'* and other late writings are largely of passing or minor interest.

books. As the spiritual "return" of all past messengers of God, the Bāb explicitly claimed to be the author of all past religions and the revealer of *al-Kitāb,* the archetypal repository of all sacred scripture (A.Bay. 1:82, 2:15, etc).

The Bāb's view of pre-qur'ānic sacred scripture is very much in line with that of `Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī (d.898/1492) and other Sufīs of the school of Ibn `Arabī including `Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. c. 832/1428; al-Insān,1:111-4). The 28th section of al-Jāmī's composite Arabic-Persian *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* (The Deliverance of the Texts), which comments upon aspects of Ibn al-`Arabī's *Naqsh al-fuṣūṣ* (The Imprint of the Bezels) focuses upon the mysteries of the bezel relative to "the peerless wisdom in the Muhammadan word". Here the Q. is equated with the Logos-like *nafs* ("Self") and *ḥaqīqa* (Reality) of Muhammad. It is seen as "a singular expression *(aḥadiyya)* of the combination of the entirety of the divine books *(jam` al-jamī` al-kutub al-ilāhiyya)."* The Q. Jāmī continues,

> came about through the Prophet [Muhammad]...He said, "God revealed one hundred and four books from heaven". Wherefore did he deposit the knowledge of these one hundred in these four; that is, [1] *Tawrāt,* (Torah), the [2] *Injīl* (Gospel[s]), [3] the *Zabūr* (Psalter) and the [4] *Furqān* ("Criterion" = the Q.). Then he deposited the knowledge of these four in the Q. He then deposited the knowledge of the Q. in the substance *(mufaḍḍal)* of its [114] sūrahs. Then he deposited the substance of its surahs into *al-Fātiḥa,* (= Q.1). Whoso has a knowledge of the commentary on the [sūrah of the] Opening *(tafsīr al-fātiḥa)* has a knowledge of the commentary *(tafsīr)* upon all the revealed books of God. Whomsoever recited it [Q.1 the *Fātiḥa*] it is as if he had recited the *Tawrat,* the *Injīl,* the *Zabūr* and the *Furqān* [= Q.] (Jāmi`, Naqd, 275).

This conflation of the substance of the revealed books into the first sūra of the Q. is probably inspired by the tradition that the whole of the Q. is in the point (•) of the letter "b" (ب) of the *basmala* of the first surah, *al-Fātiḥa* (Q.1), a tradition well-known to the Bāb. Jāmī`s mystical conflation of all previous revealed books into the first surah of the Q. reflects exactly the way that the Bāb viewed pre-Islamic revelations. The reality of the Bible as the *Tawrāt, Zabūr* and *Injīl* were spiritually subsumed within the essence of the Q. Its mysteries were implicit within the Islamic sacred book, more or less rendering the citation, direct knowledge (of translations) of the HB (Psalms) and Gospel/NT unnecessary. It has likewise been noted how

Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī expressed a similar opinion in his *Sharḥ al-Qāṣida al-Lāmiyya* (<–4.3f).

■ **The Bāb on *taḥrīf* ("falsification") and *tabdīl* ("scriptural alternation").**

At several points in his writings including the Per. and Ar. *Seven Proofs,* the Bāb presupposes that Jews possess the *tawrāt* (Torah) and Christians the *Injīl* and the followers of David the *Zabūr* ("Psalter"). He had an accepting, positive view of these past sacred scriptures although their importance is abrogated, virtually negated relative to the subsequent divine revelations of the Q. and the Bayān (= the Bāb's own revelations). The Bāb does not appear to directly refer to the (canonical) *Tawrāt* and *Injīl* as having been subject to *taḥrīf* in the usual Islamic (post-qur'ānic) sense, though he does indicate their loss of "elevated spirits" (<--in P.Bay 7:7). In the *Sūrat al-kitāb* (Sūrah of the Book, QA 41) he warns readers not to subject the QA to *tabdīl* (alternation) or *taḥrīf* ("corruption") even though revelation is essentially something beyond the letter:

> O servants of the All-Merciful! Fear God regarding the *taḥrīf* (textual corruption) of the Book even to the extent of a single letter *(ḥarf* ^{ain}) of what God has, in truth, sent down therein which goes beyond the [concrete] letter (*'alā ghayr al-ḥarf).* (QA 41:151; cf. QA 53:209).

This passage may imply that the Bāb considered divine revelation more than something written in concrete letters which can be easily corrupted. Divine revelation for him appears something more elevated than what might be subject to concrete *taḥrīf* (corruption). This viewpoint also seems to be reflected in *P.Bayān* 7:7 (<--). For the Bāb neither the *Tawrāt* or *Injil* have been subject to *taḥrīf* ("corruption") in the standard Islamic sense. It is the loss of their "spirit" and "life" relative to their power to inspire religious truth that fades away before later expressions of divine revelation. The attempt to divine theological truth after another divine revelation is assumed to be futile. When a new *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (divine manifestation) appears with a new book which encapsulates the *'aliyyīn* ("elevated spirits") which impart *haqīqa,* hermeneutical reality to the pure in heart. For the Bāb sacred books have a spiritual dimension which derives from the latest *maẓhar-i ilāhī* and promotes insight and spirituality.

The *Injīl* referred to in most if not all of the writings of the Bāb cannot be straight-

forwardly equated with existing Christian Gospels, with the canonical Christian NT. *Injīl* primarily indicates the revelation of God to Jesus. It seems to be presupposed that this revelation is extant though its usefulness is eclipsed and superseded by subsequent revelations in the form of the Q. and the Bayān of the Bāb. These latter revealed texts encapsulate the new spiritual intention of the *Injīl.*

The Bāb's position relating to the *Tawrāt* and *injīl* is sufficiently open or ambiguous to suggest and prepare the way for BA*'s rejection of any thoroughgoing Islamic expression the doctrine of biblical *taḥrīf.* It was only a decade or so after the Bāb's execution in 1850 that BA* (then a leading Bābī) began (from the early 1860s) to make frequent citations of biblical scripture in attempting to prove the truth of Islam from the NT as well as the veracity of the religion of the Bāb (-->7.1).

■ 7. 2 The Delphic maxim and an Islamicate citation from the *Injīl*

In several of his major and certain of his minor works, including his *T. Baqara* (52a-b), T.LaylatQ. (69:17), T. Man. (14:472), T. Ḥaqīqa(14:465), R.NubuwwaK (4:385) and P.Dalā'il (P.Dal:39) the Bāb quotes and sometimes comments on a maxim which he often identifies as a saying from the *Injīl* -- though it only vaguely reflects (?) Matt.10:28 (= Luke 12:4-5?):[1]

◆ اعرف نفسك تعرف ربك ظاهرك للفناء و باطنك انا ◆

Know thyself and thou shalt know thy Lord;
Thine outer self *(ẓāhir)* is for [mystical] annihilation *(fanā')*
while thine inner self *(bāṭin)* is I myself *(anā).*

The first hemistich of this saying is rooted in the Delphic maxim, "Know thyself!" which was known from antiquity, prior to the time of Philo of Alexandria (d.c. 50 CE?) who commented upon it in a manner reminiscent of later Muslim philosophers and gnostics (Philo, Spec. Leg. 1.43ff; Mut. 7.10; Westra, 1992:89-102). In his *T. Baqāra* the Bāb understands the *nafs* ("Logos-Self") to be the "Reality" which provides a sure Path unto God: "Whoso hath

[1] Matt. 10:28 seems to be the only NT saying that reflects a few Islamicate versions of the Delphic maxim: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both souls and body in hell".

known God through the Path of this Logos-Self *(nafs)* which is in him hath assuredly known God. There is no Path for the servants other than this" (T. Baqara 52a). Like BA*, Philo held that the Delphic maxim implied the unknowability of God (Louth, 1981:20f; BA* Lawḥ-i Ḥajjī Mullā Ḥādī Qazvīnī, MAM:346-62). Just as one cannot know the depths of one's own "self" so is it reckoned impossible to know the reality of God.

Variously expanded Islamicate versions of the Delphic maxim are attributed in Islamic literatures to a variety of philosophers and sages as well as to Imam `Alī and Muhammad:

> *man `arafa nafsahu faqad `arafa rabbahu,*
> Whoso knoweth himself knoweth his Lord.[1]

Apparently first introduced as a *ḥadīth* by Yaḥyā b. Mu`ādh (d. 871), it was quoted and commented upon by many medieval and later Muslim writers some of whom were aware of its Greek origin (Altmann, 1963[9]). In the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'* ( <--4.2) versions of the Delphic maxim are attributed to both Muhammad and `Alī as they are in the writings of the Bāb *(Rasā'il* 1:76; III:351; Altmann 1963[9]:1). At one point in these encyclopaedic *Rasā'il* it is said to be incumbent upon every intellectual *(`āqil*[in] ) to seek "the knowledge of the self ("soul") as well as the gnosis of its essence and its refinement" *(`ilm al-nafs wa ma`rifatihi jawharihā wa tadhībihā ,* R1:76). Ibn Sīnā reckoned that the version "Whoso knoweth himself knoweth his Lord" as a *kalima* (statement, saying) about which the *ḥukamā'* (philosophers) and *awliyā'* ('saintly ones') are in agreement (ibid 1969:1). In his opinion it calls for a "profound self-scrutiny" (Goodman, 1992:164).

Rewritten or expanded forms of the Delphic maxim were highly regarded by Sufi writers and mystics. Ibn al-`Arabī frequently commented upon it as is evident in his weighty *Futūḥāt* (II:308, 500; III:101; 314, 404, 552 etc. [ed Yahyā] 14:480, etc.; Houédard, 1992:1-10) and in his influential *Fuṣūṣ* (*Fuṣūṣ* 69; tr.74). His *Risāla al-wujūdiyya* (Treatise on Existence) is largely devoted to the mysteries of the Islamicate Delphic maxim cited as a prophetic *ḥadīth.*

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[1] Variant forms include, *a`rafukum bi-nafsihi arafukum bi-rabbihi* ("He among you who knows himself best knows his Lord best"). Both, for example, are found in *R. Ikhwān al-Safā'* (R.1:76).

It has, furthermore, been observed that the *al-Ḥikma al-`arshiyya* (Wisdom of the Throne) of Mullā Ṣadrā (<--2.1;4.1) is essentially an "extended commentary on the famous saying of Imam `Ali: `He who truly knows *(`arafa)* his soul/Self *(nafsahu),* knows his Lord" (Morris,1981:62 fn.69; 78 fn. 88). Bursī also cited and commented upon versions of the Delphic maxim in his *Mashāriq* (Lawson, 1992: 271). Like numerous other Shī`ī writers both Shaykh Aḥmad[1] and Sayyid Kāẓim as well as the Bāb and BA* commented upon versions of this tradition (B* T.Man.14:468f). BA* commented upon an Islamicate Delphic maxim (*man `arafa nafsahu faqad `arafa rabbahu)* in his *L. H-Qazvini* (MAM:346-62) and his *K. Īqān* (BA* KI:76/66) and other writings.

The first clause of the Bāb's above cited quotation from the *Injīl* corresponds with one of the Arabic forms of the Delphic maxim. Its second hemistitch is perhaps best regarded as a Sufī gloss indicative of its meaning. It may indicate that human beings by interior realization of their divine nature and the transitoriness of their *ẓāhir*, (outer physical form) come to a knowledge of God. Though not contained in the canonical NT the Bāb sometimes introduces this expanded version of the Delphic maxim as that which God said in the *Injīl (qāla Allāh fī'l-injīl).* Elsewhere in his writings he follows Islamic sources in attributing it to Muhammad or Imam `Alī.

The presence of this pseudo-Gospel divine utterance in the Bāb's writings is obviously not indicative of his direct knowledge of the NT.[2] Its source in his writings is most probably the writings of the first two Shaykhī leaders who also occasionally quote forms of it as deriving

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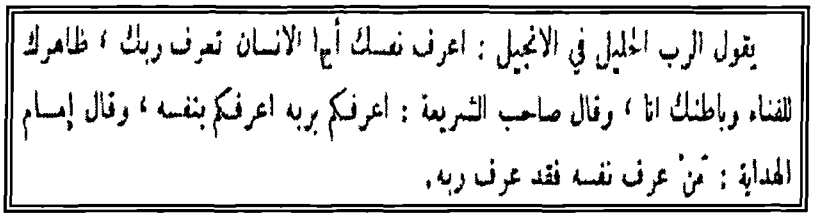
[1] See Ibrahīmī, *Fihrist.*. 225 [item 13 = Shaykh Aḥmad's commentary on the aforementioned *ḥadīth* in reply to a question of Shaykh Muhammad Mahdī Astarābadī]; Risāla in reply to Sayyid Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jīlānī in MajR. 30: 90-101,esp 94f.

[2] The Bab distinguishes this alleged quotation from the *injīl* from the two expanded Islamic forms of the Delhpic maxim found in the *ḥadīth* literatures. He usually attributes the words *man `arāfa nafsahu faqad `arafa rabbahu* to Imām `Alī and *a`rafukum bi-nafsihi a`rafukum bi- rabbihi* to Muhammad. Commenting on these traditions and the alleged quotation from the *Injīl* he affirms that the world of creation or the human *nafs* (cf. Qur`an 41:53) may be the locus of the theophany of the names and attributes of God but underlines the impossibility of any relationship between the human *nafs* and the unknowable Godhead (cf. BA*'s similar comments on *man `arafa nafsahu faqad `arafa rabbahu* in his L. H-Qazvīnī,.35f).

from the *Injīl.* The first two Shaykhs most probably quote it it from the *Mashāriq al-anwār* of al-Bursī (<--2. 2). There, in a slightly longer version, it is reckoned to be that which the "Glorious Lord" *(al-rabb al-jalīl)* uttered in the *Injīl.* The text, as cited by al-Bursī along with another two versions ascribed to Muhammad, the "Master of the [Islamic] Law" *(ṣāḥib al-sharī`a),* and the rightly guided Imām reads;


يقول الرب الجليل في الانجيل : اعرف نفسك أيها الانسان تعرف ربك ، ظاهرك
للفناء وباطنك انا ، وقال صاحب الشريعة : اعرفكم بربه اعرفكم بنفسه ، وقال إمام
الهداية : من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

The Glorious Lord says in the Injīl:
Know thyself, O thou humankind *(al-insān)!* then thou shalt know thy Lord.
Thine outer being *(ẓāhir)* is for mystical annihilation *(li-l-fanā')*while your interior reality *(bāṭin)* is I Myself *(anā)*
The master of the Law [= Muhammad] said: `Know thyself through thy Lord and thou shalt know thine own self.'
And the rightly guided Imam [`Alī] said:` Whoso knoweth himself assuredly knoweth his Lord' (Bursī, *Mashāriq,* 188). [1]

As noted, Ibn al-`Arabī is another important source for Islamicate Bible citations. In his *K. al-jalāl wa'l-jamāl* (Book of the Divine Majesty and Beauty) he quotes the following Islamicate version of what God allegedly revealed (w-ḥ-y) in His *tawrāt* (Torah, Hebrew Bible):

> O son of Adam! I created all things for thy sake and created thee for My sake. Then do not disgrace what I created for Myself through what I created for thy sake (Ar. text *Rasā'il ibn `Arabī,* I:15).

In similar fashion al-Aḥsā'ī in his *Sharh al-ziyāra* cites the following *ḥadīth qudsī* said to be contained in the *Injīl* but which is again related to the Islamicate `biblical' citations already given:

> I [God] created existing things *(al-ashyā')* for thy sake and I created thee for My sake for while thine inner reality *(bāṭinuka)* is I Myself *(anā),* thine outer self *(ẓāhiruka)* is for annihilation *(li'l-fanā')* (Sh-Ziyara 3:352-3; cf. Ibid 4:26).

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[1] This line is immediately followed by a similar saying of the "bearer of the law *(ṣāḥib al-shari`a* = Muhammad), "Whoso cometh to know his Lord best cometh to know his own self best" (Bursī, Mashariq,188). On Bursī and his concept of self-knowledge see Lawson, 1992:270f.

After this quotation the Shaykh goes immediately on to quote *al-Injīl* (The Gospel) exactly as in Bursī's *Mashāriq* (Sh- Ziyara, 3:363). Finally, it should also be noted that in the course of commenting on the words "I saw God and Paradise" in his *Sh.Tutunjiyya,* Sayyid Kāẓim also quotes the saying of the *Injīl* exactly as registered in Bursī's *Mashāriq* but with the following addition, "I am the theophany of the divine Essence *(ẓuhūr al-dhāt)* through the unique Word *(bi'l-kalām al-mutafarrid)"* (Rashtī, Sh-Tutunjiyya, 299 cf.185).

In the light of the above, it is evident that the Bāb's quotation of the typically Sufi, Islamicate "Gospel" citation, is his registering something derived from his Shaykhī teachers who were dependent upon al-Bursī or other mystically inclined philosopher-theologians. None of this has anything to do with the Bāb's knowledge of the NT.

■ 7. 3 The Bāb and alleged biblical citations in primary and secondary sources.

Gobineau (<--) in *Religiones et Philosophies..* (Paris, 1865), the Italian physician Lessona in his *I-Babi* (Turin, 1881), several Christian missionary writers (Miller, Shedd, St.Clair-Tisdall) and a number of western academics (Browne, Amanat) have, to a greater or lesser extent, accepted the largely unfounded tradition that the Bāb had been influenced by Christianity through reading Bible translation(s). From 1910 this position was championed by E. G. Browne as allegedly backed up by somewhat dubious external evidence in support of the Bāb's biblical awareness in the form of a notice based upon a memorandum found among the papers of the (ABCFM) Presbyterian missionary John Haskell Shedd (d.1895) of the "Nestorian Mission" at Urumiyya (from 1870-->).

Shedd reported an account of an alleged interview between the Bāb and the British physician resident at Tabriz, William Cormick (d.1294/1877).[1] Cormick allegedly told John Shedd that the Bāb "was seen by some Armenian Carpenters, who were sent to make some

[1] See `An Interesting Document on the Báb [A letter of W.A. Shedd to the Editor of the Muslim World, dated Urumia, Persia, August 28th, 1914]' in *The Moslem World,* Vol.5. (1915), pp.111-12 also cited in Browne, *Materials..* 260-2. William Cormick and two other Persian physicians had been sent to ascertain, apparently on behalf of the Shāh and the Muslim divines of Tabriz (before July 9th 1850), whether or not the Bāb was of sound mind and thus fit for execution. Cormick must have communicated his favourable impression of the Bāb to John Shedd between 1870 and 1877 (on Cormick see Momen Elr. IV:275-6).

repairs in his prison [presumably at Chihriq], reading the Bible". The Bāb, it was apparently said, "took no pains" to conceal his reading the Bible but allegedly informed the Armenian carpenters accordingly (Shedd, `Memorandum',12).

Though it is not impossible that the Bāb had read the Bible during his imprisonment in Ādhirbayjān (or indeed prior to this time) there is nothing in his writings that supports the theory that he had studied and based his religious ideas upon a biblical / NT precedent. There is really no internal evidence supportive of the theory that the Bāb had read the NT in either the Persian translation of Martyn or any other Persian or Arabic NT version. As will be argued here, the Bāb never cited any of the books or testaments of the canonical Bible. Browne was too ready to accept the aforementioned missionary ascribed to Shedd which may have been motivated by a desire to account for the Bāb's "enlightened" teachings by way of Christian influence. The passages from the *injīl,* which the Bāb does several times explicitly cite, are non-canonical, entirely Islamicate or Islamo-biblical sayings deriving from earlier Muslim sources (<--). If Armenian carpenters saw the Bāb reading or chanting sacred verses they might simply, in view of his widely recognised piety, have assumed that he was reading the NT. Even if he was doing so there is no clear internal evidence of this reading in any of the Bāb's writings I have seen. Having thus argued it is necessary to examine other supposed indications of the Bāb's knowledge of the Bible / NT. It can be assumed that the above missionary evidence is at best uncertain and very probably unreliable.

■ E.G. Browne and Gospel influence within the *Persian Bayān.*

While no convincing traces of the Bāb's direct knowledge of the Hebrew Bible have been found (<--4.1f) certain alleged signs of his knowledge of the NT have been set down by the aforementioned Cambridge orientalist Edward. G. Browne. This in his `Index of Chief Contents of the Persian Bayan', contained in his English introduction to his 1910 edition of the *K. Nuqaṭat al-kāf.* Here Browne listed seven alleged `signs of the influence of the Gospel on the Persian Bayān.' As Browne succinctly registered them they are;

(1) "The first shall be last and the last first" (II.16,17; VIII.4.);
(2) The Hour shall come suddenly ("like a thief in the night") (II.18);
(3) A cup of water given by a believer (IV.8.);
(4) Believers are to love one another (V.16);
(5) Believers are to do as they would be done by (VI.15);
(6) Selling in the Temple (IV.17);
(7) Dying to God (II.8; III.13; V.3)." (Refer Browne (ed.) K.N.Kāf : lxviii).

At first sight this list appears to be a fairly impressive indication of Gospel influence upon the Bāb / P.Bayān by a very highly respected Cambridge academic. Most, however, if not all of the alleged influences listed by Browne find clear parallels in Islamic literatures. None of these seven are direct or indirect signs of NT influence upon the Bāb. Browne's seven examples to some degree actually serve to illustrate the pre-19th century Judaeo-Christian/ biblical influence upon Islam. Exact Islamic sources for most of these alleged signs of Gospel influence, can be found in either the Q., the Islamic tradition literatures, in Sufi texts or other miscellaneous Islamic literatures. It will be argued here that such parallels make it very unlikely that Browne's `Signs of Gospel Influence' are proofs of the Bāb's familiarity with the NT. Each of these seven alleged signs of Gospel influence will now be briefly examined in the order given by Browne. Possible textual parallels in the Henry Martyn Persian NT will be borne in mind as will the Bāb's doctrines set out in the Persian and Arabic Bayāns and other writings.

■ (1) Eschatological reversal: 'The first shall be last and the last shall be first'.

P.Bayān (= P.Bay.) 8:4 has to do with the hierarchical appropriation of all existence, "things", *kullu shay'* ("everything"). The Bāb opens P.Bay. 8:4 by stating that the most elevated portion of "everything" belongs to himself as the "Point" *(kullu shay'a `lāhū li-l-nuqṭa).* Its intermediate component exists for the *ḥurūf al-ḥayy,* ("Letters of the Living"<--) while its most lowly *(andā)* aspect is assigned to humankind *(al-khalq).* Having used two Arabic superlatives expressive of the most elevated *(`alā)* and the most lowly *(andā)* the Bāb is inspired to incorporate the religious principle of bi-polar reversal, even combining Arabic and Persian superlative forms:

> .. In each religious theophany *(har ẓuhūrī)* it is evident that the most elevated of creatures *(a`lā-yi khalq)* become the most abased [of creatures] *(andā).* And

> [furthermore that] the most lowly of creatures (*andā-yi khalq)* become [especially] elevated *(a'lā).* Additionally, the most elevated *(a'lā-tar)* become yet more elevated *(a'lā)* [through faith] while the most lowly *(andā)* become even lowlier *(andā-tar)* [through denial]... (P.Bay. 8:4, 283, cf. 2:16,17).

That there will be a (bi-polar) eschatological reversal of (faith) status (First/Last: Last/First or Exalted/Humbled: Humbled/Exalted) is certainly indicated in Judaeo-Christian biblical and extra-biblical tradition (Ezek.2:31 (LXX); Ps. 74:8 (LXX) Ep. Arist. 363; Erub 13b, etc). NT evidence indicates that this was central to the parables and teachings of Jesus (Mk.10:31; Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Lk. 13:30; 14:11; 18:14, Barnabas 6:13 etc).[1] The coming of the Kingdom of God involved a (pre-) eschatological reversal demanding judgement in the present (Perrin,1974:52; O'York,1991:9ff).

In various forms this teaching is reflected in the Q. and in Islamic tradition. In the P.Bayān and other writings, the Bāb concretizes this perspective by teaching that with the advent of each religious theophany or dispensation elevated souls become abased and abased souls are elevated. This by virtue of their acceptance or rejection of expected *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (Divine Manifestations). Lofty inmates of the garden *(jannat,* of true faith), if they fail to accept the claims of subsequent Divine Manifestations, become abased inhabitants of the Fire *(nār,* of unbelief). During his own era lofty souls (learned Muslims) became abased through rejecting him while humble souls were elevated by a positive response to his call (P.Bay. 8:4). Warning his followers the Bāb predicts that the same may happen at the future Day of Resurrection when *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* appears (P.Bay. 7:9).

Though ultimately rooted in NT texts it is upon Islamic sources that the Bāb draws in order to indicate an eschatological reversal of faith status. Passages in both Bayāns (Per. + Ar.) and related writings expressive of a bi-polar faith reversal do not reflect the terminology of the Persian NT translation of Henry Martyn or any other Persian or Arabic NT versions known to the present writer. In P.Bayān 8:4 the Bāb refers to the fact that learned scholars in the "land

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[1] The NT references are-: Mk 10:31; Matt 19:30, 20:16; Lk 13:30; Matt 23;11-12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; cf.Mk 9:35,10:43-4;Lk 9:48, 22:26.

of Ṣad" (= Isfahān) failed to recognise him while a humble wheat-sifter named (Mullā) Ja`far Gandum Pākkūn was invested with the *qamīṣ-i niqabat* (the garb of primacy).[1] This, the Bāb then notes, is the "mystery of the utterance *(sirr-i kalām)* of the Shī`ī holy family, the *ahl-I bayt* (people of the House)". In saying this it is obvious that the Bāb himself regards the tradition of the bi-polar reversal of faith status as a Shī`ī tradition and not anything NT based. During the Bāb's own theophany the following Islamic tradition found fulfilment as is clearly stated in P.Bayān 8:14, a passage which Browne appears to have overlooked;

> The lowest of the creatures *(asfal -I khalq*) [shall become] the most exalted of the creatures *(a`lā-yi khalq)* and the most exalted of the creatures *(a`lā-yi khalq)* [shall become] the lowest of the creatures *(asfal-I khalq)*" (cited P.Bay. 8:14, 296-7).

The Bāb also quotes a similar version of an Islamic (not NT!) tradition indicative of a reversal of faith status in his late *Shū'unāt al-fārsī* (Persian Grades).

> It will come to pass that your lowly ones [shall become] your most exalted ones and your most exalted ones [shall become] your lowly ones" (*Shu'ūnK.* 82:94).

In his *K. Īqān* and other writings BA* also cites Arabic, Islamic and other versions of this tradition (KI:113/ 94). In the course of citing the Bāb in his Edirne dated *Lawḥ-i Sarrāj* (c. 1867) another version expressive of bi-polar reversal is given (Mā'idih 7:34). This tradition is also commented upon in other *alwāḥ* of BA*; in connection, for example, with the exegesis of the phrase of Shaykh Aḥmad, *sirr al-tankīs li-ramz al-ra'īs* ("The mystery of inversion through the symbol of the Ruler") (K.Aqdas1 ¶ 157/ tr. 75-6; cf. L. Hirtīk, LH 3:218) which is understood to allude to an eschatological, bi-polar reversal of faith status graphically indicated by an upturned inverted Arabic letter *wāw* (= ﻭ <–6.2) in Shī`ī representations of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) as well as in the NT and Islamic traditions (Māzandarānī, AA 5:237-245; *Mā'idih* 1:12f). AB* likewise quoted, cited and commented on the biblical as well as the Islamic tradition relating to the eschatological reversal of faith status (Ishrāq Khavarī, *Raḥiq* 1:685ff; *Māidih* 2:19,34).

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[1] Mullā Ja`far Gandum Pākkūn was converted to Bābism by Mullā Ḥusayn during the early years of the Bābī movement and died during the Ṭabarsī upheaval.

Browne's reckoning the reversal of faith status in P.Bayān 8:4 a sign of Gospel influence is wholly unconvincing in the light of the Bāb's own drawing on Islamic traditions to this effect as well as the numerous Islamic predictions of an eschatological reversal of faith status.

