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[The initials of author E.G.B. are identified in the introduction as identifying E. G. Browne.]

BÁBÍISM, the religion founded in Persia in a.d. 1844-1845 by Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad of Shíráz, a young Sayyid who was at that time not twenty-five years of age. Before his "manifestation" (*zukúr*), of which he gives in the Persian *Bayán* a date corresponding to 23rd May 1844, he was a disciple of Sayyid Kazím of Rasht, the leader of the Shaykhís, a sect of extreme Shi'ites characterized by the doctrine (called by them *Rukn-i-rábi*, "the fourth support") that at all times there must exist an intermediary between the twelfth Imam and his faithful followers. This intermediary they called "the perfect Shíite," and his prototype is to be found in the four successive *Bábs* or "gates" through whom alone the twelfth Imam, during the period of his "minor occultation" (*Ghaybat-i-sughrá*, a.d. 874-940), held communication with his partisans. It was in this sense, and not, as has been often asserted, in the sense of "Gate of God" or "Gate of Religion," that the title *Báb* was understood and assumed by Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad; but, though still generally thus styled by non-Babís, he soon assumed the higher title of *Nuqta* ("Point"), and the title *Báb*, thus left vacant, was conferred on his ardent disciple, Mullá Husayn of Bushrawayh.

The history of the Bábís, though covering a comparatively abort period, is so full of incident and the particulars now available are so numerous, that the following account purports to be only the briefest sketch. The Báb himself was in captivity first at Shíráz, then at Mákú, and lastly at Chihríq, during the greater part of the six years (May 1844 until July 1850) of his brief career, but an active propaganda was earned on by his disciples, which resulted in several serious revolts against the government, especially after the death of Muhammad Sháh in September 1848. Of these risings the first (December 1848-July 1849) took place in Mázandarán, at the ruined shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí, near Bárfurúsh, where the Bábís, led by Mullá Muhammad 'Alí of Bárfurúsh and Mullá Husayn of Bushrawayh ("the first who believed"), defied the shah's troops for seven months before they were finally subdued and put to death. The revolt at Zanjin in the north-west of Persia, headed by Mullá Muhammad 'Alí Zanjání, also lasted seven or eight months (May-December 1850), while a serious but less protracted struggle was waged against the

government at Níríz in Fárs by Agá Sayyid Yahyá of Níríz. Both revolts were in progress when the Báb, with one of his devoted disciples, was brought from his prison at Chíríq to Tabríz and publicly shot in front of the *arg* or citadel. The body, after being exposed for some days, was recovered by the Bábís and conveyed to a shrine near Tehrán, whence it was ultimately removed to Acre in Syria, where it is now buried. For the next two years comparatively little was heard of the Bábís, but on the 15th of August 1852 three of them, acting on their own initiative, attempted to assassinate Násiru'd-Dín Sháh as he was returning from the chase to his palace at Niyávarán. The attempt failed, but was the cause of a fresh persecution, and on the 31st of August 1852 some thirty Babís, including the beautiful and talented poetess Qurratu'l-'Ayn, were put to death in Tehran with atrocious cruelty. Another of the victims of that day was Hájji Mírzá Janí of Káshán, the author of the oldest history of the movement from the Bábí point of view. Only one complete MS. of his invaluable work (obtained by Count Gobineau in Persia) exists in any public library, the Bibltothèque Nationale at Paris. The so-called " New History " (of which an English translation was published at Cambridge in 1893 by E. G. Browne) is based on Mírzá Janí's work, but many important passages which did not accord with later Bábí doctrine or policy have been suppressed or modified, while some additions have been made. The Báb was succeeded on his death by Mírzá Yahyá of Núr (at that time only about twenty years of age), who escaped to Bagdad, and, under the title of *Subhi-Ezel* ("the Morning of Eternity"), became the pontiff of the sect. He lived, however, in great seclusion, leaving the direction of affairs almost entirely in the hands of his elder half-brother (born 12th November 1817), Mírzá Husayn 'Alí, entitled *Bahá'u'lláh* ("the Splendour of God"), who thus gradually became the most conspicuous and most influential member of the sect, though in the *Igán*, one of the most important polemical works of the Bábís, composed in 1858-1859, he still implicitly recognized the supremacy of *Subh-i-Ezel*. In 1863, however, Bahá declared himself to be "He whom God shall manifest" (*Man Yuz-hiruhu'lláh*, with prophecies of whose advent the works of the Báb are filled), and called on all the Bábís to recognize his claim. The majority responded, but *Subh-i-Ezel* and some of his faithful adherents refused. After that date the Bábís divided into two sects, Ezelís and Bahá'ís, of which the former steadily lost and the latter gained ground, so that in 1908 there were probably from half a million to a million of the latter, and at most only a hundred or two of the former. In 1863 the Bábís were, at the instance of the Persian government, removed from Bagdad to Constantinople, whence they were shortly afterwards transferred to Adrianople. In 1868 Bahá and his followers were exiled to Acre in Syria, and *Subh-i-Ezel* with his few adherents to Famagusta in Cyprus, where he was still living in 1908. Bahá'u'lláh died at Acre on the 16th of May 1892. His son 'Abbás Efendí (also called 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "the servant of Bahá") was generally recognized as his successor, but another of his four sons, Muhammad 'Alí, put forward a rival claim. This caused a fresh and bitter schism, but 'Abbas Efendí steadily gained ground, and there could be little doubt as to his eventual triumph. The controversial literature connected with this latest schism is abundant, not only in Persian, but in English, for since 1900 many Americani have adopted the religion of Bahá. The original apostle of America was Ibrahim

George Khayru'lláh, who began his propaganda at the Chicago Exhibition and later supported the claims of Muhammad 'Alí. Several Persian missionaries, including the aged and learned Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl of Gulpáyagán, were thereupon despatched to America by 'Abbas Efendí, who was generally accepted by the American Baha'is as "the Master." The American press contained many notices of the propaganda and its success. An interesting article on the subject, by Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky of Boston, Mass., entitled "Mohammedan Gnosticism in America" appeared in the *American Journal of Theology* for January 1902, pp. 57-58.

