

IRANIAN STUDIES

# The Development of the Babi/ Baha'i Communities

Exploring Baron Rosen's Archives

Youli Ioannessyan



# The Development of the Babi/ Baha'i Communities

Baron Rosen's Babi/Baha'i archives present private letters and diplomatic correspondence from the nineteenth century, preserved among the prominent Russian scholar Baron Viktor Rosen's materials in the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg branch.

The materials cast light on the first studies of the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, new religious phenomena which, in Baron Rosen's time, were emerging in Persia. Iran has always been a strategic concern of Russia's geopolitical interests and the traditional importance which has been given to Persia has manifested itself in hundreds of documents and writings collected by the pre-revolutionary Russian diplomats and scholars. These documents, large parts of which have never been published before, reveal interesting information on the attitude of the Russian government towards religious and ethnic minorities as well as towards related issues within the Russian Empire and abroad.

Bringing together materials in Russian, English, Persian, Arabic, and French related to the Babi and Baha'i Faiths from Rosen's archive in the original languages with an English translation, this book will be of great interest to students and researchers in the fields of Iranian Studies, Religion, and Middle East Studies among others.

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# **The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities**

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**Youli Ioannesyan**

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**To my beloved wife, Linda.**

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# Introduction

## A brief look at the Babi and Bahá'i Faiths as an object of study in nineteenth-century Russia and Britain

The Bahá'i Faith is a monotheistic religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in nineteenth-century Persia. There are an estimated 5 to 6 million Bahá'ís throughout the world, from different ethnic backgrounds, in more than 200 countries and territories. As pointed out by William Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, 'The new faith is a distinct religion, based entirely on the teachings of its founder, Bahá'u'lláh. It is not a cult, a reform movement or sect within any other faith, nor merely a philosophical system. Neither does it represent an attempt to create a new religion syncretistically by bringing together different teachings chosen from other religions' (Hatcher and Douglas Martin 2002: xiii). Its history goes back to 1844, when a young merchant in the Persian city of Shiraz, Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad proclaimed his mission as the bearer of a new divine revelation. He assumed the title 'Báb,' meaning 'the Gate,' and is considered by Bahá'ís to be the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, and Prophet-Founder of the Babi Faith. The Báb declared in his many Writings<sup>1</sup> that he saw his mission as one of alerting the people to the imminent advent of another Prophet, 'Him Whom God shall make manifest.'<sup>2</sup> The Báb addressed the issue of this Prophet on almost every page of his major doctrinal work, the *Persian Bayán*.

As the Báb gained followers and the Babi movement gathered strength, its doctrines inflamed the Shi'ih clergy. Their resentment led to the Báb's imprisonment, the persecution of his followers, his trial before the Muslim divines in Tabriz, and finally his execution in 1850. The Báb left his adherents in a state of constant expectation of the promised messenger. In the *Persian Bayán*, he urged his community to recognize and accept this bearer of a new divine revelation, wherever and whenever he chose to arise and make himself manifest. The only proof and sign of his prophetic mission should be his divine verses.

Among the prominent followers of the Báb was a Persian nobleman, Mírzá Husayn-'Alí (Núrí), known by the title 'Bahá'u'lláh,' meaning the 'Glory of God' (1817–1892). Although Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb never met, they corresponded. After the attempt on the Shah's life by two misguided Babis in 1852,<sup>3</sup> causing an upsurge of persecution, Bahá'u'lláh was put in an underground prison in Tehran

## 2 *Introduction*

for four months. It was there, as he relates in his Writings,<sup>4</sup> that he first received a revelation, through a dream of a ‘Maid of Heaven,’ that he was the divine messenger promised by the Báb. When Bahá’u’lláh was exonerated of complicity in the plot against the Shah, the royal government – which was initially determined to execute him – released him from prison, but banished him to Iraq, which was part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. Bahá’u’lláh was thus sent to Baghdad, accompanied by some members of his family and companions. The exile in Iraq lasted from 1853 to 1863, until the Persian government succeeded in persuading the Ottoman authorities to banish Bahá’u’lláh further away from the Persian borders. Consequently, he was moved to Constantinople (Istanbul), and soon afterwards to Adrianople (present-day Edirne).

On the eve of his departure from Baghdad to Constantinople (April–May 1863), Bahá’u’lláh declared to his followers that he was the ‘Promised One’ foretold by the Báb. Once in Adrianople, he began to publicly proclaim his mission, addressing *Epistles* and *Tablets* to the kings and rulers of the day, urging them to establish world peace, justice, and unity. Although most Babis gradually accepted Bahá’u’lláh as the one whom the Báb had repeatedly referred to as ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest,’ he faced fierce opposition within the Babi community, led by his half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá Subh-i-Azal, and a company of those who followed him. This latter faction became known as ‘Azalis.’<sup>5</sup>

Fearing the further spread of the Baha’i teachings, the Persian ambassador to Constantinople exerted every effort to convince the Turkish authorities of the political and religious danger posed by the Baha’i exiles. Their apprehension, and the constant plotting on the part of Mírzá Yahyá and some of his supporters aimed at discrediting Bahá’u’lláh in the eyes of the Ottoman government caused the latter to ‘resolve the question of the exiled community once and for all.’ In 1868, Bahá’u’lláh and his followers in Adrianople were committed to perpetual imprisonment in the penal colony at Acre in Palestine. As Hatcher and Martin point out, ‘Acre was chosen because it was confidently believed that Bahá’u’lláh could not survive the experience. In the 1860s the prison city was a pestilential place, a home for criminals from all parts of the empire ... Prevailing winds and tides washed the refuse of the Mediterranean onto its shores, creating a climate so unhealthy that a popular saying held that a bird which flew over Acre would fall dead in the streets ... The first two years of the Baha’is’ imprisonment was a period of intense deprivation and hardship’ (Hatcher and Douglas Martin 2002: 42). Bahá’u’lláh spent these two years strictly confined to the barracks. After the movement of troops required the use of the barracks,<sup>6</sup> Bahá’u’lláh and his family were transferred, under house arrest, to a succession of other dwellings in the city. Later, in 1877, he took up residence in a mansion of Mazra‘ih for a period of two years, and was finally allowed to settle in Bahji, near Acre, where he remained until his death on 29 May 1892. It was there that Bahá’u’lláh received Professor E. G. Browne, of the University of Cambridge, one of the few Westerners known to have visited and written about him (see his letters in this book).

In his will and testament, Bahá'u'lláh named his eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844–1921), as his successor and the authorized interpreter of his teachings. He, in turn, named his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957) to succeed him as Guardian of the Baha'i Faith. After the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the leadership of the Baha'i community passed to the Universal House of Justice, an institution ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in his Writings. The first election of this administrative body took place in 1963. It consists of nine members who are elected for a period of five years. The seat of the Universal House of Justice is on Mount Carmel, at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa.

All the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá form the Baha'i sacred scripture. The founder of the Baha'i religion left behind a rich spiritual legacy: books, epistles, and tablets, considered by Baha'is to be the revelation of God. The writings and talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the works of Shoghi Effendi are regarded as authoritative interpretation. Bahá'u'lláh's major Writings include *The Most Holy Book (Kitáb-i-Aqdas)*, *The Book of Certitude (Kitáb-i-Íqán)* and many others, originally in Arabic and Persian, and now translated into some 800 languages.

The Baha'i message is of a global nature. It is not confined to a particular people, national, ethnic, or cultural group, but is addressed to humanity as a whole. This accounts for the fact that, although the new religion originally emerged in a Persian cultural milieu, it has gradually spread across national boundaries and attracted believers around the world from different ethnic backgrounds. In the Baha'i teachings, history is seen to be unfolding through a series of divine messengers, referred to as manifestations of God or divine manifestations, each of whom reflects the same divine reality, that is, God's will, and establishes a religion that is suited to the needs of the time and the capacity of the people in which it appears. These divine manifestations include Abraham, Krishna, the Buddha, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Thus, religion is seen as a historical progression, corresponding to each stage of humanity's collective growth, and maturing in a manner similar to the phases in the life and development of an individual. This notion is defined as 'progressive revelation.' Humanity is understood to be in a process of collective evolution and spiritual progress. The current stage is described as that of adolescence, the stage immediately preceding full maturity, at which point humanity is challenged to recognize its organic oneness and gradually establish peace, justice, and unity on a global scale. The basic notion of universal harmony is expressed and reflected in all the major principles of the Baha'i Faith: the oneness of God, the fundamental unity of religion, the oneness of humankind, harmony between religion and science, the equality of men and women. Other principles include the independent investigation of truth, the spiritual foundation of society, universal education, the abandonment of prejudice and superstition, abolition of the extremes of poverty and wealth, and the adoption of an auxiliary international language.

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The commandments of God revealed by the succession of divine manifestations are seen as falling into two categories: first, eternal laws, spiritual in nature, which never alter, such as the law requiring man to acknowledge and worship God, essential spiritual principles, such as love, compassion, moderation, respect for parents, etc., and the fundamental laws of unity, harmony, and attraction; and second, social laws, such as particular ordinances governing marriage, inheritance, education of children, etc. Both aspects are described as being divine in origin and must be obeyed, but succeeding manifestations may change or modify the social laws revealed by previous manifestations.<sup>7</sup>

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by an increasing interest in the Babi and Baha'i Faiths in Europe. Diplomats, Orientalists, and others were making contributions in every conceivable way to the study of this phenomenon: the emergence of a new religion, contradicting the prevalent view that the appearance of new religions was only possible in ancient times because it was thought to be characteristic of early forms of human society.

There was considerable interest in the Babi and Baha'i Faiths in Russia and Great Britain, countries whose political positions in Iran were exceptionally strong, and whose diplomats therefore had greater opportunities to collect materials on this subject at the very dawn of the religion's history. The establishment of the Russian Academic School of Oriental Studies served as a historic background and prelude to research in such fields as the Babi and Baha'i Faiths in tsarist Russia. It is with this school that the academic activity of V. R. Rosen (see p. 7) was directly connected. Therefore it would be relevant to touch upon the origin and history of Middle Eastern and Oriental studies in Russia and highlight their relation to the Western European academic school of research.

Oriental studies as a scholarly discipline first originated in Western Europe (primarily in colonial empires) in the eighteenth century and have undergone rapid development since the mid nineteenth. Although they were stimulated by foreign policy considerations, the process was not entirely politically motivated. Scholars and researchers collected and studied literary monuments to ancient Middle Eastern and Oriental cultures, making them available for Europeans, thus debunking Western Eurocentric concepts and stereotypes, and contributing to the mutual enrichment of civilizations. Oriental studies in Russia followed the same pattern, as they were closely related to, but not entirely determined by, the tsarist interests in the East. The Russian Empire was geographically located too close to Middle and Far Eastern regions, and its interests were too closely intertwined with those areas of the globe for Russia to be able to remain isolated from the processes which were unfolding in the neighboring Asian countries.

Russia's scholarly Oriental studies drew upon three major resources: (a) applied Oriental studies, which considered the country's needs in military and diplomatic spheres; it also included the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Christian

Church in the East; (b) traditional (primarily religious) scholarly establishments of the Asian peoples under Russian rule; these tended to specialize in the study of the culture and history of different local ethnic groups, both native (within Russia's borders) and foreign (those inhabiting neighboring countries); (c) Western Oriental studies, which involved inviting Western scholars to Russia for work, as well as publishing studies of Western European researchers in Russian.

The history of Russian Oriental studies as an academic discipline goes back to 1720 when Peter the Great issued a decree concerning the establishment of a College for Foreign Affairs, which included an 'expedition'<sup>8</sup> of Turkish and other Asian languages.' The latter employed experts on Near Eastern languages. Some of them were engaged in the translation of manuscripts. In 1797 'a special Department for arranging affairs related to Asian peoples' was set up within the College for Foreign affairs. In 1802, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established by a royal decree, and in 1820, an Asian Committee was formed. It was within this structure that the Educational Department of Oriental Languages which trained staff for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emerged in 1823.

A great many graduates of this department became talented Orientalists and highly qualified professionals. Some devoted their lives to practical work, while others were engaged in academic activities. Applied and academic research in the field of Oriental studies was much in demand in the mid nineteenth century as a result of the colonial campaigns in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus. Russia's applied Oriental studies are considered to have owed much of their success to E. P. Kovalevski (1811–1868), a prominent diplomat and scholar, who began sending major scholarly-diplomatic expeditions to Asian countries to carry out significant research. The result of their work was very fruitful. N. V. Khanykov headed a scholarly mission to Iran and Afghanistan; N. P. Ignat'yev<sup>9</sup> led an expedition to Khiva and Bukhara; and N. G. Stoletov headed a diplomatic mission to Bukhara and Afghanistan.

Military agencies made their own contribution to the development of Russia's applied Oriental studies. Military missions and agents provided detailed reports on the political situation, geography, ethnic composition, and religion of neighboring Asian countries. At the end of the seventeenth century, Russian navy officers kept diaries as they sailed to India, China, and South Asia, some of which were later published. An important military-diplomatic mission, headed by general A. P. Ermolov, visited Iran in 1817, resulting in a series of essays (in Russian): *The Ways and Troops of the Persians: A Brief Outline of Persia in the Military Aspect*, and other works. Considerable influence was left on Iranian and Afghan studies by I. F. Blaramberg, a military Orientalist and army general.

The development of applied Oriental studies was matched by those of an academic nature. Russia's first Orientalist-academician (full member of the Academy of Sciences) was the Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) born German scholar, Gottlieb

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Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738), who offered his services to the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1725. His professional interests were quite broad, covering a wide spectrum of Oriental disciplines. However, he devoted his whole life to a work entitled *Chinese Museum*, published in St Petersburg in Latin in 1730–1731. The first government establishment specializing in Oriental studies within the Academy of Sciences, the Asiatic Museum, came into being in 1818. This marks the beginning of Russian academic Oriental studies proper. Its director and caretaker was Christian Martin Joachim Frähn (1782–1851), a German-Russian numismatist, historian, and academician, born at Rostock, Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

The Asiatic Museum quickly established itself as the main institute for the collection and study of Oriental manuscripts and books in Russia, as well as a major international centre for Oriental studies. By the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, almost a hundred years after its founding, the Asiatic Museum housed one of the most extensive collections of Oriental manuscripts and printed books in the world (see below). Frähn was succeeded after his death by B. A. Dorn (1805–1881), who headed the Asiatic Museum for almost 40 years. This academician was an eminent scholar, professor, broad specialist in the field of Iranian studies, and founder of Afghan studies in Russia, who contributed significantly to the formation and study of St Petersburg collections of Oriental manuscripts, coins, and books, and to the development of Oriental studies in Russia.<sup>10</sup> After Dorn, the Asiatic Museum was successively headed by V. R. Rosen (see more about him on p. 7), F. I. Videman, V. V. Radlov, and K. G. Zalemann. Studies in the Near and Middle East were primarily, but not entirely, aimed at reaching a better understanding of and addressing the problems of the peoples of the Asian provinces of the Russian Empire which were culturally close to those regions of the world. Particular attention was paid to the study of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Russian diplomats and diplomatic mission staff in nineteenth century Iran were especially active in collecting materials relating to the emerging new religion. Russia's General Consul in Tabriz, A. M. Bezobrazov; General Consul in Astrabad, F. A. Bakulin; chief interpreter of the Russian mission in Tehran, I. G. Grigorovich, and others played a considerable role in the preservation and contribution of Babi and Baha'i manuscripts to the collections in the then capital of the Russian Empire, St Petersburg, and primarily to the collection in the Library of the Institute of Oriental Languages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, later transferred to the Asiatic Museum. This academic establishment, which was also known as the St Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, now bears the name of the St Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOM).

Among the European scholars whose contribution to Baha'i and Babi studies, including the publication of original texts, was exceptionally valuable were Russian Orientalists Baron V. R. Rosen, A. G. Tumanski, and British Orientalist E. G. Browne.

A Russian aristocrat of German descent, Baron Victor Romanovich Rosen (1849–1908) was an academic, professor of Arabic at the St Petersburg University, Dean of its Faculty of Oriental Languages,<sup>11</sup> Head of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archeological Society,<sup>12</sup> and founder and editor of the *Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniya Russkogo Archeologicheskogo Obshestva (ZVORAO) (Memoirs of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archeological Society)*.<sup>13</sup> Rosen translated several of the Baha'i Writings into Russian including the *Glad Tidings* by Bahá'u'lláh (Rosen 1893b: 183–192).

Born in Reval – present-day Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, then a province of the Russian Empire – Rosen chose Oriental studies as his professional field. He soon became an outstanding expert in Arabic and Persian cultures, literature, Islamic, Christian, and finally Baha'i studies, and was one of the pioneers of research in this newly emerging scholarly area in Europe. He rose to a remarkably high position and was a recognized authority both in Russia and in the West. A full-time member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Rosen was also a corresponding member of several foreign academies and a member of academic societies such as the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, the Royal Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam, the Institut de France, and an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society in London.

One of Rosen's greatest achievements and contributions to Oriental studies was the establishment of *ZVORAO (Memoirs)*, of which he remained editor for the rest of his life. Rosen died at the age of 58, leaving behind scores of published works, including descriptive catalogues of manuscripts. The first volume of the *Memoirs* came out in 1886, equaling such long-standing European scholarly journals as the *Journal Asiatique*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Geellschaft*, *Giornale della Società*, and *Asiatica Italiana*.

Rosen prepared for publication in the original Arabic and Persian a volume of Epistles by Bahá'u'lláh and left detailed descriptions of many Babi and Baha'i manuscripts which now belong to the manuscript collection of the IOM. The descriptions are extensively illustrated by lengthy extracts from the texts of the manuscripts. Rosen also properly identified some important Epistles, such as the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* (the *Súrih of the Kings*) revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. He encouraged his students, A. G. Tumanski and others, to collect and study materials related to the Babi and Baha'i Faiths. E. G. Browne paid tribute to his Russian colleague and pointed out 'the extreme value of the materials which he has made accessible to scholars, and the exceptional claim which he has on the gratitude of all Orientalists' (Browne 1892b: 322).

Alexander Grigoryevich Tumanski (born in 1861), who came from an old Lithuanian aristocratic family, was Rosen's student. As a young captain in the Russian Imperial army, while serving in the Turkistan region (Ashkabad: now Ashgabat, capital of Turkmenistan), he came into close contact with the recently established

Baha'i community there. He undertook a trip to Persia arranged by the Baha'is and sanctioned by the Russian authorities to collect information about the Baha'is in Persia. He was accompanied on his trip by his young wife, and his journey to Persia at that time was an adventure. Among Tumanski's good friends was the prominent Baha'i scholar Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygáni. Tumanski was the first translator of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* into a European language, namely Russian (Tumanski 1899). Among his other publications of Baha'i Writings in the original, accompanied by his Russian translation, was *The Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh* (Tumanski 1893). According to Professor Akimushkin of St Petersburg, Tumanski fled with his family to Turkey after the so-called Bolshevik October Revolution and died in 1920 in the Princes' Islands. His descendants live in Belgium.

It is interesting to quote Tumanski's own account of how he first became interested in Baha'i studies:

In the summer of 1890, as a student of the officers' courses under the Educational Department of Oriental Languages, I was required to go to the military training camp. Driven by the desire to practice my colloquial Persian in summer as well as to get to know the Babis better, I requested to be allowed to go to the military training camp in the Transcaspian Region instead of to Krasnoye Selo;<sup>14</sup> the request was granted as a favor to me, provided that I went there at my own expense.

Much to my regret, I did not tell anyone of my intention to apply myself to Babi studies before my departure and for this reason I had no opportunity to become acquainted with works by E. G. Browne. Even Baron V. R. Rosen's works became known to me thanks to I. F. Gotvald, whose cordial welcome in Kazan I remember with much appreciation.