■ **(2) The suddenness of the eschatological "hour", "like a thief in the night".**

The fairly brief and succinct Persian Bayān 2:18 is in "exposition of the fact that there is absolutely no doubt about the advent of the [eschatological] Hour *(al-sā`ah)."* The note of suddenness occurs towards the very end of this section of the P.Bay. and reads,

> Anticipate then the theophany of God *(ẓuhūr Allāh)* for undoubtedly the "Hour" *(al-sā`a)* shall come upon you suddenly *(baghtat[an]).* (P. Bay. 2:18, 72).

Browne focuses upon the fact that the Bāb states that `The Hour shall assuredly come upon you *baghtat* [an] ("suddenly")'. In the Arabic verse cited above which concludes P.Bay. 2:18 the Bāb does not, however, state that the eschatological "hour" will come "like a thief in the night" or repeat NT expressions of eschatological immanence.[1] In the complex partly realized, partly futurist eschatology of the Bāb, there are quite a number of varied and diverse expressions of the imminence of the eschatological "Hour". None of them seem to have any connection with NT verses expressive of the last "Hour" or the parousia coming like a "thief in the night".

In the eschatologically charged first *Sūrat al-mulk* of the QA the Bāb exhorts the kings of the world to purify the earth of such as refute the Book on the "Day" when the *Dhikr*, (messianic Remembrance) will come *baghtat* [an] ("suddenly", QA1:3). Such references are not inspired by NT texts but by the Q. where the adverbial use of *baghtat* [an] occurs thirteen times and mostly of the "suddenness" of the eschatological "Hour" (Kassis, 313). Notes of eschatological suddenness in the Bāb's writings are fully in line with Islamic eschatological expectations themselves rooted in NT eschatology. Note, for example, the following texts:

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[1] See Mk 13:33f; Matt 24:42f; Lk 21:36; Matt 25:13; I Thess. 5:2f; 2 Peter 3:10 cf. 1 Peter 4:1; Lk 12:39; Matt 24:43f; Rev 3:3.

> Lost indeed are those who regard the meeting with God as falsehood -- until such time as the Hour *(al-sā`a)* is suddenly *(baghtat* ^{an}) upon them.. .(Q. 6:31).
>
> It [the "Hour"] shall not come upon you except suddenly *(baghtat* ^{an})." (Q.7:187)
>
> ...Or the sudden *(baghtat* ^{an}) coming of the Hour *(al-sā`a)* while they perceive not." (Q.12:107)
> ...Until the Hour *(al-sā`a)* come suddenly *(baghtat* ^{an}) upon them.." (Q.22:55).[1]

It is not necessary to invoke direct NT influence in accounting for the Bāb's own note of the suddenness of the last "Hour". The Bāb's use of the motif of eschatological "suddenness" and unexpectedness clearly echos qur'ānic verses and related Shī`ī traditions. Islamic sources themselves quote Jesus using *baghtat* $^{an}$, the note of suddenness in an Islamicate NT expression of the suddenness of the advent of the "Hour". In the Shī`ī *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ibn al-Rawandī (<--3.2), for example, Imam Ja`far al-Ṣādiq clearly echoes Mk. 13:32 (+ parallels) in reporting that,

> .. Jesus son of Mary asked Gabriel, `When shall be the emergence of the (eschatological) Hour (*al-sā`at)*?' At this Gabriel trembled and shuddered all but losing consciousness. When he composed himself he replied, `O Spirit of God! Over this most perplexing issue the one questioned (= Gabriel) is no more knowledgeable *(a`lam)* than the questioner (= Jesus) or anyone else be they in the heavens or upon the earth. It [the "Hour"] will not come upon you but *baghtat* ^{an} (suddenly)' (Rawandī, Qisas, 271-2; cf. BA* ESW:143) .

■ [3] **A cup of water given by a believer (P. Bay. IV:8).**

> And whoever shall give one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, truly I say to you that he shall in no wise have lost his reward (Matt. 10:47)

The Bāb sums up P.Bayān 4:8 in the following way;

> The essence of this gate is this, that through his verses he [God] creates the essential reality of all things *(kaynūniyyat-i kull shay')* and thereby gives sustenance, causes to die, and makes to come alive (P.Bay. 4:8,127).

Later in the same section of the P.Bayān the Bāb states:

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[1] See also Q. 43:66; 21:41; 26:202; 29:43; 39:56. Various Islamic traditions, it should also be noted, express the belief that the Mahdī or Qā'im will come suddenly or unexpectedly. cf. Persian Bayān VII.9. where, alluding to the coming of God or *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* on the Day of Resurrection, the Bāb states that "He will suddenly shine forth" (*va ṭāli` mīshavad baghtat* ^{an}).

> Thus, if today but one cup of water *(finjān–i āb)* be given by a believer in the Bayān it would seem sweeter *(aḥlā)* to the mystic knower *(ʿārif)* than all the benefits of this world *(kull-i ālāʾ al arḍ)* proffered by one not believing in the Bayān (ibid 128).

This section of the Bayān basically revolves around the belief that a pure action such as the giving of a rose-leaf *(waraq-i gul)* by a believer to another of the *ahl-I bayān* (Bābīs), is fundamentally a divine action. It is tantamount to being a divine action as the action of the "Letters of the One" *(wāḥid)'*, the nineteen strong Bābī pleroma of first disciples (P.Bay. 4:8,127).

In P.Bayān 4:8 Browne found a sign of Gospel influence in that the Bāb refers to "a cup given by a believer" (Matt 10:42; Mk 9:41; cf. Matt 25:35ff). The alleged parallel is not, for a number of reasons, an exact parallel. In P.Bayān 4:8 it is simply a "cup of water" that is given to another not a "cup of cold water" (Martyn = *kāʾs-i āb-I sardī)* (Matt 20:42b). Quite different is the P.Bay. where it is a mature or learned Bābī, an *ʿārif* (one of mystical perception) who receives the cup of water not, as in Matt. 10:42b *yek āz aṭfāl* (so H. Martyn), "one of these children" or "one of these little ones".

As translated above, the Bāb in P.Bayān 4:8 writes that if in his day a believer in the Bayān should give but a cup of water *(finjān–i āb)* to another it would prove sweeter than all the benefits of the earth given by a non-Bābī. Though there is something of a parallel with Matt 10:24 (= Mk 9:41) it is not explicit enough to indicate the Bāb's direct knowledge of the NT. The reference summed up above to the efficacy of a rose-leaf given by one of the people of the Bayān (Bābīs) likewise has no explicit NT parallel. The "cup of water" *(finjan-i āb)* motif of itself is not a strong enough parallel to categorically uphold Gospel influence upon the Bāb.

■ [4] **The love ethic, that "believers should love one another" (V:16).**

In his summary of P. Bayān 5:16 Browne expresses his aforementioned sign of Gospel influence as follows (I have added some points of Persian transliteration):

> What God loves most in the people of the Bayān (*ahl al-bayān*) is their love one for another [*ḥubb-i ishān ba ʿaḍi ba ʿaḍi-rā....namāyand*]. They should not then dispute with each other, or rebut one another's speeches in religious

> matters. And if anyone in the Bayān rejects another he must give 95 (19x5) *mithqāls* of gold to [the Bābī messiah] Him whom God shall manifest, and to none other, who will if He please remit it, or take it (SWEGB: 372-3; P.Bay. 5:16,177f).

Here, it is with the Persian phrase *ḥubb-i īshān ba'aḍī ba'aḍī-rā.... namāyand* like several Arabic phrases incorporating one or more uses of *ba'aḍ,* that the Bāb expresses a reciprocity or mutuality of love among the *ahl al-bayān* (Bābis) (cf. Wehr, Dictionary[4], 82). God's greatest *(a'ẓam)* love *(dūst mīdārad)* he states, is that the Bābis express this reciprocity of love for one another. This Browne finds a sign of NT influence. A "love ethic" is indeed mentioned a few times in the Johannine literature and is hinted at elsewhere in the NT (e.g. Matt 5:43-4; Jn 15:12, 17; 1 Jn 2:10, 3:10, 4:7ff; Rom 13:8). This ethical teaching though is something fundamental to many Persian Sufi mystics and a part of the spiritual discipline of numerous Sufi orders. The Bāb's statements in P.Bayān 5:16 could be equally and more satisfactorily accounted for through the influence of the Sufi love ethic.

Various mystical doctrines associated with *ḥubb* (love) are also clearly in evidence in the Bayāns of the Bāb as well as in several of his other writings; most notably his Sufi influenced QA and Sufi addressed *R. Dhahabiyya.* In the QA 88 the "love" motif is introduced into the Q. based account of the primordial angelic prostration (Q.Kassis, 1067-8). Heavenly angels arrayed about the Dhikr were commanded to fall prostrate before the Bāb in the "path of Love" *(sabīl al-ḥubb).* This is stipulated in the celestial *umm al-kitāb* (Archetyal Book) (QA 88:355). Then, speaking of primordial and celestial affairs in QA 109, the Bāb states:

> We, in very truth, affixed to the mightiest Throne *(al-'arsh al-a'ẓam)* before Our servant [the Bāb] the *kalimat al-ḥubb* (Word of Love) such that God, His angels and his chosen ones *(awliyā)* in every respect witnessed his [the Bāb's] truth... (QA 109:436).

QA 91 contains an address of the Bāb to the *ahl al-ḥubb* (community of love), possibly

members of the Dhahabiyya Sufi order of Shiraz[1] or other Shirazi Sufis known to the Bāb as persons who fostered a condition of spiritual *ḥubb* (love);

> O community of love *(ahl al-ḥubb)*! Hearken unto my call from the Light of mine inmost heart *(nūrī al-fū'ād)* nigh the celestial *masjid al-aqṣā* (furthermost Mosque cf. Q.17:1), in very truth, about the elevated Throne of God *('arsh Allāh)*.... (QA 91:364).

Here, as elsewhere, there are signs of the Bāb's association with Sufis from whom he was probably influenced in the direction of a mystically oriented love ethic (T.Basmala, 361; cf. T.'Asr, f.96ff). At various points in his P.Bayān the Bāb reflects and develops themes ascribed to the female love mystic Rabiya al-'Adawiyya of Baṣra (d.c.185/801) who is especially famous for her poetical celebrations of spiritual love *(maḥabba)* and intimacy *(uns).* Her somewhat detached love mysticism is echoed and made communal in the writings of the Bāb.

In P.Bayān 7:19 (on *Ṣalat)* the Bāb defines true *'ibādat* (worship) in a distinctly Rabi'an fashion when he directs that God should be worshipped intensely, outside of a fear of Hell-fire *(nār)* or the hope of Paradise *(jannat):*

> So worship God in such that if your worship of him lead you to Hell-Fire *(nār),* no alteration in your worship *(parastish)* would be produced; and similarly, if it should lead you to Paradise *(jannat).* This alone should characterize the worship which befitteth the One God. If you worship out of fear *(khawf),* this was and has ever been unseemly relative to the expanse of the Divine sanctity *(bisāṭ-I quds-I ilāhī)* and in view also of the stipulation of the Divine Oneness *(ḥukm-i tawḥīd).* Likewise, if your gaze is upon the attainment of Paradise *(jannat)* you would be adding gods to God *(mushrik)* [in your worship] even though created humanity desires Paradise *(jannat)* thereby. Both Hell-Fire *(nār)* and Paradise *(jannat)* serve and fall prostrate before God. That [worship] which is worthy of his Essence *(dhāt-i ū)* is to worship him for his own sake. This without fear of Hell-Fire *(nār)* or hope of Paradise *(jannat).* When true worship *(taḥaqquq-I 'ibādat)* is offered, the worshipper is preserved from the Hell-Fire *(maḥfūẓ az nār)* and enters the paradise of God's good-pleasure *(jannat-i riḍā-yi ū),* though this should not be the motive of one's action (P.Bay. 7:19, 271-2).

Such passages appear to be inspired by the well-known and much cited devotional saying of Rabi'a quoted towards the beginning of Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'* (Memorials

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[1] On the Dhahabiyya Sufi Order see Gramlich,1965 1:14-26. This Order is traced back to its alleged founder, Sayyid 'Abd-Allāh Barzishābādī (d. 872/1467-8) whose *silsala* branches off from the Kubrawī master Sayyid Muhammad Nūrbaksh (d.c. 869/1464). On the 19th century Dhahbiyya of Shiraz see Lewisohn, 1998-9 (BSOAS, 61).

of the Saints):

> O God, if I worship Thee for fear of Hell, then burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thy own sake, grudge me not Thy everlasting beauty (tr. Arberry, Tadhkirat: 51).

Apparently addressed to a certain Mīrzā Abū'l-Qāsim, a Dhahabī *murshīd* known as Mīrzā Bābā (also Jawād?) the love ethic is in evidence in the Bāb's *R. Dhahabiyya* (1262/1845-6). Its lengthy opening prayer includes the words of the Bāb, "Thou assuredly know, O my God, that I do not love that I should love Thee save by virtue of what Thou do love" (Dhah. 86:75). Later the Bāb appears to refer to himself as being upon the *ṣirāt al-ḥubb* (Path of love) which is the basis of faith *(aṣl al-aymān)* and the Tree of certitude *(shajarat al-īqān).* Probably attempting to break down the looseness of Sufi non-exclusivism, he addresses his questioner saying,

> O thou who gazes out with equity and love *(bi'l-inṣāf wa'l-ḥubb)!* Such is the decree of every religion *(kull al-dīn),* so don't make the issue difficult for yourself. Ponder then upon the station of the Balance *(maqām al-mīzān)* (R.Dhah. 86:86).

In Shī`ī Islam love for God, Muhammad, the Imāms and fellow Shī`ī Muslims is a central ethical teaching. Important to the Bāb and BA*, the *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya,* (<--2.1), for example, has it that `Alī uttered the following almost Christian soteriological message expressed therein, "then hold to the *waṣī* (legatee) of your Prophet (= Imam `Alī) through whom is your salvation *(najāt),* for, through love for him *(bi-ḥubbihi)* on the [eschatological] Day of Gathering is your abode of salvation" (Bursī, *Mashāriq,* 66). At one point in his *Sharh al-ziyāra* al-Aḥsā'ī teaches that it is love for `Alī which is the foundation of Paradise (*S.Ziyāra* IV:167).

A multi-faceted love ethic is foundational in many branches of Sufism and Islamic mysticism. It has its foundation in numerous Islamic traditions and *ḥadīth qudsī* , (Nasr IS1:108-9, Graham, 1978<-- 3.1). It is expressed in a multitude of Sufi poetical and theosophical writings (Giffin, 1971; Bell, 1979; Khairallah, 1980; Schimmel, 1978: 130ff). While

al-Jaḥiz (d. 255/868-9) wrote two treatises on *`ishq* (passionate love) Avicenna penned another. Scores of statements about divine and human *ḥubb* and *ishq* (love and spiritual yearning) were made by later Muslim writers. Throughout the poetry of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 627/1273), for example, there are numerous musings upon the intricacies of divine and human love (Chittick, 1983:194-231). `Ayn al-Quḍat Hamadānī (d. 525/1131) as evidenced in his *Tamhīdāt* and other works, considered theo-erotic love as "The very constitutional foundation of creation, of being, of living, and of dying." (Dabashi, `Any al-Qudat, 420). Many other Persian Sufis thought similarly.

It is not at all necessary to seek NT influence to account for the place the Bāb gave to the love for God and for fellow believers. It is astonishing that Browne should have bothered to list such a loose alleged sign of Gospel influence. Spiritual and mystical concepts of *ḥubb* are an important aspect of the thought of the Bāb as they are in both Sufism and Shīism. The Bāb's use of *ḥubb* is more likely rooted in Sufism and Shi`ism than the result of any familiarity with the Gospels. The Q. as expounded within Persianate Islam has much to say in this respect.

■ **[5] The Golden Rule in the Gospels and the Persian Bayān.**

> O People of the Bayān! Whatsoever you do not desire [approve] for anyone do not approve for your own self (P. Bay. 6:15, 231)

This negative form of the `golden rule' is rooted in Greek popular morality as formulated by Sophists. This golden rule is the maxim enjoining one to treat others as one would wish to be treated oneself (Hamerton-Kelly, IDB(S): 369-70). In either a positive or negative form it is registered in a multitude of Jewish (Aristeas, 207;Tobit, 4:15 Sab. 31a., cf.Deut 15:13; Lev.19:18), Christian (Matt 7:12, cf.5:33f; Lk 6:31., cf Jn 15:7; Didache I2., Barnabas XIX.5), Islamic and other (i.e. Hindu and Buddhist) literatures. It will be seen here that the Bāb was most directly influenced by Islamic forms of the golden rule not though NT references as Browne supposed.

A Shī`ī Islamicate conflation of a negative form of Matt 7:12/Lk 6:31 and Matt 5:39b/

Lk 6:29 is reported by Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq as the words of Jesus son of Mary to some of his disciples. It reads,

> Whatever you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not do the same to anyone else. And should anyone strike your right cheek then let him strike the left also (Majlisī, *Biḥār*^{2} 14:287).

The line of the P.Bayān 6:15 cited above could be viewed as a fairly precise Persian version of the first part of this Arabic conflation of Jesus' words. In this light direct appeal to NT influence is again unnecessary. Forms of the golden rule attributed to Muhammad and others are common in Islamic ethical literatures. In the Sunnī *Kitāb al-`arba`īn* (Book of the Forty [Ḥadīth]) compiled by al-Nawawī (d.676/1277), for example, the following tradition, found in both Bukharī and Muslim, is recorded on the authority of Abū Ḥamza Anas ibn Mālik, (Muhammad said): "None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself" (K. Arba'īn / Forty Hadith, 56-7, Ḥadīth,13).

■ **[6] The sanction on buying and selling in the mosque (IV.17)**

> It is not lawful to transact business *(bai`a)* in the precincts of the House *(ḥāl al-bayt)*. Whomsover desires to elevate this sanctum *(ḥāl)* above [all such matters] should feel free to appropriate whatever is in the sanctum *(ḥāl)* even though its owner is not at all satisfied therewith. God is the more rightful owner of *(Allāh aḥaqq)* this property *(milk)* than that servant who has simply possessed it for a few years (PB 4:17,145-6 [Arabic synopsis] cf. SWEGB:359).

> You shall not transact business with what which belongs to God in the precincts of the House *(al-bayt)* or the Mosque *(al-masjid)*. You all should submit as much of your possessions (property, *al-milk)* as you are in a position to, within the [sacred] boundary *(ḥadd)* [of the Mosque?]...
>
> The Sanctified Mosque *(masjid al-ḥaram)* indicates the birthplace of *man-yuẓhiruhu Allāh* and that is also where I was born... Say: the Seat of Aḥmad [Muhammad] [is there and is the object of] My Remembrance (*maq`ad aḥmad dhikrī)* (? Cf. Q. 54:55). He enters therein and it is there that you should perform your devotions. You should not turn towards my house *(baytī)* neither towards the [other] seats [shrines of the `Letters of the Living?'] unless you have sufficient means on the path and will not be saddened [on account of travelling difficulties].... (Ar. Bay. 4:17a, Ḥasanī, 88).

In his Bayāns (Per. & Ar.) 4:17 the Bāb forbids buying and selling, the conducting of business affairs, around the sacred *bayt* (House), apparently relative to his own house in Shiraz which also appears to be that of *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* and hence described as the

masjid Allāh (Mosque of God) and the *masjid al-ḥaram* (Sanctified Mosque, a qur'ānic term normally descriptive of the Ka`ba at Mecca, Q.2:144 etc.,Kassis, 888-9).

Bayāns 4:17 is an example of the Bāb's appropriating, and to some degree upgrading, Islamic piety by giving it something of a messianic application. Bearing in mind that certain laws of the Bāb reflect his attempts at establishing a perfect earthly paradise reflecting heavenly archetypes and opulent alchemical substances, it is worth noting that an Islamic tradition cited by Bāyazīd al-Basṭāmī (d.c. 261/874) and others has it that "In *jannat* (Paradise) there is a market where there is no buying and selling" (cited Chittick IS1:405 cf. Ibn `Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt,* II:682)

The Q. and numerous Sunnī and Shī`ī sources have it that the *masjid* (mosque, lit. `place for prostration') is primarily a sacred location for community worship (Q. 2:144; 9:17-18; 7:32 etc). It is secondarily a place of assembly thought fitting for various public affairs, having "political, social and cultural functions" (Salam-Liebich, `Mosque - History and Tradition' Enc.Rel.10:121). Often used as a centre of legal, adminisrative and educational activity, the mosque was thought fitting for the "transacting of matters of public finance and the existence of a community treasury *(bayt al-māl).* (ibid, 123). In early Islamic times the transacting of business in the mosques was not entirely forbidden (EI^{2}VI:654-5) though there are some early traditions that seem to regulate or overule this.

The Bāb's directive against buying and selling in P.Bayān IV:17 corresponds with those Islamic traditions that consider buying and selling in mosques as something undesirable or forbidden. A tradition relayed through the forbears of Ibn Shuayb recorded in the (Sunnī) *Kitāb al-masājid* (Book of Mosques) within the *Sunan* of Abū `Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nasā'ī (d.303/915) reads, "The prophet [Muhammad] forbade group meetings before *ṣalat* (prayer) on the day of gathering (Friday), as well as the buying *(al-shirā')* and selling *(al-bai`)* [of goods in the mosque]" (Sunan, 2:47-8). Similar traditions are also recorded by Abū Dawūd and Tirmihdī (Numaynī,1978 II: LIV. No. 116,page123). There may well be Shī`ī traditions to this effect though they do not seem to be common.

That the Bāb apparently reacts against commercial activity in mosques may reflect those Shī`ī traditions which highlight their supreme sanctity, especially that of the *masjid al-ḥaram.* Ja`far Ṣādiq transmitted the prophetic tradition "When you arrive at the gate of the mosque know that you have approached the gate of the house of a mighty King" (*Biḥār* [2] 83:373-4 [339ff]; Jīlānī, *Miṣbāḥ,* 1:86-90; Tibrīzī, *Farā'id*).

Despite the considerable differences in location, detail and purpose, Browne found something of a parallel between P.Bayān .4:17 and the Gospel story of Jesus' cleansing the Temple, the Jerusalem House of God. While Jesus threw out the moneychangers from the Temple the Bāb would have all goods in the sanctum of the Mosque belong to God by virtue of their being placed in this sacred region. Again, rather than invoking Gospel influence Bayāns 4:17 reflect the Bāb's mercantile and Islamic background as opposed to the Gospel account of the cleansing of the Temple. For the Bāb the eschatological call for a higher degree of piety relative to new sacred regions and centres of pilgrimage is what is focussed upon. There are no obvious textual or other relationships between Bayāns 4:17 and the Persian Gospel versions of Jesus' ` cleansing of the Temple' (Matt 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-18; Lk 19:45-8;Jn 2:13-17).

■ [7] Dying to God (P.Bayān II.8; III.13; V.3).

The following are some of the passages which Browne most probably thought reflected Gospel [NT] influence upon the Bāb's understanding of `dying to God';

> On the exposition of the reality of death *(ḥaqīqat al-mawt);* an ultimate reality *(al-ḥaqq)...* Whoso inwardly knows "death" is eternally dying before God *(lam yazal mayyit* [an] *`ind Allāh)* for such an one has no will other than God's will and such is his "death" *(al-mawt)* before the Point of the Bayān *(nuqṭat al-bayān* = the Bāb) (P.Bay. 2:8, 33, 36).

> All the [Divine] Names and similitudes *(asmā' va amthāl)* of the Ultimate Reality *(ḥaqq)* are within the Ultimate Reality *(dar-i ḥaqq)* and all such as are outside the Ultimate Reality *(dū–i ḥaqq)* are outside the Ultimate Reality *(al-ḥaqq)...* Should any person truly be an `Ārif (mystic knower) he would assuredly die in Him *(bi-ū mayyit mīgardad)* and before His Divine Will *(nazd-I mashiyyat-i ū)* (P.Bay. 3:13, 93).

The Bāb's complex ideas about dying (death, *al-mawt)* are registered in the lengthy eighth gate of his P. Bayān (23-31; cf. A.Bay. 2:8, 84) and elsewhere (P.Bay. 3:3, 84) though

hardly, it appears, in P. Bayān (5:3, 157-9). It must suffice here to note that P. Bayān 2:8 is a lengthy consideration of what constitutes the reality of death *(ḥaqīqat al-mawt).* Physical and other modes of "death" *(al-mawt)* have limitless meanings for the Bāb. "Death" takes on further senses when associated with a new theophany or manifestation of the *shajarat al-tawḥīd* (Tree of the Divine Oneness). Several non-literal senses of "death" are expressive of a collective, universal "death" implicit in five partial *shahāda* like testimonies commencing with the particle of negation, لا(*lā* = "no"). For the Bāb they are suggestive of mystical "death" and an expression of inappropriate faith affirmations (P.Bay. 2:8, 33-34, cf. A.Bay. 2:8) .

Browne did not specify precisely which Gospel (NT) texts he thought influenced the Bāb's ideas about "death". He most probably gave weight to the *mayyit bi-ū,* "dying in Him" (loosely "dying to God") in P.Bayān 2:8. Browne evidently found these references evocative of NT texts, most probably those commencing with the Greek spatial **ἐν** (= "in ------") though the notion of `dying to God' is not a commonplace in the Gospels (or the rest of the NT). It was perhaps the case that the Persian *mayyit bi-ū* reminded Browne of such Johannine phrases as ἐν Χριστώ (in Christ), ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (in Jesus Christ), ἐν κυρίῳ (in the Lord) (Jn 14:20; 15:4-10; 1 Jn 3:24; 4:13-16). Other predominantly Pauline (and pseudo-Pauline), occurrences of ἐν Χριστώ (in Christ) and **ἐν κυρίῳ** (in the Lord) occur twenty times each in Romans and I Corinthians and a few times elsewhere (Phil. 1:1,14, 4:7; II Cor. 5:17 etc.; TDNT X:537ff; EDNT1:448; 2:459).

The phrase `dying to God' (so Browne) as "dead in Christ" occurs only a few times in the NT. 1 Thess. 4:16 has it that those "dead" (Gk. *nekros*) "in Christ" (**νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ** = Christians) shall "rise first" at the parousia, the second coming of Christ (cf. Jn 5:25, 28f). Christian martyrs would seen to be those referred to in the beatitude of Rev. 4:13 as "the dead" (**οἱ νεκροὶ**) who from henceforth die "in [the] Lord" (**ἐν Χριστῷ**) (cf. also Rom 6:8; Col. 2:20 and 2Tim. 2:11). Henry's Martyn's Persian translation of the aforementioned NT passages does not suggest any close textual parallelism with the relevant passages in the P. Bayān of

the Bāb.

Browne's proposal of direct NT influence upon the Bāb is unnecessary and unconvincing. This in view of the varied and common Islamic concept of doing things *fī Allāh* (lit. `in God') evident in the Q. 22:78 and Q. 29:69 (Nöldeke on -- *fī Allāh* "in God" in Nöldeke-Schwally, 1909:1:257 cited Graham, 1977:143). It is a common phrase in Sufi literatures. Most importantly the Persian *bi-ū mayyit mīgardad* is basically equivalent to the Arabic *fanā' fī Allāh,* "dying to God" and the virtually synonymous phrase *baqā' fī Allāh* (abiding permanency, subsistence) (lit.) "in God" (cf. Q.55:26-7).

In tracing the roots of the concept of persons dying "in Him" or *fī Allāh* ("in God") in the Bāb's writings one must again bear in mind the widespread use of these phrases in Sufī literatures where --- *fī Allāh* (– in God') and related terminology is very common. The Bāb is again much more likely to have been influenced by the Sufi background than by the few NT phrases mentioned above. NT influence upon *fi' Allāh* (= Per. *bī-ū mayyit...)* is assured though it predates by hundreds of years the time of the Bāb and the 19th century Persian Gospel translations (<--4.2).