A correct understanding of the doctrines of the early Bábís (now represented by the Ezelís) is hardly possible save to one who is conversant with the theology of Islám and its developments, and especially the tenets of the Shi'a. The Bábís are Muhammadans only in the sense that the Muhammadans are Christians or the Christians Jews; that is to say, they recognize Muhammad (Mahomet) as a true prophet and the Qurán (Koran) as a revelation, but deny their finality. Revelation, according to their view, is progressive, and no revelation is final, for, as the human race progresses, a fuller measure of truth, and ordinances more suitable to the age, are vouchsafed. The Divine Unity is incomprehensible, and can be known only through its Manifestations; to recognize the Manifestation of the cycle in which he lives is the supreme duty of man. Owing to the enormous volume and unsystematic character of the Bábí scriptures, and the absence of anything resembling church councils, the doctrine on many important points (such as the future life) is undetermined and vague. The resurrection of the body is denied, but some form of personal immortality is generally, though not universally, accepted. Great importance was attached to the mystical values of letters and numbers, especially the numbers 18 and 19 ("the number of the unity") and $19^2 = 361$ ("the number of all things"). In general, the Báb's doctrines most closely resembled those of the Isma'ílís and Hurúfís. In the hands of Bahá the aims of the sect became much more practical and ethical, and the wilder pantheistic tendencies and metaphysical hair-splittings of the early Bábís almost disappeared. The intelligence, integrity and morality of the Bábís are high, but their efforts to improve the social position of woman have been much exaggerated. They were in no way concerned (as was at the time falsely alleged) in the assassination of Násiru'd-Dín Sháh in May 1896. Of recent persecutions of the sect the two most notable took place at Yazd, one in May 1891, and another of greater ferocity in June 1903. Some account of the latter is given by Napier Malcolm in his book *Fire Years in a Persian Town* (London, 1905), pp. 87-89 and 186. In the constitutional movement in Persia (1907) the Bábís, though their sympathies are undoubtedly with the reformers, wisely refrained from outwardly identifying themselves with that party, to whom their open support, by alienating the orthodox *mujtahids* and *mullás*, would have proved fatal. Here, as in all their actions, they clearly obeyed orders issued from headquarters.

Literature.—The literature of the sect is very voluminous, but mostly in manuscript. The most valuable public collections in Europe are at St Petersburg, London (British Museum) and Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale), where two or three very rare MSS. collected by Gobineau,

including the precious history of the Báb's contemporary. Hájji Mírzá Jání of Káshán, are preserved. For the bibliography up to 1889, see vol. ii. pp. 173-211 of the *Traveller's Narrative*, written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb, a Persian work composed by Bahá's son, 'Abbas Efendí, edited, translated and annotated by E. G. Browne (Cambridge, 1891). More recent works are:—Browne, *The New History of the Báb* (Cambridge, 1893); and "Catalogue and Description of the 27 Babí Manuscripts." *Journal of R. Asiat. Soc.* (July and October 1892): Andreas, *Die Bábís in Persien* (1896); Baron Victor Rosen, *Collections scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues orientales*, vol. i (1877), pp. 179-212; vol iii (1886). pp. 1-51; vol. vi. (1891), pp. 141-255: Manuscripts Bábys": and other important articles in Russian by the same scholar: and by Captain A. G. Toumanský in the *Zapiski vostochnava otdyélieniya Imperatorskava Russkava Archeologicheskava Obshchestva* (vols, iv.-xii.. St Petersburg, 1890-1900); also an excellent edition by Toumanský, with Russian translation, notes and introduction, of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (the most important of Bahá's works), &c. (St Petersburg, 1899). Mention should also be made of an Arabic history of the Bábís (unsympathetic but well-informed) written by a Persian, Mírzá Muhammad Mahdí Khan, *Za'imu 'd-Duwla*, printed in Cairo in A.H. 1321 (=A.D. 1903-1904). Of the works composed in English for the American converts the most important are:—*Bahá'u'lláh* (The Glory of God), by Ibrahim Khayru'llih. assisted by Howard MacNutt (Chicago, 1900); *The Three Questions* (n.d) and *Facts for Baháists* (1901), by the same; *Life and Teachings of 'Abbas Efendi*, by Myron H. Phelps, with preface by E. G. Browne (New York, 1903); Isabella Brittingham, *The Revelations of Bahá'u'lláh, in a Sequence of Four Lessons* (1902); Laura Clifford Burney, *Some Answered Questions Collected [in Acre, 1904-1906] and Translated from the Persian of, Abdu'l-Bahá [i.e. Abbas Efendí]* (London, 1908). In French, A. L. M. Nicolas (first dragoman at the French legation at Tehran) has published several important translations, viz. *Le Livre des sept preuves de la mission du Báb* (Paris, 1902); *Le Livre de la certitude* (1904); and *Le Beyán arabe* (1905); and there are other notable works of H. Dreyfus, an adherent of the Babí faith. Lastly, mention should be made of a remarkable but scarce little tract by Gabriel Sacy, printed at Cairo in June 1902, and entitled *Du regne de Dieu et de l'Agneau, connu sous le nom de Babysme*.

(E. G. B.)