The only way in which I can justify myself is that I was not aware of what precisely would greet me in Ashkabad. I had obtained my first information about the Babis from the *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle* by [Élisée] Reclus<sup>15</sup> at a time when I was still preparing for the entrance examination at the Oriental Languages courses. It was then that I was amazed by this religious struggle which is possible in this age, if not in Europe at least in Asia.

In the winter of 1889–90 a telegram was published in the newspaper *Novoye Vremya*,<sup>16</sup> which said that the four Shi'ih Persians who had been condemned to death by hanging by the military tribunal in Ashkabad for murdering a Babi had their sentence mitigated at the request of the Babis themselves, their death penalty being changed into penal servitude for life. It was then that I decided to go to Ashkabad for the summer and made myself familiar with Prof. Kazembek's book: *The Báb and the Babis* S[aint]-P[eters]b[urg] 1865 as my preliminary guide. The reason why I did not tell anyone about my project was that I was not sure whether my trip would provide anything new in this field or not. Furthermore, [I was wondering] what kind of Babis I would find in Ashkabad: whether they were knowledgeable in their own teaching or not, all this was unknown to me. Therefore I kept silence.

Arriving in Ashkabad on 29 June 1890, I was able without difficulty to become acquainted with the most interesting Babis. Due to their meritorious lifestyle they [were] accepted by Russians most favorably. Some of the wealthiest Babis are even permanent members of the city public assembly. That is why making their acquaintance was not difficult at all. Seeing my desire to get to know their religious teaching better, three of them were eagerly vying with one another to help me in it ...

(Tumanski 1892: 314–315, translation mine)

As Baron Rosen remarked in his description of Tumanski's undertaking: '... Mr. Tumanski left [for Turkistan] without having a chance to become aware of Mr. Browne's memoirs, which he studied on his return. Therefore he is completely independent in his judgments, which makes them all the more precious' (*Collections Scientifiques ... 1891*, VI: 243, translation mine). In about two years after his first summer trip to Ashkabad, Tumanski went there again for military service. It appears from his letters that he spent a total of 6–7 years in the Transcaspian Region.

The prominent British Orientalist E. G. Browne is too well known both in the West and in the East to need a long introduction here. However, it is relevant to make a few comments regarding his contribution to Babi and Baha'i studies. The numerous works of this scholar, which appeared from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, have preserved their value up to the present day. These include translations and commentaries, and the publication of important and interesting documents. I will mention some of them: *The Bábís of Persia; A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Báb; The Tárikh-i-Jadíd or New History of Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad the Báb; Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion; Kitáb-i Nuqtatu'l-Káf, being the Earliest History of the Bábís Compiled by Hájji Mírzá Jání of Káshán*. Browne was most remarkable in his deep penetration into the subtlest nuances of theological and metaphysical subjects and his illuminating explanations of many core concepts of the religious teachings. However, though the British scholar, like his Russian colleagues tried to base his studies on primary sources, he widened the definition of this term to encompass an extremely broad range of sources. Trusting unconditionally the materials coming from circles biased against the Baha'is, he hastily and uncritically borrowed extensive data from them for his works and relied on it in his judgments, ignoring obvious contradictions which this data contains.<sup>17</sup> This tendency made Browne's research in the field of Babi studies much more profound and well substantiated than in the field of Baha'i studies, which he regarded as being of secondary importance (see his letters to Rosen in this book).

However, the limitations of Browne's approach were compensated by the works of both Rosen and Tumanski, who focused their endeavors completely on Baha'i studies. For this reason the scholarly activities of Russian Orientalists on the one hand, and those of Browne's on the other, can be regarded as complementary. This impression is largely confirmed by their correspondence which reveals in what close cooperation the three scholars were working together and with what

willingness they exchanged information and materials and discussed their plans.<sup>18</sup>

## Baron V. R. Rosen's archive in the Russian Academy of Sciences and this book

Baron V. R. Rosen left to posterity a vast collection of unpublished materials which, among other purposes, are of extreme value for the study of the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, as well as for research on Babi and Baha'i studies in Europe, especially for those interested in a historical perspective. These materials are preserved in the St Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St Petersburg, Russia). They comprise Rosen's correspondence with A. G. Tumanski, E. G. Browne (the larger part of the collection), G. D. Batyushkov, academic S. F. Oldenburg, V. I. Ignatyev, S. Voirot, and I. Kheyru'lláh.

Of special importance are manuscripts (and copies of manuscripts), official reports of Russian diplomats from Persia on the Babis, and reports from Adrianoople on the Babis residing there at the same time that Bahá'u'lláh was exiled in that city.

It would also be relevant to say a few words about the other key figures (besides the three prominent Orientalists), whose work figures in the above-named collection.

1. Academic Sergei Feodorovich Oldenbourg, who mentions the Babis in his letter to Rosen.
2. Vladimir Ivanovich Ignatyev – another of Rosen's university students, a diplomat working in Tehran, Ashkabad, and Bukhara.<sup>19</sup>
3. Georgiy Dmitrievich Batyushkov – Persian and Arabic scholar and diplomat working in Tehran in 1893–1899, and author of a short book on the Babi and Baha'i Faiths (Batyushkov 1897).
4. Sébastien Voirot – a French Baha'i.
5. Ibráhím George Khayru'lláh (Kheiralla) – the first Baha'i teacher in America.
6. Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání – a prominent Baha'i scholar, a former Muslim master teacher in a religious seminary in Tehran, who became a devoted Baha'i.

I will now briefly describe the materials in Rosen's archive collection related to our subject which are presented or introduced to the reader in this book:

1. Tumanski's correspondence with Rosen (in Russian), which date from 1892 to 1899. These comprise over 21 letters and a newspaper article dealing with a wide range of issues: the Babi community in Ashkabad, the translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (and related issues), Tumanski's trip to Persia and some information he gathered there about the Baha'is, and other subjects. The article written by Tumanski on the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh was published in the

- newspaper *Kavkaz*. The author gives in it an unbiased account of the history of the Baha'i Faith and calls Bahá'u'lláh 'a prophet';
2. Browne's correspondence with Rosen comprises 49 letters, dated between 1889 and 1902; two letters are in Persian, and the remainder are in English. These letters also cover a wide range of issues and show the close cooperation with Rosen with whom Browne was researching the Babi and Baha'i Faiths. For example, these letters reveal that Browne used for his work both transcripts of the *Persian Bayán* from the St Petersburg manuscript collection, made available to him by Rosen;
  3. Ignatyev's correspondence with Rosen comprises three letters (in Russian). These throw light on the stance of Russia's Foreign Ministry on the Babi/Baha'i issue and reveal the differences between the Foreign Ministry and the Russian authorities in Turkistan in this respect;
  4. Batyushkov's correspondence with Rosen consists of three letters (in Russian), revealing Batyushkov's attraction to the Baha'i Faith and his protective attitude towards it;
  5. Sébastien Voirot's letter (in French) throws light on the French Baha'i community of the time;
  6. Kheyru'lláh, who was put in touch with Rosen by Browne, offers Rosen his book in his letter (in English);
  7. Official reports of Russian diplomats in Persia on the Babis/Baha'is; one is in French, while the remainder are in Russian, but written in a Russian script specially modified to make its reading difficult. These reports, dated 1868–1890, cover the period 1855–1890. Among them is a report by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, Mr. Zinov'yev, to Duke Gorchakov (in French);
  8. 'The Babis in Adrianople' – a report by the head of the Russian Consulate in Adrianople based on eyewitness accounts; the report was compiled in Russian on Rosen's request;
  9. Manuscripts:
    - (a) The *Lawh-i-Sámsún* (in Arabic), also known as the *Lawh-i-Hawdaj* (Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Samsun on his way to Constantinople). The manuscript is preserved in excellent condition;
    - (b) The *Lawh-i-Javád* (three pages in Persian);
    - (c) A chapter from the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* ('Chapter of Josef') in Arabic;
    - (d) Prayers;
    - (e) 'History of Hájí Muhammad-Rizá' – a history in Persian of the martyrdom of Hájí Muhammad-Rizá Isfahání in Ashkabad, manuscript in Abu'l-Fazl Gulpágání's hand;

All the above manuscripts (except for the *Lawh-i-Javád*, included in Rosen's volume of Epistles by Bahá'u'lláh) have not so far been available to the general public, because they have been preserved in the Archive, which accounts for their excellent condition. They are not described in any published descriptive catalogue of manuscripts.

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10. Two letters in Judeo-Persian<sup>20</sup> with a translation into standard Persian, giving an account of the events which happened to Babis (Baha’is) of Jewish background in Iran and the persecutions they suffered. One letter is addressed by Áqá Sulaymán-‘Attár Hamadání from Tehran to Áqá Sulaymán-Shálfurúsh Hamadání in Ashkabad;
11. A letter written by Abu’l-Fazl Gulpáygání to Tumanski (in Persian) on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The letter is probably a transcript of Gulpáygání’s original letter.

Two-thirds to three-quarters of these letters (except for a few from Brown and a couple of Tumanski’s letters) are related to the Babi and Baha’i Faiths. Some extracts from the Russian language materials of this collection were previously quoted in Kuznetsova’s article: ‘K Istorii Izuchenia Babizma i Behaizma v Rossii (On the history of studies in the Babi and Baha’i Faiths).’ Later the archive documents with quotes in English were briefly presented by me in: Ioannesian, ‘Baron Rosen’s Archive Collection of Babi and Baha’i Materials.’ The Russian part of these materials – the official reports of Russian diplomats, Tumanski’s and Ignatyev’s letters as well as one of the three of Batyushkov’s letters translated into English, have been recently published in full in the book: *The Baha’is of Iran, Transcaspia and the Caucasus*, ed. by S. Shahvar, B. Morozov and G. Gilbar. The latter scholarly two-volume work is a significant and valuable contribution to Baha’i and Iranian studies.

However, neither the English, Persian, and Arabic language parts of this collection nor the originals of the Russian language section have so far been published or introduced to the reader (except for certain passages quoted by Kuznetsova, see p. 114).

The purpose of this book is to bring together in one work all the materials in Russian, English, Persian, Arabic, and French related to the Babi and Baha’i Faiths from Rosen’s archive in the original languages supplied with an English translation (where necessary) and comments. These documents are closely interrelated since they all deal with the same issues and are addressed to the same person, that is, Baron Rosen. The book presents extensive quotes from all the above materials: private correspondence, diplomatic reports, and descriptions of manuscripts contained in the archive, accompanied by comments. All passages from the given correspondence relating to the Babi and Baha’i Faiths are quoted in the book.<sup>21</sup> Since the letters are complementary to the sender’s or Baron Rosen’s published works, throwing sometimes additional light on the issues discussed in these publications, the comments on them are primarily (but not entirely) intended to help the reader understand how a given letter or report relates to a particular published work. The publication of the quotes is authorized by the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences as certified by a special agreement. The materials in languages other than English (Russian, Persian, French, Arabic) are presented in their original and in the English translation made by Linda and Youli Ioannesian.

Since these materials contain and touch upon so many varied subjects, it is impossible to classify them according to their content. For this reason, they are

arranged chronologically and sequentially based on their deposit, inventory and item numbers; sometimes the main subject of the letter or quote is emphasized. The materials in the Archive are registered under the following three numbers:

deposit (фонд)  
inventory (опись)  
unit (единица хранения).

All the quotes are given with a reference to the page. The numeral stands for the folio page number; 'a' indicates the folio front page, 'b' indicates the folio back page.

The transliteration of Persian/Arabic titles and personal names follows in general the Baha'i transliteration system with the exception of the subscript diacritical marks, which are not used in the work and the Persian *izáfih*, which is not placed between the components of complex personal names. This system enables the titles of Babi and Baha'i Writings to preserve the set forms (Arabic or Persian) in which each text is commonly known among the followers of the Baha'i Faith. At the same time, it for the most part matches Browne's transliteration which the British Orientalist employs in his letters published in this book. The terms 'Babi' and 'Baha'i' (whether in reference to the religion or to its followers) as well as geographic names do not have any diacritical marks. The terms and names influenced by Turkish pronunciation in the original documents (in the reports and letters from Turkey) are not transliterated either. However, all the quotes from English language sources (Browne's letters and published works) preserve the original transliteration of Persian/Arabic terms and personal/geographic names including the use of subscript dots. The same applies to the punctuation and quotation marks (the use of double quotation marks instead of singular). This accounts for an inconsistency in the rendering of certain personal/geographic names and terms: Tumansky/Toumansky, Jawád, Ashkabad/'Ishkábád, Bâbýs, Bâby/Bábí, Behá'i, Ezelí(s), etc. in Browne's letters and quotes from his published works, while elsewhere in the book the corresponding forms are: Tumanski, Javád, Ashkabad, Babis, Babi, Baha'i, Azali(s).

Throughout the archival correspondences, the Baha'is are referred to as 'Babis' as was common practice in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. I keep this term in the original texts but replace it with 'Baha'i' and 'Baha'is' where the latter are implied in my comments.

All the Common Era (CE) dates in the Russian (or French) language section of the collection follow the Julian calendar.

## Notes

- 1 In this book, the initial capital letter in 'Writings' is used when referring to the works of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb (as they are considered to be the Holy Scripture in the Baha'i Faith). In other contexts, the initial capital letter is not used.
- 2 See Momen, W. 1989: 28.
- 3 See Cameron and Momen 1996: 55–56.

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- 4 In the *Súriy-i-Haykal*, for example.
- 5 For more information about him, see Momen W. 1989: 243.
- 6 See Cameron and Momen 1996: 94.
- 7 See Momen W. 1989: 137. For more detailed information on the the Bahá’í Faith, see Hatcher and Douglas Martin, op. cit., related entries in Momen W., op. cit., and other sources.
- 8 An old term applied to certain government establishments (derived from ‘expediting one’s responsibilities’).
- 9 Not to be confused with V. I. Ignatyev, one of Rosen’s correspondents.
- 10 See Kolesnikov and Luzhetskaya 2005: 15.
- 11 Baron Rosen was appointed Dean of the faculty in 1893.
- 12 Rosen became Head of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archeological Society in 1885.
- 13 The *Memoirs* ... started to appear in 1886.
- 14 A small town near St Petersburg (see Tumanski’s letters and my comments).
- 15 See Reclus 1875.
- 16 For this newspaper, see Ignatyev’s letter # 3 and comments.
- 17 This is all the more surprising given the fact that Browne himself sometimes admitted that certain data he was using in his publications was unconfirmed or unsubstantiated; see, for example, Browne 1891, 2: 364.
- 18 In his published works and archive letters, Browne acknowledges the importance of the contributions of Baron Rosen and Tumanski.
- 19 According to N. A. Kuznetsova, he was also Russia’s Consul in Rasht (Kuznetsova 1978: 96).
- 20 The Persian dialect (or several dialects) of Persian-speaking Jews, who use the Hebrew alphabet for the writing of Persian words.
- 21 The only exceptions are two diplomatic letters written in a specially modified Cyrillic script to make its reading extremely difficult.

# **Materials from the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences**

(St Petersburg Branch)

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# Part I From A. G. Tumanski's correspondence with V. R. Rosen

1.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 458

[From a letter dated 28 February 1892, sent from Ashkabad]

[Р. 1/b] ... К бабидам вернуться мне удалось только в конце января месяца; благодаря служебным работам, я до отъезда Куропаткина не мог совершенно ничего делать по этой части. С его же отъездом, оставвшись совершенно без казенного дела, я почти целые дни провожу в обществе бабидов. Нет сомнения, что я принялся за осуществление моего старого проекта [sic], т.е. перевод на русский яз. [sic] Китабе Ақдес и других главнейших Лаухов, Мунаджатов, Теразатов и т.п. прелестей. До настоящего времени это дело подвигалось довольно вяло и я перевел за целый месяц половину Кит. Ақд. [sic], т.е. до слов: ان يارض الخاء نسمع فيك و الخ. Мне бы очень хотелось составить небольшой сборник главнейших писаний Бехауллы с переводом на русский, конечно с примечаниями, и для введения – небольшой исторический очерк, как по писанным

[Р. 2/a] источникам имеющимся у меня / так и по некоторым словесным преданиям собираемым много у очевидцев разных событий. В Асхабаде состав бабидов очень интересный. Многие из них были очевидцами и участниками очень интересных событий. Есть и из знавших самого Баба. Самый интересный из бабидов – это мой, прошлогодний знакомый, Самаркандский житель, приехавший в Асхабад нарочно, чтобы помочь мне перевести Кит. Ақд. [sic] – Мирза Абуль Фазль Гюльпайгани ابوالفضل كلپاگانی, который упоминается в Тарихе Джедид ...

Мой приятель один из бывших шиитского Улема, брат его Муджтебид и участник собрания в Казимейне (Travellers Narr. II 85–87). Перу Абуль Фазля принадлежит также начало Тарихе Джедид до конца 3-ей стр.\* (до слов بنابر این اینجانب نیز ذمہ خود فرض دانست).

\* Footnote by Tumanski]: “На моей рукописи.”

Translation:

[P. 1/b] ... I did not have a chance to get back to the Babis until the end of January. Being preoccupied with my responsibilities, I could not do anything in this respect until Kuropatkin's departure. Since his departure I, having been left without any formal duties, have spent almost every day in the company of the Babis. Certainly I have applied myself to the realization of my old project, namely, the translation into Russian of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and other main *Lawhs*.<sup>1</sup> *Munájáts*, *Tarázáts*<sup>2</sup> as well as of some other delightful works of this kind. Until now the work has been going pretty slowly, and I have for the whole month been translating half of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, up to the words: ان يا ارض الخاء نسمع فيك و الخ. I would very much like to compile a small volume of the most basic, collected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh with their Russian translation, with annotations of course, and as an introduction a short

[P. 2/a] historical essay based on the written sources in my possession / as well as on some oral accounts, collected from many eyewitnesses of different events. The members of the Babi [community] in Ashkabad are very interesting. Many of them have been witness to and participants in very interesting events. Some of them personally knew the Báb. The most interesting of all the Babis is my friend whom I met last year, a resident of Samarkand, who came to Ashkabad for the sole purpose of helping me translate the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. [This is] Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání، ابوالفضل گلپایگانی<sup>3</sup> who is mentioned in the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* ...<sup>4</sup>

My friend is one of the former Shi'ih 'Ulamá, and his brother was a *Mujtahid* as well as a participant in the assembly in Kazimayn (Travellers Narr. II 85–87).<sup>5</sup> Abu'l-Fazl also penned the beginning part of the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* up to the end of page 3\* (up to the words: بنابر این اینجانب نیز ذمہ خود فرض دانست).

\* [footnote by Tumanski]: "According to my manuscript."

Comments:

Aleksey Nikolayevich Kuropatkin was lieutenant-general, Governor-General of the Transcaspian Region (1890–1898), later War Minister. He is mentioned in *God Passes By* (Effendi 1995: 300). Tumanski, who was the first European translator of the major Baha'i book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (see Introduction), discussed with Rosen issues related to this work as it was still in progress. The incorporated quote from the book in Arabic is: 'O Land of Khá! We hear from thee [the voice of heroes, raised in glorification of thy Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most Exalted]' (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph number: 94).

See about Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání in the Introduction.

The *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* is a History of the Babi period compiled by Mírzá Husayn Hamadání which was published in English translation, with comments and notes

by Browne (Browne 1893). The circumstances of its compilation are discussed by Tumanski in the next passage of the letter. The mentioned phrase from the *Tárikh-i-Jadid* is as follows:

بنابرین اینجانب نیز بر ذمّه خود فرض داشت که در مدت سفر ایران و سیاحت بین فرق مسلمانان اطلاعاتی که حاصل نموده بر سبیل اختصار و حکایت در این اوراق بنکارد

Browne translates it as:

For this reason did the writer of this book deem it incumbent on himself to set forth in these pages in a concise and narrative form such information as he acquired during his travels in Persia concerning the different sects of the Muslims ...