From early Islamic times Muslims appropriated Christian terminology associated with doing something *fī Allāh* (lit.`in God') including `dying to God' ("in God"). Goldziher, as long ago as 1888 had ably demonstrated that Muslim expressions of doing something *fī Allāh* were the result of NT- Christian influence upon early *ḥadīth* and other Muslim literatures.[1] He stated, for example, that,

> A specifically Christian expression which has penetrated deeply into Islamic literature is to do anything 'in God,' *fi'llāh* or *bi'llāh.* The Muslim interpreters of the traditions in which this expression occurs explain it generally in the sense of *fī sabīl Allāh,* i.e. in God's way or to the glory of God.. (Goldziher, Muh. Studien II: 392-3 [tr. Stern, II: 355).

[1] See the appendix to his essay, `The ḥadīth as a means of Edification and Entertainment' (Eng. trans. in Goldziher (ed) Stern vol. II:145-163 detailing NT influence upon *ḥadīth* literature written in 1888 (Eng. trans. In Stern 1971 vol.II:346-362). This appendix is further supplemented by Goldziher in his article, `Neutestamentliche Elemente in der Traditionslitterature' in *Oriens Christianus* II (1902), 315-22.

Goldziher gives several examples of the above from Sunnī *ḥadīth* collections as well as the following statement from the 4th Shī`ī Imam, `Alī Zayn al-`Ābidīn (d. 95/713) regarding "the *jīrān Allāh* (protected of God) who "sit together in God, practise common devotional exercises in God, and together go on pilgrimage in God *(nataj alas fi'llāh wa-natadhākar fi'llāh wa-natazāwar fi'llāh)* (al-Yaqūbī II:264-5 cited Goldziher, ed. Stern, II:356 underlining added).[1]

Though the Bāb strongly criticized anything suggestive of a pantheistic *waḥdat al-wujūd* which compromised God's being `wholly other', his writings do suggest a deep mysticism surrounding the believers self-effacement in the *mashiyyat Allāh* (The divine Will) centred in the *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (divine manifestation) through a "death" of self *(mayyit)* in its ultimate reality *(al-ḥaqq).* This has no close NT parallel but many Sufi parallels. In fact the Bāb is not so far removed from the Great Shaykh (Ibn al-`Arabī) who championed a *via negativa* as well as a mediatory *al-Insān al-Kamil* and various kinds of unitative spiritual conditions expressive of dying to God (<--P.Bay. II:9).

It is also pertinent to note that within the writings of the mystically oriented philosophers of the Safavid period such as Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1099/1679), there are discussions of these matters. In Kashānī's *Kalimat-I maknūnih* (Hidden Words) there is a section entitled "The discourse [word] *(kalimat)* in which is an indication of the significance of *al-fanā' fī Allāh* ([mystical] dying in God) and *al-baqā' bi'l-llāh* (eternal abiding in God)". Without going into details, it is explained that gnostic initiates *(ahl-ma`rifa)* teach that the intention of "the death *(fanā')* of the servant *(`abd)* in the ultimately Real (God, *ḥaqq)* is not *fanā'-i dhāt,* (the extinction of his personal essence [in God]) but rather the (mystical) death of self *(fanā')* before the dictates of His law *(fanā' jaht-i bi-sharīat-i ū)* in the direction of that "Lordship" which results from complete servitude before the *al-ḥaqq* , the Real-God *ṣūbubiyyat-I ḥaqq)* (Kāshānī, *Kalimat,* 116).

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[1] For further examples of the Muslim use of *fī Allāh* in the Q. and in select *ḥadīth qudsī* (<--2.2) see Graham1978 which also registers some learned comments of Nöldeke (d.1930) on the use of *fī Allāh* in the Q (Graham, 1977:143 referring to Noldeke-Schwally I:257).

The foregoing seven `signs' of Gospel influence suggested by Browne in the Bāb's P. Bayān provide little or no solid evidence of the Shirazī Sayyid's direct knowledge of the Gospels (NT). As far of I am aware there is nothing in the Bāb's other writings which clearly indicate his direct knowledge of the Bible. Unless better evidence is forthcoming it can be assumed that the Bāb never cited the canonical NT nor any other biblical texts. It is likely that he bypassed existing Persian and Arabic translations because of his extreme veneration of the Q. The pristine Bible had its spiritual essence assimilated into the Arabic Qur'ān (<-). For the Bāb the *tawrat* and *injīl* were expressions of the sublime word of God but scriptures appropriate to a previous religious theophany (<--).

■ 7.4 The Bible in the address of the Bāb to the Letters of the Living.

Attention will now be focussed upon a Gospel informed speech of the Bāb which he allegedly delivered to his first disciples, the `Letters of the Living'. Some statements of Amanat about the Bāb's knowledge of the NT in his 1989 *Resurrection and Renewal* will also be critically surveyed.

In1888 a leading Bahā'ī poet and teacher then resident in `Akkā named Mullā Muhammad and known as Nabīl-I Zarandī (1247/1831--1310/1892) was commissioned by BA* to write a history of the Bābī-Bahā'ī religions. This, it seems, in order to supercede an inadequate history "from the year 60" (1260 =1844 CE) written by BA*'s long-time amanuenses Mīrzā Āqā-Jān Khadīm-Allāh (d. 1319 /1901). Subsequently, from Dhū'l-Qada 1305/ July-August 1888 Zarandī began to compile a lengthy collection of historical sketches and associated notes, an initial draft of which was completed on 19th Jumādī 1 1307 (= 12th January 1890). After taking account of BA* and AB*s suggestions the revised 1014 page (each page being 25x21 cm. and having 22-24 lines) manuscript was completed on 26th Rabi` 1 1308 (10th Nov.1890). Among other things this work included coverage of the pre-Bābī Shaykhism of the first two Shaykhs continuing up till the time of completion (1890) and dominated by the person of BA*, his writings and his major disciples. This work came to be

known as the *Tārīkh-i [Nabīl-I] Zarandī*.[1]

Zarandī's apologetically and hagiographically oriented salvation history begins with a citation from a fasting Tablet of BA* and a poem revolving around his theophany. There follow three pages of gematric and theological considerations of BA*'s name Ḥusayn and the mysteries of *al-ism al-a`ẓam* ("The `Mightiest Name of God") as *bahā'*, ("splendour" --> 7.2f) in the light of Islamic *ḥadīth,* the *al-ḥurūfāt al-muqaṭṭa`a* (the isolated letters of the Q.) and aspects of *`ilm-i -ḥurūf* (the science of letters) (*Zarandī,* mss. 1-4 in Rafati, 1996: 87 cf. 76f). A few pages later (page 6ff) Zarandī explains how he came to write his history which he prefaced (page 8f) with a list of topics covered and details regarding key Bābī-Bahā'ī informants. Then begins the work proper. It is impossible to adequately assess its style and contents without full access to the original text which has not been available for scholarly examination for many years. Only a few isolated pages of the original Persian have found their way into print.[2]

The *Tarīkh-I Zarandī* has never been wholly published in the original or in translation. What is now known is (largely) the result of SE*'s 1932 publication of his selective English translation and thorough reworking of parts of the first portion of Zarandī's history of the Bāb and Babism. This he entitled the *Dawn-Breakers Nabíls Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation* (1st ed.1932. 685pp). It appears to be selective `recreation' of narratives contained in the (largely) initially Shaykhī prolegomenon and Bābī portion of the *Tarīkh-i*

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[1] Some details about the unpublished *Tārīkh-I Nabīl Zarandī* can be found in Vahid Rafati's 1996 article `Tarīkh-I Nabīl Zarandī' in *Khūshihā-yi az kharmā–I adab va hunar.* vol. 7 (Proceedings of a seminar on Nabīl-I a`ẓam-I Zarandī), 76-87. In the following paragraph's I draw primarily on this article by Rafati, the only easily available first hand account of the Haifa located mss. Cf. MacEoin, Sources, index, 272-3.

[2] As far as I am aware very few Bahā'ī or non-Bahā'ī scholars have been allowed to examine or consult Zarandī's original papers constituting a recension of the *Tārīkh* (= in part the "Dawn-Breakers"). For reasons that are not entirely clear, contemporary Bahā'ī authorities are loathe to allow scholarly examination of the Persian-Arabic originals in their possession. I was informed in 2000 that the Haifa ms. of Zarandī is not in fact the final recension incorporating all the revisions and suggestions of BA* who apparently regarded Zarandī's theological *Tārīkh* as lacking concrete historical details. The fully revised edition of Zarandī was apparently appropriated by opponents of BA* and is not now in the archives of the Bahā'ī World Centre (Haifa, Israel).

Zarandī. The Shaykhī period presents Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāzim as harbingers of the Bābī (-Baha'i) religion. Then, after detailing aspects of the life and writings of the Bāb, it continues up until the time of the Mazandarān upheaval (1852).[1]

For the 20th century Bahā'ī international community, SE*'s English language *Dawn-Breakers* occupied a central place in Bābī-Bahā'ī salvation history. SE* lavishly praised Zarandi's history and directed western Bahā'īs to study it. Bahā'ī teachers and missionaries should evangelize after the sacrificial example of the Bābīs of the *Dawn-Breakers.* From the time of its translation it became a kind of touchstone for assaying the value of other Bābī (-Bahā'ī) historical works. In the late 1950s, for example, zealous Iranian Bahā'īs in the light of a letter of SE* dated 15th Sept.1932, tried to suppress other histories thought to contradict the *Dawn-breakers* which they viewed as a virtually infallible work.

■ **The NT in the Bāb's alleged address to select `Letters of the Living' (mid. 1844).**

Reckoned the twelfth of the nineteen apostles of BA*, the abovementioned Muhammad `Alī Nabīl-i Zarandī was a zealous Bahā'ī propagandist and a poet of considerable talent (Browne, LHP IV:151,187 fn.). He was also an insightful apologetic historian of four decades Bābī-Bahā'ī experience (Zarandī, 1923[95]; *Khūsh-I hā,* no.7). Involved in Bābī activities since the Tabarsī episode, Zarandī had many key first-hand informants for his detailed and highly significant though not infallible, hagiographically oriented, *istidlāliyya* informed history.

Of the various addresses included in the English *Dawn-Breakers* of Zarandī [SE*] (completed c. 1308/1890-1 1st pub. USA. 1932) there exists an address of the Bāb (without any *isnād* / chain of authorities) allegedly delivered to most of his first disciples, the *hurūf[āt]-I hayy* (Letters of the Living) before sending them out to proclaim his mission in the summer of 1260 / 1844 (DB [SE*]:63-5). As translated and doubtless to some extent "recreated" by SE*

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[1] The *Tārīkh-i Zarandī* has never been wholly published in the original Persian (and Arabic) or in any other language into which it might have been translated. On its publication history see Rafati, 1996:83f. All partial publications of the *Tārīkh-I Zarāndī* are translations from SE*'s English version. An Arabic translation entitled *Maṭā`lī al-anwār* (Cairo, Egypt, 1941) was made by the Egyptian Bahā'ī `Abd al-Jalīl Bey Sa`d (d.1942) but was banned and the original print run appears to have been destroyed by the Egyptian authorities. A Persian translation from the English via the Arabic (!) was made by Ishrāq Khavārī (d. 1971) with a similar title and was first printed in 117 BE = 1961 (?).

(Rabbanī, PP: 215) this address incorporates phrases and citations which echoing ascribed to Jesus in the Authorized (`King James', 1611) NT version. The `Sermon of the Mount' (Matt 5:1ff and Lk 6:17ff) and words attributed to Jesus as he addressed his own disciples as they embarked on their missions (Mk.6:7f; Matt.9:35f; 10:1f; Lk. 9:1f;10:1f) account for many of these allusions. SE*s translation of the bulk of this speech is as follows (with select NT references and key NT phrases in capitals):

> O my beloved friends! You the bearers of the name of God in this Day. You have been chosen as the repositories of His mystery...Ponder the words of Jesus addressed to His disciples, as He sent them forth to propagate the Cause of God. In words such as these, He bade them arise and fulfil their mission: 'Ye are even as the fire which in the darkness of the night has been kindled upon the mountain top. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE THE EYES OF MEN [Matt. 5:16]. Such must be the purity of your character and the degree of your renunciation, that the people of the earth may through you recognise and be drawn closer to the HEAVENLY FATHER who is the Source of purity and grace. FOR NONE HAS SEEN THE FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN [Jn 6:46; cf. Jn 1:18; Matt 6:9; 11:27;Lk 10:22]. You who are His spiritual children must by your deeds exemplify His virtues, and WITNESS TO HIS GLORY. YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH, BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST ITS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? [Matt.5:13a] Such must he the degree of your detachment, that INTO WHATEVER CITY YOU ENTER [Matt. 10:11 cf. Mk 610; Lk 9:4] to proclaim and teach the Cause of God, YOU SHOULD IN NO WISE EXPECT EITHER MEAT OR REWARD FROM ITS PEOPLE [cf. Matt 7:2b+ Lk 6:38b]. Nay, WHEN YOU DEPART OUT OF THAT CITY YOU SHOULD SHAKE THE DUST FROM OFF YOUR FEET [Lk 9:5, cf. Matt 10:14; Mk. 6:11]. As you have entered it pure and undefiled, so must you depart from that city. For verily I say, THE HEAVENLY FATHER IS ever with you and keeps watch over you. If you be faithful to Him, He will assuredly deliver into your hands all the treasures of the earth, and will exalt you above all the rulers and kings of the world.' O My Letters! Verily I say, immensely exalted is this Day above the days of the Apostles of old... Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land. I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day. Exert your utmost endeavour that, in the world to come, I who am now instructing you, may, before the MERCY-SEAT OF GOD, rejoice in your deeds and glory in your achievements" (Zarandī / SE* DB:63-64, 65).[1]

The miscellaneous quotations and allusions to the NT record of Jesus` words in his `Sermon on the Mount', `Mission of the Apostles' and elsewhere have been thought to underline the Bāb's familiarity with the NT. After selectively citing passages and references from this address of the Bāb Amanat comments, "These and other remarks appear to be free references

[1] Two of Amanat's biblical cross references footnoted to these last two sentences, "Scatter throughout the length and breadth of this land..." (fn. 240 = cf. Matt11:3) and ".. I am preparing you for the advent of a mighty Day" (fn. 241 = cf. Matt. 10:7, 23) are meaningless. They have no bearing upon the Bāb's alleged NT allusions. Several of the biblical references in R&R are erroneous.

to the Gospel" (R&R:198). This is largely correct[1] but these citations and allusions are not the Báb's own "free references". It is methodologically very suspect to make this assertion on the basis of the English of the Zarandi / SE* recension of an address only indirectly attributed to the Báb. Neither the Báb's early writings nor his later works contain anything comparable to this speech. Even the English introduction to this speech has it that these words are only the like of what the Báb might have said to his first disciples: "With such words the Báb quickened the faith of His disciples and launched them upon their mission" (DB :65).

Zarandī / SE* also have the Báb himself say, "In words such as these He [Jesus] bade them arise and fulfil their mission" (DB:63). In the light of these points it is not surprising that SE* who himself framed the address in AV/King James' English), in a 1934 letter advised Bahā'ī readers not to take the speeches attributed to the Báb and BA* in the English *Dawn-Breakers* as their "exact words" but, rather, as "the substance of their message" (SE*,UD: 433). It is surprising that this address of the Báb has been taken by Amanat to highlight the Báb's personal knowledge of the NT and of Christianity.

In taking the Zarandi/SE* DB address to be a testimony to the biblical knowledge of the Báb it would also be necessary to assert that he knew the Hebrew Bible in the AV. This in that the last sentence from this address (DB:65 cited above but not by Amanat) contains AV biblical English terminology rooted in the Hebrew Bible by making reference to the "mercy-seat of God". This phrase is biblical English deriving from the Tyndale (1526) Bible version subsequently taken up in the 1611 AV. The AV 's "mercy-seat" has no obvious Arabic-Persian or Islamic equivalent. It translates the Hebrew *kapporet* (Exod. 25:17ff etc) which designates the place of expiation (Lat. Vulgate = *propitiatia)* which is the golden lid covering the Ark of the Covenant containing the two stone tablets of the law. This golden lid is the "mercy-seat" , so-called because it was sprinkled with sacrificial animal blood to atone for the sins of the

[1] The Báb's references to the apostles of Jesus *(hawārīyun)* are few and far between. See, for example, QA 63:255 (EGB. Coll.f.109a), a passage inspired by Q. 3:52f and *T. Kawthar,* (EGB Coll. Or. F10 (7), f.91a) (cf. P.Bay. 2:9).

Israelites (Lev.16:14-15).

In the Greek Septuagint (LXX) the Heb. *kapporet* is often translated by the Gk. *hilasterion* (τὸ Ἱλαστήριον) which influenced the English rendering "mercy-seat" in the Greek (Pseudo-Pauline) book of Hebrews at 9:5 (cf. Rom. 3:25) which is the only NT use of this English phrase. This takes us far from language and concepts the Bāb might have used in an 1844 address. Amanat makes no reference to this Zarandi/SE* AV biblical phrase in the Bāb's address. It doubtless originated with SE* who used "mercy-seat" ten or more times in translating from the writings of the Bāb and BA*. [1] The original behind "mercy-seat" in DB:65 may well also be (Ar.) *al-ʿarsh* though this tells us nothing at all of the Bāb's knowledge of the intricacies of the HB. It testifies to SE*'s delight in the beauty of the biblical English of the AV. He used it freely in beautifying and "westernizing" the words of the Bāb and BA*.

In the light of the above it can hardly have been the case that the Bāb "took his references direct from the Gospels" (so Amanat R&R:198) and allegedly had, as Amanat puts it, an "above average" knowledge of the NT (R&R:00). This "above average" knowledge of the NT is that of Zarandī as put into AV English by SE*. It can be confidently asserted that the Bāb himself never uttered the Zarandi/SE* *Dawn-Breakers* address as cited above (<-- DB:63-5). The address to the Letters of the Living appears to have been primarily authored by Zarandī and subsequently brought into line with biblical AV English by the Bahā'ī Guardian. There is nothing comparable to this *Dawn-Breakers* address in any of the authentic Persian and Arabic writings of the Bāb known to the present writer.

The widely travelled Zarandī most likely authored words used by SE* as a basis of the Bāb's address to his disciples. Prior to writing his history (in 1888) Zarandī doubtless had considerable dialogue with Christians in the Ottoman empire and in the ʿAkkā-Haifa region

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[1] On occasion SE* used "mercy-seat" to (non-literally) render *al-ʿarsh* (lit. the Throne) in QA 91 though the *ʿarsh* of Islamic -Bābī cosmology has nothing to do with expiation (SWB: [QA 91]] 45/tr. 68). In translating *alwāḥ* of BA* in his *Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh* (1st ed. 1934) SE* also at one point used the English "mercy seat of Thy Oneness" to render the Arabic *ʿarsh raḥmat waḥdāniyyatika* (lit. Throne of the mercy of Thy Oneness") (P&M No. 184, 323/Ar. 216).

where there were several churches and numerous Christians. He could easily have gained a knowledge of Arabic and / or Persian translations of the NT as did many other Bahā'īs of his generation, including Mīrzā Abū'l-Faḍl Gulpaygānī (d. 1914) and Hajjī Mīrzā Ḥaydar `Alī Iṣfahānī (d. 1921). It could well have been his knowledge of the Bible that enabled him, at Alexandria in August 1868, to convert a Protestant physician named Fāris Effendī (d.18?? unknown?) whom BA* subsequently addressed as (a probably honorary?) *usqūf al-naṣārī* ("one of the bishops of the Christians") and to whom he wrote at least two weighty Arabic Tablets (Zarandī, *Tarīkh* tr. in Balyuzi, BKG:265ff; Lambden, 1993).

Zarandī had ample opportunity to learn about the Bible/NT. He would very likely have familiarized himself with, if not memorized such central Gospel passages as the `Sermon on the Mount'. Then, in writing his history, he might have gained inspiration from the NT record of Jesus' address to his disciples before sending them out on their evangelical mission (<--). This line of approach may best account for his drawing on NT passages to fill in lacunae in Bābī history. The Dawn-Breakers address of the Bāb cited above is best viewed as a piece of Christian-Bahā'ī inspired salvation history of the late 1880's and early 1890s updated in highly biblicized form in the early 1930's by SE*. The Bāb's words were created in order to provide a befitting and wonderful address for the new messiah who was seen to take on a Christ like prophetological persona. In similar fashion Zarandī / SE* had also used and adapted a version of the Islamic account of Jesus' first day at school to provide hagiographical inspiration and precedent for the account of the Bāb's first day at the school of Shaykh `Ābid (Lambden, BSB 1/4 [1983], 22-32 = 1986:1-31).

The Bāb's 1260/1844 speech to the bulk of his Letters was greatly favoured by SE*. It was highly inspirational for many of its Bahā'ī readers of western Christian background. This is evidenced by the fact that the address was several times separately printed in addition to

numerous printings of the English *Dawn-Breakers.*[1] It served to inspire western Bahā'īs in the propagation of their religion (Rabanī, PP:217f; SE* MIS:299;). As a piece of salvation history it was very effective though it can hardly be deemed historical or to be what the Bāb might himself have uttered. It has no bearing at all upon the Bāb's alleged knowledge of the Bible or his self-understanding.

■ Unfounded assertions of Amanat in his *Resurrection and Renewal*

Amanat's understanding of the Bāb's address to the `Letters of the Living' and of wider issues relating to the Bāb's knowledge of the NT and of Christianity are set out in his 1982 Oxford University doctoral thesis, a revised version of which was published in 1989 by Cornell University Press with the title *Resurrection and Renewal, The Making of the Bābī Movement in Iran, 1844-1850,* (= R&R). Both the thesis and the book contain a number of statements about the Bāb and the influence of the NT upon him. Almost everything said in this area is either demonstrably false or based on very scant evidence indeed.

In R&R:142 Amanat asserts that "There is enough evidence that even in the early stages, prior to his proclamation [May 1844 CE], the Bāb had access to recent translations of the New Testament, though probably not the Old Testament". The evidence for this is spelled out in a footnote (no.174). Therein Amanat sketches the availability of Persian translations of the NT/ Bible. First, the availability of these translations has nothing whatsoever to so with the Bāb's actual possession or use of them. For this there would seem to be no reliable primary evidence at all. Amanat then asserts that, "Constant references in the *Bayān*, and in his earlier works to Jesus and to "the letters of the Gospel" (i.e. Christians) and their faith, leave little doubt as to his direct knowledge of the Gospel" (R&R:142) This is entirely misleading. While there are a fair number of references to Christians in the *P. Bayān* and a few other late works, detail is

[1] Collins records several American printings of the 5 or so page `The Bāb's Address to the Letters of the Living' (New York: Bahā'ī Pub. Committee, 193?; 1949; 1953; 196?) (Collins, 1990:8). It was also included, for example, at the end (pp. 20-22) of the commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the `Martyrdom of the Bāb 1850-1950' (np .nd. [1950]) by the NSA of the Bahā'īs of Australia and New Zealand.

lacking as it is in the Bāb's "earlier works". In fact references to the "letters of the Gospel" (= Jesus' disciples, Christians) are not particularly numerous and show no indication at all of NT influence. There is nothing which leads the reader of the Bāb's early works to substantiate Amanat's over confident and misleading assertion that there is "Little doubt as to his direct knowledge of the Gospels" (R&R:142).

The Bāb's references to Christians are more likely accounted for as born out of his admiration for Christians and Europeans gained during his time at Bushire or merchant years in Shiraz and Bushire. Amanat's footnote to the above cited assertion (fn. 75 p,142) refers the reader to his Ch.4 and to the (Persian) *Dalā'il-I Sab`ih* 52-3 for "references to the Gospel". While the information in Ch. 4 will be dealt with below, the passage in the Persian *Dalā'il-i Sab`ih* allegedly containing "references to the Gospel" reads as follow:

> And now that the bearer of the divine ordinance (*ṣāḥib-i ḥukm* = the Bāb) is manifest with evident proof and certain testimony, they (Christians, etc) have remained wrapt up in veils. Like the Christian community *(ummat-I `Īsā`)* whose priest-monks *(rahbān)* indulged in austerities *(riyāḍat mīkashīdand)* in order to [befittingly comprehend] a single ordinance *(ḥukm)* in conformity with the divine good-pleasure [as stipulated] in the Gospels *(injīl).* And [then] the messenger of God *(rasūl Allāh* = Muhammad) was made manifest as the fountainhead of the divine ordinances *(maṣdar-i aḥkām-i ilāhī)* and they remained wrapt up in veils. Still they indulged in austerities *(riyāḍat mīkashand)* in order to comprehend the divine good-pleasure [regarding messianic expectation] in the Gospels *(injīl).* Now bear witness how the well-being *(rizq)* of the veiled ones [Christians] ended up such that they were in a state of error *(maḥall-i idnī?).* Not a single one [Christian] is looked upon favourably, for he only operates according to the parameters of his own destiny. And one and all [of the Christians) act bereft of understanding save, that is, such as God has accorded [true] salvation *(najat).*

This passage contains no Gospel references at all and shows no special knowledge of Christians. In Islamicate fashion it simply states that the most pious Christians failed to comprehend the advent of Muhammad as the one promised in the Gospels. They largely remained veiled to both the messianic advent of Muhammad and that of the Bāb.

It is in Ch.4 of R&R that Amanat refers to the speech attributed in Zarandi/SḴ*, to the Bāb (<--). After correctly reckoning Shī`īte traditions "the main impetus for the Bāb and his followers", he states that these were "not the only sources of inspiration" (R&R:196) and

continues,

> The speech the Bab delivered to his disciples in the summer of 1260/1844, just before departure to their assigned missions, also shows traces of Christian influence. He even drew a direct comparison with Christ and his disciples. After expressing his hopes for the progress of the movement and emphasising the moral strength and sacrifice needed for fulfilling their mission, the Bab cautions his followers to shun any hesitation or weakness that might lead them to retreat and silence. He then directly refers to the words of Jesus (R&R:197)

It is evident that Amanat takes the NT allusions in Zarandī/DB* speech of the Bāb to his Letters (which he cites) as evidence of the Bāb's making direct reference to the "words of Jesus" (Amanat, ibid). The following Gospel references are given in R&R:198 (fn.239), "Compare to Matthew 5:14-16 (cf.10:27), 11:27; 5:13; 10:11-14, 20 (also Luke 9:5) respectively." They are followed by a sentence asserting that "Nabil makes no specific reference to any of the Gospels" which is evidently intended to affirm their going back to the Bāb himself. Amanat thus implies that though the Bāb knew the Gospels, Zarandī did not! In the light of what has already been argued it will be evident that the opposite is far more likely to be the case. The *Dawn-Breakers* Gospel allusions only inform us about the knowledge of Zarandi/SE*. Having largely correctly identified though wrongly attributed certain of these NT allusions Amanat also makes the following bold yet mistaken assertions,

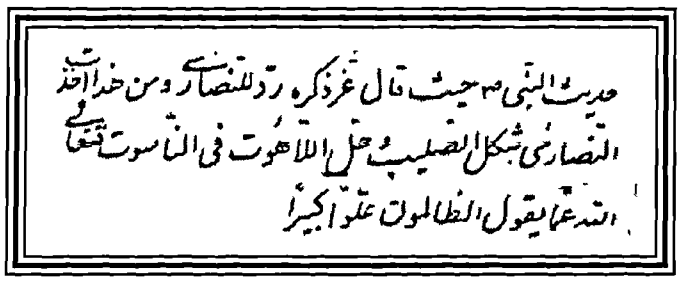
> This preoccupation with Christ was beyond the common Muslim knowledge of the time, which was mainly confined to the Qur'ān and other Islamic sources. He must have taken his references directly from the Gospel , the study of which had given him an understanding of revelation and divinity somewhat different from that of the Qur'ān. No doubt the Bab found the personality of Christ appealing and his message of affection and self-sacrifice in conformity with his own. Traces of Christian doctrines of Trinity and Atonement is apparent even in his earliest works (R&R:198)

The Bāb did not exactly have a "preoccupation with Christ". His knowledge was not exactly "beyond the common Muslim knowledge of the time" because his attitude towards the Bible was something wholly different to that of most of the Shī`ī apologists of his day (<--4.4) A careful examination of the Bāb's references to Christians indicates that he was not at all preoccupied with Christ but deeply concerned over heretical Christian Trinitarian concepts and

the related Christian rejection of Muhammad.

Most of the Bāb's major works contain not "traces" of Christian Trinitarianism but Q. like refutations of "trinitarianism" and other forms of heretical *shirk* (associationalism).[1] Commenting on Q. 2:111 in his early *T. Baqara* the Bāb denies both Jews and Christians a place in Paradise on account of their various forms of *shirk* (associating gods with God). Christians will not enter paradise who associate (1) themselves, (2) Jesus and (3) God in *haykal al-tathlīth,* in a "tritheistic configuration". For the Bāb God is not "a fourth among four" or the "third of three" (cf. Q. 5:77, etc). His Oneness precludes any direct link between his Essence and his creation. (T. Baqara, f.254f).

A cross is basically the intersection of two lines transverse to each other which became a widespread symbol of life in pre-Christian antiquity. From the 2nd cent. CE the cruciform became an important symbol of the Christian religion on account of Jesus' death by crucifixion (Grossi, `Cross' EEC 1:209). As far as I am aware, the Bāb does not refer to the atonement or to Jesus' crucifixion but repeats a tradition about the origin of the Christian symbol of the cross as associated with a concept of the incarnation seen as something heretical not soteriological. The Bāb refers to the *shakl al-salīb* (form, shape, symbol of the cross), to the origin of the form or symbol of the cross. The following tradition *(ḥadīth)* usually attributed to the Muhammad, is quoted many times in the major and minor writings of the Bāb. Though his quotations sometimes vary slightly an example is shown below along with the translation:



[1] See, for example, T. Baqara, f.254f. cf. f.12 (on Q. 2:1-2); f. 264 (on 2:116); T.Tawhid [69]:2-13[10ff]), QA 61:245; QA 91:365; QA 72:250; T.Aṣr:f 84ff,98;T.Hā' (1):4, 238f, 257f; Q.Zavārih:423ff. S.Ja`far 96:51).

> The *ḥadīth* of the Prophet [Muhammad] .. in refutation of the Christians: `And from this [shape] the Christians took the form of the cross *(shakl al-ṣalīb)* and the descent *(ḥall)* of the Divinity *(al-lāhūt)* into the human sphere *(al-nāsūt).* But exalted be God, Lofty and Mighty, above that which these transgressors assert.[1]

This tradition has no relationship to Christian atonement but is critical of the Christian incarnation as symbolized in the "cross" seen as a talismanic sign of the heretical conjunction of *lāhūt* (divinity) and *nāsūt* (humanity). The *shakl al-tathlīth* ("threefold form") has multiple senses in the Bāb's writings though whenever it indicates the Christian trinity it is always something categorically rejected. According to tradition, the Mahdī, if not the Qā'im, is to destroy the "cross". He is not, as Amanat implies, to embrace or repeat a Christian doctrine of atonement. The number of times the Bāb cites the above prophetic tradition about the folly of Christians at having adopted the *shakl al-ṣalīb* (form / symbol of the cross), might lead one to think the Bāb was inspired by the tradition of the eschatological destruction of things cruciform.

Amanat's second sentence cited above (R&R:198) again presumes the Bāb's direct reference to the NT for which there is no evidence. His fn. 243 has it that such is evidenced "in his commentary on *Sūra t al-Baqara,* INBA no. 64, 298" though there is no such page reference in this INBA volume neither does the T. Baqara contain any non-Islamicate or canonical NT citations. This same fn. also refers to the Bāb's "letter in reply to questions by Mīrzā Muhammad Sa'īd Ardistānī" though this reference is also incorrect containing nothing supportive of the Bāb's direct knowledge of the NT or his understanding of Christian doctrines.

INBMC 69:424 has no reference to anything appropriate to Amanat's argument. On the following page of this source, however (= INBMC 69:425), there begins the "Reply to three

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[1] This boxed text is excerpted from the Bāb's Q. Zawarih 69:425. See also T. Baqara f.195 (Q.2:62); T. basmala, f.339(b); T. Kawthar, f.19b; T al-Hā' (1): f. 268; T. `Aṣr 69: f. 29; T Akhī 14: f.414; Q. Hafiz : f.79-80; Untitled :INBMC14:163-80. It can also be noted that the use of the Syriac loan words *lāhūt* and *nāsūt* for "divinity" and "humanity" has a long history in Islamic Trinitarian discussions as can be seen in the use of these terms by the Zaydī al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, in his *Radd `alā al-Naṣārā,* 317ff; al-Ḥallāj, and al-Shahrastānī in the section of Christians in his al-Milal 2:220 where a Christian opinion is expressed to the effect that Jesus' ascension involved awareness of *al-lāhūt* (Divinity) in/through *al-nasūt* (the humanity).

questions of Mīrzā Muhammad Sa`īd Zavārih ( = Mīrzā Muhammad Sa`īd Ardistānī?) about the *Basīt al-ḥaqīqa* and other matters". In the course of commenting on the *Basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa* the Bāb does assert the transcendence of the divine Essence and make some anti-Trinitarian statements. The single divine Reality cannot be either a "third between two" *(lā thālith bayn-humā)* or the a "third aside from two" *(thālith ghayr-humā)* (69:423). After citing the *al-Kāfī* of Kulīnī and further underlining the divine transcendence with reference to the qur'ānic, anti-Christian Trinitarian phrase *thālith al-thalātha* ("third of three", Q. 5:73), the erroneous nature of proponents of *basīt al-ḥaqīqa* (the singleness of the Real) which presuppose a multiplicity of the divine Reality is clear. In this connection the Bāb also cites the prophetic *hadīth* about the heretical Christians derivation of the *shakl al-salīb* ("form of the cross") through belief in incarnation, that there was a "descent of divinity *(lāhūt)* into the human realm *(nāsūt).* (INBMC 69:425)

There is no evidence in the sources cited to substantiate Amanat's proposal of the Bāb's knowledge of the Gospels or of the intricacies of Christian theology. Neither is there any trace of his affirming the Christian "doctrines of Trinity and Atonement". NT reading did not give the Bāb a concept of "revelation and divinity somewhat different from that of the Qur'ān". His statements in this respect are not NT or Christian rooted but perspectives based upon his championing of an apophatic theology and a Shī`ī, Q. rooted anti- *waḥdat al-wujūd* (existential oneness) and anti-Trinitarianism.

When, furthermore, Amanat asserts that there is "No doubt" that "the Bab found the personality of Christ appealing and his message of affection and self-sacrifice in conformity with his own" one might ask where he finds evidence of the Bāb's knowledge of the "personality of Christ" or the Christian message of "self-sacrifice" to assume such an influence. One would be better advised to look towards the centrality of the Shī`ī notion of the sacrifice of Ḥusayn at Karbala rather than to NT teachings.

Finally in connection with Amanat's statements regard ing the Bāb, the NT and Christianity, it may be noted that the Bāb's "ideas of the Second Coming" were not a blending

of the "apocalyptic role assigned to Jesus in Shi`ism" with the apocalyptic eschatology of the NT but an expression of Shī`ī ideas of the "return" of the Qā'im without any significant NT input. It is not so much that the Bāb as the Qā'im is a suffering, sacrificial messiah like Jesus but that he is a Qā'im whose universal and successful *jihad* was thwarted and one who expected martyrdom like many of the twelver Imams without reference to the sacrifice of Jesus.

Neither mainstream twelver Shī`ism nor Bābism have any real place for a parousia ("second coming") of Jesus to enact another sacrificial death or martyrdom. The Bāb's rare references to his own martyrdom have no connection with those of the NT Jesus. It was not, as Amanat asserts, that "The Christlike Mahdi of the Bab saw salvation in suffering rather than in violent revanchism." (R&R:198) His "preoccupation with theophany" might have led some of his opponents to accuse him "of believing in Christianity and preaching the Trinity" though this is merely the repeating of some uninformed remarks of such as would make his teaching dependent upon unorthodox Christian heresies. These, in fact, the Bāb did much to dispel.

■ Concluding Note

To sum up, while the Bāb was subject to some general western and Christian influence his direct familiarity with the Bible is very unlikely. E.G. Browne's arguments for his being influenced by the NT are very flimsy. Amanat's statements are largely unfounded. The evidence of the *Tārīkh-i Zarandī* in the form of the *Dawn-Breakers* saying anything historical about an alleged speech of the Bāb to most of the Letters, is very weak. It may be that a thorough examination of more of the Bāb's extensive Persian and Arabic writings (not all available) will expose elements more suggestive of his having read the NT but any marked biblical influence can safely be ruled out. The Bāb's own writings contain no biblical citations and no definite indications of biblical or Christian theological influence. The Bāb yet had a very high Islamic type estimation of Jesus (cf. Ibn al-`Arabī), referring to him in his *Tafsīr man `arafa nafsahu* as the *ashraf al-anbiyā'* ("noblest of the prophets") (T.Man, 74). Christian influence upon the Bāb was minimal. As Amanat rightly states "Whatever the effect of Christianity on his ideas, the Bab was still firmly tied to Shi'ism" (R&R:198).

Chapter Eight

BAHĀ'-ALLĀH, THE MIGHTIEST NAME OF GOD AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE BABĪ-BAHĀ'Ī INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

■ 8.1 Isrā'īliyyāt and Bahā'-Allāh (1817-1892) as the personification of the *ism Allāh al-aʿẓam* (Mightiest Name of God).

This final chapter will contain a brief introduction to BA* and his writings and examine how and why he came to adopt the divine attribute *bahā'* (Ar. radiant "Splendour") as the Isrā'iliyyāt rooted locus of his identity regarded as the quintessence of the *ism Allāh al-aʿẓam* (the Mightiest Name of God) personified in him. BA*'s early attitude towards the Bible and biblical *taḥrīf* will then be surveyed (= 8.2). This will be followed by some conclusions to the thesis along with a few remarks about how a neo-Shīʿī Bābī faction (= Babism) evolved into the global Bahā'ī religion of the Book' (= 8.3).

■ Bahā'-Allāh the follower of the Bāb (1844/5-1863 [66])

On the orders of Naṣir al-Dīn Shāh's new grand vizier, Mīrzā Taqī Khān, Amir Kabīr (d. 1852), the Bāb was publicly executed as a dangerous religious heretic in the public square in Tabrīz on July 9th 1850. Some time prior to this he had communicated an undoubtedly authentic five page Arabic *waṣiyyat-nāmia* (Will and Testament) to the Name of God *al-Azal* (Eternity) indicative of BA*'s half-brother Mīrzā Yaḥyā Nūrī (d.1914 CE) whom he accorded a key position pending the future theophany of "Him Whom God shall make manifest" (INBMC 64:95-102; Haifa mss; cf. Nicholas, 1905 [BéyanA], 52f). Towards the beginning of this *Waṣiyyat-nāma* the Bāb made cryptic reference to himself or, for Bahā'īs, to BA* (cf. GWB CXIII:207)[1] as one *ḥayy fī ufuq al-abhā* ("living in the Abhā Horizon", INBMC 64:96; BWC. Ms. [unpaginated] 2). The word *abhā* here is the superlative form of the verbal noun *bahā'* (splendour, beauty). It is this word which, along with derivates from the same Arabic root and

[1] According to at least one of his "seals" of the Edirne period (?) (BWV: 4 +Taherzadeh, RB 1, photograph opposite 78x) BA* states "God testifies by virtue of His own Self that I, verily, am one that is alive in the Abhā (most beautiful) Horizon and at every instant cries out from that Horizon, `I, verily, am God, no God is there except me'". Elsewhere, in numerous *alwāḥ* BA* associates himself with the Bāb's phrase *anā ḥayy fī ufuq al-abhā.* An example would be the untitled Tablet of BA* in *La'ālī* 3:15.

phrases containing the word *bahā'* which BA* identified as the *ism Allāh al-a'ẓam*, the greatest or mightiest Name of God. [1]

Bābism only just survived the Bāb's execution. In surviving it most significantly gave birth to the conservative Azalī Bābī faction led by Mīrzā Yaḥyā, (per.) Subh-I Azal (The Morn of Eternity) and the globally-minded, progressive Bahā'ī religion semi-publicly initiated by BA* in May 1863. These two neo-Bābī factions both stem from these two Nūrī half-brothers. From the early 1860s BA* claimed to be the Bābī messiah *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh* and ultimately the promised messiah expected in past major religions.

■ **Mīrzā Ḥusayn `Alī Nūrī, Bahā'- Allāh and his writings**

Allegedly a descendent of Keturah wife of Abraham and the last Sassanid king Yazdigird III (d. 651 CE) , BA* was born in Tehran on 2nd Muḥarram 1233 AH (November 12th 1817 CE), being two lunar years older than the Bāb. His father, Mīrzā `Abbās b. Riḍā-Kulī Khān Nūrī (d. 1255/1839), a notable calligrapher entitled Mīrzā Buzurg by Fatḥ `Alī Shāh, was a native of Tākūr in the district of Nūr in the province of Māzandarān (Iran) A one time vizier to the twelfth son of Fatḥ `Alī Shāh Mīrẓā Buzurg was a close friend of Mīrzā Abū'l-Qāsim Khān Qā'im Maqām (d.1835) the previously mentioned author of a response to the missionary Henry Martyn (<--4.4). A man of some wealth and influence during the reign of Fatḥ `Alī Shāh, he married seven wives and fathered at least fifteen children. Mīrzā Ḥusayn `Alī BA* was the third child of his second wife Khadija Khānum.

BA*'s childhood and youth were spent in Tehran and Māzandarān. In the former city he had personal tutors engaged by his parents from whom he acquired, among other things, a knowledge of Persian literature, the rudiments of Arabic grammar and the Q. He did not receive any systematic or extensive theological training and, like the Bāb drew on Q. 7:156, in referring to himself as *al-ummī* ("unlettered"),

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[1] Zarandī [SE*], AB* and other Bahá'í historians also record that some months prior to his death the Bāb penned 360 derivatives of the word *bahā'* in a fine *shikastih* ("broken script"), in the form of a calligraphic pentacle and arranged for it to be delivered to BA* (DB: 370+fn. AB* Maqāla tr. 26).

> The learning amongst men I studied not; I did not enter the theological colleges *(al-madāris).* Enquire of the city wherein I dwelt, that you may be assured that I am not of those who speak falsely *(Lawḥ-I Sulṭān* 148).
> We did not enter the theological colleges *(al-madāris)* or study learned themes *(al-mabāhith).* Hearken unto that through which this *al-ummī* (unlettered one) summoneth you unto God, the Ever-Abiding (*Aqdas*:121).

BA* later frequently claimed receipt of divinely inspired knowledge. In his *L. Ḥikma* (187?/8?) he intimates how he received such inspiration independent of actually acquiring it through reading and study,

> *Thou* knowest full well that We (= BA*) perused not the books which men possess and We acquired not the learning *(al-`ulūm)* currently amongst them, and yet whenever We desire to quote the sayings of the learned *(bayānāt al-`ulamā')* and of the wise *(al-ḥulamā'),* presently there will appear before the face of thy Lord [= BA*] in the form of [revealed] tablets *(alwāḥ)* all that which hath appeared in the world and in the Holy Books *(al-kutub)* and Scriptures *(al-zubur).* (*L. al-ḥikma*, 127-8/tr.TBAA.,148-9; see also, *L. Bismillah* MAM:281; L.Shaykh, 13/ tr.11; Faydī, *Bahá'u'llāh* 18ff)

While Bahā'ī writers tend to minimize the nature of BA*'s early education such Azalī writers as `Izziyya Khānum (an Azalī half-sister of BA*) reckon that he acquired knowledge by intensive study and by associating with Sufis and sages *(ḥukamā').*[1] On his father's death BA* refused to follow in his footsteps. Then twenty two years old his religious interests and pietistic inclinations made him reluctant to embark on a worldly career.[2] Bahā'ī sources have it that Mullā Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī (the first believer in the Bāb) indirectly informed BA* of the rise of the Bābī cause (late 1844, early 1845?) through Mullā Muhammad-I Mu`allim (-I Nūrī). He straightaway became a staunch believer (Zarandī/SE*, DB:71f). Soon after his conversion he dedicated himself to the success of the Bābī religion and its evolution.[3]

According to Zarandī, BA* was a key participant in the Bābī conference of Badasht (in

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[1] Compare AB* *Mufawaḍat../* tr. SAQ:33, (talk of April 18th 1912 in) PUP:25 and `Izzīya Khānum, *Tanbīh,* 4, 34f, 58.

[2] Cf. words attributed to Hājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī by AB* in a talk delivered in Haifa on December 16th 1919 in Herrick, *Unity Triumphant,* 156...

[3] On BA's earliest activities as a Bābī see for example, Balyuzi, BKG:39-42; Zarandī, [SE*] DB:75-85; `Abdu'l-Bahā', TN: 58ff.

western Khurāsān) held in the summer 1848 CE. There the fullness of the Bāb's messianic claims were openly discussed and made known. A representative of the progressive, `radical Bābī faction', BA* is said to have conferred new names on each of the 81 (= 9x9) or so Bābis present. He came to be known as *Jināb-I Bahā'*, (lit. 'His eminence the Splendour') hence his later title *Bahā'-Allāh* (`the splendour [glory] of God') (DB:211).

Following a 10 month stay in Karbala (Iraq; Sept. 1851 --> July1852?), BA* returned to Tehran (August 15th 1852) shortly before an abortive attempt on the life of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh ṣ. 1848-96) by a small group of militant Bābī activists. Though unconnected with this activity, BA* was imprisoned with other Bābis in the Siyāh-Chāl ("Black Pit") dungeon in Tehran for four months (Sept. --> Dec. 1852?). There he had mystical experiences which led him to claim to be a *maẓhar-i ilāhī* (Divine Manifestation) c hosen by God to regenerate the then fragmented, persecuted and demoralized Bābī community. In his Persian *Rashḥ-I `amā'* (The Sprinkling of the Cloud of Divinity, early 1269 AH/ late 1852 CE?) and later writings BA*, dwelt on this call. In the late *L. Shaykhh* (Ibn-I Dhi'b = ESW c. 1891), for example, he explains how he meditated "day and night" on the conduct of the Bābīs and decided that on his release from the Siyāh Chāl dungeon he would attempt to regenerate them. He has thus explained his dream;

> During the days I lay in the prison of Tehran.. I felt as if something flowed from the crown of my head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of my body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments my tongue recited what no man could bear to hear (BA*, *L. Shaykh* 25/tr. SE* ESW:22).[1]

On the basis of such passages Bahā'īs view the Siyah Chāl imprisonment in the year nine (=1, 269 AH)[2] as the year of BA*'s call to *maẓhariyya,* though he claimed pre-existent subordinate divinity. His mystical experiences in that place and the appearance to him of a *ḥurī* ("celestial Maiden") have been likened to Moses' Sinaitic call, Jesus' baptismal commission and

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[1] See also, idem, *Lawḥ-I-Sultān* in A.Muluk:148,190 (cf. AB* SAQ:79,141,143 S.Hayḳal AQA:. 4: 269 (tr SE* GPB:101-02).

[2] In certain of his writings the Bāb had alluded to the importance of the `year nine' (see for example, *Persian Bayan).* This year is understood by Bahā'īs to be the year 1,269 AH (=15th October 1852--4th October 1853) and seen as the period of BA*'s assumption of Prophethood.

Muhammad's confrontation with Gabriel on Mt. Hira (SE*, GPB:101). His forty year prophetic ministry (1852-1892) is believed to have begun at this time.

Despite BA*'s early identification of himself as the returned Imām Ḥusayn and his mystical experiences in the Sīyāh Chāl in Tehran, the majority of Bābīs continued, right up until the mid. 1860's, to regard Mīrzā Yahyā as the head of the Bābī community. BA*, the founder of the Bahā'ī religion, was exiled from Iran to Iraq (1852) then to Istanbul and Edirne in Ottoman Turkey (1863-68) where he broke with Mīrzā Yahyā (mid.1866) after a failed *mubāhala* confrontation. In 1868 he was again exiled to Acre coming to live in its Palestinian vicinity (Mazra'ih, Bahjī) within Ottoman Turkey for the remainder of his life (1868-92).

■ **The writings of Bahā'-Allāh.**

From being a leading Iranian and Iraqi Bābī (1260/1844-->1863) until the time of his passing in Acre Palestine in 1308/1892, BA* wrote in excess of 15,000 religious communications in Persian and Arabic largely in the form of *allāḥ* ("scriptural tablets"). They vary in length from a few words to several hundred pages and date from the last 40 years of his life (1852-1892 CE). For the most part they are letters written in honour of, or in reply to questions posed by Bābīs and Bahā'īs. Though largely untitled, a proportion of the more weighty, doctrinally significant writings have specific designations (perhaps 300-500 of them)? It is in line with the conviction that they were expressions of *waḥy* (divine revelation) or *kalimat Allāh* (Word of God) like the (original) *Tawrāt*, *Injīl* and Q., that they were often designated *alwāḥ* (`tablets', sing. *lawḥ)* following the use of this term in the HB and the Q.

The titles BA* himself gave several hundred of his works often relate to major themes within them or the identity of the recipient(s). Some major revelations are designated *sūrahs* (sing., *sūrah,* pl. *suwar)* like 'sections' or "chapters" of the Q., others, for example, are considered *kitāb* (= `writing, letter, books' pl. *kutub*), *ṣaḥīfa* ("scrolls"), *risāla* (= `epistle, tract..,') and *tafsīr* (<–3.1 commentaries). By the time of his residence in Edirne BA* claimed to have revealed the equivalent of all pre-Bābī divine revelations. Then, towards the end of his life he estimated that his collected writings would fill 100 volumes (*Lawḥ-I Shaykh,* 134-5, 195

/115,165). Apart from thousands of letters to communities, groups and individual Bābīs and Bahā'īs, Bahā'ī scripture includes epistles addressed to Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Sunnī, Shī`ī and Shaykhī Muslims, Azalīs, diverse oriental rulers, diplomats and freethinkers and a number of Western monarchs.[1] Between 35 and 40 major titled writings date from the Iraq years (1853-1863), perhaps 50 from the Istanbul-Edirne period (1863-1868) and perhaps 200 or more from the West Galilean (`Akkā') period (1868-1892).[2] Many of these texts contain interpretations of biblical and qur'ānic rooted Isrā'īliyyāt motifs and episodes and hundreds expound a range of biblical texts.

■ The Judaeo-Islamic Mightiest Name of God, the word *bahā'* and Bahā'-Allāh.

As a leading Bābī, BA* identified himself through the word *bahā'* ("radiant splendour") as the personification of the *ism al-a`ẓam,* the Mightiest or Greatest Name of God. His earthly theophany came to be theologically represented as an eschatological doxophany, a radiant parousia of personified, supernatural divine radiance. BA* frequently articulated his claims in the light of Jewish, Christian, Islamic and Bābī texts. His pictured himself as the radiant manifestation of the long secreted (Ar.) *bahā'* (splendour-beauty) of God (= Bahā'-Allāh). In the paragraphs to follow it will be seen how the basically Isrā'īliyyāt motif of the Mightiest Name came to be chosen by BA* as the locus of his person and theological identity. A trajectory of a few aspects of its Jewish, Islamic-Shaykhī and Bābī-Bahā'ī history will be outlined in illustration of how this Judaic-rooted motif, ultimately became the touchstone of later Bahā'ī identity, graphically portrayed on the Baha'i ringstone and elsewhere.

The supreme or Mightiest Name of God (Heb. *ha-shem ha-gadol)* concept has largely Jewish origins though Hellenistic magic, esotericism and related theurgic ideas doubtless

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[1] In his *Sūrat al-haykal* (AQA 4:273) BA* wrote, "We verily, caused the verses to descend in nine styles, each of them a testimony to the sovereignty of God, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting." It is not clear what is meant by these "nine styles" *(shu`ūn)* of revelation though the use of nine is obviously related to the *abjad* numerical value of the Bahā', the Bahā'ī "Greatest name" as contrasted with the five grades into which the Bāb divided his writings.

[2] A list of 154 major *allāh* of BA was given by SE* in various volumes of *The Bahá'í World*. (cf. Ishrāq Khāvarī's *Ganj-I Shayigān.*).

shaped some aspects of the background(s) of Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī developments. In the HB the personal though supernatural Deity has ten or more principal names, including the common Semitic name `Êl (אל "God") and related theophoric designations such as `Êl-Elyōn (God-Most High"), `Êl-Shaddai ("God All-Powerful"?) and `Êlōah ("God" cf. Allāh), `Elōhîm ("God" = Heb.אֱלֹהִים). Centrally important Names of the God of Israel are the tetragrammaton (Heb. = יהוה YHWH) and Adonai or "Lord" (`ādōnaī אֲדֹנָי) the vowelling of which enables it to be (un) pronounced as יְהוָה ("Jehovah"), although it should properly (?) be Yahweh (cf. יה Yāh; YHWH Ṣebā'ôt = "Lord of Hosts").

From several centuries BCE the traditional pronunciation of YHWH was only uttered annually by the high priest in the Jerusalem "Holy of Holies". This, among other factors, encouraged numerous speculations as to the nature, identity, power and sanctity of this transcendent divine Name within the Abrahamic religions. Its power was such that according to many Jewish and Islamic texts it gave the prophets and others favoured souls the power to perform miracles. In the Gk. LXX (2nd-3rd cent. BCE?) YHWH is translated *theos* ("God") or κύριος (= Kyrios, [lit. "Strong'?] "Lord"). It often appeared in magical amulets of the first few centuries CE as the all-powerful name (Gk.) *iaō,* Magically inscribed or conjured along with the names Adonai and (the angelic Deity) Abraxas (both related to YHWH), it was such that it could be said, "When this name is but spoken, the earth moves from its foundation" (cited Ringgren TDOT V:509).

Post-biblical Judaisms, especially varieties of Jewish mysticism and esotericism, added many sometimes novel, hypostatic, occasionally magical, theurgically meaningful, qabbalistic and talismanic Names of God. Certain of the Qumran texts ("Dead Sea Scrolls"), include passages referring to God by means of the "great Name" or reflecting a `Mightiest Name' theology. In, for example, col. IV of 4Q504 [4QDib.Ham$^{a}$ ], `The `Words of the Luminaries', a petitioner refers to Jerusalem as the place which God chose, "for your Name to be there for

ever." Apparently in eschatological times God- the Name is to sit there for ever enthroned. This such that all countries could vision His "glory" and bring offerings of gold, silver, precious stones, "all the treasures of their country" to his "great Name" to the honour of Israel and Zion "your holy city and your wonderful house" (cf. Haggai 2:7) (trans. Martinez, 415). Many Rabbinic and later Jewish mystical texts celebrate God's Mightiest Name.

In the *Hekhalot Zuṭarti* (The Lesser Palaces) and other Merkabah texts (2nd- 6th cent. CE?) the power of the Name is greatly lauded and celebrated (*Hekhalot Zuṭarti*, 337/347 tr. Schäefer 1992:56). This text also mentions the great "Name" of God as being of cosmic potency. Through its instrumentality Moses "was able to part the sea and pile the waters up into high "mountains". The divine essence is made up of powerful, sacred Names forms of which were handed down throughout history by Balaam, Moses, the Angel of Death, David and Solomon (ibid, 357ff). Some of these Names are preserved in a long unintelligible chain incorporating angelic names and such names of God as Shaddai ("All-Powerful"), Qadosh ("Sanctified") and the biblical (folk etymology) אהיה אשר אהיה (*`ehyeh `āsher `ehyeh'* tr. [AV] "I AM THAT I AM" Exod 3:14 <--2.1).