(Browne 1893: 3).

Tumanski continues:

После этого **تعريف** я думаю, что Вам будет не безинтересно узнать [Р. 2/б] не/которые сведения о составлении Тарихе Джедид и мотивировку того, что ее называют Тарихе Манукчи. — اسناد — Абуль Фазль.

Огнепоклонник Манукчи во время 1-го похода англичан в Кабул служил в английских войсках на должности Тавильдара Низами (кажется интендантская должность). В виду существующих порядков в английских войсках и пренебрежительного отношения к неангличанам, Манукчи, отчаявшись в военной карьере, вышел в отставку и уехал в Тегеран, где и прожил более 30 лет. Всю свою деятельность Манукчи посвятил облегчению положения своих единоверцев в Персии. Он главным образом обратил внимание на урегулирование **جزیه**, которую платили гебры и успел выхлопотать у Персидского Правительства право взимать непосредственно самому эту подать. Тот излишек, который до той поры попадал в карманы хакимов, Манукчи обратил в фонд на проценты с которого он устроил известные гебрские школы. Все это конечно не могло быть иначе как с помощью английского правительства, поданным которого был Манукчи. Но в последнее

[Р. 3/а] время почему / то оставшись недовольным своим правительством, Манукчи изменил тактику и стал действовать не сам, а через русского подданного Таджир бashi армян Хаджэ-Ивана. Летом 1890 г., когда я был первый раз в Асхабаде, пришло известие о его смерти.

Живя долго в Персии Манукчи был очевидцем многих событий движения бабидов и сам лично относился с симпатией к ним. В бытность свою в Багдаде он виделся с Беха-Уллой, от которого на имя Манукчи есть два Лауха. Один Вам известен — это тот Лаух, который находится в конце «Мудуние» написанный чистым персидским языком. Другой Лаух последовал в благодарность за присылку сочинения Манукчи **آینی هوشنگ**. Этого Лауха у меня нет.

В 1297 г. Г. Мирза Абуль Фазль познакомился в Тегеране с Манукчи. В это время Манукчи задался целью издать два исторических сочинения. Одно – историю до исламских царей Персии, которую он поручил составить Измаил Хану Зенду. Этот последний и написал книгу فرازستان . [Р. 3/б] Историю же ба/бидов он поручил составить бабиду Мирзе Хусейн Гамадани\*. Манукчи сам не мог писать, так как он не знал букв арабских, но желал включить в историю свои воспоминания и взгляды. Мирза Хусейн Гамадани обратился за советом к Мирзе Абуль Фазлю, который и посоветовал ему держаться хронологии Насих-уттаварих, включая в эти хронологические рамки воспоминания Манукчи. Сам же Абуль Фазль, как я выше сказал написал к этой истории нечто вроде предисловия (عنوان).

Здесь нельзя обойти молчанием редактора этой истории Хаджи Сейид Джевада Кербелаи, к которому Мирза Хусейн Гамадани носил свои черновики.

Этот Хаджи был одним из известнейших шиитских ученых, из рода Сейида Мехди, тоже величайшего ученого, известного под именем بحر علوم . Этот хаджи начал свою науку в Кербеле в раннем ... и был из учеников Шейха Ахмеда Ахсайского. Потом 10–12 лет слушал курс у [Р 4/а] Казема Решти и наконец сделался Бабидом. Баба он / знал

еще ребенком и еще до اظهار 'а признав необыкновенные качества его. Мой приятель Абуль Фазль от него воспринял свет бабизма. Хаджи скончался в Кермане в 1299 г. имея около ста лет от роду. Вот и все, что я могу сообщить пока о Тарихе Джедид ...

\* Footnote by Tumanski]: Умер в Реште в 1299 г. Так что время составления Тарихе Джедид должно быть между 1297 и 1299.

Translation:

[Р. 2/б] I think that after this تعریف<sup>6</sup> you will be curious to know some / details about the compilation of the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd*<sup>7</sup> and the motives behind its being titled *Tárikh-i-Márukchí*.<sup>8</sup> اسناد<sup>9</sup> – Abu'l-Fazl.

During the first assault by the English on Kabul, a certain Mánukchí, who was a fire worshipper,<sup>10</sup> served in the English forces as a *Tavíldar Nízami*<sup>11</sup> (apparently a commissariat post). Mánukchí, disappointed in his hopes of having a military career, due to certain [unspoken] habits existing in the English army and the prevailing disdainful attitude towards those who were not English, resigned and went to Tehran, where he lived for over 30 years. Mánukchí focused all his activities on easing the plight of his coreligionists in Persia. He turned his attention to the matter of the regulation of جزیه<sup>12</sup>, which the Guebres<sup>13</sup> had to pay and managed to obtain from the Persian government the right to directly exact the tax himself. Mánukchí was able to turn the surplus money, which until that time had been flowing into the pockets of the *Hákims*,<sup>14</sup> into a fund with which he established the well-known Guebres'

schools from its interest. This could never have been possible without the help of the English government, whose subject

[P. 3/a] Mánukchí was. But recently for some reason, / Mánukchí became unhappy with his government, changed his tactic and, started to operate via a Russian citizen – Khájih-Ivan, the *Tájir-báshí*<sup>15</sup> of the Armenians, instead of working directly with them himself. In the summer of 1890, while I was in Ashkabad for the first time, the news of his death arrived.

Living in Persia for many years, Mánukchí witnessed many of the events of the Babi movement and was himself sympathetic to the Babis. During his stay in Baghdad he met Bahá'u'lláh, who wrote two *Lawhs*, addressed to Mánukchí by name. One is known to you. It is the *Lawh*, which appears at the end of 'Muduniyyih' [sic] and is written in pure Persian.<sup>16</sup> The other *Lawh* was written out of gratitude for [Mánukchí's] sending his work آیئی هوشند<sup>17</sup> [to Bahá'u'lláh]. I don't have this *Lawh* in my possession.

In 1297<sup>18</sup> Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl met Mánukchí in Tehran. At the time Mánukchí had embarked on publishing two historical treatises. One was on the history of the pre-Islamic kings of Persia, a work which he entrusted Ismá'il Khán Zand to compile. The latter consequently wrote the book: فرازستان<sup>19</sup>. As for [P. 3/b] the history of / the Babis – he entrusted Mírzá Husayn Hamadání,\* the Babi, with this work. Mánukchí could not write [a history] himself because he did not know the Arabic alphabet, but he wanted to incorporate his own recollections and views into this history. Mírzá Husayn Hamadání sought Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl's advice and Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl suggested that he should base it on the chronology of the *Násikhu't-Tavárikh* and then incorporate Mánukchí's recollections into this chronological framework. Abu'l-Fazl himself, as I have already pointed out, wrote something like an introduction (عنوان)<sup>20</sup> to this history.

It would be wrong at this point not to mention the editor of this History, Hájí Siyyid Javád Karbílá'í, to whom Mírzá Husayn Hamadání showed his drafts.

This Hájí was one of the most famous Shi'ih scholars, from the family of Siyyid Mihdí who was known as the greatest scholar and went by the name of بحر علوم<sup>21</sup>. This Hájí, having begun his studies in Karbila at an early ... [word unclear] was one of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsá'í's disciples. Then for 10–12 years he was under Kázim Rashtí's instruction and eventually became a Babi. He [P. 4/a] knew the Báb / as a child and recognized his wonderful qualities even before his اظهار<sup>22</sup>. It was from him that my friend, Abu'l-Fazl received the light of Babiism. Hájí died in Kerman in 1299<sup>23</sup> at the age of 100. This is all I can tell you at present about the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* ...

\* Footnote by Tumanski]: Since he died in Rasht in 1299, the time of the compilation of the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* should be between 1297 and 1299.

Comments:

This part of the letter is closely related to Tumanki's article: 'K Voprosu ob Avtorakh Istorii Babidov Izvestnoy Pod Imenem Tárikh-i- Mánukchí ili Tárikh-

i-Jadíd (On the question of the authorship of the history of the Babis known as *Tárikh-i-Mánukchí* or *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* طاریخ مانکچی, طاریخ جدید), published in *Memoirs of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society* (Tumanski 1894: 33–45). The article deals with the same issues, based on the information drawn from Abu'l-Fazl Gulpágáni's short treatise, addressed specially to Tumanski and therefore titled: *Risáliy-i-Iskandariyyih* (*Treatise of Alexander [Tumanski]*). But the emphasis in the article is made on the history of the compilation of the chronicle in question. While it incorporates Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl's account of its composition in the original Persian and is accompanied by its Russian translation, it almost leaves out Mánikchí's biography, except for a few remarks describing his personality. However, Mánikchí (in Russian sources: 'Mánukchí') definitely left a trace in Bahá'i history and therefore merits closer attention, not only because he was the initiator of the compilation of the above history. Suffice it to say that Bahá'u'lláh revealed a Tablet specially addressed to Mánikchí, and another addressed to Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl, in which the Prophet-founder of the Bahá'i Faith replied to Mánikchí's questions.

E. Browne made extensive use of the *Risáliy-i-Iskandariyyih*, received from Tumanski, in his introduction to the English translation of the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* (Browne 1893: xxv–xli). He wrote:

Thanks to Lieutenant Toumansky<sup>24</sup> of the Russian Artillery, to whose energetic and successful researches amongst the Babis of 'Ishkábád science owes so much, a full account of the circumstances which gave rise to the composition of the *New History*, and the manner in which its composition was effected, has been obtained from one of the three persons (the only one still living) concerned therein, to wit. Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Muhammad ibn Muhammad Rizá of Gulpágán, whose acquaintance M. Toumansky made at 'Ishkábád. The substance of what M. Toumansky learned from Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl he most kindly communicated to me through Baron Rosen, with full permission to make use of it.

[ibid., xxxiii–xxxiv]

Browne reproduced word by word in English the same account of the history of the compilation of the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* which is contained in Tumanski's article in Russian, without expanding on the part about Mánikchí. Therefore, Tumanski's letter, containing a detailed biography of Mánikchí, based on Abu'l-Fazl Gulpágáni's account as its source, considerably amplifies his article, as well as Browne's introduction to the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd*.

*Násikhu 't-Tavárikh* – a well-known history of Iran during the Kájar dynasty consisting of about 15 volumes. Its author bore the title of 'Lisánu'l-Mulk' and was also known by the name of *Sipíhr* (see Batyushkov's letter # 1 and Browne's # 12).

Shaykh Ahmad Ahsá'í (Ahmad-i-Ahsá'í) was the founder of the Shaykhí School, whose teaching prepared the ground for the Babi movement. Kázim Rashtí (Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí) was his prominent disciple and designated successor.<sup>25</sup>

But let us now quote another passage from the letter:

[P. 4/a] За сим обращаюсь к Вам с просьбой от имени бабидов. Дело в том, что им желательно приобрести у Броуна 100 экземпляров персидского текста (№ I) изданной Броуном Тарихе Сейях [sic] и около 50 экземпляров второго тома. Если можно, то не отказывайтесь пожалуйста сообщить стоимость такого количества экземпляров со всеми дополнительными расходами. Если же нельзя купить 50 экземпляров лишних одного текста, то тогда они ограничиваются просьбой 50 экземпляров полного сочинения ...

[P. 4/b] С этой же почтой пишу Матфею Авельевичу и посылаю рукопись Тарихе Сейях, почерк которой не хуже Броуновского оригинала, если не лучше. За то та (эта? – Ю.И.) писана рукой Зейн уль Мукарибин, что придает ей особенное значение в глазах верующих. Китабе Акдес мне хочется издать также фотографическим способом, для чего у меня также будет соответствующий экземпляр. Кроме того мне удалось достать и автографы Баха Улла и Баба. Кроме этого мне обещали прислать фотографию дома в Акке, портрет же нельзя достать. В Тарихе Сейях (I стр. ۳۴, II стр. 45) упоминается о рисунке русского консула. Бабиды крайне хотели бы знать кто это рисовал и не известен ли Вам тот рисунок. Если бы можно было с него снять копию или фотографию, то этим можно было бы доставить большое удовольствие Беха Улле. Однако кончено ...

Translation:

[P. 4/a] May I herewith make a request on behalf of the Babis? The point is that they desire to obtain from Browne 100 copies of the Persian text (No. 1) of the *Tárikh-i-Sayyáh*, published by Browne, and about 50 copies of the second volume. Do not hesitate, if possible, to let me know what the cost will be of this number of copies including all the additional expenses. If there is no way to purchase 50 extra copies of just the text alone, then they will limit their request to 50 copies of the full book ...

[P. 4/b] In the same post I am writing to Matfey Avelyevich and sending a manuscript of the *Tárikh-i-Sayyáh*, written in a hand that is not inferior to Browne's original, if not better. Though that one<sup>26</sup> is written in Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín's hand, which accords it special value in the believers' eyes. I would like to have the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* also printed photographically, for which purpose I will likewise have a corresponding copy. Also I managed to obtain manuscripts in the original handwriting of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. I have moreover been promised a photo of the house in Akka. As for the picture [of Bahá'u'lláh], it cannot be obtained. The *Tárikh-i-Sayyáh* ([vol.] I. p. ۳۴,<sup>27</sup> [vol.] II. p. 45) mentions a drawing of the Russian Consul.<sup>28</sup> The Babis are very eager to know who exactly made the drawing and whether you are familiar with it. If it is possible to make a copy or take picture of it, this would afford great pleasure to Bahá'u'lláh. I have to stop now ...

## Comments:

The issue of the Baha'i community in Ashkabad ordering from Browne through Tumanski copies of the Travellers' Narrative (*The Tárikh-i-Sayyáh*) published by the former also came up in Browne's correspondence with Rosen. See Browne's letter # 25.

Matvey<sup>29</sup> Avelyevich Gamazoff (1812–1893) was an Orientalist, Head of the Educational Department of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was in his memory that Tumanski dedicated his translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*.

The manuscript sent to Gamazoff is currently in the collection of the IOM. It consists of 100 folios and is registered in the *Concise Persian MS Catalogue* under the sequential number 4186 (code: B 1147).<sup>30</sup> The front page has a dedication note from A. G. Tumanski: 'This Babi manuscript "Tarikh-i-Seyyah [sic]" was sent from Astrabad in 1892 as a gift to the Educational Department by lieutenant Alexander Grigoryevich Tumanski, a graduate of the Oriental languages courses at the Officers' courses of the Department in 1891' (translation mine).<sup>31</sup>

Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, Bahá'u'lláh's calligrapher, was one of the 19 outstanding early Baha'is known in the history of the Baha'i Faith as 'Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh.'

As for the original manuscripts of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb mentioned in the letter, their whereabouts are not known.<sup>32</sup>

It is remarkable that the often-mentioned drawing of the Báb by the painter brought by the Russian Consul in Tabriz is discussed in a letter written when Bahá'u'lláh was still alive. Since this issue did not come up in Tumanski's other letters to Rosen, it would be safe to assume that Rosen did not know the answer to this question. This only proves that the portrait in question which to this day has never been found was already a mystery in those days.

Having received the news of the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, Tumanski wrote:

2.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 458  
[from a letter dated 3 July 1892, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 5/a]

Многоуважаемый

Виктор Романович!

Свершилось! Страница перевернута . ان حضرت صعود فرموده . Беха Улла скончался. В таких выражениях сообщили мне о кончине Бехá [sic]

асхабадские бабиды. Известие о его смерти, последовавшее в Бехдже, в его قصر'е около Акки 16 Мая утром по старому стилю пришло в Асхабад только 24 Июня. Никаких писем, никаких телеграм [sic], *tout court* была [sic] присланы<sup>33</sup> прилагаемые завещание и مرتّبه 'Андалиба. [P. 5/b] Перевод их и небольшое введение я пришлю с / следующей отходящей от нас почтой. Если найдете возможным то не откажите поместить их в Записках ...

Историю Джани я уже давно поджидаю. Одно скажу, бабиды не охотно очень дают старые документы, считая их не совсем годными. Что касается لوح صامصون, то он в Асхабаде не ... но за справкой посылаю в [P. 6/a] Бухару, где находится знакомый уже / Вам Мирза Абуль Фазль Гюльпайгани ...

Translation:

[P. 5/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

[The inevitable] has finally occurred! The page has turned over <sup>34</sup>ان حضرت صعود فرموده Bahá'u'lláh has died – These are the words in which the Babis of Ashkabad informed me of the passing of Behá. The news of his death which transpired in Bahji, in his قصر<sup>35</sup> near Akka on the morning of 16 May, according to the old calendar, did not arrive in Ashkabad until 24 June. No letters, no telegrams, *tout court*<sup>36</sup> the *Will and Testament* and the مرتّبه<sup>37</sup> of the 'Andalib,<sup>38</sup> enclosed [in this letter], were sent. I will send their translation [P. 5/b] and a brief introduction / in the next outgoing post. If there is a chance to publish them in the *Zapiski* don't say no ...

I have been looking forward to Jání's *History* for a long time. I can tell you one thing: the Babis quite reluctantly give away old documents, because they don't consider them exactly befitting. As to the لوح صامصون<sup>39</sup> it is not ... [word unclear] in Ashkabad, but I am sending an inquiry to Bukhara, where / [P. 6/a] Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání, with whom you are already familiar, is ...

Comments:

'The old calendar' implies here the Julian calendar versus the Gregorian. 16 May 1892 by the Julian calendar corresponds to 28 May by the Gregorian, while 24 June corresponds to 6 July respectively.

Baron Rosen published Tumanski's article on the *Will and Testament* of Bahá'u'lláh, which comprises the Persian original text under the title: *Kitáb-i-'Ahdí* (*The Book of My Covenant*) with a Russian translation (Tumanski 1893).

In the above publication, Tumanski also presents in full the mournful elegy of the 'Andalib' (in the original Persian with his own Russian translation), which he

mentions in the letter above (*ibid.*, 199–203) and explains that ‘*Andalib*’ is the title of the most venerable poet – ‘Alí Ashraf Láhijání (*ibid.*, 194). He specifies who exactly broke him the news of the passing of Bahá’u’lláh and spoke the words in Persian quoted in the letter (*ibid.*, 193). It was Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Karím Ardabílí, known under the Russianized name of Asadov. The latter is described by Tumanski in his other publication: ‘*Dva Poslednikh Babidskikh Otkroveniya*’ (‘*Two Recent Babi Revelations*’) as one of the three Babis (Baha’is) of Ashkabad who played an exceptionally great role in trying to make Tumanski familiar with the teachings of their religion. Moreover, Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Karím almost daily spent time reading and explaining the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* to him (Tumanski 1892: 315). This outstanding Baha’i was also the addressee of one of Bahá’u’lláh’s two epistles to the Babis (Baha’is) of Ashkabad published by Tumanski as the *Two Recent Babi Revelations* (*ibid.*, 317–320).

*Jáni’s History* or the *History of Mírzá Jáni* is an account of the Babi movement attributed to Hájí Mírzá Jáni Káshání, a prominent Babi killed in 1852. Browne, who published a critical edition of this book based on two manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, appraised it as one of the earliest histories of the Babi movement, a fact which he emphasized in the title (Browne 1910). Moreover, Browne, regarding this work as ‘the primary historic source’, considered it a criterion by which the authenticity and truth of other historic sources should be measured. However, subsequent studies revealed considerable inconsistencies and disparities in the text published by Browne, including differing dates of its composition clearly indicated in the work and references to certain events which could not have occurred during Mírzá Jáni’s lifetime.<sup>40</sup> This led researchers to the conclusion that the historical part was apparently written by several authors on the basis of an earlier history by Mírzá Jáni, to which a theological treatise was appended. Though the issue is still disputed by scholars, it is evident from data contained in the text that some portions of the work were later interpolations. At any rate, the book in Browne’s published version appears to have gone through redactions.<sup>41</sup>

It is also worth noting that despite Tumanski’s doubts in the possibility of finding *Jáni’s History* he did find it, of which he informed Rosen later (see his letter # 15).