Some permutations of the "Name" of God given in Rabbinic, Jewish mystical and qabbalistic texts, are complex many letter "Names" or secreted formulations. Some are said to consist of 12 letters, others 42 letters while some "Names" are "unintelligible *nomina barbara* incorporating Greek words. Islamic and Bābī-Bahā'ī sources likewise speak of God's "Greatest Name" as something supremely powerful, incomprehensible or secret. This has something of a precedent in Rabbinic concepts of God's *shem ha-meforash,* his "Ineffable" or "Inexplicable" Name (Marmortstein, 1968).

In Islamic tradition God's Names are variously listed, most famously in prophetic *ḥadīth* listing his much commented upon 99 *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* (The most beautiful Names) (Bihar^2 4:184ff). A prophetic tradition cited by al-Fayḍ al-Kashānī in his *Nawādir al-akhbār* has it that God has 4,000 Names some of which are known only to himself. 1,000, furthermore, are known to God and the angels, another 1,000 to God, the angels and the prophets and the fourth 1,000

are known to the believers, 300 being in the *Tawrāt,* 300 in the *Injīl,* 300 in the *Zabūr* and 100 in the Q., 99 of these are evident *(ẓāhir)* and one of is "concealed" *(makhtūm).* Whosoever knows this latter hidden Name, the tradition continues, "will enter Paradise *(al-jannat)"* (cited Kashānī, Nawadir 110). The same source cites a tradition from Imām Ja`far Ṣādiq about his Mightiest Name *(ismihi al-a`ẓam)* which partly reflects Jewish traditions:

> His Mightiest Name consist of 73 letters, 25 letters of which he gave to Adam, and 25 of which he gave to Noah. Abraham was given 8 letters and Moses four letters while Jesus was given two letters through which he revived the dead and cured the blind and the lame. Muhammad was given 72 letters. And he concealed one letter perchance he might know what is within himself and know what is in the selves of his servants (cited idem, Nawadir, 110 from a 3rd cent. AH source).

This and similar Shī`ī traditions about the 72 or 73 letters of the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* and their gradual disclosure to a succession of Abrahamic prophets in succeeding religious eras sometimes reckoning one of the "letters" hidden (73-1=72), have influenced the Bābī-Bahā'ī theology of the Greatest Name (Bihar ^{2} 11:68f). Both the Bāb and BA* at times identified various of these letters contained in pre-Bābī sacred books.

Drawing on Qur'ān 21:78f and these traditions, the Bāb, in QA 59 states that David and Solomon were inspired with two letters of the "greatest Word" *(kalimat al-akbar)*-- possibly "B" and "A" the two letters of bāb (?) --- adding that Dhu'l-Nūn (= Jonah?), Idris (= Enoch?), Ishmael and Dhu'l-Kifl (Job or Ezekiel?) were in darkness until they testified to the truth of the "point of the Gate" *(nuqtatu'l-bāb* = the Bab). In his *T. Laylat al-qadr* (Q. 97), the Bāb explicitly refers to 3, 4, and 5 portions of one of the forms of the "Greatest Name" existing in the *tawrāt Injīl* and Q. (INBMC 69:17).

Commenting on the *basmala* and first verse of the Qur'ānic *Sūra of the Pen* (Sūra 68), Bahā'-Allāh mentions that God divulged something (a "letter"/ "word" *harf* ^{an}*)* of the "Greatest Name" as Bahā' in every religious dispensation. In the Islāmic dispensation, he states, it is alluded to through the letter "B" (bā'; the first letter of the *basmala*) and in the Gospels *(injīl)* through the word Ab (= "Father" Gk. = πατέρ), in the Arabic Bible, a two letter word corresponding to two of the letters of *bahā'* ("A" & "B"). The word *bahā',* BA* indicates, is

clearly intimated in the Bābī Bayān and is representative of the *nafs* (Logos-Self) of God in the Bahā'ī era (INBAMC 56:25). The Arabic word *bahā'* obviously does not occur directly in the NT. Here its theological equivalent is the Gk. δόξα (*doxa*) which often translates Hebrew כבוֹד *(kabôd* = `radiant glory). In the HB and Gk. LXX both these words can be indicative of a radiant theophanic splendour or "glory". (Exod. 33:18f; Isa. 60:1f; Mk. 8:38). Various suggestive biblical texts in which these Hebrew and Greek terms occur were referred by BA* to his eschatological theophany as the *al-ism al-a`ẓam.* ("Mightiest Name of God -->).

The Judaic, Isrā'īliyyāt mightiest Name motif was very early adopted within Sunnī and Shī`ī Islam. Jewish rooted notions of the powerful *al-ism al-a`ẓam* were voiced by various early *ghulāt* thinkers and later transformed within a more orthodox, evolving Imamī, Shī`ī theology. Neo-Shī`ī Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrines of the *ism al-a`ẓam* to some extent have their Islamic roots in these primitive theological speculations of the *ghulāt.* factions. A fascinating example propounded by one of these thinkers is that of al-Mughīra b. Sa`īd al-Bajalī (d. c.119/737), a *mawla* (non-Arab) of the then governor of Iraq Khalīd al-Qasrī (105-20/724-38). Associated with Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (d. c.126/743) his "gnostic" doctrine is said to have given central importance to the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* To some degree reminiscent of Jewish *Shi`ur qomah* mysticism, God existed in humanoid form for him and his followers. Their anthropomorphic Deity had "members in the number and form of the letters of the Arabic alphabet". When God initiated creation he uttered his "Mightiest, Greatest Name" which fell on Him as His crown" (Madelung, EI^2 VI:347-8).

A faction the Mughīriyya believed that at the time of the "return" of al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (the Pure Soul), seventeen souls among them would be taught one of the letters of the "Greatest Name" of God. Then, by means of its power, they would wage war and establish a messianic kingdom on earth. Al-Mughīra has been thought to be the first of Shī`ī thinkers to

speculate about the mystical nature of the alphabet (Tucker 1975:34ff).[1]

Among the influential Sunnī Muslims who made considerable use of *ism al-aʿẓam* concepts in his theology of the names of God in the context of esoteric gnosis and magic, was Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Būnī (d. Cairo, c. 622/1225). He authored forty or more Arabic works and was known to 19th cent. Shīʿī writers including Shaykh Aḥmad (5.1f<--).[2] Existing in several recensions his *Shams al-maʿārif al-kubrā wa laṭāʾif al-maʿārif* (The Greater Sun of Mystic Meaning and the Subtleties of Gnosis, pp. 500+) mentions the *al-ism al-aʿẓam* and its various graphic forms on several occasions (Shams, 52ff; 86ff; 93f; 101ff, etc).

The *Shams al-maʿārif* makes creative use of *abjad* and other number correspondences, (magic) number-letter squares and deals with *jafr* and the construction of amulets and circles of astronomical, talismanic and magical import. There are detailed comments upon numerous theologically loaded divine Names and Attributes. Other theophoric Names including those of the mother of Mūsā (Moses), various arcane scripts and components of the secreted Greatest Name are cryptically discussed.

Angelological and other matters rooted in or expressive of Isrā'īliyyāt are also present. Goldziher, Vajda and others have touched on these Jewish-rooted magical, mystical, theological and angelological subjects. A close study of the *Shams* and related works of al-Būnī will undoubtedly reveal important doctrinal links with the talismanic and related *ʿulūm al-ghayb* (occult sciences) aspects of the sometimes neo-Islamic, gematric, quasi-qabbalistic gnosis *(jafr)* of the Bāb. The Isrā'īliyyāt themes reflected in the Bāb's writings sometimes appear to go back to al-Būnī.[3] The following passage in the *Shams al-maʿarif* is similar to

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[1] An Arab native of Kūfa named Bayān b. Samʿān [al-Tamīmī] (d.119/737) was a literalist, extremist leader of the Bayāniyya who came to claim the Imamite. Associated with Mughīra and Muhammad al-Bāqir he claimed to operate through the power of the *ism al-aʿẓam* (Greatest Name of God) (al-Ashʿarī, *al-Maqālāt,* 66-67; Hodgson, EI^2 1:1116; Tucker, 1975)

[2] See his *al-Risāla al-Rashtiyya* (1226/1811), JK 1/ii:63-114; Ibrāhimī, *Fihrist,* No. 104 p,260f; Momen, BSBM1:113.

[3] That his qabbalistic gnosis may have been directly or indirectly influential upon the Bāb is perhaps indicated by the fact that like the Bāb he equated Joseph son of Jacob *(abjad* = 185) with God, the Self-Subsisting *(al-Qayyūm)* which ha an identical *abjad* numerical values (Shams, 185f 481f).

statements of the Bāb (<--2.1),

> Know.. that the secret of every [religious] community is in its Book and that the secret of the Book of God is in the letters *(al-ḥurūf)* [in which it is written]... Within it [the Q..] are the secrets of all the revealed [sacred] Books and Scrolls *(al-kutub wa'l-ṣuḥuf)* [of the past] and others besides them. As for *abjad,* it is Syriac *(al-suryāniyya)* which was the medium of revelation unto Adam, Enoch *(Idrīs),* Noah, Moses and Jesus (Al-Būnī, *al-Shams,* 31:3-4).

Such theologically profound aspects of the writings of al-Būnī undoubtedly influenced the first Shaykhi leaders and the Bāb whose Arabic style and vocabulary, like that of Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī, at times echos that of al-Būnī. The Bāb's sometimes abstruse writings encompass similar subjects to those covered in the *Shams,* including considerations of the divine Names and attributes, *ramz, jafr;* talismans, alchemy and the *al-ism al-a`ẓam.*

The *Shams al-ma`ārif* identifies and discusses the divine Name through which Moses was commissioned when God proclaimed , "I verily am God, no God is there except Me". It was by means of the *al-ism al-a`ẓam* that Jesus resurrected the dead. al-Būnī has it that Jesus utilized the Mightiest Name and also uttered various life-giving prayers (*Shams* I:52f). He records that Abū Hudhayl transmitted the tradition that Jesus would bow twice in prayer *(raka`tayn)* then fall prostrate and address God with the following six Divine Names:

> *Yā Qadīm* (O Ancient!). *Yā Dā'im* (O Everlasting!). *Yā Aḥad* (O One!) *Yā Wāḥid* (O Unicity!). *Yā Ṣamad* (O Eternal!) *(Shams,* 54).

Within the *Shams al-ma`ārif* are various obscure, Hebraic angelological Names (with genitive אל = يل =`el "----of God" terminations). Apart from the usual four archangels (Jibrīl, Mīkā'īl, Isrāfīl and `Azrā'īl, *Shams,* 76, etc) there is mention , for example, of Asyā'il, Dunyā'il, Hizqiyā'il, Dardiyā'il, Maṣmā'il and Surā`īl *(Shams,* 52-52, 57, 71 cf. Sayyid Kāẓim, Sh-Qaṣida). Vajda has shown that some of these names derive from the Jewish pseudepigraphical, angelologically intensive incantation textbook, *Sepher Ha-Razim* (Book of Mysteries, 4th cent.CE?). This source presents itself as having been revealed to Noah by the angel Raziel (The Mystery of God) before he entered the ark. Thereafter it came to be in the possession of Solomon whose famed wisdom encompassed all secrets (*Shams,* I/7, 52- 55,

57,71; Vajda 1948:400; Morgan, 1983; Gruenwald, 1980:224f).

The Safavid theologian and Sufi-inclined philosopher mystic Bahá' al-Dín al-Āmilī (<--) adopted the pen-name *(takhallus)* Shaykh-I Bahā'ī (Ar. Al-Shaykh al-Bahā'ī) and wrote a *Mathnavī* poem, *Dar rumūz-I ism-I a'ẓam* (On the mysteries of the Greatest Name) (Jawāhirī, *Kulliyat,* 95f). This work contains no reference to the word *bahā'* or the common Islamic epithet Bahā' al-Dīn (<--) from which Shaykh Bahā'ī (as Āmilī is often designated) probably derives. This poem, like early traditions known to al-Bīnī and others, states that the power of the Mightiest Name was such that Jesus' raised the dead thereby.

■ **Shī`ī devotional texts and the Arabic word *bahā'*.**

It is the Arabic verbal noun *bahā'* which is regarded by Bahā'īs as the quintessence of the *al- ism al-a'ẓam,* more fully expressed in the title Bahā' Allāh. This word has a wide variety of non-theological verbal and nominal meanings and a wide semantic field encompassing aesthetical and theological terminology. As a Persian (Arabic) loan word it has other mostly non-theological senses. [1] Drawing on weighty Arabic lexica, Lane's widely respected dictionary includes the senses `perplexity', `incomprehensibility' (cf. Heb. בהו bohū, Gen.1:2) `poverty', `goodness', `greatness', `perfection', `majesty', `magnificence', `grandeur', `beauty', `brilliancy', `luminosity' and even `the sheen of the spittle of a lion' or `the calmness of a she-camel used to her milker'! The semantic field within which the Bābī-Bahā'ī sources understand the word *bahā'* includes words expressive of `beauty', `excellence', godliness, `divine majesty', `splendour', `light' , `brilliancy' and radiant `glory'.

The Arabic word *bahā'* is probably derived from three ("B"+"H"+"A"/ "W") and made up of four root letters, ("B"+ "H" + "A" + the glottal stop *hamza'*). Though fundamental to the Arabic spelling, the final glottal stop *hamza* (ء) is usually omitted in Persian. Bahā', in other words, is made up of the four letters and has an *abjad* numerical value of nine: [1] "ب" = 2 +

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[1] For details and examples see, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* 1:35-6; Dozy, *Supplément* 1:123-4; E.W. Lane, *Lexicon* 1:263-4. Wehr, *Dictionary* 97;. On Persian usuages and senses see Steingass 1892; Dehkhoda, *Lughat Nāmih,* entry *Bahā'*.

[2] "H" = 5 + [3] "A"= 1 + [4] ء *hamza* (the glottal stop) ' = 1, total = 9 which is considered by Bahā'īs a "sacred number" symbolic of perfection as the highest numerical integer. This number nine came to be expressed in many aspects of Bahā'ī semi-ritual practises and even configured aspects of Bahā'ī architecture and the number of persons (nine) serving on certain Bahā'ī administrative institutions.[1]

The numerous Shī`ī devotional texts and compilations form a foundational background to Bābī-Bahā'ī vocabulary, worship and theology. Among important Shī`ī devotional compilations is the metaphysically rich *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiyya* (The Scroll of the Prostration) ascribed to Imam `Alī al-Sajjād (d.c.95/713), the *Miṣbāh mutahajjid al-al-kabīr*[2] of al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067; cf. B* P. Dal: 66), several works of Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Tāwūs (d.664 /1226; said to have been favoured with a knowledge *of the ism Allāh al-a`ẓam,* Kohlberg, 1992:14) including his *Muhaj al-da`wāt* (The Soul of the Supplications), the *al-Miṣbāḥ* ("Luminary") of Taqī al-Dīn al-Kaf`āmī (d.900/1494-5), the Persian *Zad al-ma`ād* (Knapsack for the Eschaton) of Majlisī and the more recent and very popular *Mafatīḥ al-jinān* (Keys of Paradise) of `Abbās al-Qumī (d.1359/1940) (see further Ja`fariyān,1999).

All of these works contain materials of importance in tracing the use of the word *bahā'* and the devotional theology of the *al-ism al-a`ẓam.* Among the highly significant supplications attributed to the twelver Imams contained in certain of these volumes[3] is a dawn supplication transmitted by Imam `Alī al-Riḍā' (d. 203/818) *Du`ā al-saḥār* for the fasting month of Ramaḍan (al-Qummī, *Mafatīḥ,* 238-9). It is very closely related to a similar *Du`ā' yawm al-*

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[1] Just as YHWH has the abbreviated form יה Yāh so *bahā'* was sometimes abbreviated by BA* through its first two letters "b" (ب) and "h" (هـ) See the colophon ending the *Kitāb-i iqān,* "Thus hath it been revealed aforetime.. revealed by the "Bā" and the "Hā" [= Bahā'-Allāh] (KI:200/164).

[2] This work also exists in a shorter though occasionally different recension entitled *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid al-Saghir* (Kohlberg, 1992:272)

[3] The biblically influenced *Du`ā' al-simāt* (Supplication of the Signs, cf. the testimonia Deut 33:2) has been a much commented upon devotional prayer. It had a significant influence on Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture and lies behind a number of occurrences of the (Islamo-) biblical location Paran (Ar. fārān) in Shaykhī and Bābī-Bahā'ī primary literatures (Lambden, 1983b).

mubāhila (Supplication for the Day of Mutual Execration)[1] said to have been transmitted by Ja`far al-Ṣādiq (al-Qummī,ibid., 351-355). Its alliterative, rhythmically intense opening line with five occurrences from the *bahā'* root (splendour/ beauty/ glory) is as follows,

> O my God! I beseech thee by thy *bahá'* (Splendour) in its utmost Splendour *(abhā')* for all thy Splendour *(bahā')* is truly resplendent *(bahiyy);* I, verily, O my God! beseech thee by the fullness of thy Splendour *(bahā`).* (al-Qummī, *Mafatīḥ,* 238f).

The Arabic text of this *Dū`a al-saḥār* was centrally important to both the Bāb and BA*. The frequency of the non-qur'ānic word *bahā'* in the writings of the Bāb is in large measure a result of his very frequent citing and reworking of both this opening line and large portions of the whole supplication. The *Du`a al-saḥār* (Dawn Prayer) appear s to have been deeply significant for the Bāb. He derived the names of the nineteen months of his new *badī`* ("novel", "new") calendar from recensions of it: month [1] *bahā'* (Splendour) [2] *Jalāl* (Glory) [3] *Jamāl* (Beauty)[4] *`Aẓimat* (Grandeur) [5] *Nūr* (Light, etc). The Bāb creatively re-wrote this *Dawn Prayer* perhaps a hundred or more times in his numerous `stream of consciousness' devotional revelations. Early in his mission he creatively refashioned the almost identical opening lines of the *Du`ā' yawm al-mubāhila* (INBA 6006C: [90-95] 92f) as he did very frequently towards its end; especially in his weighty *K. asmā'* (Book of Names) (INBMC 29:4f,26,31f, etc) and *K. Panj S.,* (Book of the Five Grades) (I/I:3f; VII/1:316; VII/2: 224, etc).

BA* has given the *Dū`a al-saḥār* a tremendous gravitas referring to it as the *lawḥ al-baqā'* ("Tablet of Eternity"). This in that it commences *(dibachih)* with the word *bahā'* identified as the Mightiest Name of God *(ism Allāh al-a`ẓam)* This was a "reality" with which God

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[1] In the *Mafātīḥ* of al-Qummī the recitation by the Shī`ī faithful of the *Du`ā' yawm al-mubahila* is part of the commemoration on the 24th Day of the most sacred month Dhu'l-Ḥijja which is closely linked with the celebration of the *yawm al-ghadīr* (Day of the Pool). For Shī`ī Muslims this day was that upon which `Alī was appointed *walī* (legatee) which is set a few days earlier (on the 22nd [or 18th] day of this month). `The Day of Mutual Execration' *(yawm al-mubāhila)* denotes the day on which the Muhammad engaged in mutual execration *(mubāhala)* with select Christians of Najrān. It was on this Day that he is believed to have gathered the proto-Shī`ī (subsequently named) "people of the cloak" *(ahl al-kisā'*, cf. Qur'ān 33:32) namely (apart from [1] Muhammad himself) [2] `Alī, [3] Fāṭima, [4] Ḥasan and [5] Ḥusayn.

ornamented his own Logos-Self (= BA*) (AQAMunajāt, 45-6). BA* saw the opening words of the *Du`a saḥār* (= *Du`a yawm al-mubāhala)* as an indication of himself as the refulgent *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (Ma'idih 4:23). He cited segments of its opening line in thousands of benedictions upon his devotees such as the following upon Shaykh Kāẓim Samandar (d. 1336/1918) from a 1307/1891 Tablet, *`alayhū min kulli bahā' bi-ahbā-hu* ("upon him be a portion of the totality of *bahā'* (Glory) at its most glorious") (BA* in AyatB:318-9 No.152).

Among other Shī`ī supplications the Greatest Name is said to be contained in the *Dawn Prayer* of Muhammad Bāqir though it is not explicitly identified with the word *bahā'*. Majlisī in his Persian *Zād al-ma`ād* (Knapsack for the Return) and Kaf`āmī in his *al-Miṣbāḥ* (the Luminary) and other Shī`ī and Shaykhī authorities including the Bāb's antagonist Karīm Khān Kirmānī (d. 1288/1871) wrote an Arabic commentary on the *Du`a al-saḥār* in 1274/1857 (Sh-Du`a, 19f; Lambden,1998) all record a tradition that the Mightiest Name is found in this prayer. The following paragraph introduces the *Du'a al-saḥār* in Majlisī's *K. Zad al-ma'ād:*

> As for the worthy, greatly respect supplication *(du'a),* it has been related that his highness Imam Riḍā stated that this is a supplication that his highness Imam Muhammad Bāqir would recite in the mornings. He would say that if people knew the greatness *('azamat)* of this supplication before God, the speed with which it would [enable the devotee to] be answered, they would certainly kill each other with swords in order to obtain it And if I took an oath that the *ism Allāh-I a`ẓam)* (Mightiest Name of God) is in this prayer, I would be stating the truth. Thus, when you recite this supplication, recite it with all concentration and humility and keep it hidden from other than his people [i.e. non-Shi'is]... (Majlisī, K. Zad, folio 63b).

It is obviously not stated that the word *bahā'* is the Mightiest Name within this prayer, neither does the Bāb explicitly state this. Bahā'īs, however, understand it thus, especially since the word *bahā'* is the first major divine attribute after *Allāh,* itself one possible *ism al-a`ẓam* (this would make Bahā'-Allāh a double Mightiest Name). Yet, the personal name Allāh is not exactly "hidden". Thus, in numerous writings BA* underlined the "sealed", "hidden" nature of the non-qur'ānic (non- 99 Names) word *bahā'.* He saw it as "hidden" in the sense of its being

known and manifest but for most not recognized as the all-powerful *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam.*[1]

The word *bahā'* occurs thousands of times in Islamic literatures throughout Islamic history.[2] An early usage is that of the philologist Abī Zakariyā' Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrā' (d. 207/ 822) who wrote a now lost grammatical textbook entitled *K. al-bahā'* (*The Book of Glory)* (*Ma`ānī,*11). The epithet *Bahā' al-Dīn* (lit. 'The Glory of Religion'), for example, had a widespread Islamic usage from around the 11th cent. CE (Kramers, 1926). Bahā' occurs in several prophetic *ḥadīth,* several times in the *Futūḥāt* of Ibn al-`Arabī and in a very large number of other mystical writings (Lambden,1998). It is found more than 70 times in the multifarious Shī`ī texts making up the (110 volume) *Biḥār al-anwār* of Majlisī.

Islamic tradition lists many different (perhaps over 100) suggested possible Mightiest Names which cannot all be spelled out here. In, for example, the *Miṣbāh of* al-Kaf`āmī and the *Muhaj al-da`wāt* of Ibn Tāwūs, the following are among the possibilities that are listed: (1) the Name Allāh, (2) the *basmala* – followed by *al-akbar* or *al-a`ẓam* (? Imām Ṣādiq),[3] (3) a portion from *(maqṭa fī)* the *Umm al-kitāb* (Archetypal Book) or within the *muṣhaf* ("Book" = Q.?), (4) one among the 99 Names of God, (5) *Yā Ḥayy Yā Qayyūm* (O Living One! O Self-Subsisting), (6) in certain verses of specific qur'ānic sūrahs, *al-Baqara* (= The Cow, Q. 2), *Āl `Imrān* (= The Family of `Imrān, Q. 3) and Ṭā-Hā' (= Q. 20), etc., and (7) in a prayer recited by Joshua son of Nūn, (8) (Muhaj: 378ff; Misbah: 408ff where, 60+ possibilities are listed).

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[1] Note that in his K. Aqdas BA* at one point states, "Say: This is that hidden knowledge which shall never change, since its beginning is with nine [= *abjad* Bahā']. the symbol that betokeneth the concealed and the manifest, the inviolable and unapproachable Name.." (¶ 29, 28 cf. note p.188).

[2] Probably pre-9th century CE Christian uses of the word *bahá'* occur in Arabic recensions of an originally Syriac work, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (*Me'ârath Gazzê,* original Syriac c. 4th cent. CE?) in the *Kitāb al-majjāl* ("Book of the Rolls". This work includes an account of the story of Adam and Eve in which reference is made to the First Man's pre-fall (*bahā' al-aẓīm,* his "mighty glory" or "great beauty" (Bezold, Schatzohle,. 2:14) as well as his *al-bahá' al-`ajīb* (wondrous glory), Gibson, Rolls,.6). According to the "Book of the Rolls" the first couple were both clothed in glory and *bahá'* " "splendour" (Gibson, Rolls, 7).

[3] The letter "l" (lām) within the Allāh of the *basmala* is, among other things, said to be the *ism al-a`ẓam* (the Mightiest Name) and a *ramz* ("cipher") which is the first thing which God chose for himself *(li-nafsihi)* (T. Basmala, 6014C:341).

It is worth noting that certain early Shaykhī writings were understood by BA* and AB* to anticipate the word *bahā'* being the Mightiest Name. These opening words of Sayyid Kāẓim's commentary upon al-*Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya* of `Abd al-Bāqī Afandī al-Muṣilī (d.1278/1861), are perhaps the best example,

> Praise be to God Who hath ornamented the brocade of existence with the mystery of differentiation *(sirr al-baynūnat)* by virtue of the ornament of the emergent Point *(ṭirāz al-nuqṭat al-bāriz)* from whence cometh the letter "H" *(al-hā')* through the letter "A" *(bi'l-alif),* without filling up *(ishbā`)* or segregation *(inshiqāq)*" (*Sh. Qaṣīda,*1)

This passage is referred to by BA* in a Tablet to Mullā `Alī Bajistānī (Ma'idih 7:139) and by `Abdu'l-Bahā' in his *Commentary on the Basmala* (Makā'tib 1:33ff). In somewhat cryptic fashion Sayyid Kāẓim mentions the "Point" (•) interpreted as alluding to the hidden letter "B" (cf. its dot ب) and related to the letters "H" (هـ) and "A" (ا) which combine to spell *bahā'.* Also worth noting here is Sayyid Kāẓim's comments on *ḍiyā'* (splendour) in his *Commentary on the Sermon of the Gulf.* (<--2.2). It is associated with *bahā'* as "the light of lights" explained by Jesus as the first letter of the *basmala* (ب) signifying bahā'-Allah, the "Splendour of God" which Sayyid Kāẓim also relates to the *Du`a al-saḥār* (<-- Sh.TTNJ: 20). In his *Sh. Qaṣīda* Sayyid Kāẓim, also comments on the `Light Verse' (24:35) explaining that this "Light" is synonymous with the *al-ḍiyā'* (radiance) and *al-bahā'* (splendour) adding that "the *bahā'*... is the "Primordial Light" and the "Mightiest, Greatest Name" *(al-ism al-a`ẓam al-a`ẓam)* through which God created the "heavens and the earth" and whatsoever is therein. Shaykhī theology at times anticipated aspects of the centrality given in Bābī-Bahā'ī theology to the word *bahā'* as a luminous phenomenon and a very creative, dynamically powerful Word..

Details cannot be registered here about the complexities of the Bāb's uses of *bahā'* or the wide-ranging theological senses that BA* gave this word. Both before and after his religious mission the Bāb was especially given to the devotional life. This devotional preoccupation led him to cherish and meditate much upon the two Shī`ī supplications *Saḥār* and *Mubāhala* containing multiple references to the word *bahā'.* (<–). He probably gained further fascination

with various cosmic and theophanological aspects of *bahā'* spelled out in Shaykhī sources (see QA where there are 14 occurrences of bahā'.

The Bāb came to use the word *bahā'* quite frequently in his devotional revelations, some of which contain neologisms generated from the word *bahā'* (K.PanjS:171ff). In some writings of the Bāb the word *bahā'* is associated with the Bābī messiah *man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh,* "All the *Bahā'* (glory-beauty) of the Bayān is `Him whom God shall make manifest" (Per. Bay. 3:14; cf. K.PanjS: 88). The Bāb occasionally used the genitive phrase *bahā'-Allāh,* though not exactly as a personal name.

Following the Bābī conference of Badasht (June 1848), BA* defined himself through the word *bahā'* (<--). He thereby opened the possibility of his being identified as the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* alluded to in some Shī`ī- Shaykhī texts such as the *Du`a Saḥār-Mubāhila* devotions so central to the Bāb's devotional and high theological writing. From the early 1850s BA* used the word *bahā'* as a proper name (BA*, Rashh, 184-6; K-Ta`am, 265). In due course the *laqab* (honorific title) of Mīrzā Ḥusayn `Alī Nūrī became Bahā'-Allāh (ABayinat:. Following the *ahl al-bahā'*, "people of bahā'" terminology of the Bāb for the saved elect within the mysterious *ṣafinat al-ḥamrā'* ("Crimson Ark", QA 57:226, etc), BA* referred to his followers in this way (L-Shaykh, XXX/ ESW:139). In later years he occasionally called his devotees *al-bahā'iyyūn* (= Bahā'īs, (lit.) `those imbued with *bahā'* as the divine splendour'; L. Ḥikma 2:267, No. 130). This designation became central within the developed Bahā'ī religion.

There are thousands of occurrences of the word *bahá'* in Bahá'í sacred scripture, many theologically weighty statements about the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam.* BA* has stated that all the Divine Names in both seen and the unseen spheres are dependent upon the *bahā'* as the Mightiest Name of God (Ma'idih 8:24). The use of the *bahā'* as the Mightiest Name is, in a sense, the alpha and the omega of Bahá'í existence. It is nine times repeated in the daily Bahā'ī *ṣalat,* the "Long Obligatory Prayer" and can be recited at meal times (L..Tibb). It has a healing and protective potency, and is recited six times during BA*'s communal *Prayer for the Dead* (P&M No.167). Too sacred to be used on gravestones, this and other calligraphic representations of

the Bahā'ī Greatest Name are hung in Bahā'ī homes or engraved on personal ring stones worn on the little finger of the right hand. In his *Most Holy Book (K.Aqdas)* BA* made the repetition of the "Greatest Name" ninety five times (95 = 5 X 19) each day a regenerating religious activity (Aqdas ¶ 26; cf. SE* in LG:905). It is hardly surprising that the last individual head of the Bahā'ī religion, SE* (d.1957) wrote, "The Greatest Name [as Bahā', etc] is a distinctive mark of the [Bahā'ī] Cause and a symbol of our Faith" (LG:895).

Finally, a few notes about the Bahā'ī theology of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* relative to the HB and NT. The word *bahā'* seems to have no precise equivalent or cognate in Biblical Hebrew although it is represented theologically by the Hebrew כבוֹד *(kabôd* = `radiant glory) and its occurrence as כבוֹד יְהוָה ("Glory of the Lord") as well, theophanologically by BA*'s application of the tetragrammaton to himself (<--). BA* claimed to be the eschatological theophany of the tetragrammation. One such statement addressed to the Bahā'ī poet `Andalīb ("Nightingale) reads, "He [= BA*] it is who in the *tawrāt* (Torah) hath been named Y-H-W-H (loosely Yahweh) (BA* AQA2:28 ; see Lambden 1988:157-8). For BA* the Exodus account of the revelation of the divine Name (Ex.3:13-14;6:2) incorporating the phrase אהיה אשר אהיה (<--2.1), has a mystical significance as an allusion to his pre-existent reality, the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* which communicated with Moses on the mystic Sinai (Ma'idih 4:38-41; Lambden 1986:33ff; 1988 esp.155-8).

At one point in certain Arabic NT translations, most notably the London 1858 (= 1671) William Watts printed Arabic Bible for the Eastern Churches, the genitive phrase *bahā'-Allāh* translates δόξα τοῦ·θεοῦ (AV "the glory of God") in Revelation 21:23 where John of Patmos predicts,

> And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God (Gk. δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ = bahā' Allāh) did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof (AV tr).

In a very large number of *allāh* BA* applies to himself NT references to Christ's parousia

in radiant "glory" (Gk. *doxa* <-- Mk. 8:38,13:26; Matt.16:27; Lk. 9:26b). As the eschatological "Father" he claimed to be the return of Christ the "Son", initially, it seems, from Edirne (Ottoman Turkey) in the early-mid. 1860s (L. Ibn; S.Mulūk, etc) almost exactly 200 years after Sabbetai Tzevi (1626-1676) made his messianic claims known (1665-6) in this location. In Arabic NTs the masculine adjective *majīd* (= "glorious") or *majd* ("glory", cf. Q. 11:73; 85:15) not *bahā'* most frequently translate *doxa* "glory". Many of BA*s post-1863 references to his theophany thus use *majd / majīd* alluding to the synoptic predictions of a parousia in "glory".[1] In addressing various `kings and rulers' in major *allāḥ* of the late Edirne, early Galilean (= `Akkā'/Acre) period (1867-1862) this claim is frequently voiced as in the following brief extracts from epistles addressed to the "Christian west", to Napoleon III (d.1873), Queen Victoria (d.1901) and Pope Pius IX (d.1878):

> Wert thou to incline thine inner ear unto all created things, thou wouldst hear: `The Ancient of Days *(al-qadīm)* is come in His great glory *(dhu'l-majd al-`aẓīm)* (BA* to Napoleon III AQAK 99)

> He, in truth, hath come unto the world in his most great glory *(bi-majdihi al-a`ẓam)* (BA* L. Vikturiya, AQAK:131 tr.PDC:35).

> Blessed be the Lord *(al-rabb)* who is the Father *(al-āb)!* He verily, hath come among the nations in His most great glory *(bi-majdihi al-a`ẓam,* L. Pap. AQAK:/ tr.TB:79).

From the above paragraphs it should be clear that the Arabic word *bahā'* was identified by BA* from the 1860s as the locus or quintessence of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam.* This latter Isrā'īliyyāt motif has clear Judaic-Islamic roots. It has its secondary roots in the deep Shaykhī-Bābī theophanological gnosis. BA*, personalized the *bahā'* motif during his early Bābī years later claiming to be a pre-existent incarnation of that *bahā'* which is the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam.* intimated to Moses on the mystic, timeless Sinai. This, it would seem, was by virtue of the Bāb's use of *bahā'* phrases and derivatives in Shī`ī-Shaykhī inspired *Du`a saḥār / mubāhila*

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[1] In his the *Jawāhir al-asrār* (-->) BA* cites Matt. 24:29-31a (in Arabic, AQA 3:10) as he does in his K.Īqān (KI:19f /tr.16f; -->) though the parousia in "glory" is here associated with Muhammad.

generated devotional meditations and prophecies (cf. Qismatī, 38)..

■ 8. 2 Bahā'-Allāh and the emergence of the Bahā'ī interpretation of the Bible

Very little is known about BA*'s pre-Bābī years (1817-1844). Before becoming a Bābī at the age of twenty-seven he spent most of his time in Māzandarān (Nūr, Tākūr, etc) or in around Tehran the then capital city. Though Jews, Christians, missionaries, foreign diplomats and Europeans all resided in Tehran, Arabic and Persian Bibles had only been sporadically distributed there from early in the 19th century. Before 1844 there is no record of BA*'s having had intimate links with any of these aforementioned groups. Though opportunity existed within the Tehrani milieu for him (prior to 1852) to have communicated with Europeans or acquired some knowledge of the Bible and matters Judaeo-Christian, there are no primary or secondary sources which suggest that this was the case.[1]

Extant primary and secondary sources suggest that BA*'s knowledge of the Bible has its roots in the late Iraq period of his life. No canonical Bible quotations appear to exist prior to 1861 when the *Jawāhir al-asrār* (Essence of Mysteries) was written (-->). None of his pre-Iraq writings have anything to say about his Jewish or Christian associations or the Bible aside from a few Islamicate citations (-->). It was in Baghdād in the 1850s and early 1860s that BA*, unlike his reclusive half-brother Mirzā Yaḥyā, socialized quite openly (sometimes in coffee houses) in order to promote Bābism. In his *Sūrat al-zīyāra* (Surah of the Visitation) written for the wife of Mullā Ḥusayn, BA* mentions his expulsion from Iran and his being amongst Bābis and "those who disbelieved [in Bābism] of the [religious] communities *(min millal al-qablī)* (Ma'idih 8:84). This is slightly expanded upon by AB* who, in the early 1900s, explicitly stated that Bābī gatherings in Baghdad attended by BA* often incorporated learned Jewish and Christian religionists:

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[1]Of minor interest in this connection is the fact that BA's father's was friendly with Mīrzā `Abu'l Qasim Farahanī, Qā'im Maqām (<–5.4) who was among those who responded to the Christian missionary polemic of Henry Martyn. It is not known whether BA* or his father were familiar with these exchanges.

> It often happened in Baghdad that certain Islamic, Jewish and Christian divines *(`ulamā')* as well as well-informed Europeans *(arbāb-I ma`ārif-I urūpā)* were congregated for a blessed [Bābī] gathering *(majlis-I mubāraka)...* (SAQ VII: 22)

It was doubtless BA*'s attending such ecumenical Bābī gatherings that led to his close dialogue with Jews and Christians with whom he very likely discussed biblical issues. In this he would have argued the truth of Muhammad and Islam as well as Bābism and thus would have made use of various Arabic (and possibly Persian) Bible translations. This perhaps to some degree accounts for his citing a Christian Arabic translation of the Bible within his *Jawāhir al-asrār* (1861) and *K.Īqān* (1862).

An intimate association of BA* and Christians is also suggested by other things. Probably relevant to this is the fact that important Christian portrait(s) of BA* shown to Bahā'ī pilgrims at the Bahā'ī World Centre (Haifa, Israel) date from the Iraq period (pre-1863). Some have distinctly Christian ("Roman Catholic"?) cherubic iconographic features strongly suggesting an intimate association between BA* and Christians. Among the persons known or who might have come into contact with BA* at this time were the Jew Abd-Allāh ben Abraham Somekh (d.1889), the (British consul) Arnold Burrowes Kemball (d.1908) and the "freethinker" Mīrzā Malkum Khan (d.1908).

Prior to the early 1860s the only quasi-bible, Islamo-biblical citations known to the present writer are found within certain of BA*'s alchemical *alwāḥ.* They do not derive from Christian Arabic Bible translations are Islamo-biblical citations most likely cited from Islamic "alchemical" works. This pursuit of alchemy was widely indulged in the early Qajar years. Arabic, often pseudo-biblical citations or discourses within such works, often have an only vague relationship with the canonical Bible. Such biblical materials occasionally surface, for example, in works attributed to the enigmatic Jabīr b. Ḥayyān (fl. 2nd-3rd/mid. 8th cent CE?), an alchemical initiate and alleged disciple of the sixth Shī`ī Imam Ja`far Ṣādiq (d. 147/765 <-- 2.1) Both Jabīr and Ja`far are reckoned alchemical initiates in Shī`ī and other sources (Ruska, 1924;

Haq,1994).[1] Sometimes cryptic Isrāiliyyāt traditions and motifs inform Islamic alchemical writings including items within the Jabīrean corpus and writings attributed to the founding mother of Greek alchemy Mary the Jewess (prophetess or Copt; fl.1st cent. CE?).[2] Well-known to BA*, for example, Jabīr's *Kitāb al-mawāzin al-saghīr* (Lesser Book of the Balances) makes reference to a (lost?) book of Jabīr in which he expounds pre-Islamic scripture including the Hebrew Torah. Therein Jabīr writes, "[therein] do I expound, through the gnosis of the divine Assister *(ma'rifat al-mu'īn)*, the *Tawrāt,* the *Injīl,* the *Zabūr* and the *Mazāmīr"* (= Psalter) (Berthelot, [III] 1893:115-6 [Arabic] cf.148).[3]

It is in an alchemical Tablet to a certain Mīrzā `Abbās, for example, that BA* cites alchemical Isrā'īliyyāt and biblical passages. They include a cryptic alchemical pronouncement of Abraham about the nature of the cosmos *(al-`ālam)* as an Egg *(al-bayḍā)* and its constituents as well as an enigmatic statement of Jesus about *kā'in* ("Being") in association with the *kalām Allāh* (Word of God) (cf. Jn.1:1-2?). In this context Jesus utters the command "He that hath no sword, let him buy a sword!" (cf. Luke 22:35-8). The *Sitz im Leben* presupposed here for Jesus' alchemical gnosis, is obviously a far cry from anything that might emerge from the redaction criticism of the Lukan pericope (INBA 36:277-80).

■ **Biblical citations and the question of *taḥrīf* ("falsification").**

Just over ten years after the death of the Bāb (1850) , BA* wrote his important Arabic *Jawāhir al-asrār* (1860) and *Kitāb-I īqān* (c.1862) both of which modify the Islamic doctrine of

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[1]According to Māzandarānī BA*'s family had an interest in exoteric and esoteric alchemy. He refers to BA*'s brother Mirzā Mūsā and father Mīrzā Buzurg as experienced alchemists (Athar 1:172-3 [Iksīr] 5:53 [kīmīyā]). They were allegedly in possession of gold and silver alchemical tools and instruments which BA* had concealed in Tehran. During the two year period of his Sufi guise in Iraqī Kurdistan (1856-1856), BA* was deemed "an adept in alchemy and the science of divination" (SE* GPB: 124).

[2] Isrā'īliyyāt informed traditions about alchemical processes were commented upon by BA* including a cryptic utterance of the Mary the Jewess (fl. 1st cent. CE?) Including the saying, 'Take from the "branch" of the [philosopher's] Stone not from the "root" of the Stone' (Ma'ida 1:26f) as well as a saying relating to the *samghat al-bayḍa* ("White Gum"= Silver) and the *samghat al-ḥamrā'* ("Red Gum" = Gold). A massive bibliography surrounds this subject.

[3]Alchemical subjects were also an important element in Shaykhī esotericism. Shaykh Aḥmad, Sayyid Kāẓim and Karīm Khān Kirmānī were learned in this area.

biblical *taḥrīf* ("falsification") and contain biblical citations. The Biblical citations are from the NT with one exception in the form of a Persian paraphrastic version of Isaiah 65:25 introduced as a *ḥadīth-I mashūr* ("well-known tradition"; KI 73/75) existing in many Islamicate versions (-->). It can thus be said at the outset that BA* did not cite the HB until the post-Iraq period of his life. No fully fledged citations from the Torah/ HB are found in any of the currently available Persian or Arabic writings of the Bāb or BA* until the post-Iraq period of BA*'s life.

The Bible and biblical *taḥrīf* in the *Jawāhir al-asrār.*

The *Jawāhir al-asrār* (The Essence of the Mysteries) according to the evidence of one of its manuscripts dates to the (Bābī) year *bahiyy* = *abjad* 17 or 1277/ 1860-61 (INBMC 46:40). It certainly pre-dates the *K.Īqān* which is partly based upon it and seems to refer to it (KI13/17, cf. Ganj:28). The *Jawāhir* is an important Arabic work of BA* written in response to questions posed (or communicated to him?) by Sayyid Yūsuf-I Sidihi (Isfahanī), a one time resident of Karbāla, Shī`ī mujtahid and pupil of the Marjā al-Taqlīd, Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (1759-1864). His questions, apparently posed before he had met BA* (AQA 3:20), related to the advent of the Mahdī and when the Bābīs might expect the theophany of Bābī messiah. The *Jawāhir* has a good deal in common with both the (Persian) mystical *Haft Vādī* (Seven Valleys, c. 1858?) and the *K.Īqān* of BA*

The first third or so of the *Jawāhir* (AQA III:4-31) consists of an exposition of the reason for the rejection of past messengers of God and the need to understand biblical and qur'ānic eschatological prophecies non-literally. After bemoaning the fact that Jews and Christians failed to "comprehend the melody of the utterance" *(laḥn al-qawl)* through a wrong (hermeneutical) approach to biblical scripture, BA* says that this was the reason for their rejection of the *amr Allāh* ("Cause of God") meaning the message of Jesus and Muhammad (AQA3:6-9). BA* next sets down something of what God has mentioned in the previous scriptures *(kutub al-qabl)* to the end that his reader might incline towards Bābism. He cites, in Arabic, a series (in canonical order) of NT passages taken from the synoptic versions of Jesus' eschatological discourse (Matt 24:lff;Mk.13:1ff; Lk. 21:5ff) and citations extracted from the Johannine `Farewell Discourse'

(Jn.14:Iff). Introducing these texts with a citation from Matthew BA* first writes:

> This is the form *(ṣūrat)* of what was revealed afore time [contained] in the Gospel of Matthew *(injīl al-matta),* in the first Book *(fī sifr al-awwāl,* of the Gospels) in which he [Jesus] makes mention of the signs of the theophany *(ẓuhūr)* which [who] shall come after him [after Jesus = Muhammad] (Jawahir: 9/ 46:3).

An accurate citation of Matt 24:19 (AQA 3:9) follows which is textually identical with that printed in the Christian Arabic NT text of the 1657 London Polyglot of Brian Walton (= L.Poly.), the Rome Vulgate compared 1671 (Eastern Churches) version of Sergius Risius (= Sarkīs al-Ruzzī; R. Watts reprint,1850) as well as the 1811 Arabic Newcastle Bible (Carlyle) and the (later) Van Dyck (1860s) independent (Protestant) translation:

> Woe unto them that are with child [pregnant] and to them that give suck in those days (Matt. 24:19, AV/KJV).

This text is immediately followed by a highly elevated reference to Jesus to whom the synoptic words are directly attributed in introducing the citation of Matt. 24:24:29-31a. The Arabic text here is identical to that cited in the later K.Īqān[1] It has several variations from the Arabic Christian versions referred to above and the *textus receptus* reflected in modern critical editions. This text reads as follows using the AV translation with textual variants notes in capital letters,

> [But Immediately] after the oppression of those days shall the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the EARTH *(quwwāt al-arḍ)* shall be shaken [= 24:29]. [And] then shall appear the signS (Ar. pl *ʿālamāt)* of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with powerS and great glory [= 24:30]. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet [= 24:31a] (AV) (Ar. AQA 3:10/46:4).

BA*'s Arabic here thus has the following textual differences:

[a] For (Gk.) δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν = "powers of the heavens", Ar. *quwwāt al-*

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[1] Exactly the same version (as that printed in AQA III:10) of Matt 24:29-31a is quoted, paraphrased and commented on at some length in BA*s *K.Īqān* (-->). SE*'s translation of this text is not wholly literal but is assimilated to the AV., glossing over the minor variants and not translating BA*'s Persian paraphrases of the Arabic NT texts. The Arabic plural *ʿalāmāt* ("signs") for example, is in conformity with the *textus receptus* and modern translations (+ INBAMC 46 & AQA III) translated as a singular ("sign"). He also has "in the clouds" not "on the clouds" (Cf. KI tr. 16).

samā'/ al-samawāt (= L.Pol. sing. 1671 [1850] = pl. + VDyck) the *Jawāhir* (+ K.Īqān) has Ar. *quwwāt al-arḍ* = "powers of the earth" (cf. Jawahir 46:4 which has *quwwat al-samā').*

[b] For (Gk.) ἡ σελήνη = "the sign", the Ar. correctly has *'alāma* (sing.) (L.Pol. etc) while the *Jawāhir* (+ K.Īqān) has *'alamāt* = "signs" (pl.).

[c] For (Gk) μετὰ δυνάμεως = "with power", the Ar. (L. Pol.) has *quwwāt* (pl.) as does *Jawahir* (+ K.Iqān), while the other Arabic texts agree with the Gk. singular.

These three variations in the *Jawāhir* are also, for the most part presupposed in the identical text cited in the *K.Īqān* as well as in the (untranslated) Persian paraphrase of BA* in this later work (-->). The agreement of point [c] with the L.Pol. might suggest that the probably reprinted Christian text cited by BA* was more in agreement with this 1657 London Polyglot. No categorical statement could be made without a full consultation of reliable mss. When at [a] BA* has (Ar.) *quwwāt al-arḍ* ("powers of the earth") and not "powers of the heavens" it is likely that this phrase here is a lapse though it is sufficiently minor that BA*'s main arguments are not disrupted.

Many great Islamic scholars and thinkers occasionally cited sacred texts "wrongly" or with minor errors and variants. BA* apparently did this and no less a figure than al-Ghāzalī (d.505/1111). The latter, for example, is known to miss quoted some of his Q. citations and *ḥadīth* citations (Lazarus-Yafeh, 1975:217 fn.). The relatively minor textual idiosyncrasies here do not alter the fact that BA*'s main point is the veracity of the biblical text as opposed to the negative implications of Islamic *taḥrīf.* Later BA* actually states that he is paraphrasing or making inadequate citations because of lack of space and the need to move forward.

The other texts cited in the *Jawāhir al-asrār* include Mk. 13:19 which BA* notes parallels the text in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 24: 21; cf. Lk. 21:23). It is an Arabic version in full agreement with the L. Poly. (AQA 3:10+46:4). BA*'s aim is to draw attention to the distinctly eschatological materials in each of the four Gospels that he quotes Mark 13:19 even though it roughly parallels to Matthew 24:21. From "the third book.. the Gospel of Luke" *(sifr al-thālith.. injīl lūqā)* BA* quotes a partial and largely accurate Arabic version of Luke 21:25-7 which has several

minor variants from the Christian Arabic versions . The text BA* cites is again closest to the London Polyglot.[1]

In illustration of Jesus' eschatologically oriented utterances recorded in the "fourth book.. the Gospel of John", BA* cites three clusters of paraclete texts. First he quotes a slightly variant (Arabic) version of Jn 15:26-27a,

> [But] When *al-mu`azzī* ("the Comforter") is come, whom I shall send unto you, the Spirit of Truth *ṣūḥ al-ḥaqq)* which cometh from the Truth (God, *al-ḥaqq)* he shall testify of me. And ye [also] shall bear witness (AQA 3:11 = INBMC 46:4).

Here (Gk.) παράκλητος (paraklêtos = "Paraclete") is translated by the Arabic *al-mu`azzī* (lit. "Comforter") as in the L. Polyglot (1657) and a large number of subsequent Arabic translations including that of Van Dyck (see Lambden, 1997). While the English translation "comforter" apparently goes back to the English reformer John Wycliffe (d. 1384), the Greek was from patristic times thought to have an active sense of consoling or comforting (Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, etc). Most Arabic collections of *testimonia* to Muhammad cite Islamicate versions of Johannine Paraclete promises considered as prophecies of Muhammad (= Aḥmad Q. 61:6).

BA* next cites what appears to be a conflation of Jn 14:26 and 16:5-6aβ said to be what Jesus uttered in "another place" (in John's Gospel):

> [But] when the Holy Spirit cometh, the Comforter whom my Lord will send in my name, he shall [assuredly] teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you [Jn 14:26]. But now I am going unto him that sent me; and not one among you asketh me where I am going [Jn.16:5]. But because I have said these things unto you [Jn 16:6aα] (AQA. 3:11-12 = 46:4).[2]

It is curious in this unexpected juxtaposition of verses that Jn 16:16a breaks off and the words "sorrow hath filled your hearts" (16:16b) is omitted. Finally, BA* quotes a juxtaposed

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[1]This text is essentially the Lukan redaction of Mk.13:24-26 (// Matt 24:29-30 cited by BA* as above) with verse + 31 (there sis no exact parallel in Mk. or Matt..

[2] Here instead of "the Father" the text of Jn 14:26 quoted by Bahá'u'lláh has "my Lord" (Ar. *rabbī),* possibly a misreading (textually transmitted error) of *ābī* "my father" (so Polyglot) the "a" *alif of ābā* being read as the *"r" ra'* of *rabbā* (?).

(Arabic) version of Jn 16:7 and 16:13:

> [Nevertheless] I tell you the truth; it is best for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter (*al-mu'azzī)* will not come unto you; but if I go I will send him unto you [Jn 16:7]. And when that Spirit of Truth *ṣūḥ al-ḥaqq)* is come, he will guide you unto all the truth: for he will not cry out of himself but shall speak out whatsoever he shall hear; and he will declare unto you the things that are to come [Jn 16:13] (AQA 3:12= 46:4-5).

In selecting (and conflating) key texts from John's Gospel indicative of future events, BA* makes the advent of the Comforter (*al-mu'azzī)* the centre of attention. This figure is mentioned in each of the three Johannine passages quoted. Having quoted an Arabic version of Matt. 24:19, 29-31a; Mk 13:19; Lk 21:25-27+31 and Jn 15:26-27a, 14:26+16:5-6a, 16:7+13, BA* characterises these texts as "the substance *(sūrat)* of what was sent down [to Jesus] afore time" (AQA 3:2). He swears by God that he had felt compelled to abbreviate, condense them, hence it would seen, the unusual conflations or juxtapositions.

BA* also underlines his ability to quote at length from past scriptures:

> If I desire to make mention of the words of the prophets *(kalimāt al-anbiyā')* which were sent down from the *jabarūt* of the Divine Grandeur and the Kingdom of the Divine Sovereignty *(malakūt al-sulṭanat)* the pages *(al-awaraq)* and the tablets *(al-alwaḥ)* would assuredly be filled up before matters be concluded (AQA:12).

Sayyid Muhammad is assured that "all the scriptures *(al-zuburāt)*, psalms *(al-mazāmīr)* and scrolls *(al-saḥā'if)* contain messianic texts similar to the NT passages quoted (AQA 3:13). Where they to be quoted at length this might be counter productive for the Sayyid. The subject of the manner of interpreting NT texts is next discussed. Muslims must not be literalist in their exegesis

> If they [Muslims] say that these words [NT texts cited] are from God and have no *tā'wīl* ("allegorical meaning") but should be [understood] according to the outer mode of expression *(ẓāhir al-qawl)* in the most literalistic manner *(fī ẓāhir al-ẓāhir)* then how can they object to the [existence of] the unbelievers of the "People of the Book" *(ahl al-kitāb)?*

As literalists Muslims cannot complain about Jews and Christians rejecting Islam when they need to be led to understand prophetic scriptures non-literally:

> They neither believed in them nor obeyed them inasmuch as they did not

> witness the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars from heaven upon the face of the earth or the descent of the angels in their outward form upon the earth. Therefore did they reject the Prophets and the messengers. Nay, rather, they considered them opponents of their religion and their laws. They levelled false charges against them... (AQA III:14-15).

Muslims accepting the veracity of the NT predictions are compelled to recognise their allegorical level of interpretation. Otherwise non-believing Christian literalists have a valid position regarding non-fulfilment. NT texts must be interpreted allegorically (AQA III:15).

In quoting and discussing NT texts BA*'s primary aim is to enable Muslims to interpret qur'ānic eschatological prophecies non-literally. In so doing they should be able to recognise the truth of Bābism. They should not repeat the error of literalists among the "people of the Book". This argument presupposes the existence and authenticity of the NT commonly believed by Muslims to be have been largely if not wholly fabricated or textually corrupted (<--). It is thus argued that Christian scripture really exists:

> If they [Muslims] should assert that these [NT] books *(al-asfar* = the Gospels) in the possession of this community (= the Christians) and which they have named *al-injīl* and attribute to Jesus son of Mary were not revealed by God and [through] the manifestation of His Self [= Jesus] this would necessitate [Muslims asserting] the cutting off of [divine] grace on the part of the Source of Graces [God] and the non-realization of the Proof on the part of God with respect to His servants... If, when Jesus ascended unto heaven, his Book also went up with him then by what means would God be able to present them with scriptural proof on the Day of Resurrection or punish them [the Christians] for their unbelief in accordance with what is written down from the Imams of the [Islamic] religion and established by the rightly guided `ulamā' (AQA 3:16).