For the *Lawh-i-Sámsún* or the *Lawh-i-Hawdaj* by Bahá’u’lláh, see letter # 4.

Tumanski devoted an article to the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh in which he tried to give an accurate account of the history of the Babi and Baha’i Faiths.

### 3.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460

[Article by Tumanski in the newspaper *Kavkaz*, № 180, dated 9 July 1892]

Асхабад, 25-го июня/Корр. «Кавказ»

На днях получено известие о кончине главы бабидов и их пророка Бэха-Уллы, последовавшей в Акке (С. Жан д’Акр) в Сирии 16-го

мая с.г. Это замечательная личность, которая сумела привлечь около миллиона последователей в разных частях Персии, придала бабизму тот миролюбивый характер, которым в настоящее время отличаются adeptы этой религии. Из гордого перса-шиита, признающего дружбу только со своими единоверцами и полное отчуждение от иноверцев (теберра ве тевелла) учение это сделало человека смиренного, считающего всех людей братьями, бабида.

Бэха-Улла, настоящее имя которого Мирза-Хусейн-Нури, родился 1-го ноября 1817 года. Он был сыном Мирзы-Бузурк-Нури, бывшего vizirя Фегих-Али-шаха.<sup>42</sup> Молодость свою он провел в доме отца, где вращаясь постоянно в среде интеллигентных и образованных людей, он отличался очень рано умственным развитием и прекрасным нравственным направлением.

Когда началось движение бабидов\*) Мирза-Хусейн-Али является одним изревностных приверженцев Баба и проповедником его доктрины в Мазандеране, где и оставался до смерти Махоммад-Шаха. После этого он вернулся в Тегеран, где при посредстве Муллы-Абдуль-Керима Казвини вошел в сношения с Бабом.

В 1852 году, после покушения на жизнь Шаха-Наср-Эддина, Бэха-Улла должен был удалиться из Персии. По некоторым известиям, он был, в числе заподозренных в этом покушении, арестован, но благодаря вмешательству русского посла был освобожден. Историк бабидов Сейях об этом не упоминает,\*\*), но за то сам Бэха-Улла в одном из своих посланий вспоминает с благодарностью помочь, оказанную ему русским посланником\*\*\*).

Удалившись из Персии Бэха-Улла избрал себе местожительством Багдад. Прожив в полном уединении и отрещившись от всех дел около года в Багдаде, Бэха-Улла один без спутников отправился в горы турецкого Курдистана, изредка заезжая в Сулеймание [sic]. Но по настоянию бабидов, которые после казни Баба 1848 и разгромов в Хорасане, Мазандеране и Зенджане остались без руководителей, он опять вернулся в Багдад, пробыв два года в горах. Возвратившись в Багдад он посвятил себя, по словам упомянутого историка Сейяха\*\*\*\*), «делу воспитания, побуждению к улучшению нравов, к приобретению познаний, усвоению искусств всех стран, к хорошему обхождению со всеми народами мира и доброжелательству ко всем национальностям, к общительности, единению, повиновению, скромности, к воспитанию детей, к производству того, в чем нуждается человеческий род, и основанию истинного счастья людей». Деятельность Бэха-Уллы здесь выразилась в неустанной переписке и рассылке увещаний и советов. К этому-же периоду относится и появление его первой книги, еще не претендующей на божественное происхождение, а именно Китабе Иган.

К концу пребывания своего в Багдаде, т.е. перед тем, как его, по проискам персидского генерального консула Мирзы-Бузурк-Хана, вытребовали в Константинополь, Бэха-Улла объявил себя тем лицом,

появление которого предсказывал Баб, и которому Баб считал себя предтечей. Действительно Баб неоднократно в своих писаниях говорил, что после него явится « тот, на которого Бог укажет» (Мани-юзхиругуллаху). Вот это то предсказание Бэха-Улла и принял на себя, и с этого момента бабизм вошел в совершенно новую фазу своего существования, претерпев во многом весьма существенные изменения. Весь новый религиозный строй заключается в массе отдельных посланий Бэха-Улла, адресованных различным лицам и по разным случаям и носящим большею частью название Лаух’ов (скрижалей); главные же основы заключаются в так называемой Китабе-Акдес<sup>43</sup> (священнейшая книга), перевод которой на русский язык подготавливается к печати.

В Константинополе Бэха-Улла и его спутники оставались не более шести месяцев и по распоряжению турецкого правительства были поселены в Адрианополе. После пятилетнего пребывания в этом городе в среде бабидов произошли раздоры и они разделились на две партии: одни признавали Бэха-Улла за того, за кого он себя выдавал, другие же сгруппировались около брата Бэха-Уллы Субхе-Эзеля (настоящее имя его Мирза Яхья). В виду этого турецкое правительство сочло необходимым разделить их: одних сослали на остров Кипр, других-же с Бэхой-Уллой в Акку, где он и прожил до смерти. В настоящее время главой бабидов, согласно неоднократным указаниям Бэха Уллы и его последнего завещания, признан старший сын его Мирза Аббас (Аббас Эфенди) под титулом Гусне ’Аазем (величайшая ветвь).

А. Г. Т[уман]ский

[footnotes by Tumanski]:

- \*) Желающих познакомиться с событиями 40-х годов, а также отчасти с первоначальным бабизмом отсылаем к книге Козем [sic] Бека «Баб и бабиды». СПб, 1865.
- \*\*) См. ‘A Traveller’s Narrative’ by Edward g. [sic] Browne. Cambridge 1891.
- \*\*\*) См. Collections Scientifiques de l’Institut des langues orientales de St.-Pétersbourg t. IV, p. 186.
- \*\*\*\*) E. G. Browne. A Traveller’s Narrative. II 89, I 69.

Translation:

Ashkabad, 25 June/ ‘Kavkaz’ Corr[espondent]

A report has been received the other day about the death of the Head of the Babis and their prophet, which occurred in Akka (St Jean d’Acre) in Syria on 16 May.<sup>44</sup> This was a remarkable person, who managed to attract about a million followers in different parts of Persia and bestowed upon Babiism the peace-loving nature which is now characteristic of the adherents of this religion. This teaching has made a proud Shi’ih Persian, who accepts friendship only with his coreligionists and fully turns his back on people of other beliefs

(tabarra' va tavalla), into a humble person, a Babi, who considers everybody to be his brother.

Bahá'u'lláh, whose original name was Mírzá Husayn Núrí, was born on 1 November 1817. He was a son of Mírzá Buzurg Núrí, the former minister<sup>45</sup> of Fath-‘Alí Sháh. He spent his youth in his father's house, where constantly surrounded by cultured and educated people he displayed at quite an early age great mental capacity and a wonderful moral mindset.

When the Babi movement started \*) Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí was one of the Báb's most ardent adherents and preacher of his doctrine in Mazindaran, where he stayed until Muhammad Sháh's death. After that he returned to Tehran, where he communicated with the Báb through Mullá Abdu'l-Karím of Qazvin.

In 1852, after the attempt on Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's life, Bahá'u'lláh had to depart from Persia. According to some information, he was among those suspected of that attempt, was arrested, but owing to the Russian ambassador's intervention, was released. The Babi historian, Sayyáh, doesn't mention this episode \*\*), but Bahá'u'lláh himself recalls the help, rendered to him by the Russian envoy, with gratitude in one of his epistles \*\*\*).

Having departed from Persia, Bahá'u'lláh chose Baghdad as his residence. After living approximately a year near Baghdad in complete seclusion and following the suspension of all activities, Bahá'u'lláh alone, without any companions, made his way to the mountains of Turkish Kurdistan, at times paying visits to Sulaymaniyyih. But at the persistent request of the Babis, who after the Báb's execution in 1848<sup>46</sup> and their defeats in Khorasan, Mazindaran, and Zinjan were left without leaders, Bahá'u'lláh returned to Baghdad having stayed for two years in the mountains. After coming back to Baghdad he, according to the above-mentioned historian Sayyáh \*\*\*\*), applied himself fully to 'educating [his people] and inciting [them] to morality, the acquisition of the sciences and arts of all countries, kindly dealing with all the nations of the earth, desire for the welfare of all peoples, sociability, concord, obedience, submissiveness, instruction of [their] children, production of what is needful for the human race, and inauguration of true happiness for mankind.' Bahá'u'lláh's activity in this respect manifested itself in ongoing correspondences and the issuing forth of admonitions and counsels. His first book, namely the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, with no claim to a divine origin yet, goes back to that period.

By the end of his residence in Baghdad, that is before he was, due to the intrigues of the Persian general consul Mírzá Buzurg Khán, deported to Constantinople, Bahá'u'lláh declared himself to be the person, whose manifestation had been foretold by the Báb and whose precursor the Báb had considered himself to be. Indeed the Báb had repeatedly said in his Writings, that the 'one whom God will make manifest' (*Man-yuzhiruhu'lláhu*) will appear after him. This is the prophecy which Bahá'u'lláh applied to himself [as being fulfilled by him], and since that moment Babiism has entered an entirely new stage of its existence, having undergone quite considerable changes in many

aspects. The whole new religious system is contained in a great number of separate epistles by Bahá'u'lláh addressed to different individuals on different occasions, which for the most part bear the name of the *Lawhs* (Tablets); the basic principles are contained in the so-called *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (*The Most Holy Book*), of which a translation into Russian is now being prepared for print.

Bahá'u'lláh and his companions stayed in Constantinople for no longer than six months and by the orders of the Turkish government they were [then re]located in Adrianople. After a five-month stay in that city there appeared among the Babis discord and they were divided into two parties: one [consisted of those who] recognized Bahá'u'lláh to be the one he claimed to be, while others grouped around Bahá'u'lláh's brother, Subh-i-Azal (his real name is Mírzá Yahyá). For this reason the Turkish government considered it necessary to divide them: one group were banished to the island of Cyprus, others were [banished] with Bahá'u'lláh to Akka, where he lived until his death. His oldest son Mírzá 'Abbás ('Abbás Effendi) who is titled *Ghusn-i-A'zam* (*The Most Great Branch*), is, according to Bahá'u'lláh's repeated instructions and his last Will, recognized at present to be the Head of the Babis.

A. G. T[uman]ski

[footnotes by Tumanski]:

\*) We refer those who want to know more about the events of the [18]40s as well as about the original Babiism to Kazimbeg's book 'The Báb and the Babis'. St Petersburg, 1865 [in Russian].

\*\*) See 'A Traveller's Narrative' by Edward G. Browne. Cambridge 1891.

\*\*\*) See Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues orientales de St.-Pétersbourg, t. IV. P. 186.

\*\*\*\*) [See] A Traveller's Narrative. Vol. II, p. 69, Vol. I, p. 69.

Comments:

The dates in the article follow the Julian calendar.

Tumanski gives the wrong year of the martyrdom of the Báb (1848 instead of 1850). Some confusion about the year of the Báb's execution in Russian nineteenth century sources might have originated in the book by Kazimbeg: *The Báb and the Babis*, published in Russian in 1865. Not only does this author of the first European book on the history of the Babi Faith fix the wrong year for this event but he even questions Moshnin's correct date when he quotes Moshnin in his book (Kazimbeg 1865: 33). Browne notices Kazimbeg's error (Browne 1889b: 512).

Let us now turn our attention to another letter. Since it consists of a covering letter and enclosed items (texts) I interpose between extracts from the covering letter the texts they refer to.

4.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit:87

[from a letter dated 26 December 1892, sent from Ahkabad]

[P. 1/a] ... Теперь же посылаю Вам давно мною ожидавшийся لوح صامصون. Относительно его его [sic] никаких заметок привести не могу, тем более, что как Вам известно, этот Lauh даже не был известен ашхабадским бабидам. Только в 8 строке (1 стр.) в словах ستأخذهم عذاب فتنة عظيم видят намек на русско-турецкую войну.

Translation:

[P. 1/a] ... Forthwith I am sending you the لوح صامصون<sup>47</sup> which I have anticipated for so long. I can give you no clue regarding it; moreover, this Lawh, as you are aware, was even unknown to the Babis of Ashkabad. Only on line 8 (page 1) the words[:] ستأخذهم عذاب فتنة عظيم

might be considered an allusion to the Russo-Turkish war.

Comments:

The *Lawh-i-Sámsún* by which the *Lawh-i-Hawdaj* is implied is the Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Ottoman city of Samsun on His way to Constantinople from Baghdad when he was banished 'further away from the Persian borders' in 1863 (see Introduction). The word 'Hawdaj' is translated as a 'seat for riding a camel.'

The phrase from the Tablet quoted in Arabic, which literally means: 'they will be seized with "grievous and tormenting Mischief,"' is not considered in the Baha'i writings to be an allusion to the Russo-Turkish war. In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi gives it the following interpretation: 'Sighting from His howdah the Black Sea, as He approached the port of Sámsún, Bahá'u'lláh, at the request of Mírzá Áqá Ján, revealed a Tablet, designated *Lawh-i-Hawdaj* (Tablet of the Howdah), which by such allusions as the "Divine Touchstone", "the grievous and tormenting Mischief", reaffirmed and supplemented the dire predictions recorded in the recently revealed *Tablet of the Holy Mariner*' (Effendi 1995: 157). The latter is understood to be a warning of the tests ahead, which were to come from Mírzá Yahyá (Momen, W. 1989: 111).<sup>48</sup>

The manuscript of the given Tablet, consisting of five pages (the title page included) is enclosed within the letter and registered under the same code (Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 87; pages: 3/b, 4/a, b, 5/a, b).<sup>49</sup>

Its title in the Archive: لوح صامصون<sup>50</sup>. The title is written in blue pencil on the title page by a hand distinctly different from the text of the manuscript. The latter begins with the words:

تلک ایات ظهر فی خدر البقاء و هودج القدس حين ورود اسم الاعظم عن شطر السّبحان فی ارض الصّامصون يمّ بحر عظیم اذا نزّلت جنود وحی الله بطراز الذى انصعقت عنها کل من فی السّموات و الارضین ...

Translation:

These verses were revealed behind the Veil of Immortality, in the Howdah of Holiness, when the Most Great Name arrived from the court of the All-Glorious in the land of Sámsún, on the shore of the great sea. Thereupon the hosts of divine revelation descended, arrayed in such beauty that all that are in heaven and on earth were dumbfounded ...<sup>51</sup>

The text ends with the words:

... و كذلك فذرنا فی سماء الأمر ما یغنى به العالمین

Translation:

... Thus have We preordained in the heaven of Command that by which the worlds may be enriched [translation mine].

Let us now turn to another passage from the letter.

[P. 1/b] Кроме этого прилагаю при сем два письмо [*sic*] на персидском языке, писанные еврейскими буквами. Они относятся к тем происшествиям с бабидами, которые случились этим летом в Хамадане и о которых писали в газетах. Кроме того они являются образчиком еврейско-персидского разговорного языка. Но так как я не знаю еврейского алфавита я пробовал транскрибировать с помощью бабидов эти письма. Но мой еврей-бабид (Ага Сулейман Шальфуруш) упорно отказывался понять мое намерение передать букв в букву текст, но персидскими буквами, стараясь все время передать عبارت более красноречиво, что привело меня совсем в отчаяние. А потому я посылаю Вам все заметки как есть: Быть может и встретите чтонибудь интересное. Во всяком случае и шииты совершают указанные зверства!

Translation:

[P. 1/b] In addition, I enclose herewith two letters in Persian written in Hebrew characters. These refer to the events that happened to the Babis in Hamadan this summer which were reported in the newspapers. Moreover, they are samples of the Judeo-Persian colloquial dialect. Since I don't know the Hebrew alphabet I tried to have these letters transcribed with the help of the Babis. But a Jewish Babi acquaintance of mine (Áqá Sulaymán-Shálfurúsh) persistently

refused to understand my intention to transcribe the text letter by letter using the Persian alphabet, while trying the whole time to render the عبارت<sup>52</sup> more eloquently با وضع فضیحتر<sup>53</sup>, driving me completely to despair. Therefore, I am sending you all the notes as they are, in the hope that you will perhaps find them interesting. In any case, the Shi‘ih also commit these atrocities!

Comments:

It is worth noting that the Baha’i Faith had a following not only among people of Muslim background but among former representatives of other religious minorities too.

G. N. Curzon addresses this issue in his book:

Quite recently the Babis have had great success ... having secured many proselytes among the Jewish populations of the Persian towns. I hear that during the past year they are reported to have made 150 Jewish converts in Teheran, 100 in Hamadan, 50 in Kashan, and 75 per cent of the Jews at Gulpaigan  
(Curzon 1892, 1: 500).

The two letters enclosed by Tumanski are in Judeo-Persian with a translation into regular Persian. The term ‘Judeo-Persian’ is applied by linguists to the peculiar Persian dialect of Iranian Jews, which uses Hebrew characters (but not the language) in writing. The letters in the original Judeo-Persian are on pages 7/a – 7/b; 8/a, b – 9/a of the same unit. Below is the supplemented translation of these letters into standard Persian, which still preserves some peculiarities of the original dialect.

[P. 6/a, b]

و دیگر واقعه دوستان همدان این است در یک ماه قبل ملا عبد الله فسادی بر / پا کرد  
چند نفر بیهودی هارا برد خانه خودش چوب زد بعد چند روزی آب و نان بروی ایشان  
بست چند نفر را مسلمان کرد قریب چهل نفر چند دفعه هم با شرار ریخت بکشد قطع  
بیهودی نماید آخر حکم کرد جمیع وصله کذاشته روز باران<sup>54</sup> بیرون نیایند سی و سه  
حکم جهت ایشان جاری کرد حال اویخته با حباب اهل فرقانی جمیع پنهان شد کلیمیها  
جمیع سر تر اشینند آقا یاری و آقا میرزا علی را کرفتند چوب بسیاری زند از  
قرار یکه نوشته بودند حسب الله<sup>55</sup> طفل آقا یاری را کرفتند روى زبانش را<sup>56</sup> کذاشته<sup>57</sup>  
مختصر تا حال در هیچ ولایتی همچه ظلم نشد قریب صد ... کلیمیهای همدان پول  
تلکراف دادند باطراف تل نمودند و علاج از دست این ظالم نشده

Translation:

[P. 6/a] Another event [that happened to] the friends [the Baha’is] in

[P. 6/b] Hamadan is as follows. A month ago Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh committed / an act of violence. He took several Jews to his house [and] whipped them.

After that he left them without food and drink for a couple of days. He converted some of them to Islam, approximately 40 people. He tortured them several times<sup>58</sup> with fire in order to kill them [or] in order to force them to abandon Judaism. Finally he ordered all of them to wear a patch and not to go out without it<sup>59</sup> during the day. He also issued 33 orders concerning them. Thus,<sup>60</sup> after their dispute<sup>61</sup> with the friends, the people of the Book<sup>62</sup> all left the scene without a trace.<sup>63</sup> All the Jews shaved their heads. They seized Áqá Yári and Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí [and] whipped them repeatedly, because they had written: God is sufficient unto us. They seized Áqá Yári’s child ... [following words unclear]. To be brief, until now such an injustice has not occurred in any other province. About a hundred ... [word unclear] Hamadani Jews sent money by telegraph, which they had gathered throughout the locality. [But] there was no escape from the hands of this tyrant.