In the next few paragraphs BA* informs Sayyid Muhammad that the true meaning of the texts quoted should be sought from exalted Beings and not from those who do not know their "right hand side from their left" and who cannot penetrate such secrets. He mentions a celestial "City of Knowledge" *(madīnat al-`ilm)* where all knowledge and all secrets are treasured. Therein are the "essences [gems] of the mysteries" *(jawāhir al-asrār*, cf. the title of this work) and the secrets of scriptural texts. Outside of entering this celestial source of inspiration which appears to take on features of the New Jerusalm of the Apocalypse (Rev. 21), which is the source of NT exegesis, the predictions cannot be fathomed (AQA 3:16-20).

> Nay, by He in Whose hand is my soul! It is impossible that anyone should quaff even a dewdrop [of the mysteries of these verses] save he who hath entered beneath the shade of this City, the pillars of which were established upon mountains of red ruby, its walls of the chrysolite of the Divine Unicity *(zabarjad al-aḥadiya),* its gates of the diamond of the Divine Perpetuity *(`a lmīs al-aḥmadiyya)* and its earth the perfume of nobility *(rūḥ al-mukarram)* (AQA3: 20).

After confessing that he has digressed somewhat, BA* calls Siyyid Muhammad's attention back to Gospel texts. He quotes an accurate though slightly idiosyncratic Arabic version of Matt. 24:35 (// Mk.13:31; Lk 21:33) as that which is written in "all the Books of the Gospel" which Jesus, "the Spirit" *(al-rūḥ)* uttered "through the light" *(bi'l-nūr)* when he communicated with his disciples *(talāmid).* Taken literally this verse would inhibit Christian faith in Islam. Muslims must thus recognise the *ta`wīl* non-literal senses of eschatological prophecies. The Bāb came but was rejected because Muslims failed to interpret the scriptures befittingly.

Having made these points the issue of *taḥrīf* ("biblical falsification") is now directly raised

> Be not veiled on account of all that which was sent down in the Qur'ān and that which you [Siyyid Muhammad] have heard of the traces of the suns of infallibility and full moons of the divine Grandeur [= statements of the Imams] concerning the "corruption of those who exceed the proper bounds [extremists]" *(taḥrīf al-ghalīn)* and the alterations of those who falsify scripture" *(tabdīl al-mutaḥarrifīn;* cf. Q. 4:58; 5:16, etc) for they did not intend such expressions to apply save in the case of certain specific, declared instances *(al-mawārid al-makhṣūṣāt al-manṣūṣāt)* (AQA 3:27).

BA* here argues that as indicated by the [twelver Imams] biblical *taḥrīf* was limited to a few specific instances. This same subject is discussed in more detail by BA* in a parallel section of his *K.Īqān* which will be discussed below.

The latter two thirds of the *Jawāhir* is in large measure an exposition of the seven mystic stages to spiritual realization. At various points BA* cites NT texts including Jn 3:5b-7 (Arabic text fully agreeing with the Londo n Polyglot) in his exposition of Islamic eschatological predictions that should be spiritually interpreted. A conflated Arabic text of the first few verses of the Apocalypse (of John of Patmos = Rev) is cited their author being referred to as "one of

the prophets *(anbiyā')".* Apparently presupposing that Rev 1:13ff is a prophetic description of the exalted being of Muhammad, BA* quotes a conflated Arabic version of certain phrases occurring in Rev 1:14-16:

> His eyes were as a flame of fire [1:14b] and his feet were like unto...brass...[1:15aα]... And out of his mouth went a [sharp] two-edged sword [l6aβ]... (AQA 3:59).

Illustrative of the abstruse language of scripture these allegedly prophetic words, BA* holds, cannot possibly be taken literally. If the parousia of the one depicted in Rev. 1:14-16 should appear he would not be human. Intimacy with him would be impossible. Christians who expect a man to appear in such a form will never come to true faith. Great wisdom nonetheless, BA* states, is enshrined in Rev I:l4f. BA* gives a detailed non-literal interpretation to phrases within these verses which cannot be fully registered here (AQA 3:62ff). Neither is it possible to adequately discuss the implications of all the NT texts cited in the *K.Īqān,* many of which are also included in BA*'s this Persian rewrite of his *Jawāhir al-asrār.*

■ The Bible and biblical *taḥrif* in the Kitāb-ī Iqān

Like the *Jawāhir al-asrār ,* the *K.Īqān* (Book of Certitude) was written as a response to questions posed by an uncle of the Bāb, Hajjī Mīrzā Sayyid Muhammad mostly revolving around problems of the seeming non-fulfillment of Shī`ī eschatological predictions. Originally known as the *Risāla-i Khāl-i Akbar* (Treatise for the Greatest Uncle), this elegant Persian *istidlāliyya* (Demonstrative treatise) was later named the *K.Īqan* or "Book of Certitude" (= KI.,1278 AH=1861 CE). It is the chief cornerstone of middle Bābī and emergent Bahā'ī theology. And dates to about a year after the *Jawāhir al-asrār* , namely, 1278/1862 (cf. Buck, 1995). Within his *Kitāb-I Iqān* BA* devotes considerable space to the spiritual interpretation of Matthew 24:29-31a (KI:19ff /16ff) cited in Arabic exactly as it is in the *Jawāhir al-asrār (<---).* These NT verses are again interpreted in terms of Muhammad being the return of Christ. Expounded non-literally, the eschatological signs of the synoptic gospels accompanied his parousia of the Arabian prophet. Literalist Christian divines unable to convert to Islam were deprived of the

"streaming grace of the Muhammadan Revelation and its showering bounties" (KI:17-18/.20-21).

Having outlined the natu e of the rejection of a succession of past prophets, BA* quotes a few Persian paraphrases of Paraclete texts (rooted in Jn 14:26b, 28, KI:16/14) and introduces the matter of the "return" of Jesus after which Matthew 24:29-31a is cited (<--). Several passages from this text are then allegorically interpreted in a manner similar to the exegesis in the *Jawāhir* though in more detail. After commenting upon "And he shall send his angels" (Matt. 24:31a) BA* raises hermeneutical issues. The need for non-literal exegesis of eschatological prophecies is again underlined. The failure of Christians to incline in this direction is lamented in that it led to their rejection Muhammad. Muslims must acknowledge the need for deep spiritual exegesis otherwise they cannot blame Christians for rejecting Muhammad. The genuine scriptural prophecies in the NT are obviously figurative (KI:61-2/50-51).

In discussing the above issues Muslims simply fall back on their assertion of biblical *taḥrif*. The texts are corrupt therefore what these texts predict is meaningless. As in the *Jawāhir* BA* refers to statements of the twelver Imams, the "Aḥmadī m rrors , about the *taḥrif-I ghālīn* (= Ar. *Jawāhir*, *taḥrīf al-ghā n* AQA 3:27) translated by SE from a faulty text (a missing dot over the first letter *ghayn:* ع not غ, so Cairo KI:65) and reading *taḥrif-I `ālīn* [`āliyyīn] which he translated "Modification by the exalted beings (= `ālīn [āliyyīn])" instead of "corruption of the exaggerators"(*taḥrif-I ghālīn)* or the like.[1]

The phrase expressive of textual manipulation in the tradition of the Imams in the Persian of the *K.Īqān*, is *tabdīl-I mustakbirīn* which is translated by SE* "alteration by the disdainful" (lit. "haughty") (KI:65/54) which only loosely corresponds to the (Ar.) *Jawāhir* parallel *tabdīl al-mutaḥarrifīn* ("alternation of the [textual] corrupters"). That the correct reading here is *taḥrīf-I ghālīn* ("corruption of the exaggerators") is indicated in that the *K. Iqān* is drawing on Shī`ī tradition(s) which have this reading. Important in this respect is a passage from the following

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[1] cf. Qur'ān 4:171a, *yā ahl al-kitāb lā taghlū fī dīnikum,* ("O people of the Book! Do not commit excesses in your religion"). The Arabic word *ghālīn* comes from the root gh-l-u/w the basic verbal form of which signifies `to exceed the proper bounds'. From this root comes *ghuluww* = `extremism', `an adherant of an extremist sect'.

Imami Shī'ī *ḥadīth* (= "the utterances of the Aḥmadī mirrors");

> For us in every discrepancy there is abandonment for they [the Imams] interdict from our [Shī`ī] religion the *taḥrīf al-ghālīn* ("corruption of the exaggerators"), the selectivity of the false ones *(intiḥāl al-mubṭilīn)* and the eisegesis of the ignorant (*ta'wīl al-jāhilīn*)" [1]

The *Jawahir* parallel to the *K.īqān* passage translated above is an expansion which clearly acknowledges its indebtedness to Shī`ī traditions that speak of *taḥrīf* ("corruption") or *tabdīl* ("alteration") in connection with biblical (and qur'ānic?) revelation. The implication of these latter paragraphs is that the existing text of the Bible is essentially a largely uncorrupted divinely revealed Book. This became the standard Bahā'ī viewpoint though it does not signify that the whole Bible constitutes *waḥy* (divine revelation).

In illustration of his understanding of the limited applicability or context of qur'ānic verses mentioning *taḥrīf* (not being indicative of whole scale biblical *taḥrīf*), BA* (like certain Muslim exegetes) relates the context of the qur'ānic references to *taḥrīf* by narrating the well-known story of the dialogue between Muhammad and the Jewish Rabbi `Abd Allāh Ibn-l Ṣūrīyā as the occasion for the revelation of Q. 4:45 (or 5:45).[2] This cannot be fully discussed here though it can be noted that the story of Ibn Ṣūriyā and the question of stoning as punishment for adultery is much discussed in *tafsīr* and related sources.[3] Such, BA explains, were the circumstances that precipitated Gabriel's revealing, to Muhammad, the words "They [the Jews] pervert

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[1] This "saying of the Imam" is cited by the Shaykhī Muḥammad Khān-i Kirmānī in his *Ḥusām al-dīn,* 12 though it is not precisely sourced. Taking this context into account the reading *ghālīn* ("exaggerators") makes far better sense than *'āliyyīn* ("exalted beings") inasmuch as one would not expect "exalted Beings" (assuming *'alīn* does not have the sense "haughty ones") to engage in the *taḥrīf* ("corruption") of holy books. See also Majlisī, Biḥār 2:92, 151, 4:353; 23:30,95; 25:274, 363; 27:222, 32:352; 35:326;36:256; 37:27; 70:102 and 102:78.

[2] See Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat* tr. Guillaume, 266ff; Burton, 1977: 68ff; Ishrāq Khāvarī, QI 1:22-3, 613-8. Q. 3:92 reads, "Say:Bring the Torah and read it if ye are truthful", a verse said to have been addressed to Jews who submitted a man and a woman for examination who had committed adultery (Bukhārī, Saḥīḥ, III:92). The version set forth by BA* is a conflation and expansion of several early accounts.

[3] The Pentateuch does in fact contain the stoning penalty for adultery (Lev. 20:10 Deut. 22:22, etc). It is not clear whether or to what extent the death by stoning for adultery was carried out by Jews during the biblical period. In post-biblical times adulteresses were variously stoned, strangled, burned, imprisoned etc most commonly, publicly flogged (Tigay and Cohn `Adultery' EJ 2:314).

(yuḥarrifūna) the text of the Word of God" (= Q.4:45, or 5:45).[1] They indicate a specific occasion of *taḥrīf* which does not support a notion of the whole scale textual *taḥrīf* of the Bible.

BA* underlines his rejection of textual *taḥrīf* by pointing out that neither Jewish nor Christian divines have removed from the Bible *(kitāb)* verses predicting the advent of Muhammad. Muslims who hold this view are seriously in error because devout Jews and Christians would not universally excise scripture from their sacred texts (KI 55/67). This argument in favour of the fundamental authenticity of biblical revelation is found in many Muslim liberal sources. For BA* *taḥrīf* really indicates the erroneous exegesis of scripture. Jews at the time of the Prophet Muhammad indulged in *taḥrīf* in that they interpreted scripture after their own fancies. Muhammad thus accused them of *taḥrīf.* Q. 2:75ff. has to do with the *taḥrīf-I ma'ānī,* the "falsification of the meaning" of the sacred word in corrupt Jewish anti-Islamic polemic (KI: 55-56/67-69).

Summing up his view of biblical revelation in the light of his previously outlined exegesis of Gospel texts (Matt 24:29ff), BA* acknowledges that various modes of textual *taḥrīf* had occurred but places the emphasis upon the unfortunate *taḥrīf-I ma'ānī* ("the falsification of meaning"). It is ego centred hermeneutical disorientation that constitutes *taḥrīf* not textual manipulation of corruption (KI:57f / 69f). For BA* the Bible is fundamentally authentic though widely misinterpreted or misinterpreted. The Muslim assertion that the genuine text of the *Injīl* is non-existent, having "ascended unto heaven", is also countered (KI:57/69). Such an assertion is grievously in error and is a mockery of the divine providence. When "the sun of the beauty of Jesus" ascended unto the "fourth heaven" *(falak-I chahārum)*[2] how, BA* asks, could the

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[1] In the Cairo ed. of the *K.Īqān* (p.67) Q. 4:45 is partly cited as the words revealed to Muhammad in connection with the Ibn-i Ṣūrīyā episode. Q. 5:45 differs only slightly from Q. 4:45 in terms of the words quoted by BA* (*mīn ba'ad).* It is Q. 5:45ff that, in Muslim commentaries, is usually explained in the light of the case of the Jewish adulterers and the stoning penalty issue. The phrase "they pervert *(yuḥarrifūna)* the text of the Word of God" in Q. 5:45 is taken by some (al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* VI:137) to indicate the Jewish concealment or suppression of the stoning penalty for adultery.

[2] Here (KI:86) as elsewhere such as the *Lawḥ-I Abā al-Ḥasan* (BA*Khādim-Allāh, dated 27th Rabi' 1297 AH [= 1879], INBMC 28:[447-63], 449) BA* speaks of Jesus as having ascended up into the "fourth heaven", the "solar" locale from whence he is to return. Cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Futuḥāt;* Ishraq Khāvarī,

"holy Book" disappear also? It is inconceivable that divine, scriptural guidance would be cut off by God during the pre-Islamic period (KI:57/69-70).

Despite prejudices born of exaggerated notions of biblical *taḥrīf,* there were a fair number of Sunnī and Shī`ī apologists, thinkers and philosophers who cited the Bible with confidence and apologetic acumen. BA* had a good deal in common in his rejection of biblical *taḥrīf* with, among others, the following Muslim scholars several of whom to some degree shared a positive attitude towards the Bible: Imam `Alī al-Riḍā' who acknowledged an apostolic rewriting; the Shī`ī historians al-Yaqūbī and al-Mas`ūdī, al-Shahrastānī and Ibn Khaldūn. It will be appropriate to also mention here the great Iranian (possibly Ismā'īlī thinker ?) Abū Fatḥ al-Shahrastānī (d.548/1153), best known for his *K. al-milāl wa'-niḥal* (The Book of Religious and Philosophical Creeds), today recognized as the first history of religion text in world literature (Wasserstrom IOS XVII:128).

Aside from al-Shahrastānī's positive view and knowledge of the Bible evident in his *K. Milāl* the little known prologue to his incomplete Persian Tafsīr work *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa miṣbāḥ al-abrār* (Keys of the mysteries and Lamps of the Pious) contains passages of great interest. Therein it is stated that despite some Jewish twisting of scriptural word(s) *(al-kalām)* out of their context (<--) *(yuḥarrifūna'l-kalima `an mawāḍi`hi)* (Q. 4:46) there existed a single recension *(naskh)* of the *tawrāt* representative of the *alwāḥ* (Tablets, given to Moses) in the safekeeping of the Aaronites *(awlād hārūn).* The *tawrāt* did not loose its status as an honourable expression of "Word of God: *(kalām Allāh).* This is clear from the qur'ānic reference to the *tawrāt* as "a guidance and a light" (Q.5:44a). The *Injīl* (Gospel[s]) are likewise the "Book of God" *(kitāb Allāh)* although existing in four differing recensions with innumerable differences deriving from the four evangelists. The extant Gospels are thus not wholly the *kalām Allāh* (Word of God) but contain portions of the true Gospel, just as the Q. is not wholly present in the commentaries of the Islamic commentators *(tafsīr al-mufassarīn).* That there is *waḥy*

QI.1:103-107).

("divine inspiration") in the existing Gospels is also apparent from the Q. which states that the *injīl* (Gospel[s]) confirms previous scripture (Q. 3:3, 50) (Shahrastānī, Mafatih,122-3).

Unlike the majority of Shī`ī scholars such as Sayyid Aḥmad `Alawī (<--), al-Shahrastānī was able to accept the partly if not largely inspired nature of the Bible. BA*'s position was very similar. He argued in favour of the basic authenticity of biblical revelation in his *K. īqān* and more succinctly in his *Jawāhir al-asrār* (<--). This was of fundamental importance for the evolution of the Bahā'ī interpretation of the Bible. The Bāb's qur`āno-centric perspectives hardly opened up or bypassed the Muslim doctrine of *taḥrīf* though he did view the Injīl as the *kalām Allāh* (<--4.1ff). BA* addressed the matter straightforwardly. He endorsed the most liberal of Muslim attitudes towards Judaeo-Christian scripture. BA* confidently quoted the Bible throughout his life after the writing of the *K.Īqān.* This was an example followed assiduously by his eldest son AB* and many others among his successors and followers. His strong arguments against biblical *taḥrīf* were key factors that led to the oriental and subsequent occidental Bahā'ī dialogue with Jews and Christians through biblical exegesis.

Certain arguments found in the writings of the Bāb and the contacts BA had with Jews and Christians in Baghdad, doubtless contributed to his positive view of the Bible. Having said this, however, it should be pointed out that there are writings of BA* (as well of AB* and SE*) that modify any overstate any doctrine of the authenticity of the Bible argued in the *Kitāb-I Īqān.* As BA* was exiled during an almost thirty year period (1863-1893) from Iran to Ottoman Turkey and Palestine he not only openly rejected hardline Islamic concepts of *taḥrīf* but gradually came to address weighty epistles informed by accurate biblical citations to Jews, Christians, numerous believing devotees and various western rulers and ecclesiastics.

■ Further biblical citations in the K.Īqān

In setting forth evidences of the spiritual sovereignty of Muhammad, how he "with one single verse.. sundered light from darkness", BA* draws on his exegesis of Rev 1:16aβ ("And out of his mouth went a..sharp two-edged sword") as detailed in the *Jawāhir.* The revelations of Muhammad were a divisive revolutionary "sword" though also highly unitative. Hostile and

antagonistic peoples were bound together through the qur'ānic word. This is indicated in a *ḥadīth-l mashūr* ("well-known tradition"), actually the paraphrased citations rooted in the book of Isaiah 65:25a (cf Isa.11:6f.) not cited in Arabic like most of his NT., but in Persian.[1]

> The wolf *(gurg)* and the lamb (*mīsh,* `[sheep') shall eat and
> drink from the same place." (KI:73/75). [2]

BA* regarded the taking of this text literally both foolish and ignorant.[3] It's literal realization would disrupt the natural order of things and serve no purpose. This text of Isaiah indicates the power of the divine word to reconcile and unite opposing and diverse peoples.

BA's understanding of the Isaianic tradition is in line with that of a not inconsiderable number of Jewish, Christian and Muslim exegetes of Isa 11:6f and 65:25 or traditions rooted therein. Schimmel in her *Mystical Dimensions* notes that the theme of the "drinking together of the wolf and the lamb" from HB prophecies, "occurs as a sign of the ruler's perfect justice in Ismaili propaganda" and "also forms part of Rūmī's imagery, in which it is applied to the mystical beloved under whose spell the differences between men and animals disappear" (359 + fn. 2) The "lying together of the lion and the lamb" was also an image of importance in Moghul paintings of the early seventeenth century (ibid; Schimmel,1978:97-98). In several talks and writings AB* interpreted Isa 65:25/11:6f figuratively in the light of his father's explanation (SAQ. XII:58f. cf. 102; PUP:369-70; PT:55, 56 etc.)

In arguing for a non-literal understanding of "life", "death" and "resurrection", BA* has

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[1] The Persian version cited is close to Isa. 65:25 though not identical with the *textus receptus,* BA* may be paraphrasing the text or quoting an Islamic tradition inspired by Isa 65:25a or, indeed some other Islamic source in which this well-known prophecy is mentioned. Isa 65:25 and 11:6f were sources of inspiration to Islamic thinkers and poets including for example, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

[2] SE* in his translation of the this passage (KI:.73) quotes the AV text (=RSV also) of Isa 65:25a, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together" as if it accurately renders the Persian.

[3] Many modern Christian fundamentalist publications attest the continuing vitality of the hope that Isa 65:25 / 11:6f will find concrete realization in the millennial age.

it that the following Arabic Johannine texts indicate a figurative sense to these matters, [1]

> It is appropriate for you that you be born again" (Jn 3:7b)
> Whosoever is not born of the water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God since that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit (Jn 3:5b-6, KI:73-6/86-90).

For BA* this text indicates that Jesus, in view of his ethereal power and heavenly sovereignty, called for and had the power to effect a mystic "resurrection". BA* also understands Matt 8:22b (= Luke 9:60a) to be illustrative of the inner significance of "death". Matt 8:21 (= Luke 9:59) is paraphrased in Persian and verse 22b quoted in Arabic, "Let the dead bury the dead". (KI 77/91). It is presupposed that these words of Jesus allude to the spiritually "dead" (those without faith renewed) being left to bury the physically dead. The condition of "death" as the absence of the true "life" of spirituality is thus indicated. For AB* and subsequent Bahā'ī writers Matt 8:22b (= Luke 9:60a) was an important proof text indicating the spiritual sense of the general "resurrection" of the "dead".

Following further detailed arguments designed to underline the inner significance and cyclic occurrence of mystic "resurrection" and the attendant actualization of the inner states of "life" and "death" BA* says more about the spiritual "wealth" and "sovereignty" of God's chosen Messengers (KI 77-84). In illustration of their heavenly "riches" some apocryphal words attributed to Jesus by Imam Ja`far Ṣādiq are cited and commented upon:

> Thus Jesus, Son of Mary, whilst seated one day and speaking in the strain of the Holy Spirit, uttered words such as these:
> `O People! My food is the grass of the field, wherewith I satisfy my hunger. My bed is the dust, my lamp in the night the light of the moon, and my steed my own feet. Behold, who on earth is richer than I' (KI 85/101). [2]

In the course of discussing the essentially spiritual sovereignty of Jesus and the divine

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[1] The Arabic text of Jn 3: 5b-6 here is identical with that quoted in the *Jawāhir* though Jn 3:7a is omitted in the K.Īqan. The text is again very close to the L. Polyglot. BA*'s Persian paraphrase is also untranslated by SE*.

[2] BA* gives a partial Persian paraphrase of these words attributed to Jesus- occurring in Majlisī, *Bihār* 5:358 old edition (see QI 2:1145).

manifestations, BA* draws on a number of NT texts referring to two episodes in the life of Jesus, (1) the synoptic accounts of his trial before Caiphas, the Jewish High Priest and Pilate the Roman procurator of Judea (esp. Matt 26:57ff+ parallels, cf. John 18:1ff) and (2) the Lukan account of Jesus' ability of perform healing miracles illustrated by summing up and commenting upon story of Jesus' `Healing of the Man Sick of the Palsy' (Paralytic) at Capernaum (Luke 5:17-26, refashioned cf. Mk.2:1-12, Matt 9:1-8).[1]

> ... Whether is it easier that I say unto him, `Take up thy couch', or that I say,`Thy sins are forgiven'? that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power *(sulṭan[an]*, "sovereignty") on earth to forgive sins" [2] (KI 86/103-4)

Explicitly referred to in the Arabic version of Jesus' words to his critics just quoted, is the "power" or "sovereignty" of the "Son of Man". He has "power *(sulṭān[an])* on earth to forgive sins" Such celestial authority, BA* comments is the *sulṭānat-I ḥaqīqqī* ("real sovereignty") and the power *(iqtadar)* of God's chosen ones" (KI 86/104)

These episodes are quoted as they were thought to underline the ethereal power and authority of God's messengers. Among other texts, the following Son of Man saying from Jesus is cited,

> Beholdest thou not the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and might? (KI 85/102-3). [3]

The implication of this interrogative and truncated Arabic version of Jesus' words, is that he invited his hearers to see and acknowledge him (the Son of Man) now seated at the right hand of God (cf. the Persian paraphrase, immediately following the Arabic). This is not exactly

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[1] Worth noting is the fact that in his *Miftāh al-Asrār* Pfander (<--) has this Synoptic narrative indicate Jesus' divinity and power to heal (tr. Tisdall, 23-5).

[2] See Luke 5:23-24a; Mk 2:9-lOa; Matt 9:5-6a with minor divergences. SE* translation of this variant Arabic paraphrase of Lk. 5:23-24a, is highly paraphrastic and assimilated to the AV of the Markan account (Mk. 2:9-lOa). Note the reference in the Arabic to Jesus' *sulṭan[an]* (sovereignty), the subject BA* is discussing (cf. also the Persian paraphrase, not translated by SE* KI:104).

[3] These words seem to be a rewritten and truncated Arabic version of Matt 26:64b/ Mk 14:62b where BA* finds reference to Jesus' (= the Son of Man's) "sovereignty".

the sense of the synoptic verses on which BA*'s quotation is based. They have a futuristic or eschatological import (Matt 26:64 // = Mk 14:62; Lk 22:69. cf. Dan 7:13; Jn 1:51). The past / present tense of BA*'s version apparently precludes the inclusion of the rest of the Matthaean/ Markan version(s) of these words, namely, "and coming on /with the clouds of heaven" (Matt 26:64b= Mk 14:62b). Jesus was outwardly devoid of power but possessed of an all-encompassing inner power (KI:86/103). Though derided and about to be sentenced to death he invited his hearers to vision and acknowledge his exalted heavenly status. BA* does not mention the mode of Jesus' death.

BA* concludes his exposition of the heavenly sovereignty of the prophets by likening the Jewish and Christian rejection of Muhammad to the Muslim rejection of the Bab, the "Point of the Bayan" *(nuqṭa-yi bayān).* The last eighty or more pages (KI:87-164/105-199) of the *K. Īqān* contain no further biblical quotations though there is much that has been highly influential in determining the mode and manner of the Bahā'ī interpretation of the Bible. The following notes must suffice to sum up and indicate themes of particular importance and influence.

■ **The Arabic bible text used by Bahā'-Allāh**

In conclusion of this section it will be appropriate to make some preliminary remarks about BA*s biblical citations in the light of Arabic Bibles available in mid.19th century Iran and Iraq. A number of Arabic Bibles were available to the Shī`ī `ulamā' and others in Qajar Iran and 19th century Ottoman Iraq. Arabic printed editions of the NT (16th century CE onwards) were for the most part varieties of a 13th century eclectic Arabic recension known as the "Alexandrian Vulgate". This lies behind the Arabic version in the ten volume Paris Polyglott (1625-45). Most pre-19th century partial or complete Arabic printed Bibles were adaptions or revised reprints of this Paris Polyglott including the Arabic texts within in the *Biblica Sacra Polyglotta* (1653-7) of bishop Brian Walton (d.1661) known as the `London Polyglot' (<–).

Also widely distributed in numerous reprints was the 1671, Vatican Vulgate'compared but little revised Rome published Arabic Bible of Sergius Risius (Sarkīs al-Ruzzi, d. 1638) who worked under the patronage of the Catholic Authorities. This version hardly supersedes the

weaknesses of this Paris or London Polyglots. An early Protestant attempt at updating is the 1727 slightly revised and corrected Arabic NT version by Sulayman ibn Ya`qūb al-Salbānī (of Damascus = Solomon Negri).

Largely reviewed above, the biblical citations of BA* within the (Ar) *Jawāhir al-asrār* and *K.Īqān* dating to the last Iraq years (1860/1-2), are, apart from a few minor paraphrastic Persian exceptions (Isaiah, John), all Arabic NT quotations. The texts cited are invariably a Christian Arabic translation, most likely one deriving from the London Polyglot or a slightly variant NT reprint of this text. These Arabic quotations were probably copied, consulted or otherwise obtained via Christians, Europeans or missionaries active in Baghdad around 1860. The occasional idiosyncrasies within the quotations merit further study. They cannot easily all be accounted for on the basis of variant texts.

While BA*'s pre-Edirne Bible citations are largely if not wholly, directly or indirectly London Polyglot derived, in later years he seems to have drawn on the Persian translation of Henry Martyn (K. Badī`, c. 1867) and the Protestant Arabic translation of Eli Smith (d.1857) and Cornelius van Dyck (d. 1895) which first appeared (as the NT) in 1860(65) the whole Bible appearing just a few years later. This much favoured version was translated direct from the biblical languages with some assistance from Butrus al-Bustānī (d.1883), Yusūf al-Asīr (d.1889) and Nāṣif al-Yāzijī (d.1871). Frequently printed from the 1860s CE this version became the standard Arabic text adopted by Protestant missionaries. It was much cited by BA* and intimately studied by AB*.

■ 8. 3 Conclusions: from neo-Shī`ī Bābī faction to the global Bahā'ī religion of the Book.

The opening chapters of this thesis commenced with an examination of basic aspects of the Islamic Isrā'īliyyāt (Israelitica) tradition, not initially a separate literary tradition but an orally transmitted phenomenon. It was decided that in this thesis Isrā'īliyyāt would be used with the wider inclusive definition suggested by some academic scholars such as Kister.[1] Academic definitions seem still to be in a state of flux. Isrā'īliyyāt at times appears roughly synonymous with "Abrahamic" and is probably best left transliterated. Just as Muslims assimilated Abrahamic

Isrā'īliyyāt traditions and Islamified them, so Bābī-Bahā'ī scriptural sources sometimes give them new levels of meaning in the light of its emphasis upon a spiritual hermeneutic and new religious theophany.

The Q. has sometimes been considered an expression of (proto-) Isrā'īliyyāt. The Arabic term Isrā'īliyyāt may have originated in the 2nd cent. AH being closely associated with the early practise of *tafsīr* (Q. commentary) and the tradition of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (stories of the prophets) entertainment and circulation. It may have been through the Yemenite Jewish convert to Islam, Wahb b. Munabih, a major fountainhead of early Islamic Isrā'īliyyāt, that the term entered the Islamic vocabulary.

The Isrā'īliyyāt traditions were initially wholeheartedly embraced within *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* and other emergent Islamic disciplines. A reaction against this great wave of seemingly `non-Muslim data' came about within an increasingly self-conscious `Abbāsid (or earlier?) distinctly Muslim community. Some among the pious came to look negatively upon Isrā'iliyyāt despite its obvious foundational presence in the Q. Early Shī`īsm, however, especially the so-called *ghulūww* (extremist) factions, were especially open to the creative apologetic utilization of biblical data, insights and allegedly proto-Shī`ī Isrālīliyyāt traditions. The roots of the centrally important Bābī-Bahā'ī concept of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) traditions are found in certain of these groups as well as in sources more centrally within mainstream Shī`ī religious tradition.

Fourteen categories of Islamic literature most centrally enshrining Isrā'īliyyāt materials and traditions were suggested. Four of these areas are especially foundational. They are (1) *Tafsīr* (Q. commentary), (2) *akhbār/ ḥadīth* (traditions), (3) *Tārīkh* (historical sources) and (4) *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (stories of the prophets). It was shown that Bābī-Bahā'ī primary literatures register Isrā'īliyyāt materials from each of these four areas as well as the other ten not discussed in detail here. Original *neo-tafsīr* materials born out, for example, of the allegorical story of Joseph are central to Bābī and Bahā'ī salvation history. While BA* presented himself as the new eschatological Joseph, his great-grandson SE* reckoned this biblical-qur'ānic figure a *maẓhar-I ilāhī* (Manifestation of God). Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture is full of such traditions and

motifs rooted in Islamicate Isrā'īliyyāt. They sometimes receive distinctly Bābī-Bahā'ī levels of meaning.

Shī`ī esoteric traditions including verses of the *Khuṭba al-ṭutunjiyya* ("Sermon of the Gulf") are viewed as foundational within Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Both the Bāb and BA*'s self understanding was shaped by the eschatological expectation of the *mukallīm mūsā* (He who conversed with Moses) on Sinai mentioned in this quasi-*ghuluww* sermon. It was suggested that the frequent Bābī-Bahā'ī use of terms like *`amā'* ( loosely, "cloud of unknowing") might go back through Ibn al-`Arabī (or a member of his school) to an early Arabic appropriation of the kind of traditions found in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa (d. 395), author of the seminal *Life of Moses.*

Muslim historians were seen to utilize biblical history and on occasion cite biblical texts. Certain of these historians viewed the Bible as a work that could be directly cited while others reckoned it in one way or another subject to *taḥrīf* ('falsification') and refrained from citing the text, though paraphrases were not uncommon, as was the case with al-Tabari. Among the examples given of the Bābī-Bahā'ī use of Isrā'īliyyāt within Islamic history was BA*'s possible use of al-Bīrūnī's reference to a 'Book of the Ages (skt. [Per.] *Kitab-I yūga)'* in his Tablet regarding the pre-Adamic era *(Lawḥ-I qabl-I ādam).* It was also pointed out that BA* in this same writing probably registered a passage found in the *K. Tanbīḥ* of al-Mas`ūdī about the association of Abraham's crossing the Jordon with the origin of the term Hebrew *(`ibrānī)*(<-3.2.)

Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' materials in various literary forms were seen to be widespread in Bābī-Bahā'ī sources. BA* frequently reviewed the lives of major pre-Islamic figures showing how their rejection was similar to that which he and the Bāb experienced. Motifs associated with Joseph, Job and Moses are greatly utilized in the writings of the Bāb and BA*. The perfumed garment of Joseph, for example, became a type of the spiritually regenerating robe of BA* pictured as the *yusūf al-bahā'* (All beauteous Joseph). Among the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* motifs utilized by BA* in his *K. Īqan* is his association of Noah and *badā'* ("change of circumstances") which very likely results from the concerns of the Bāb's uncle about a cancelled *jihād* episode in early Bābī history.

In the discussion of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in Shi`i Islam, it was pointed out that Islamic sources exhibit a widespread transmission of Islamicate or Islamo-biblical sources, often as pseudo-biblical citations. This was especially true of the early period. Early Islamo-biblical citations range from reasonably accurate to having nothing whatsoever to do with the Bible as a piece of canonical Judaeo-Christian scripture. Such variant Islamo-biblical citations not infrequently found their way into considerably later, greatly respected Islamic sources including Ibn al-`Arabī and Mullā Sadrā. An example set down below is the saying of Jesus originating with Muqātil b. Sulaymān as cited by the great philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā in his commentary on the *Uṣūl al-kāfī*.

The charge of biblical *taḥrīf* ("falsification") levelled by Muslims against `People of the Book' was seen to have been exacerbated in the early 19th century Middle East when Pfander and Henry Martyn indulged in evangelical orientalism in the form of anti-Islamic Christian missionary propaganda. Shaykh Bahā al-Dīn al-`Āmilī (Shaykh Bahā'ī), whose name has nothing to do with his being a kind of `proto-Bahā'ī', was one of those Shi`i figures whose writings appear to have influenced both Shaykhi and Bābī-Bahā'ī numerological speculations regarding Adam and Eve and the number nine. It was seen that missionary activity in early Qajar Iran both made the Bible more readily available than it had been and led around thirty Shī`ī Muslims to write anti-missionary tracts.

The sixth chapter of this thesis reviews aspects of the Bible and Isrā'īliyyāt in early Shaykhism, selected writings of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī and Sayyid Kāẓim Rashtī. These two often arcane exegetes indulged in the `irfānī-type interpretation of a number of biblically based *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* episodes and motifs, most notably Moses's Sinaiatic request to see God. These two foundational figures for Bābī-Bahā'ī studies on occasion interpreted Islamicate biblical citations and other points of exegetical interest. The Bāb's doctrines and interests have a very close relationship to these figures. The style of the Bāb's Arabic in its deep, intense gnostic orientation appears close to that of Sayyid Kāẓim, his one-time teacher. Graphic and other forms of the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam* (Mightiest Name of God) were interpreted in detail by the

architects of Shaykhism, and in this, they prepared the way for the Bahā'ī theology of the Greatest Name and the graphic representation of it, which became a central symbol of the Bahā'ī religion. Certain of their Islamicate Bible citations were repeated by the Bāb.

The main purpose of the last two chapters of this thesis was to examine the nature of the Bāb's alleged or actual Bible knowledge and to make some comments upon the nature of the Bābī-Bahā'ī interpretation of the Mightiest or Greatest Name motif ultimately believed by Bahā'īs to be personified in the figure of BA*. Examination of the Bāb's Persian and Arabic writings failed to locate any citations of the HB and the canonical NT. Canonical NT quotations from the Bāb were likewise found to be non-existent. Islamicate, Islamo-biblical citations of a distinctly Sufi orientation do appear in the Bāb's writings though they have no bearing at all on his direct knowledge of the canonical, Judaeo-Christian Bible.

E. G. Browne suggested seven signs of NT influence at specific points in the Persian *Bayān* of the Bāb were each found to be unconvincing. The Bāb's alleged citation of NT texts in his supposed speech to the `Letters of the Living' found in the SE* redaction of a recension of the *Tārīkh-I Zarandī* (= *Dawn-Breakers*) was also seen to be without foundation. It is thus concluded that the Bāb did not cite any of the books of the Bible, either NT or HB, preferring to focus upon the all-encompassing spiritual reality of the Q. and his own revelations (the *Bayān*). Through his knowledge of *jafr* (gematric gnosis) and various *`ulūm al-ghayb* (esoteric sciences) such as talismanry the Bāb claimed as the representative of the hidden Imam and in doe course a theophanic Being with a "spiritual" knowledge of all Abrahamic scripture. Though he did not exactly over-rule Islamic *taḥrīf* he did regard both the *tawrāt* and the *injīl* as the *kallām Allāh* (Word of God) even though the spiritual dimension of these sacred texts was all but negated before the holistic exaltedness of later divine revelations.

The final chapter eight introduced BA* as a leading Bābī, and one who early on adopted the word *bahā'* as his title. In so doing, he centered within himself numerous Abrahamic motifs associated with the *ism Allāh al-a`ẓam*. In doing this, he seems to have been markedly influenced by the Bāb's frequency of the use of this term, especially in his many `stream of

consciousness' revelations rooted in the two Shī`ī devotional texts, the *Dū'a al-saḥār* and the *Dū'a yawm al-mubāhala*. In particular, BA* saw the former text as a Tablet of Eternity (*Lawḥ al-baqā*) encapsulating the reality of his own spiritual being as the `secreted' Mightiest Name of God.

Unlike the Bāb, BA* began to cite the Bible, or more specifically the Arabic NT, towards the end of his Iraq years (1861-2). This most likely came about through his association with Christian missionaries, one or more of whom may have been responsible for his portrait. The biblical text cited in his *Jawāhir* and *K. Iqān* seem most closely related to the `Alexandrine text' as expressed in the London Polyglot Bible of William Walton or one of its many sometimes redacted Arabic versions. The aforementioned writings of this period contain the first biblical quotations within Bah ā'ī sacred literature. They were greatly expanded by BA* in the subsequent almost thirty year period of his frequent allegorical interpretation of the Bible.

BA*'s successors AB* and SE* wrote thousands of texts further expressive of the Bahā'ī interpretation of the Bible. The neo-Shī`ī phenomenon that was the religion of the Bāb evolved through these latter figures into the global Bahā'ī `religion of the Book'. The initial appeal of the Bāb to Shī`ī-Shaykhī Muslims and all humankind in his neo-qur'ānic *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (= QA 1) was realized through the modernistic, ecumenical religion of one who claimed to personify the Mightiest Name of God. The call of the Bahā'ī leaders to Jews, Christians and others began through the exegesis of the Q. but evolved to incorporate the rehabilitation and modernistic demythologization of biblical scripture.

✧

■ SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ■

■ SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ■ [1]

This bibliography is basically set out in two sections:

[1] Bābī-Bahā'ī primary texts, mss. and printed materials.
(A) The writings of the Bāb.
(B) The writings of Bahā'-Allāh.
(C) The writings of `Abd al-Bahā' (= AB*) and Shoghi Effendi (= SE*).
[2] Bābī-Bahā'ī and other secondary sources.

■ [1] The writings of Sayyid `Alī Muhammad, the Bāb

In preparing this thesis I have been able to consult mss. versions of most of the major and minor writings of the Bāb now largely in unedited mss. Here the abbreviation INBA will indicate mss. forming part of the *Iran National Bahā'ī Archives,* photocopies of a number of ms s. have become available to me. INBMC (= Iran National Bahā'ī Manuscript Collection, 100+ vols. [Tehran] mid. 1970s.) indicates volumes of bound photocopies of Arabic and Persian manuscripts mostly of the writings of the Bāb and BA* as well as some letters (*alwāḥ,* `Tablets') of AB* and select other Muslim [Shaykhī] and Bābī-Bahā'ī secondary sources.

Over the years a very large quantity of the writings of the Arabic and Persian writings of the Bāb have become available to me, some through the generosity of individuals others through university collections and Bahā'ī archives. Among the mss I have consulted are the many works of the Bāb found in seventeen volumes of the INBMC series which were privately published in bound photocopies in Iran in the mid. 1970s.[2] Other Bābī mss. within other collections have also been consulted, including several from the E.G. Browne Collection of the University of Cambridge[3]. Other Arabic and Persian mss. of the Bāb's writings acquired by the British [Museum] Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) and the International Bahā'ī archives in Haifa, Israel were also consulted. The Bahā'ī World Centre (BWC) in Haifa, Israel

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[1] Key bibliographical abbreviations used are: BPT = Bahā'ī Publishing Trust; BSB = *Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin;* BWC = Bahā'ī World Centre; MMM = *Majmu`ih-yi millī maṭbu'at-i amrī* (Iranian BPT.)

[2] The INBMC utilized were vols: 1, I4, 29, 40, 43, 50, 53, 58, 60, 64, 67, 69, 80, 82, 86, 9I and 98.

[3] See R.A. Nicholson (ed.), *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS. Belonging to the late E. G.* (Cambridge: CUP, 1932)

were kind enough to provide me with copies (some in typescript, some in electronic form) of generally inaccessible Bābī-Bahā'ī mss. They are abbreviated Haifa: BWC.ms. An invaluable source of reference, have been Denis MacEoin's, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History, A Survey* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992; abbreviated here as *Sources).*

■ (1- A) Published and unpublished writings of the Bāb.[4]

Ar. Bay.	=	*al-Bayān al-`arabī.* Ḥusaynī, *al-Bābiyyūn,* 82-107; [2] INBMC 43:1-68;
Ar. Dal.	=	*Dalā'il-i sab`ih. np.nd.* [Azalī ed. Tehran, 196?] [pp.](*alif- nūn*); IBA (? = Nicolas ms.106),102a--104b.
K. Asmā'.	=	*Kitāb al-asmā' .* INBMC 29. [2] Uncat. mss. Marzieh Gail Coll. Bosch Bahā'ī Library (USA).
K. Fihrist	=	*Kitāb al-fihrist* INBA. Ms 6007C:339-348.
K. Panj.S	=	*Kitāb-i panj sha'n.* np.nd. [Tehran Azali ed. 196?]
K. Haykal	=	*Haykal al-dīn.* np.nd [Tehran, Azalī ed. 196?]
K. `Ulamā'	=	*Kitāb al-`ulamā'* INBMC 67:206-16; Afnan 2000:107-111.
K. Rūḥ	=	*Kitāb al-rūḥ* [incomplete]. Haifa mss.
Kh.Ḥuruf	=	*Khuṭba on `ilm al-ḥurūf* INBA 91; INBA6004C: 209-213.
Kh.Jidda	=	Khuṭba at Jeddah. INBA 91: 61-81
Kh .Qah.	=	*Khuṭba-yi qahriyya.* INBMC 64:127-150.
P. Bay.	=	*Bayān-i farsī np. nd.* [Tihran, Azali ed.]
P. Dal.	=	*Dalā'il-i sab`ih.* IBA (ii) (? = Nicolas ms.106),104bff. + n.p. n.d (Azalī edition [Tehran,196?]) 1-72.
QA	=	*Qayyūm al-asmā'* Afnān Lib. ms.[5]
Q. Hafiz	=	*Su`āl `an al-lawḥ al-ḥafīẓ.* (Q. 85:22), TBA. mss. 6006C:79-80.
Q. Zavarih	=	Reply to the three questions of Mīrzā Muhammad Sa`īd Zavārih on *Basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa* and other matters INBMC 69:419-437.

[4] Where two or more different texts are listed in the section it is normally the first mss. listed which has been cited in this thesis -- as should be indicated in the referencing.

[5] Most of the refernces in this thesis are to this uncatalogued, very clear handwritten copy contained in the Afnān Library (London). After the sūrah number the page reference is written after a colon. e.g. QA 1:3 = sūrah1 page 3. This copy is dated Muḥarram 1323/1905. Other mss..consulted include a Haifa ms. Dated 1261/1845 and the EGB. Coll. Ms.F (7).

R. Dhah. = *Risāla Dhahabiyya.* (cf. Afnān, 2000:449). INBMC 86:70-98.

R.Jasad. = *Risāla fī'l- jasad al-nabī* (= *Sharḥ kayfiyyat al-mi`rāj)* INBMC 69:416-418.

R. Nub.K = *Risāla fī'l-nubuwwa al-khāṣṣa.* INBMC 14:385.

R. Sulūk = *Risāla fī'l-sulūk.* TBA., Ms. 6006C: 73-74..

S. Bayn = *Ṣaḥīfa bayn al-ḥaramayn.* CUL, Browne Or. Ms. F 7(9):1-125; TBA. ms. 6007C, 348-413.

S. Ja`far = *Sāḥīfa-yi Ja`fariyya.* INBMC 98:48-108; INBMC 60:57-154.

Shu'unK = *Shu`ūn-i khamsa al-fārsī* (= Persian K.Panj.?) INBMC 82:78-133.

T.Akhi = *Tafsīr ḥadīth `allamanī akhī rasūl-Allāh.* INBAMC 14:410-417.

T. `Ama' = *Tafsīr, ḥadīth al-`amā'.* TBA. Ms 6007C:1-16..

T. `Asr = *Tafsīr sūra wa'l-`aṣr.* (Q. 110) INBMC 69:21-119

T. Baqara = *Tafsīr sūrat al-baqara* (Q. 2) INBMC 69: (1ff) 157-294+377-410.

T. Basmala = *Tafsīr (ḥurūf) al-basmala.* TBA ms. 6014C: f. 301-370..

T. Ha' (1) = *Tafsīr al-Hā'* (1) INBMC 14:221-283; INBMC 67:4-52.

T. Ha' (2) = *Tafsīr al-Hā'* (2) INBMC 14:284-320. INBMC 67:53-85

T. Hamd = *Tafsīr Sūrat al-ḥamd* (Q.1). INBAMC 69:120-153.

T. Kawthar = *Tafsīr Sūrat al-kawthar.* EGB Coll. Ms. Or. F10 [7].

T. LaylatQ. = *T. Laylat al-qadr,* (Q.97) INBMC 69:14--21.

T. Kumayl = *Tafsīr Ḥadīth Kumayl ibn Ziyād al-Nakhā'ī.* INBMC 53:63-8.

T. Man = *Tafsīr ḥadīth man `arafa nafsahu faqad ` arafa rabbahu.* INBAMC 14:468-477; [2] INBMC 40:46-53.

T. Wajh = *Tafsīr Naḥnu wajh Allāh.* TBA 6006C: f.69-70; INBMC 53:56-8.

Wasiyya = Waṣiyyat-nāma. INBA 64:95-102; BWC: Haifa Ms. (unpaginated)

■ Azalī editions of writings of the Bāb.

P.Bay. = *Bayān-i Fārsī.* Tehran, n.d.

P.Dalā'il = *Dalā'il-i Sab`ah.* Tehran: n.d.

Qismati = *Qismati az alwāḥ-i khaṭṭ-i nuqṭa-yi ūlā wa Sayyid Ḥusayn Kātib* (n.p. [Iran] n.d.).

■ Translations of A. L. M. Nicholas (d.1864-1939)

P. Béyan = *Le Béyan Persan,* trans. A. L. M. Nicolas, 4 vols. Paris: Librarie Paul Geuthner, 1911-14

Ar. Béyan = *Le Béyan Arabe, Le Livre Sacré Bábyse.* Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905

S.Prev. = *Le Livre des Sept Preuves de la mission du Bab.* Paris: Maisonneuvre, 1902

■ Translations of the Bahā'ī World Centre (Haifa, Israel).

SWB = *Selections from the Writings of the Báb* ([= SWB] trans. by Habib Taherzadeh (et al.). Haifa: BWC,1976.

SWB* = *Muntakhabātī az āthār-i ḥaḍrat-i Nuqṭih-i Ūlā.* Wilmette: BPT, 1978.

■ (1-B) Writings of Bahā'-Allāh. [6] Published Sources, Abbreviations:

AQA *Āthār-i qalam-i a`lā.* 8+ vols. Bombay & Tehran: MMMA: Tehran, 1890-198?. rep. Vol. 1 (= *K. Mubīn)* ,Dundas, Canada, 1996/153 BE.

Amr.K Fāḍil-I Māzandārānī (Ed.) *Amr va Khalq.* 4vols. In 2 Hofheim-Langenhain:Bahā'ī-Verlag, 1986

AMuluk *Alwāḥ-i nāzilh khiṭāb bi- mulūk wa ru'asā-yi arḍ,* Tehran: MMMA, 1968/124 BE

AQAM *Āthār-i qalam-i a`lā, Majmú`a-yi munājāt.* n.p. [Tehran]: BPT, 128 BE

Aqdas. *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The Most Holy Book.* Haifa: BWC, 1992/5.

AyatB *Āyāt-i Bayyināt* (ed. R. Samandarī), Dundas, Canada: Association for Bahā'ī Studies, 1999/156 BE.

ESW* = *Lawḥ-i Khiṭāb bi-Shaykh Muḥammad Taqīī Mujtahid-i Iṣfahānī ma`ruf bi Najafī.* Cairo: nd. 1338/1919-20.

ESW tr. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (tr. Shoghi Effendi). Wilmette: BPT, rev. ed., 1971(76).

Ganj *`Abd al-Ḥamīd, Ishrāq Khavārī. Ganj-i sháyigán.* Tehran: BPT, 1968/124 BE.

GWB* *Mūntakhabātī az āthār-i-ḥarát-i Bahā'u'llāh* [= *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh],* Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1984.

GWB *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh,* trans. + comp. SE*, London: BPT, 1949 + Wilmette Illinois : BPT, 1978.

HW *Kalimt-i maknūnih* in MAM: 17-32 (Pt.1 Arabic) + 373-398 (Pt. 2 Persian).

IQ. *Iqtidārāt va chand lawḥ-i dígār.* n.p. [Bombay] 1310 A.H./1892-3.

LH *La'āli' al-ḥikma.* 3 vols. (ed. Vahid Behmardi). vol 1.Brasil: Editoria Bahā'ī, 143BE/1987; Vol.2 Brasil: Editoria Bahā'ī, 146 BE/1990. Vol. 3, Brasil: Editoria Bahā'ī, 148 BE/1991.

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[6] An * indicates an original text and a forward slash separates the pagination in original source[s] from that wherein there may be an English translation.

MAM *Majm`a-yi alwāh-i mubraka arat-i Bahā'u'llāh* Cairo: 1338 A.H. / [1919-] 1920. Rep. Wilmette, Illinois, 1982.

P&M (tr.) *Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh* [trans. Shoghi Effendi] London: BPT,1957.

P&M* *Munājāt, Majmū`a adhākīr wa ad`iya min āthār ḥaḍrat Bahā' Allāh.* Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bahai-Brasil, 138 BE/1981 [= Arab. & Per. text of P&M].

Ayyām-T *Risālih-yi ayyām-i tis`ih.* 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1981.

TB *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas,* Haifa: BWC,

■ **Specific Writings of Bahā'-Allāh**

Jawahir = *Jawāhir al-asrār.* AQA 3:4-88 [2] INBMC 46:1ff [3] INBMC 99.

K.Badi` = *K.badī`* (c.1867). mss., (Pers. Library); Prague: Zero Palm Press 148 BE/1992.

K.Ta`am = *L. kull al-ṭa`ām.* INBA 36:268-77; Mā'idih 4:265-76. text comm. and trans. Lambden BSB 3/1 (1984):4-67.

KI. = *Kitāb-i īqān,* Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahā'ī-Verlag, 1980/ 136 BE (= rep. *K, īqān,* Egypt, 1934); *Kitáb-i-Iqán: The Book of Certitude* (tr. Shoghi Effendi). London: BPT.,1961.

L. Ayyūb = (= *Sūrat al-ṣabr*). Ma'idih 4: 282-313

L. Baha' = Lawḥ-i Bahā'. Haifa mss. INBMC 35:70-81.

L. Creator = `O Thou Creator!' mss (trans. Hebrew University, Jerusalem).

L. H-Qazvini = *Lawh-i Ḥajjī Mullā Hadī Qazvīnī.* MAM:346-62.

L. Hurufat = [Tafsīr] L. *Ḥurūfāt-i muqaṭṭa`ah.* Haifa mss. [2] INBMC 36:212-242 ; [3] Mā'idih 4:49-86

L. Hikmat = *Lawḥ-i Ḥikmat.* MAM: 37-53

L. Ibn = *Lawḥ-I Ibn-I Insān.* IQ: 93ff.

L. Khātam = *Lawḥ-i Khātam al-nabiyyūn.* (mss.).

L. Qabl. = *Lawḥ-i qabl-i ādam*. IQ:68-78 cf. partial tr. SE* GWB: LXXXVII.

L. MalikR = *Lawḥ-i. Malik-i Rūs.* Tablet to Czar Nicolaevitch Alexander II of Russia A.Muluk:121-128.

L.Mawlūd = *Lawḥ- i mawlūd- i ism- I a`ẓam. Ayyām- i tis`a*, 48-51.

L. Pāp = *Lawḥ-i. Pāp* (Tablet to the Pope Pius IX) A.Muluk:73-90.

L. Sarraj = *Lawḥ.-i Sarrāj.* (Tablet to `Alī Muhammad Sarrāj), Ma'idih 7:4-118; [2] INBA 73:198-231.

L. Shaykh	=	*L. Ibn-i Dhi'b* ("Epistle to the son of the Wolff" = ESW)
L. Sultan	=	(Nāṣir al Dīn Shāh) in A. Muluk: 145-201.
L. Vikturyia	=	*Lawḥ-i Vikturiya* (Queen Victoria), A.Muluk:131-141.
Qasida	=	*al-Qaṣīdah `izz al-warqa'iyya* (The Mighty Ode of the Dove) Mss. Haifa AQA 3:196-213.
Rashh	=	*Rashḥ-i `amā'*. Haifa typsescript in the hand of Zayn al-Muqarrabīn [2] INBA 36:460-1; [3] Ma'idih *4:184-6.* tr. Lambden. BSB 2/1 (1983): 4-114.
S. Muluk.	=	*Sūrat al-mulūk.* A.Muluk:3-69.
S. Nush	=	*Sūrah-i nuṣḥ.* INBMC 36:242-268.
S. Qamīṣ	=	*Sūrat al-qamīṣ.* AQA 4:XX-XXX.
S. Ziyara	=	*Sūrat al-zīyāra* (Surah of the Visitation) for the wife of Mullā Ḥusayn Bushrū'ī, Maidih 8:82-92.

■ **1-C Select writings of `Abd al-Bahā' (AB*) and Shoghi Effendi.**

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