[P. 10/a]

هر کاه از حادثه همدان بخواهید این است ۲۵ ایلوی چند نفر از اسرائیلی ها رفته بودند صحر<sup>64</sup> بعد که مریجت<sup>65</sup> نموده بودند چند نفر کوییم در رفته بودند نزد ملا عبد الله که اینها عرق خورده اند کوییم هارا از بیت (از بیت؟) نموده اند بعد اینهارا برند پیش آخوند چوب زندن بعد داد بر زندن شان بحکومت جرم کر کرقتند در آن ساعت که شب ۲۸ ماه ایلوی باشند جمیع اسرائیلی هارا برند پیش آخوند که باید حال وصله بکارید و الا فردا حکم بر قتل شما مینمایم بقدر دو هزار خلق بیشتر جمع شدند لابد قبیل نمودند تمام کشندن نه اسرائیل از حد کشته بدانند اقا باری را خواسته بودند ببرندش خودش رفته بود آخوند کفته بود در چه مذهب هستی کفته بود اسلام بعد کفته بود باید رذ بکوی چون که می کویند تو بابی هستی باری رذ نکفت استقامتی کرد که اسباب حیرت جمیع شده در توی این خلق بی شعور کفته بود من دین کسی را بد نمی کویم آن هم دینی هست برای خودشان بعد داد برند بحکومت چوب زندن دای ایلی را کرقتند برند پیش اقا باری آن هم رذ نکفت چند روز در حبس بودند با زنجیر پنجه تو مان دادند بیرون آمدند باینکه حکم قتل شان را داده بودند باری باحباب بسیار تلخ می کنند اما باور نمایید جناب آقا باری تمام احباب را روسفید نمود آفرین بر محبت و استقامتش هیچ کس امید آن که سالم بیرون بباید نداشت

Translation:

[P. 10/a] If you are interested in what happened in Hamadan [it is as follows]. On the 25th of [the month of] *Ílúl*<sup>66</sup> several of the Israelites left ... Then, when they returned, some non-Jews<sup>67</sup> ran off to Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh [saying] that the Israelites had been drinking spirits and had behaved offensively towards the non-Jews. After that they brought them before the *Ákhúnd* and beat/whipped [them]. Later, they made a vociferous complaint about them to the authorities. [Those Israelites] were considered guilty of committing a crime. At that hour, on the evening of the 28th of the month of *Ílúl*, all the Israelites were brought before the *Ákhúnd*, [who ordered them, saying]: ‘you must now put on a patch, otherwise I will condemn you to death tomorrow.’ Over 2000 people were gathered [there]. They could not but accept [the order]. All put

on [the patch]. The humiliation of Israel has passed all bounds. Know that they wanted to take Áqá Yári by force, [but] he went [to the *Ákhúnd*] himself. The *Ákhúnd* said: ‘What is your faith?’. [He] replied: ‘Islam.’ Then [the *Ákhúnd*] said: ‘You must now deny [the Babi Faith] for you are said to be a Babi.’ However, he did not deny [it]. He showed such firmness that caused everybody to marvel. In the midst of those ignorant people, he said: ‘I do not revile anybody’s faith, and that one is also a faith of its own.’ Afterwards they submitted a complaint to the authorities [and] had [him] beaten/whipped. They seized Dáyí Ílí and brought [him] to Áqá Yári. He did not deny [his Faith] either. They were imprisoned for a few days. They passed 50 *túmáns* [to the guards] using their chains. They were released, although the verdict condemning them to death had already been given. In short, the friends have a very bitter life. But believe [me], Áqá Yári did not betray the trust of all the friends. His affection and firmness are praiseworthy. No one expected that he would come out of it safe and sound.

### Comments

One of the above letters, dated 25 *Rabi‘u'l-Avval* 1310 [AH], was sent from Tehran by Áqá Sulaymán-‘Attár Hamadání to Áqá Sulaymán-Shálfurúsh Hamadání living in Ashkabad. There is also a postscript in Russian saying: ‘The letter of Áqá Mihdí Zargar, a Jewish Babi, to Áqá Sulaymán-Shálfurúsh.’ Because of the confusing way in which both these indications are made, it is difficult to judge which of them refers to which letter.

*Rabi‘u'l-Avval* is the third month of the Muslim lunar year. *Rabi‘u'l-Avval* 1310 corresponds to September 1892.

The second (longer letter) is supplied with interpolated comments in Russian. Thus, the original word ﻭصـلـة, standing for ‘a patch’ is explained in the comments as: ‘red piece of cloth for distinguishing Jews from Muslims.’

Let us now return to Tumanski’s letter.

[P. 2/a] Я лично все это время очень мало занимался бабидами и только в последнее время занялся исподволь переводом одного (тоже хронологического-исторического) стихотворения Небиля относящегося до некоего Фазиля, о котором я касался в моем сообщении о завещании Беха. Это стихотворение я предлагаю поставить как предисловие к одному Лауху, который я тоже намерен перевести. Этот Лаух адресован упомянутому Фазилю и касается разных философских вопросов и главным образом выявляет отношение бабидов к философии школы Муллы Садры [sic] и Муллы Хади Себзевари (شـرـاقـيـ). Когда все будет готово пришлю Вам для записок. Об رسـلـةـ касающейся биографии Беха Уллы получил известие, что готова и выслана мне. Об ней конечно постараюсь дать подробный отчет ...

Translation:

[P. 2/a] Personally, I have not been very involved with the Babis lately and until quite recently I have undertaken the translation of a (also chronological historical) verse by Nabil at my leisure for someone named Fazil, whom I touched upon in my note on Bahá'[u'lláh]'s Will and Testament. I suggest that this verse may serve as an introduction to one of the *Lawhs*, which I also intend to translate. This *Lawh* is addressed to the above-mentioned Fazil and concerns different philosophical issues; mainly it reveals the Babi attitude towards the Mullá Sadrá and Mullá Hádí Sabzivári ((أشراقی))<sup>68</sup> philosophical school. When everything is ready I will send you [these] for [the publication in] the *Zapiski*. I have received news about the *رساله*<sup>69</sup> concerning Bahá'u'lláh's biography, that it is finished and has been sent to me. I will surely try to give a detailed report on it ...

Comments:

In *The Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh*, published by Tumanski under the title: *Kitáb-i-'Ahdí* (*The Book of My Covenant*) [Tumanski, *Posledneye Slovo Bahaulli* (*Bahá'u'lláh's Last Word*)] Tumanski describes Fazil (Nabil-i-Akbar), the news of whose death, according to Tumanski, was received by the Baha'is of Ashkabad on the same day as the news of the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, as 'one of the most prominent Babi figures, who was an associate of the Báb himself' (Tumanski 1893: 193–194). However, the information contained in the last clause of the quote is incorrect: Nabil-i-Akbar was not an associate of the Báb. (See also Tumanski's letter # 6).

The mentioned Tablet (*Lawh*) was published by Tumanski in the original Persian and his Russian translation among the Supplements to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Supplement II) under the title: لوح بسيط الحقائق (The Tablet of the *Uncompounded Reality*).<sup>70</sup> Supplement II starts with an introduction which includes a brief description of Tumanski's manuscript of the biography of Fazil (Nabil-i-Akbar) written by Nabil-i-A'zam (Mullá Muhammad Zarandí, prominent Babi and Baha'i, author of the narrative of Babi and the earliest days of Baha'i history, *The Dawn-Breakers*). Therefore it would be reasonable to suppose that what is implied in the letter by the 'chronological historical verse by Nabil for someone named Fazil' is in fact the above biography (see also Tumanski's letter # 6 and comments).

Mullá Sadrá or Hází Mírzá Husayn Shírází (1572–1640) was an Iranian theologian, philosopher, and mystic. He was a Shi'ih ideologist in Safavid Iran.

Mullá Hádí Sabzivári, also known under the nickname of *Asrár* (1797–1872) was a famous Iranian scholar and philosopher of his time.

*Ishráq* is the name of the philosophical school founded by Shaykh Shihábu'd-Dín Suhravardí.

5.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 458

[from a letter dated 24 October 1892, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 13/b] ... Вот и все случаи употребления **بعد الذى** كتاب أقدس. Разрешите пожалуйста в примечаниях привести Ваше объяснение. Относительно печатания я недавно получил от Мирзы Абуль Фазля письмо, в котором он просит повременить с изданием ввиду опасений Гусне Азема за последствия могущие произойти для них.

[P. 14/a] Копию этого / письма я прилагаю. В ответ на это письмо я написал Мирзе, чтобы он успокоил своего главу тем, что в переводе на русский язык для них не может быть никаких опасностей что, пока я не получу разрешение **حضرت**'а я не буду издавать. Мне надо пока с ними ладить, так как скоро будет готова биография Беха Уллы, а эту штуку интересно будет заполучить. Не пишите только об этом Brown'y, а то перехватит. Если будет возможность я переведу ее вместе с выдержками из *Тарихе Джедид* (Манукчи) и *Макалейе Сейях*. Это послужит как бы введением в [sic] Китабе Акдес; эти переводы пойдут скорее, чем Китабе Акдес и быть может к следующему Сентябрю будут закончены, а тогда мне можно будет взять отпуск и приехать в Петербург ...

Translation:

[P. 13/b] ... These are all the cases of the use of [the expression] **بعد الذى** in the **كتاب أقدس**.<sup>71</sup> Would you, please, allow me to include your explanation in the notes? On the publishing [of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*] I recently received a letter from Mirzá Abu'l-Fazl, in which he asks me to delay the publication due to the Most Great Branch (Ghusn-i-'Azam)'s concern about the possible consequences [of such a publication] for them.

[P. 14/a] Enclosed is a copy of / the letter. In response to this letter I wrote to Mirzá [Abu'l-Fazl] to reassure their [community] Head, saying that no harm would be caused to them by a Russian translation and that I would not proceed with its publication unless I got the permission of the **حضرت**<sup>72</sup>. I have to be on good terms with them so far, as Bahá'u'lláh's biography is on its way and this is something which would be interesting to get. Please, don't write to Browne about it so that he won't beat me to it. If an opportunity presents itself I will translate it together with extracts from the *Tárikh-i-Jadid* (Mánuk-chi) [*New History*] and the *Maqdíy-i-Sayyád* [*A Traveller's Narrative*]. This would serve as a kind of introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, these translations will go on faster than the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and will probably be completed by next September, then I will be able to take a vacation and come to St Petersburg ...

## Comments:

It seems that Tumanski kept his promise to put off the publication of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* with its Russian translation, since in the Introduction to this book he explains the delay in its publication (this translation had been completed in 1893 but was not published until 1899) by his trip to Persia and ‘some various unfavorable circumstances’ (Tumanski 1899: i). This might be an allusion to the circumstances referred to by Mírzá Abu’l-Fazl in his letter to Tumanski, whose copy Tumanski enclosed with his own letter to Rosen. It is worth noting that though Abu’l-Fazl Gulpágání conveys in it a request by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, it can in no way be perceived as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s own writing. Nor is there any ground to attribute the arguments behind this request to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá himself.

Below is the text of Mírzá Abu’l-Fazl’s enclosed letter which is registered in the Archive under the same Deposit, inventory and unit numbers as Tumanski’s letter.

[P. 16/a]

از سمرقند خدمت ذیموم هبت آفیسر محترم دولت بهیهه قویهه روسيه جناب مستطاب  
فضایل مآب میرزا الكساندر تومانسکی دام مجده العالی اقل الکتاب ابوالفضل  
کلپاکانی بتاریخ ۳ ربیع الاول ۱۳۱۰ قلمی و معروض داشته  
بنام خداوند یکتا

بزرگ سرور روشن کوهر دانشورم از خداوند تبارک و تعالی هم خواهم پیوسته  
آنچه داشت شریف بر تزییج مراسم مدینت و صیانت عالم انسانیت موفق و بمجد و  
عزت و طراوت و نصرت ترین باد

در این مدت که از لذائذ ملاقات و صحبت آنحضرت محروم مانده ام پیوسته آرزومند  
بودم که مراتب اشتیاق و ارادات خود را بتوسط رساله معروض دارم لکن خطرات این  
سال مهیب عجیب که بر آن سرور لبیب مخفی نیست مانع از اظهار این مقصود بود تا  
در این ایام که ابر بلایا و امراض از افق این بلاد متفرق و فدوی از بخار اوارد  
سمرقد شد توقع منبع مولانا الاجل الامجد الافخم الاغصن المبارک الاعظم حضرت  
عیسی افندی اضاء الله الافق بضیاء وجهه المنیر وصول بافت چون شرحی در باب  
طبع کتاب اقدس در آن مرقوم بود لذا لازم شد که اعلام امر مبارکرا خدمت آنمحبوب  
و سیله فتح باب مراسلت کردانیم شاید باین وسیله بزیارت آثار قلم آن جناب مشرف  
شوم

در توقع منبع چنانکه بنظر عالی میرسد خواهش تعویق و تائی در طبع این کتاب  
مستطاب از انجناب فرموده اند زیرا که نشر این کتاب فاتح باب انقلاب و موجب  
خدمات بزرگ بر احباب خواهد شد چه مراتب شرارت و عادوت فرق اسلامیه با  
طائفه باشیه بر آنچنان معلوم است بخصوص طائفه اعراب سکنه ارض مقدس که  
بصلاحیت وجود و قساوت قلب و جسارت در بلوا از جمیع قبایل وحشیه معروف ترند  
و الخ

## Translation:

[P. 16/a] To His venerable and benevolent Excellency officer of the glorious and powerful Russian State, His virtuous Highness Mírzá Alexander

Tumanski, may his exalted brilliance be prolonged, the least of the writers – Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání, on the 3rd of [the month of] *Rabi' u'l-Avvál* of 1310<sup>73</sup> wrote from Samarkand:

In the name of the Unique God

My most honorable and noble scholar,

I constantly pray to God, the Blessed and Exalted, that this eminent person may be successful in the propagation of habits [conducive to] the civilization and protection of the human race as well as he may [also] be adorned with excelling glory, grandeur, freshness and splendor.

While I was deprived of the pleasure of meeting and conversing with His Holiness I constantly cherished the desire to express my longing and affection [for him] in a treatise. However, the hazards of this year [have been] severe [and] astonishing, which, as it is no secret to this nobleman, have prevented the fulfillment of this wish until these [very] days. When the cloud of afflictions and sicknesses was dispelled from the horizon of these lands [and] your devoted servant entered Samarkand from Bukhara, there arrived an all-surpassing command [from] our Most Sublime, Most Glorious, Most Highly-esteemed Master, the Most Great and Blessed Branch, His Holiness 'Abbás Effendi, may God illumine the horizon by the light of his resplendent countenance! Since it contained an explanation concerning the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, therefore it became necessary [for me] to open the door of communication by conveying the blissful order to this beloved [soul] by post, haply thus I may be honored to behold the traces of the pen of His Excellency.

In the all-surpassing command, given His lofty view [His Holiness] has requested from His Excellency a delay and slowing down of the printing of this august Book, because the publication of that Book will open the door of upheaval and cause severe damage to the friends. The degree of hatred and animosity of Islamic sects towards the Babis is known to His Excellency. Especially the Arab people inhabiting the Holy Land are most notorious of all barbaric tribes for their toughness of nature, hardness of heart, and boldness in disturbance, etc.

Let us now go back to Tumanski's letter:

[Р. 14/b] Что же касается претензии Беха Уллы регулировать отношения христиан к брачному вопросу [,] духовенства и вопросов о монашестве, то мне кажется, она не так не ожиданна. Задаваясь создать новую религию, такого эклектического характера как необабизм, нельзя, думаю, было Беха Улле отказаться от всякой тени прозелитизма. Кроме того и самый Лаух носит название لوح نداء, т.е. скрижаль «призыва», а также и другое название с намеком на христианскую терминологию, بشارت. Новостей по бабизму особых нет, кроме полученного краткого

[P. 15/a] известия об убийстве в / Йезде четырех человек. Подробностей пока нет, если будут, то сообщу Вам ...

Translation:

[P. 14/b] As for Bahá'u'lláh's claim to regulate Christians' attitudes towards marriage, priesthood, and issues related to monasticism, this does not seem to me quite unexpected. Having intended to originate a new religion of so eclectic a nature as *neoBabiism*, Bahá'u'lláh, I believe, could not withhold from the slightest tint of proselytizing. Moreover, the *Lawh* itself bears the name of نداء, i.e. the Tablet of 'the Call' as well as another title with an allusion to Christian terminology: بشارت.<sup>74</sup> No real news about Babiism except for the [recently] received brief report concerning the murder of four

[P. 15/a] people in / Yazd. No details so far, if I get them, I will let you know ...

Comments:

Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet, the *Glad Tidings*, which among other things addresses issues of marriage, priesthood, and monasticism will be further discussed in Browne's letters # 28, 29 and comments.<sup>75</sup> In the current letter Tumanski is apparently replying to Rosen's questions, who was proceeding with his Russian translation of the Tablet for publication (see Introduction).

Though the characteristic of the Baha'i Faith as a religion of 'an eclectic nature' is highly disputable<sup>76</sup> (except in the sense that religions in general have very much in common and no new religion is totally different from previous ones), the very fact of Tumanski's as well as Rosen's repeatedly defining the Baha'i Faith as a new religion is very significant. Thus, in his Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* Tumanski described the given Book as 'a monument of the new religion' (Tumanski 1899: xxii).

6.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 459  
[from a letter dated 1 February 1893, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 4/b] ... Справки по Вашим Лаухам я поручил подготовить бабидам, а когда приеду из командировки (т.е. дней через 5, 6), то приведу в порядок и немедленно вышлю Вам.

[P. 5/a] Теперь могу сказать, что Лаух № 32 есть тот самый именно Лаух, о / котором я Вам ранее писал, что он адресован покойному Фазилю, биографию которого написал Небиль. Эта биография в 302 стиха носит заглавие[:]

ترجمه حال و تفصیل سرگذشت احوال جناب نبیل اکبر علیه به‌آللہ الانور است  
نبیل اعظم نبیل اکبر прозвище Фазиль, поэт Небиль называется

Начало[:]

نام جان بخش خدای مهربان زینت هر نامه و کلک و زبان

Конец[:]

از عنایات خود ایجان افرین این دعara با اجابت کن قرین .

Translation:

[P. 4/b] ... I have entrusted the Babis to supply the information about your *Lawhs* [which you have requested], when I return from my business trip (i.e. in about 5, 6 days), I will put it in order and immediately send it to you. I can [P. 5/a] tell you now that *Lawh* No. 32 is that same *Lawh*, / which I have written to you about earlier and that it is addressed to the late Fázil, whose biography was written by Nábíl. This biography consisting of 302 verses is titled:

ترجمه حال و تفصیل سرگذشت احوال جناب نبیل اکبر علیه به‌آللہ الانور است

[A Biography and a Detailed Account of the Life of His Excellency Nábíl-i-Akbar, may Bahá'u'lláh, the Most Luminous, abide upon him].

نیبل اکبر [Nábíl-i-Akbar] is Fázil's title, [while] Nábíl, the poet, bears the title of نبیل اعظم [Nábíl-i-A'zam]

It begins with[:]

نام جان بخش خدای مهربان زینت هر نامه و کلک و زبان

It ends with[:]

از عنایات خود ایجان افرین این دعara با اجابت کن قرین .

Comments:

*Lawh* No. 32 in the 'First Volume of Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh', prepared for publication by Baron Rosen, is the *Tablet of Wisdom* (Rosen 1908: 92–100). Tumanski was absolutely right in bringing to Rosen's attention that the given Tablet was addressed to Mullá Muhammad Qá'iní, who had the title 'Nábíl-i-Akbar,' but was also known as 'Fázil-i-Qá'iní'<sup>77</sup> (see also Tumanski's letter # 4 and comments).

Tumanski, in the introduction to the *Tablet of 'Alí* (published in Supplement II to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*), gives almost the same information about the *Biography of Fázil* by Nábíl Zarandí as he does in this letter. But he adds that the transcript in his possession was handwritten by Nábíl Zarandí's nephew. He also presents a brief

account of his meeting with Fázil during the short visit of the latter to Ashkabad in the spring of 1892 and shares with the reader his deep impression of this ‘inspired Babi’ (Tumanski 1899: 53–54). See also Browne’s letter # 29.

7.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 459

[from a letter dated 27 July 1893, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 10/a] ... Получив Ваши Лаухи об них я теперь и скажу несколько слов. میراث مرغوب به خود بگویید. Подавляющее количество всяких писаний оставленных как Бехой своим последователям превосходит всякое воображение и я не знаю кто будет в состоянии разобраться во всем этом действительно «море» словоизвержения. Разве только так называемые مبلغین, ну им и книги в руки. В этом направлении в Акке сделана первая попытка: изданы Китабе Акдес и некоторые Лаухи, которые я и перепровождаю

[P. 10/b] Вам с этим письмом. Издание сделано, как Вы уви/[дете] по восточному и сколько я ни ломал себе голову, сколько я не [sic] допрашивал бабидов я не мог уловить хотя что либо похожее на систему. Одно лишь можно сказать что в начале идут крупные Лаухи за тем все меньше и меньше. Вот поэтому то и нельзя не радоваться, что остались Лаухи хронологию которых можно определить, т.е. отнести к известному периоду и наиболее интересному. Что же касается справки о Лаухах, то я убедился, что они расспросным путем не особенно надежны. Остаются только справки о личностях, к которым адресованы эти Лаухи. И вот расспрашивая таким образом я натолкнулся на существование преинтересной небольшой рукописной хроники касающейся арестов и гонений бабидов во многих местах Персии в 1300 [P. 11/a] г.х. Эта хроника принадлежит перу / некоего Мирза Али Асгер میرزا علی اصغر и написана очень просто, языком почти что разговорным, почерк шикасте, на русской почтовой бумаге. Но впрочем более подробный отчет я Вам предоставлю уже из Мангышлака и привезу саму рукопись ان شاء الله, когда отпустят в отпуск, т.е. осенью в Сентябре или Октябре. Что же касается расспросных сведений, то они очень не удачны, конечно тут много и моей вины. Простите и не судите строго ...

Translation:

[P. 10/a] Having received your *Lawhs*, I will now say a few words about them. The great majority of any Writings, left by Bahá’u’lláh to his followers as [his] میراث مرغوب<sup>78</sup> surpasses any imagination, and I wonder who will ever be able to explore the whole of this real ‘ocean’<sup>79</sup> of verbal effusion. Save perhaps the so-called مبلغین<sup>80</sup>, so it is up to them. The first attempt to accomplish this was made in Akka: the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and a few *Lawhs*, which I am sending you herewith, have been published. The

[P. 10/b] publication, as you will / see, has been made in the Middle Eastern way, however much I was racking my brain, no matter how often I asked the Babis about [it], I failed to discern anything like a system. The one thing that is certain[:] at the beginning commence the longer *Lawhs*, followed by the shorter and shorter ones. This is the reason why it is so joyful to realize that the remaining are *Lawhs*, whose chronology can be determined, i.e. [they] can be traced back to [one] certain well-known and most interesting period. As for gathering information about the *Lawhs*, I have become convinced that it is not reliable enough to use information collected by inquiries. However, what can be obtained is information about the individuals to whom the *Lawhs* were addressed. Making my inquiries in this way, I once came across the existence of the most interesting short manuscript chronicle about arrests and persecutions of the Babis in different parts of Persia during AH 1300. The author of this

[P. 11/a] chronicle is / someone named Mírzá 'Alí Asghar<sup>81</sup> and it is handwritten in a very simple, almost colloquial language, in the *shikastih* cursive script on Russian letter paper. However, I will present you with a fuller report from Mangyshlak once I am there, and bring the very manuscript itself<sup>82</sup>, ان شاء الله when I am allowed to go on vacation, that is to say in the fall, in the September or October. As for the information obtained through inquiries, it is pretty unreliable, which is certainly to a great extent my own fault. For this I beg your pardon and, please, don't be too hard on me ...

#### Comments:

The same idea of admiration for the abundance of Writings revealed by Bahá'u'lláh is expressed by Tumanski in less metaphorical terms in the closing part of the Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*: 'Apart from the *lawhs* known to us there will probably be found many more new ones, for Bahá'u'lláh's prolificacy in this respect is amazing.'<sup>83</sup>

The publications of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and of a few *Lawhs* mentioned in the letter, as is clear from the term 'publications,' imply lithographical editions and not manuscripts. The first might refer to the lithograph of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* used by Tumanski together with his manuscript of this Book for translation. Let us quote an extract from his Introduction to the translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*:

Finally, the third volume, which included the 'Most Holy Book' – the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, which I present now to the reader, was lithographed in 1892 (AH 1308) in Bombay, and I received the first copies of it in the beginning of 1893. This was during the time when I was finishing the translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* from the manuscript, obtained by me in 1890, consequently, I felt the need to collate its text with the canonical edition of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. The present edition is based on the latter [canonical] edition, while the differences

between this version and my manuscript are marked: my manuscript version is designated by the letter P.

(Tumanski 1899: xxvii–xxviii, translation mine)

This lithographical edition comprises the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and some Tablets. It is described by Tumanski in the quoted Introduction (*ibid.*, xxviii–xxxvi). Unfortunately, it is not known what happened to that lithograph later. As for the edition of the *Lawhs* by Bahá'u'lláh which Tumanski sent to Rosen with the letter, the only lithographic edition of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets in the collection of the IOM as well as of the St Petersburg State University which matches the description in the letter is a lithographical volume comprising: *The Tablet of Effulgences (Lawh-i-Tajalliyát)*, *The Tablet of Splendours (Lawh-i-Ishráqát)*, *The Tablet of Ornaments (Lawh-i-Tarázát)*, *The Tablet of the Words of Paradise (Lawh-i-Kalimát-i-Firdaw-síyyih)*, registered in the Catalogue as: *Alváh*, code: Ps II 163.<sup>84</sup> But whether this is the same lithographical edition which Tumanski mentions in his letter with respect to the *Lawhs* he was sending to Rosen is still a question.

The chronicle written by ‘someone named Mírzá ‘Alí Asghar’ has not been found in Baron Rosen’s archive. Shikastih (lit.: broken) — a cursive or half-shorthand script, it is thought to have been invented at the close of the seventeenth century, in Herat.

The year AH 1300 corresponds to AD 1882.

Mangyshlak is a peninsula on the east coast of the Caspian Sea (in today’s Kazakhstan).

Tumanski continues:

[P. 14/a] Кроме этого Мирзой Абуль Фазлем предоставлена в мое распоряжение рукопись, кажется новая. Рукопись состоит из трех рукописей: две географические персидские и одна называется جامع العلوم

[P. 14/b] (упоминается у Хаджи Хальфи). Если поже/лаете я Вам сообщу подробнее об этих рукописях уже из Мангышлака. Одна называется حود[,] العالم من المشرق الى المغرب[,] имя автора стерто чьей то варварской рукой, рукопись очень древняя ... Написана в 10 столетии ...

P. S. адрес мой Закаспийская область ф[орт] Александровск.

Translation:

[P. 14/a] In addition to all this, an apparently new manuscript has been put at my disposal by Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl. The manuscript consists of three manuscripts: two geographical ones in Persian and the other titled<sup>85</sup> جامع العلوم (it is mentioned by Hájí Khalfí). If you like, / I will share more

[P. 14/b] details about these manuscripts with you once I get to Mangyshlak. One is titled [،] <sup>حدود العالم من المشرق الى المغرب</sup><sup>[،]</sup><sup>86</sup> the name of the author is erased by somebody's barbaric hand, the manuscript is very old ... It was written in the 10th century ...

P.S. my address – the Transcaspian Region[,] Fort Alexandrovsk.

Comments:

The latter manuscript is currently in the collection of the IOM; its catalogue code: C 612 (Akimushkin *et al.* 1998, 1: 153). It was taken by Tumanski out of Russia in 1920 and was later purchased from Tumanski's family living in emigration and sent to the above Institute by the late Prof. Minorski. Tumanski continues with the story of the manuscript in the following letter (see more comments on the subject below).

8.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 459  
[from a letter dated 2 September 1893, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 16/a] ... Эту рукопись весной Мирза Абуль Фазль купил в Бухаре от одного торговца за 12 рублей и преподнес мне в мою бытность в Бухаре, а я ему взамен подарил серебряный чайный прибор той же стоимости.

Теперь относительно бабидов. Последнюю надпись на сборнике Лаухов написанную خط بديع я не знаю, знаю только что это имя одного из редакторов. Как только приеду в Асхабад я постараюсь достать еще 3 и 4 экземпляра.

Translation:

[P. 16/a] ... This manuscript was purchased by Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl from a merchant in Bukhara this spring for 12 rubles and presented to me while I was in Bukhara, in return I gave him a silver tea set of the same cost as a gift.

We turn now to the Babis. As to the last inscription written in the <sup>خط بديع</sup><sup>87</sup> on the [manuscript] volume of Epistles I am not familiar with it; all I know is that it is the name of one of the editors. As soon as I come to Ashkabad I will try to obtain 3 or 4<sup>88</sup> more copies.

Comments:

Tumanski devoted an article to this newly obtained manuscript: 'Novootkrytiy Persidskiy Geograph X Stoletiya i Izvestiya Yego o Slavyanakh i Russakh (A Newly Discovered 10th Century Persian Geographer and his Data Concerning the Slavs and the Russy)' published in *Memoirs of the Oriental Branch of the*

*Russian Archaeological Society* (Tumanski 1897: 121–137). In the latter article he elaborates on the circumstances of this find, which provides a clue for a better understanding of the letter:

Our discussions [with Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl] often switched to historic subjects too and I was listening to the inspiring improvisations of the Persian scholar with real enjoyment. But however brilliant and knowledgeable my unforgettable companion might be, the one who shared in the translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, I still managed to tell him something new, to wit, I introduced him to an Arab geographer ... During these discussions I was trying to persuade Mírzá [Abu'l-Fazl] to look for old manuscripts ...

These discussions took place in the spring of 1892, and in the fall that followed a summer which is going to be remembered by the people of Ashkabad for cholera I was happy to find out that my Mírzá was alive and well and resided in Samarkand. Shortly afterwards I received a letter from him ...

(*ibid.*, 121, translation mine)

Tumanski quotes a passage from Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl's letter in the original Persian and translation, which is directly related to the subject addressed in his correspondence with Rosen:

During my stay in Bukhara ... I came upon a very good copy of an old book comprising four treatises. The first treatise is on geography, and it served as introduction to a map. The second treatise is also on geography. It was compiled 943 years ago and was handwritten 808 years ago. It mentions the names of cities totally unknown now. The third treatise is on music, and it is very short. The fourth treatise is a book by Imám Fakhr Rází – *Jámi 'u'l-'Ulúm*.

(*ibid.*, 122)

Tumanski continues with the story in the article:

Later I surely conveyed the news of this find to Baron V. R. Rosen, who never left me without his guidance during the whole period of my stay in the East. I avail myself of this most suitable opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to him. In 1893 I brought the manuscript to St Petersburg and because of my upcoming business trip to Persia entrusted it to the care of that scholar.

(*ibid.*, 123)

By 'conveying the news of this find to Rosen', Tumanski apparently refers to this letter from Rosen's archive.

As for the so-called 'new script' ( خط نو ) also mentioned in this letter, Tumanski addresses it in his article 'Dva Poslednikh Babidskikh Otkroveniya' (Tumanski 1892: 316) and in the Introduction to his translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: xxviii). But he does not elaborate much on the issue.<sup>89</sup>

9.

Deposit: 777, inventory: 2, unit: 459.  
[letter dated 9 December 1893, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 19/a]

Многоуважаемый  
Виктор Романович!

Вот я опять в своем Асхабадском приюте, снова бабиды и, слава Богу, никаких особых поручений не получаю, так что могу заняться опять старым делом. Я начал конечно с Китабе Акдес, сличаю каноническое издание с рукописью и отмечаю варианты, которые интересны мне в том, что показывают колебания грамматических воззрений редакторов этой книги. Эту работу совместно с окончательной редакцией перевода я кончу на этой или в начале будущей недели, а затем примусь за

[P. 19/b] примечания. Бабиды поплыли в Акку еще/ не вернулись, так что свежих новостей оттуда нет. Абуль Фазль в Самарканде, а остальные пребывают в полном здравии и благополучии. О командировке в Персию ничего нового не слышно. Куropatkin ничего не имеет видимо против, а затем, что Аллах даст.

Translation:

[P. 19/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

Well, I am back to my Ashkabad refuge, again I am with the Babis, and thank God, [here] I don't get any special orders, which enables me to busy myself with my old endeavor. Surely, I began with the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, collating the canonical [published] edition with the manuscript and marking variants, which are interesting to me because they show the vacillation of the grammatical views of the editors of this book. I am finishing this work together with the final editing of the translation this week or at the beginning of next, doing the footnotes after. The Babis, who have sailed off to Akka,

[P. 19/b] have / not returned yet, so no recent news from there so far. Abu'l-Fazl is in Samarkand, as for the rest, they are quite well and healthy. I have not heard anything new concerning my trip to Persia. Apparently, Kuropatkin has nothing against it, but let us then see what Allah wills.

For A. N. Kuropatkin, see comments on Tumanski's letter # 1.

Tumanski continues:

Бабиды своими рассказами о Персии сильно разжигают во мне желание, чтобы это путешествие состоялось и рисуют мне перспективу очень интересного странствования. ان شاء الله . Конечно в рекомендациях недостатка не будет, уже теперь сообщено во многие пункты о моем [P. 20/a] предстоящем приезде. / С этой же почтой пишу Фельдману о некоторых изменениях в маршруте, которые полагаю нужными. Дело в том, что секретной поездки сделать уже нельзя, так как все дело это велось не<sup>90</sup> секретно и еще до моего приезда в Ашхабад все почти уже знали о предстоящей мне командировке и конечно делали заключение, что бабиды главная цель. Публика узнала об этом из приказа по области, в котором сообщалось, что я отчисляюсь от должности Помощника начальника Мангышлакского Уезда вследствие предполагаемой командировки в Персию. Рассчитываю только на халатность самих Персиян, одного только опасаюсь, чтобы англичане не помешали. Ну да будет, что будет!

[P. 20/b] ... Нет ли чего нового от Броуна и как его дела с бабида<sup>91</sup> бехаистами? Помирились ли или еще более разошлись, что я полагаю более вероятным, вследствие публикации им портрета и писаний Азала ...

Translation:

[P. 19/b] The Babis with their stories about Persia greatly enkindle the flame of my desire to undertake this trip and draw a picture of a very interesting journey for me. ان شاء الله<sup>92</sup>. Of course recommendations will not be lacking. [P. 20/a] By now reports have gone to many places concerning my forthcoming arrival. / In the same mail I am writing to Feldman about some changes in the route which I consider necessary to make. The point is that to make this trip secret has not worked out, because from the very first this whole affair has not<sup>93</sup> been handled quietly and before my arrival in Ashkabad almost everybody had already known about my forthcoming business trip, and surely inferred that the Babis were the main cause of it. The public found out about it from the order issued in the Region, which said that I was being relieved of my post as Assistant Commander of the Mangyshlak District because of my supposed business trip to Persia. I can only count on the negligence of the Persians themselves<sup>94</sup> and fear lest the English should get in my way.

[P. 20/b] ... Is there any news from Browne? How is he getting on with the Babis [corrected into] Baha'is. Has he got along with or most probably broken further apart from them because of his publication of Subh-i-Azal's portrait and writings?...

Comments:

F. A. Feldman was lieutenant-general, principle of the Emperor Alexander Military Lyceum.

Interestingly enough, Tumanski uses here the term ‘Baha’is (Behaists)’ for the first time in his correspondence with Rosen, replacing the more common ‘Babis’ with it and underlining the correction.

10.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 459  
[from a letter dated 20 December 1893, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 21/a]

Многоуважаемый Виктор Романович!

Спешу Вас поблагодарить за присылку книги Brown’а, которую получил в полном благополучии. Прошу Вас не отказать при случае передать мою искреннюю признательность Е. G. Brown’у, оценка которого моей более чем скромной работы решительно приводит меня в смущение. Книга его в высшей степени интересна, но кульминационный пункт, на [P. 21/b] мой взгляд, – это то, что он сообщает по جَلَّى / о Бехе [sic] и Эзеле. Горе мне, что я так мало владею английским языком. Но во всяком случае постараюсь проштудировать главнейшие места. С текстом и текстом перевода Китабе Ақдес покончил, так что могу Вам выслать арабский текст\*), который пронумерован по стихам и отмечены все варианты. Как найдете соответственным? Относительно примечаний я предполагал бы большую часть поместить в виде выносок, оставил в виде примечаний несколько более крупных.

[footnote by Tumanski]:

\* ) Нумерация стихов имеется и в моем экземпляре канонич[еского] изд[ания], согласная с переводом и предполагаемым к переводу текстом.

Translation:

[P. 21/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

First of all I would like to thank you for your sending [me] Browne’s book, which arrived safely. Whenever an opportunity presents itself, please, be so kind as to convey my sincere gratitude to E. G. Browne, whose high appreciation of my more than humble work positively causes me to blush. His book

is extremely interesting [as a whole], but its culmination, in my opinion, is what he reports about Bahá'[u'lláh] and Azal based on جانی.<sup>95</sup> / [P. 21/b] Woe is me, I speak so little English! But in any case, I will try to peruse the most important parts. I've completed the [original] text and the text of the translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, so that I can now send you the Arabic text, which has a number for each verse, and the readings are marked. What would you consider more correct? As for the notes I would rather have most of them as footnotes, leaving for endnotes a few most lengthy [of them].

[footnote by Tumanski]:

- \* ) The verses in my copy of the canon[ical] ed[ition] also have numbers corresponding to the verse numbers of the translation and the original.

Comments:

We do not know precisely what Tumanski means by Browne's appreciation of his 'humble work', but we can assume that he might be alluding to Browne's following words about Tumanski in the article: 'Some Remarks on the Bábí Texts edited by Baron Victor Rosen in Vols. I and VI of the Collections Scientifiques', published a year before this letter was written: 'His plans were crowded with the fullest measure of success; he was welcomed effusively by the Babis of 'Ishkábád, and received from them a rich store of information, books and photographs' (Browne 1892b: 318).

Probably, later Tumanski changed his mind concerning the system of notes in his translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, because in its published version there are only footnotes to the translated text.

Tumanski continues:

[P. 22/a] Теперь Виктор Романович позвольте поделиться с Вами/ и моей личной радостью. Я встретил ту, которую в самом скором времени назову своей женой. Моя невеста без страха решается ехать со мной в Персию, но Вы себе представить не можете что мне приходится переживать при мысли о той нравственной ответственности, которую приходится мне брать на себя. Но я надеюсь здесь Вы мне несколько поможете, попросив Фельдмана ограничиться лишь маршрутом Тегеран, Исфаган, Шираз, Кирман, Йезд – Тегеран. Право на ту сумму, которая мне будет ассигнована это будет не мало, а тем я избегну риска

[P. 22/b] проезжать с женой по тем местам / где можно ожидать нападения Курдов и полунезависимых Туркмен. К тому же путешествие по Хоросану [sic] для женщины представляет огромные трудности. Быть может ознакомившись и привыкши немного к условиям путешествий по Персии сначала в более легкой обстановке, мы в случае необходимости отважимся и на этот путь. Но теперь, заметьте, что и я сам более

знаком теоретически с условиями путешествия, но по этому и не могу обладать той уверенностью, которая необходима для этого ...

Translation:

[P. 22/a] Allow me now, Viktor Romanovich, to share my personal joy with you. I have met the one, whom I will very soon call my wife. My fiancée has fearlessly decided to go to Persia with me, but you can hardly imagine what I feel at the thought of the moral responsibility, which I have to take upon myself. However, I hope that this is where you can render me some help, asking Feldman<sup>96</sup> to limit my route to Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Kirman, Yazd –Tehran. Truly, it would be enough for the sum which will be assigned to me and I would thus avoid the risk of passing with my wife through

[P. 22/b] the places / where one can expect to be attacked by Kurds and semi-independent Turkomans. Moreover, a journey through Khorasan offers great difficulties to a woman. Maybe, after we first become familiar with and grow a little accustomed to the travel conditions through Persia under easier circumstances, we will in case of need dare to undertake that other trip too. But note that at present, I only have a theoretical idea of the conditions of the journey, and because of that I cannot possess the confidence which is necessary for this ...

An extract from another letter shows how Tumanski was proceeding with his work on the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*:

11.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460

[from a letter dated 21 January 1894, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 3/a] ... Китабе Акдес с переводом и подстрочными примечаниями вышлю Вам со следующей почтой. Из приложений пока готовы три, а именно извлечение из Лауха к Керим Хану (Шейхиду), перевод Лауха [P. 3/b] об / элементарной действительности *بسط الحقيقة*, где Беха Улла касается пантеизма [,] и Лаух о суфиях. Предполагаю приложить еще некоторые Лаухи заключающие "أحكام" ... Из них перевел так называемые *اشرافات* и продолжил переводить и другие.

Новостей особенных нет. Только замечаю некоторое оживление в посещении бабидами Акки и получена рисале от Гусне А'азема под названием *رسالة سياسية*, о которой я Вам дам отчет, так как ее содержание думаю включить в введение ... Однако пора кончать.

السلام و البهاء عليكم

Ваш Туманский.

Translation:

[P. 3/a] ... In the next mail I am sending you the translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* with footnotes. As for the supplements only three of them are ready so far, namely: (1) an extract from the Tablet to Karím Khán, the Shaykhí, (2) a [P. 3/b] translation of the Tablet on / the uncompounded reality بسيط الحقيقة<sup>97</sup> in which Bahá'u'lláh touches upon pantheism, (3) a Tablet about the Sufis.<sup>98</sup> I also intend to add a few Tablets containing حکام اشرافات<sup>99</sup> ... Of these I have so far translated the so-called<sup>100</sup> and am continuing to translate others.

No real news so far. Just an increased activity in Babi's visiting Akka can be seen. A treatise titled رساله سیاسیه<sup>101</sup> has recently been received from the Ghusn-i-'Azam, of which I will give you an account, for I am planning to include its content in my Introduction. But it's time to finish for now.

السلام و البهاء عليك

[Let peace and Bahá' abide upon you]

Yours, Tumanski.

Comments:

*Ishrágát/Splendours* is a Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in reply to Jalíl Khú'i's questions. It is one of those relatively late Writings of the founder of the Baha'i Faith which came into existence after the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*.

Supplement I to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: 49–52) is devoted by Tumanski to Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Karím Khán* (لوح کریم خانی), who is described by Tumanski as 'the sworn enemy of the Babis and Bahá'u'lláh's followers, the former Head of one of the Shaykhí factions.' Tumanski quotes the beginning and end parts of the Tablet as well as a longer passage from Shaykh Ahmad, cited by Bahá'u'lláh, which contains a prediction about the *Mahdí*. He bases these quotes on the two manuscripts of the *Tablet of Karím Khán* in his possession and makes an attempt to present his tentative Russian translation of this difficult passage from Arabic, making reference to verse 157 in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (corresponding to verse 378 in Tumanski's publication of the *Most Holy Book*).

By 'a Tablet about the Sufis' the *Tablet of 'Alí* must be implied, addressed by Bahá'u'lláh to Hájí Mullá 'Alí Akbar Shahmírzádí. The manuscript containing this Tablet and the mentioned *Tablet of the Uncompounded Reality* was received by Tumanski in the May of 1893 from Jadíd 'Azízu'lláh.<sup>102</sup> Tumanski published both these Tablets (as illustrating Bahá'u'lláh's attitude towards the Sufis and the philosophy of Mullá Sadrá) in the Persian original and in his Russian transla-

tion in Supplement II to his publication of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: 53–71).

*Risáliy-i-Siyásiyyih* is a *Treatise on Politics* written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, son of Bahá’u’lláh and his successor (see Introduction) in 1892. ‘Ghusn-i-‘Azam’, translated from Persian as ‘The Most Great Branch’, is the title of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

The closing line of the above letter merits special attention. Tumanski uses this expression ‘Let Bahá’ abide upon you’ in the closing part of several of his letters. On one occasion Batyushkov does the same in his reference to E. G. Browne. He says: ‘alayhi Bahá’ (‘let Bahá’ abide upon him’).

Tumanski ran into some difficulties with the Russian authorities while arranging his trip to Persia. Baron Rosen, as it is clear from the following document, was instrumental in paving Tumanski’s way to that country.

12.

[Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460]

Письмо Управляющего делами военно-ученого [*sic*] комитета.

21 января 1894 г. С. Петербург

[In the bottom left corner: Его Прев-ству Барону В. Р. Розену]

[P. 32/a]

Милостивый государь

Барон Виктор Романович.

По докладу Военному Министру ходатайства Вашего Превосходите льства о предоставлении Штабс Капитану Туманскому возможности завершить свои исследования обабидах, Его Высокопревосходительство изволил разрешить командировать его с означенною целью на 6 <sup>ти</sup> месяцев в Персию, с отпуском 2/т. рублей на путевые расходы.

О таковом разрешении вместе с сим сообщено для зависящего [P. 32/b] исполнения Команду/ющему войсками Закаспийской области и Штабс-Капитану Туманскому.

Примите, Милостивый Государь уверение в Совершенном Моем почтении и преданности

[Signature resembling: Фельдман]

Translation:

Letter of the Business-manager of the Military Research Department

21 January 1894[,] St Petersburg

[In the bottom left corner: To His Excellency Baron V. R. Rosen]

[P. 32/a]

My Dear Sir

Baron Viktor Romanovich,

Regarding Your Excellency's intercession with the Defense Minister on the matter of making it possible for Staff Captain Tumanski to complete his studies on the Babis, His Highness has deigned to allow him to be sent on a 6-month expedition to Persia for the aforesaid purpose, assigning to him 2 t[housand] rubles for his travel expenses.

This permission has at the same time been communicated to the Military / [P. 32/b] Commander of the Transcaspian Region to be exercised accordingly, and to Staff Captain Tumanski.

Be assured, My Dear Sir, of  
My utmost respect and devotion

[Signature resembling: Feldman]

Comments:

Tumanski wrote words of appreciation for Feldman in his Preface to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*:

Finally I consider it my duty to express my gratitude to [the following people] ... Principal of the Emperor Alexander [military] Lyceum, I[lieutenant]-g[eneral] F. A. Feldman for providing an opportunity for me to verify the conclusions [I arrived at as a result of my studies] by means of a trip to Persia, where I visited the major centers of Babiism

(Tumanski 1899: II).

Concerning his forthcoming journey Tumanski, wrote in the following letter:

13.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460

[from a letter dated 27 January 1894, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 5/b] ... Это будет организовано так: в Акку сообщено о моей поездке [P. 6/a] и оттуда будет послан циркулярный / تُقْبِح / , в котором полное содействие мне будет сделано обязательным для всех верующих. Я не знаю как и благодарить Вас за все это. Я и моя невеста в неописуемом восторге. Бабиды тоже ликуют и, произнося зикры, обещают мне самое интересное путешествие. Из Асхабада будет командирован один из них, который будет сопутствовать [sic] в моем странствовании. Что касается моей свадьбы, то я рискую ее не откладывать и взять жену с

[P. 6/b] собой .../ Поэтому 18 февраля мы обвенчаемся и в этот же день выезжаем в Петербург. Китабе Акдес полагаю лучше с собой привести, равно как и дополнения ...

Translation:

[P. 5/b] ... It is going to be organized in the following way. A report will be [P. 6/a] sent to Akka concerning my journey, and a circular / تُقْبِح <sup>103</sup> will be sent out from there requesting the believers as part of their obligation to give me full assistance. I don't know how to thank you for all this. My fiancée and I are completely delighted. The Babis are also jubilant, while saying their *zikr' es*<sup>104</sup> they are promising me the most exciting trip. One of them will be sent from Ashkabad to accompany me on my journey. As for my wedding, I [P. 6/b] am bold enough not to postpone it and take my wife with me ... / Therefore, on 18 February we will be married in the church and leave for St Petersburg on the very same day. I suppose that it would be better, if I brought the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* as well as the Supplements with me ...

He takes up the themes of his marriage and the trip to Persia in the following letter too:

14.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460

[from a letter dated 17 February 1894, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 7/b] ... Теперь относительно жены и женитьбы. В воскресение 20-го моя свадьба. После свадьбы мы с женой поедем на несколько дней в Бухару, а за тем возвращаемся в Асхабад и 7-го Марта выезжаем в Персию. Дальше если окажется невозможным путешествовать с женой (что

я предполагаю весьма возможным) я устраиваю ее в Тегеране и поеду [sic] остальной путь один. Маршрут мой я предполагаю [P. 8/a] выполнить следующим образом. Из Узунгана еду в / Астрabad, из Астрабада на Шахруд в Тегеран. В Тегеране делаю небольшую остановку и еду в Йезд, Кирман, Шираз и через Исфаган обратно в Тегеран, где думаю пробыть около месяца, а затем в Асхабад ...

С этим письмом я посылаю Вам перевод, текст и примечания Китабе Акдес. Из приложений пока посылаю II e хотя I и III готовы, но в жалком неопрятном виде, что затрудняюсь прилагать. Постараюсь в это оставшееся время их немного почистить и тогда перед отъездом Вам [P. 8/b] вышлю / остальное. Относительно предисловия думаю ограничиться самым кратким, чтобы был бы какой ни есть, а все-таки окончательный номер. Примечания я предполагал бы все поместить под строками. Поэтому я обозначил их номером стихов, а в самом тексте обозначил синим карандашом места к которым относятся примечания ...

وَالْبَهَاءُ عَلَيْكَ Преданный Вам Туманский

Translation:

[P. 7/b] ... Now concerning my wife and my marriage. My wedding will be on 20th. After the wedding my wife and I will visit Bukhara for a couple of days, and then we are returning to Ashkabad and on 7 March leaving for Persia. Later, if it proves impossible [for me] to continue the journey with my wife (which I consider quite likely), I will make arrangements for her to stay on in Tehran while I proceed with the rest of my trip by myself. I intend to travel on the following route[:] I will set out from Uzungan for / Astrabad, [P. 8/a] from Astrabad I will go on to Tehran through Shahrud. I am stopping over in Tehran for a short while and continuing with my journey to Yazd, Kirmān, Shiraz and back to Tehran through Isfahan, where I am planning to stay for about a month, and finally [return] to Ashkabad ...

Herewith I am sending you the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* translation, [its] text and the notes. Of the Supplements, for now I am sending number II, though number I and III are also ready, but they are in a deplorably untidy condition. [P. 8/b] I will try to polish them a little, and then send you the / rest before my departure. As for the Introduction, I think the briefest one would do for it so that there may at least be some kind of complete edition. As for the notes, I would have them as footnotes. For this reason I have given each the number of the corresponding verse while at the same time marking in blue pencil the places in the text to which the footnotes refer ...

وَالْبَهَاءُ عَلَيْكَ Sincerely yours, Tumanski

[May Bahá' abide upon you]

15.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
[from a letter dated 25 May 1894, sent from Tehran]

[P. 10/a]

Многоуважаемый Виктор Романович!

Посылаю Вам при этом письме мое первое приложение к переводу  
كتاب اقدس . Не откажите пожалуйста согласно его исправить перевод  
стр. 378 Кит. Акд. – Завтра выезжаю на Хамадан – Буруджирд – Чехар  
Мехалль – Исфаган. Задержался в Тегеране по семейным обстоятель-  
ствам. Жену пришлось отослать в Россию к родителям вследствие ее  
нездоровья. Еду один дальше. 18 ноября кончится командировка. Из  
Исфагана еду в

[P. 10/b] Шираз / – Нейриз – Бендер-Аббас – Кирман – Йезд – Тегеран.  
С бабидами в постоянном соприкосновении. Достал в семье покойного  
Джани экземпляр его истории. Хороший список, недостает первых трех  
листов. Надеюсь еще достать ...

Translation:

[P. 10/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

I am herewith sending you my first Supplement to the translation of the  
كتاب اقدس.<sup>105</sup> Please, be so kind as to correct the translation of the *Kit[āb-i]*  
*Aqd[as]* on p[age] 378 in accordance with it. Tomorrow I am leaving for  
Hamadan – Burujird – Chahar Mahall – Isfahan. I have been held up in Tehran  
due to some family problems. I had to send my wife back to her parents in  
Russia because she was ill. I am proceeding with my journey alone. On 18  
November my expedition will be over. From Tehran I go on to

[P. 10/b] Shiraz / – Nayriz – Bandar-Abbas – Kirman – Yazd – Tehran. I am  
constantly in touch with the Babis. I have obtained from the late Jani's family  
a copy of his *History*. It is a good transcript, but it is lacking the first three  
pages. I still hope to get [them] ...

Comments:

In the published 'Minutes of the Meetings of the Oriental Branch of the Russian  
Archeological Society' there is a record: 'A letter has been received from A. G.

Tumanski concerning his trip around Persia, his studies of the Babis and his finding a copy of the “*Tárikh-i-Jání*” (Protokoly Zasedaniy ... 1896: viii). This might well be a reference to the above letter.

Unfortunately I don't possess any information that would cast light on the current whereabouts of the mentioned manuscript of (*Mírzá Jání's History*). All one may be certain about is that neither this manuscript nor the rest of Tumanski's private collection of Babi and Baha'i writings have become part of any academic collection in Russia. He gives a description of this manuscript in a long footnote to the Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: v–vi). From this description one finds out that the manuscript was written in 1291 of Hijrih (corresponds to AD 1874) and was obtained by Tumanski in the April of 1894 in Tehran. Interestingly enough, despite Tumanski's concern that ‘the Babis quite reluctantly give away old documents’ (see his letter # 2), he succeeded in obtaining it through a Baha'i – *Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání*, whom he describes as ‘his old friend from Ashkabad’ and for whom he expresses his sincere appreciation. Tumanski also quotes in his Introduction a passage from this manuscript in the original Persian and in his Russian translation, surprisingly omitted or suppressed in E. G. Browne's manuscript of the same *History*, which contains an account of how Bahá'u'lláh took upon himself the flogging intended for his half-brother *Mírzá Yahyá* when they were both arrested in Amul (Tumanski 1899: viii–ix).<sup>106</sup>

As his journey was drawing to a close, Tumanski wrote:

16.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
[from a letter dated 28 October 1894]<sup>107</sup>

[P. 11/a] ... Вот я и окончил свое путешествие, почти. Я не скажу, чтобы оно было легкое. Опасности явной никогда не было, но лишений ..., в [P. 11/b] особенности / поездка из Нейриза в Бендер Аббас и оттуда в Кирман. В Б[ендер] А[ббас] не живет ни один европеец, всеми европейскими делами заведуют цивилизованные индусы и гебры. Несмотря на это путешествие было не без интереса ... Относительно

[P. 12/a] бабидов могу сообщить, что всюду почти, где / они имеются, я входил с ними в сношения и это составит предмет особой записки, которая войдет в мой отчет.

Translation:

[P. 11/a] ... I have almost finished my journey. I cannot say that it was an easy one. Though I was never exposed to a real danger, I had a lot of

[P. 11/b] troubles ... [word unclear] especially / on my way from Nayriz to Bandar-Abbas and from there to Kirman. No single European lives in

B[andar-]A[bbas], while all European affairs are handled by civilized Hindus and Guebres. Notwithstanding that, the journey was not at all uninteresting ... As to the Babis, I can say that almost everywhere where / they [P. 12/a] exist I came into contact with them, and this will be the subject of my special note which I will include in my report.

Tumanski took up the issue of *Jáni's History* manuscript again:

[P. 12/a] Относительно письменных документов, главный результат я Вам уже сообщил, т.е. находка Тарихе Джани, но я боюсь, что моя рукопись претерпела некоторую редакцию и утратила тот тон, который столь характеристичен [sic] в тарихской [sic] рукописи. Сличение конечно разрешит этот вопрос. Но я все таки рад этой находке главного и основного исторического памятника бабидского движения. Я Вам писал, что в начале моей рукописи недостает несколько листов. Будучи в Кашане я через одного из членов семьи Джани узнал, что имеется еще один полный экземпляр в окрестностях Кашана и мне обещана копия недостающих листов. Посмотрим сдержут ли обещание. Но повидимому [P. 12/b] / недостающие листы ничего не отнимают от исторической части рукописи и составляют часть введения *استدلايه*, которое продолжается на первых имеющихся у меня листах. Кроме этого я раздобыл два исторических стихотворения: одно из ранних творений Небиля, другое приписываемое персидской принцессе [sic] под *فتنه* *تخلص* ом *استدلايه* и характерное тем, что рисует утрату авторитета Субхе Эзеля среди секты. Стихотворение тоже из первых времен бехаизма ... Не откажите сообщить мне какая судьба постигла мой перевод Китабе Акдес. Я ведь Вашего письма все таки не имею ...

Translation:

[P. 12/a] As regards written documents, the main result [of my search] as I have already reported to you, is that the *Tárikh-i-Jáni* was found, but I am afraid that my transcript may have undergone some editing and have lost the tone so characteristic of the *Tárikh-i* manuscript. [Their] collation would certainly resolve this issue. However, I am still glad to have found this main and major historic monument of the Babi movement. As I wrote to you earlier, several pages from the beginning of my manuscript are missing. Once in Kashan I found out through one of the Jani family members that there exists one more complete copy [of the *History*] in the area around Kashan and I was promised a copy of the missing pages. Let us see if they will keep their [P. 12/b] promise. But apparently, / the missing pages by no means detract from the historic narrative of the manuscript for they are part of the Introduction *استدلايه*,<sup>108</sup> which continues through the few beginning pages [of the manuscript] in my possession. In addition, I have procured two historic verses: one from Nabil's early works, the other attributed to the

Persian princess under the pseudonym <sup>فتنه</sup><sup>١٠٩</sup> تخلص of Subh-i-Azal among the sect. The verse also goes back to the beginning time of Behaism ... Please, be so kind as to tell me, what the fate of my *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* translation has been. I still don't have a letter from you ...

Comments:

For *Tárikh-i-Jání* or *Tárikh-i*, which is a reference to *Jání's History*, see comments on Tumanski's letter # 2.

The princess known under the pseudonym of *Fitnih* was a granddaughter of Fath-‘Alí Sháh Qájár. She also bore the title of *Shams-i-Jihán* (Taherzadeh 1996, 1: 128–129). Bahá’u’lláh revealed several Tablets for her.

In the given passage we see another instance of Tumanski's using the term 'Behaism' instead of the more general term 'Babiism', which was more common at the time.

17.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
[from a letter dated 10 December 1894, sent from Ashkabad]

[Р. 14/a] ... Пишу Вам из Асхабада, куда я не так давно вернулся. Кончилось мое странствование, в течение которого мне пришлось сделать более 3600 в. верхом. В течение последних двух недель со времени моего возвращения я отдыхал физически от всех невзгод этого длинного пути ...

[Р. 14/b] О результатах по бабизму, т.е. о сборе рукописей по истории бабизма я Вам уже сообщил в прошлом моем письме. Прибавлю лишь еще исторический документ, а именно: список с части неизданного труда покойного Али Кули Мирзы (И’тизад ус-Сальтане) под заглавием <sup>كتاب متنبيين</sup><sup>١١١</sup>, касающейся бабидского движения ...

[Р. 15/a] Ваше письмо от 7<sup>го</sup> Августа сооб/щает, что перевод мой поступил в типографию, так что в настоящее время есть надежда, что часть его уже отпечатана. Если Вас не затруднит, то не откажите прислать мне то, что уже напечатано, так как это побудит меня составить введение, за которое я как то не могу приняться. Нет ли чего нового из Кембриджа или вообще откуда нибудь по этой части [?] Я подписался на Orientalische Bibliographie, так что сам теперь буду следить за новостями ...

Translation:

[P. 14/a] ... I am writing to you from Ashkabad, to where I have returned quite recently. My traveling is over, during which I had to ride over 3600 versts. For the last two weeks since my return I have rested physically from all the troubles of this long journey ...

[P. 14/b] As for the result of my Babi [studies], that is collecting manuscripts on Babi history, I have already told you about it in my previous letter. I would just add [to it] a historic document, namely: a transcript of a part of late 'Alí-Qulí Mírzá (I'tizádu's-Saltanih)'s<sup>112</sup> unpublished work titled: *كتاب متبين*<sup>113</sup>, which deals with the Babi movement ...

[P. 15/a] Your letter dated 7 August says / that my translation of the *كتاب اقدس*<sup>114</sup> has gone to the press, so hopefully, a part of it has already been printed by now. Would it be too much trouble for you to send me what is already printed, since it would provide me with the motivation to compile the Introduction, which I cannot seem to begin? Is there any news from Cambridge or elsewhere in this respect[?] I have subscribed to the *Orientalische Bibliographie*, so from now on I will be following the news myself.

Comments:

Verst is an old measure of length in Russia which amounts to 3500 feet (1.067 km).

'Alí-Qulí Mírzá I'tizádu's-Saltanih (1819–1881) was Fath-'Alí Sháh's son. He was appointed Iran's Minister of Education in 1859.

Interesting observations concerning the spread of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and some statistical data with respect to Baha'is in different places are summarized in the following letter. None of these subjects were even casually mentioned by Tumanski in his officially published report on his expedition to Iran (see Tuman-ski and Ponafidin 1896: 1–127).<sup>115</sup>

18.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460

[from a letter dated 4 January 1895, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 16/a] ... Я в настоящее время всецело занят подготовкой отчета. Отчет свой я предполагаю разделить на два. Один чисто военного характера, в который войдут сведения топографические и этнографические и равно и [P. 16/b] съемки [sic] путей, другой же отчет по бабизму я думаю / представить лишь по окончании печатания перевода Китабе Акдес. Материалом для этого отчета послужат мои личные впечатления вынесенные из знакомства с Бабидами в Реште, Казвине, Тегеране,

Хамадане, Исфагане, Ширазе, Нейризе, Йезде, Кашане. Кроме этих пунктов бабидов я встречал и в некоторых промежуточных пунктах, а именно в Мелаире (Доулет Абаде) на пути из Хамадана в Буруджирд. Затем их много в окрестностях Исфагани, а именно в Неджеф Абаде, в Сидех, в Абадех. В Фарсе они группируются в Зергане, в Сервистане и в Нейризе. В юго-восточном Фарсе их совсем нет, равно как и в Бендер Аббасе. Полное отсутствие их замечено мной и в Буруджирде. В Кирмане их только несколько человек, за то их довольно много в Сирджане и в Рафсинджане. В Йезде и его окрестностях их тоже

[P. 17/a] довольно / много. В общем же число их не должно превышать тысяч сто или 150 т цифра данная Кюрзоном и цитируемая Броуном по моему преувеличена. Но это нисколько не умаляет их значения. Бабидов в настоящее время особенно много в Тегеране, среди которых находятся очень высокопоставленные и влиятельные лица. Кроме того бабизм [*sic*] служит знаменем вокруг которого группируются элементы недовольные существующим режимом. В числе таковых встречаются очень влиятельные ханы и предводители кочевых племен, а именно мне лично знакомы два весьма влиятельных хана среди Бахтиаров и один шейх среди Арабов Фарса (بنو شیبان). Но впрочем об этом всем подробнее я впоследствии Вам сообщу. Кроме этого для характеристики настоящих бабидов у меня имеются два интересных документа: один – окружное [P. 17/b] послание / Гусне Аазема полемического характера\*), а другой найденный мною в архиве нашей Миссии, секретное предписание какому то бабиду о мерах необходимых для безопасного следования в Акку ...

[P. 18/b] Кончили ли Вы Ваш сборник Лаухов и нет ли чего нового из Кембриджа?

[footnote by Tumanski]:

\* ) Называется رساله سیاسیه.

Translation:

[P. 16/a] ... I am now completely engaged in the preparation of my report. I intend to divide my report into two [parts]. One is of a purely military sort, which will include topographic and ethnographic data as well as road communications surveys; the other report which is on the Babis I think / I will [P. 16/b] not present until after the publication of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is completed. This report will be based on my personal impression of the Babis whom I became familiar with in Rasht, Qazvin, Tehran, Hamadan, Isfahan, Shiraz, Nayriz, Yazd, Kashan. In addition to these places I also met Babis in some intermediate locations, namely in Malayir (Dawlatabad) on the way to Burujird from Hamadan. There are many of them in the area surrounding Isfahan

too, namely in Najafabad, Sidih and Abadih. In Fars they group together in Zirganih, Sarvistan, and Nayriz. As for South-Eastern Fars none of them are there, and neither in Bandar-Abbas. I also observed their complete absence in Burujird. There are just a few of them in Kirman, but other than that they are quite numerous in Sirjan and Rafsinjan. There is also quite a large number of them in Yazd and in the surrounding area. /

[P. 17/a] Their total number doesn't exceed 100,000 or 150,000. The figure given by Curzon and quoted by Browne is to the best of my knowledge exaggerated. However, this by no means detracts from their importance. Currently there is an especially large number of Babis in Tehran, among whom you can find very high-ranking and influential people. Moreover, Babiism also serves as a banner around which elements unhappy with the existing regime group together. Among these there are some very influential khans and chiefs of nomadic tribes. I personally met two highly influential Baktiyari khans and an Arab shaykh from Fars (بنو شیبان).<sup>116</sup> However, I will tell you all about it in more detail later. Moreover, I have, for the description of Babis proper, two interesting documents. One is the Ghusn-i-A‘zam’s [P. 17/b] circular message / of a polemic nature\*), while the other is secret instructions to a Babi concerning the safety measures required to undertake a trip to Akka, which I found in our Mission archive ...

[P. 18/b] Have you finished your Volume of the *Lawhs* and is there any news from Cambridge?

[Footnote by Tumanski]:

\*) It is titled[:] رساله سیاسیه [Risáliy-i-Siyásiyyih].

Comments:

‘The figure given by Curzon’ and disputed by Tumanski may refer to the statistical data in *Persia and the Persian question* by George N. Curzon, who in the chapter ‘Institutions and reforms’ of this book fixed the total number of Baha’is in Iran at 1 million: ‘The lowest estimate places the present number of Babis in Persia at half a million. I am disposed to think, from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million’ (Curzon 1892, 1: 499). However, some Russian officials were rather inclined to accept it as a realistic estimate (see Ignatyev’s letter # 2).

‘The Volume of Lawhs’ implies the *First Volume of Epistles of Beha’u’llah, the Babi* [in the original Arabic and Persian], which Baron Rosen was preparing for publication at the time.

Tumanski’s letters dated after 1895 were sent from Dudergoff/Krasnoye Selo (two small towns very close to one another situated near St Petersburg) and from

St Petersburg. This must serve as an indication that by that time the Ashkabad period in his military career was over and he moved to the capital. That period, as far as Tumanski's correspondence with Rosen goes, was from the beginning of 1892 through 1895 inclusive.<sup>117</sup>

Below are letters related to the new period in Tumanski's life. One of them just consists of an article in the *Al-Ahram* newspaper in Arabic, published in Egypt, which Tumanski sent to Baron Rosen. Another letter (# 22) contains Tumanski's address in St Petersburg downtown, which indicates that he also stayed in the city itself at least for a while. These letters speak for themselves and I will make but a few brief comments on them:

The street where Tumanski stayed in St Petersburg ('Nijegorodskaya Street') now bears the name of the 'Lebedev Street,' while the town of Dudergoff is currently named 'Modzayskoye.' By the 'Persian questions' Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of the Seven Questions* (*Lawh-i-Haft Pursish*)<sup>118</sup> is most likely implied, while 'the texts of the کلمات' (lit.: words) must be a reference to His *Words of Paradise*. Both of these Writings as well as the *Tablet of Splendours* (*Lawh-i-Ishráqát*), the *Tablet of Ornaments* (*Lawh-i-Tarázát*), and the *Tablet of Effulgences* (*Lawh-i-Tajalliyát*) were published by Tumanski in Supplement III to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: 72–124). In the short foreword to the given Supplement, Tumanski explained that the mentioned Writings were borrowed by him from the manuscript he received in the December of 1891 from Bahá'u'lláh's son-in-law – Hái Siyid 'Alí Afnán, who was in Ashkabad at the time, and that given this fact the manuscript could be considered 'canonical.' In the brief description of the manuscript, he pointed out that most of the Tablets contained in this manuscript were delivered to E. G. Browne by Bahá'u'lláh's son – Mírzá Badí'u'lláh in the October of 1890 and were described by the British Orientalist in the 'Catalogue and Description of the 27 Babi Manuscripts' (Browne 1892a: 666–671). Tumanski also observed certain differences between his manuscript and Browne's, namely in the arrangement of the Tablets and in the fact that his manuscript comprised certain *Lawhs* which were lacking in Browne's.

Karl Germanovich, mentioned in letter # 22, is most likely a reference to Karl Germanovich Zalemann (1849–1916), who was a Russian philologist specializing in Iranian studies and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (since 1895), director of the Asiatic Museum (see also Introduction).

19.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
[from a letter dated 10 June 1896, sent from Krasnoye Selo]

[P. 22/a-b]

... Недавно в «Аль Ахрам» была статья о бабидах (№ 5524), в которой говорится между прочим ниже следующее:

Translation:

... Recently there appeared an article about the Babis in the 'Al-Ahram' [newspaper] (N 5524) which incidentally says:

فما ابقو قبيحاً الا نسيوه اليهم (يعنى الى اهل البها) و لا رذيلة الا وصفوه بها فكثرت  
الاشاعات و فاقت الافكار و اشكل امرهم على افضل الا وروبيان فقام جماعة من  
أهل الفضل و الانصاف منهم لكشف عقائد البابية و معرفة عاداتها / و منهم العالم  
الشهير البارون رُزْنَ احْدَ كِبَارِ الْإِسَانَةِ فِي مَدَارِسِ بَطْرُسِيَّرْجِ فَارِسِلِ الْكَبِيْرِنِ الْكَسِنِرِ  
تومانسكي احد تلاميذه الى مدينة عشق اباد فایران فعاش هذا مع البابيين اكثر من ثلث  
سنين و عرف جميع احكامهم و عاداتهم و اخذ كتبهم و طبعها و نشرها في روسيا و  
سائر ممالك اوروبا و منهم المستر برون ادوارد معلم اللغات الشرقيه في كلية كمبردج  
هذا ايضاً سافر الى ايران في سنة ١٣٠٣ هجرية و عاش مع جميع الشعوب الساكنة في  
ایران و عرف عادات الكل و اخذ كتب البابية ثم سافر الى سوريا و ورد عكا و تشرف  
بحضرة بهاالله و رجع الى اوروبا و نشر جميع ملحوظاته في الجرائد العلمية

Translation:

And there was not anything abominable left which they would not attribute to them (i.e. to the people of Bahá') nor was there any wickedness by which they would not characterize them. So rumors increased, minds became disturbed and the matter became obscure for the most excellent Europeans. Consequently, a group of learned and noble people among them rose to investigate the Babis' beliefs and to find out their habits. One of them is the illustrious scholar Baron Rosen, who is among the senior celebrated doctors in the educational establishments of [St]Petersburg. He sent one of his students, Captain Tumanski, to the city of Ashkabad and then to Iran. So, he lived with Babis over three years and got to know all their commandments and customs. He obtained their books, published them and put them into circulation in Russia and other European countries. Also among them<sup>119</sup> is Mr. Browne Edward – a teacher of Oriental languages in Cambridge University. This [scholar] traveled to Iran in 1303 of Hijrih too. He lived with different peoples inhabiting Iran, became knowledgeable in the habits of all [of them] and obtained Babi books. He traveled then to Syria, arrived in Akka and had the honor of entering into Bahá'u'lláh's presence. He returned to Europe and published all his observations in scholarly journals.

20.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
[from a letter dated 17 July 1897, sent from Dudergoff]

[Р. 27/а] ... Последние корректурные листы получил, надеюсь что прошлые корректуры дошли благополучно к Вам. Тексты «персидских вопросов» у меня имеются, так как я разыскал рукопись, с которой сделаны имеющиеся у Вас списки ...

Translation:

[P. 27/a] ... I have received the latest proof-sheets and hope that the previous proofs reached you safely. I have the texts of the ‘Persian questions’, because I eventually found the manuscript from which the transcripts in your possession had been made ...

21.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
 [from a letter dated 4 August 1897 sent from Dudergoff]

[P. 29/b] ... PS При сем посылаю и тексты 'كلمات' ов.

Translation:

[P. 29/b] ... PS I am also sending you herewith the texts of the *كلمات*.

22.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 460  
 [from a letter dated 28 July 1899]<sup>120</sup>

[P. 31/a] ... Указатель я еще перед отъездом передал Карлу Германовичу с просьбой доставить его в типографию ...

[P. 31/b] ... Адрес мой: СПб. Выборгская сторона Нижегородская 31, кв. 9.

Translation:

[P. 31/a] ... I handed the Index to Karl Germanovich yet before my departure, requesting him to deliver it to the printing house ...

[P. 31/b] ... My address: S[aint]-P[eters]b[urg], Viborgskaya storona[,] Nijegorodskaya St., ap. 9.

## Notes

1 ‘Lawh’ – the Arabic/Persian word meaning ‘Tablet’ is used in this sense throughout Tumanski’s letters.

2 ‘Munáját’ – ‘prayers’, ‘Tarázát (Terazat)’ – ‘Ornaments’ (Arabic/Persian).

3 The same name in Persian.

4 Omitted here is a quote from the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd*. See comments below.

5 The full title of this work: *A Traveller’s Narrative Written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb: edited in the original Persian, and translated into English, with an*

- Introduction and explanatory notes, by E. G. Browne.* See Browne 1891. The work was written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, although Browne did not know it at the time of his publication of the book.
- 6 'Praise, glorification' (Arabic/Persian).
  - 7 'New History' (Persian).
  - 8 'The History of (by) Mánukchí' (Persian).
  - 9 'Source' (Arabic/Persian).
  - 10 A term incorrectly applied to Zoroastrians in Iran and generally in the Middle East.
  - 11 *Tavildar Nizami* – a distorted form of *ta(h)vildár-i-nizámi* 'military storekeeper' (Kabuli Persian).
  - 12 *Jazíyih/jizíyih* – a special tax imposed on non-Muslims in Moslim society.
  - 13 Another name, by which Zoroastrians are commonly referred to in Iran.
  - 14 'Rulers'; *hákim* (singular) – 'ruler, governor' (Arabic/Persian).
  - 15 'Chief merchant' (Turkish/Persian).
  - 16 Pure Persian is devoid of any Arabic loan words, unlike the Persian language spoken in modern-day Iran.
  - 17 This title might be translated into English as: 'Hushang's verse'. Hushang is a personal name and also the name of an ancient Iranian legendary king.
  - 18 The year AH 1297 (of Hijrih) corresponds to AD 1879/1880.
  - 19 Lit.: the Upper place (Persian).
  - 20 The word 'introduction' in Persian.
  - 21 'The Ocean of knowledge' (Persian).
  - 22 'Declaration' (Arabic/Persian).
  - 23 The year AH 1299 corresponds to AD 1881/1882.
  - 24 This is the way in which Browne spelt Tumanski's name in his publications and most of his letters.
  - 25 For more information about this school see, for example, Rafati 1990.
  - 26 It is not quite clear in the letter if it is 'that one' or 'this one'.
  - 27 Page 57. Tumanski uses original Persian figures when making reference to the page in Vol. 1.
  - 28 The portrait of the Báb and his disciple Anís made after their martyrdom.
  - 29 In Tumanski's (biblical) spelling: Matfey.
  - 30 See Akimushkin *et al.* 1998, 1: 560.
  - 31 Unfortunately, the description of this manuscript was left out of my final English version of the article (Ioannesian 2006: 75–100). But it can be found in the Russian version (Ioannesian 2005: 316).
  - 32 None of the Babi or Bahá'i manuscript currently preserved in IOM fits this description (of being autographs of Bahá'u'lláh or the Báb).
  - 33 The original form 'присланा' is corrected by Tumanski's hand into 'присланы'.
  - 34 'His Holiness has ascended' (Persian).
  - 35 'Mansion' (Arabic/Persian).
  - 36 'Briefly' (French).
  - 37 'Elegy, in which the death of a saint or a martyr is lamented' (Persian).
  - 38 'Nightingale' (Persian).
  - 39 '*Lawh-i-Sámsún*'.
  - 40 For instance, the History mentions the 'Babis in Turkistan' (though the Bahá'i community did not emerge in Turkistan until the 1880s).
  - 41 For more information on the subject see Schaefer *et al.* 2001: 64–68.
  - 42 'Фегих-Али-шаха' (in the genitive case) stands for 'Фетх-Али-шах' (most probably, the Cyrillic letter 'т' in Tumanski's manuscript was taken by the editors for 'г').
  - 43 In the original spelt as 'Кишабе Акдес' which is, obviously, a misprint.
  - 44 This and some other dates featuring in the correspondence are according to the old (Julian) calendar used in pre-Revolutionary Russia (see comments).
  - 45 The original word used by Tumanski is 'vazír', which means 'minister' in Persian.

- 46 The date is not correct.
- 47 ‘*Lawh-i-Sámsún*’.
- 48 For more information about this Tablet, see Taherzadeh 1996, 2: 6–18.
- 49 The page numbers are in the reverse order.
- 50 ‘*Lawh-i-Sámsún*’.
- 51 The quoted translation is from Ishraq-Khavari 1974.
- 52 ‘Expression’ (Persian).
- 53 That is how it is in the original, which must stand for ‘*بِأَوْضَعِ فَصْبِرَتْ*’ more eloquently’ (Persian).
- 54 Probably, the word was misunderstood by the copyist and it should be read as *بِإِنْ*. Otherwise it does not make sense in the given context.
- 55 This must probably stand for: ‘*حَسْبَنَا اللَّهُ*’ “God is what suffices us”, or: ‘*حَسْبَهُ اللَّهُ*’ ‘for the love of God’ (Arabic).
- 56 The word is not clear. I might well have been *رَنَثَرَ رَا*.
- 57 The word might as well have been *كَانَفَهْ*.
- 58 Lit.: infused them with ..., caused to melt.
- 59 My translation is based on reading *بِإِنْ بِلَادَنْ* as *بِإِنْ* (see footnote above).
- 60 Lit.: now.
- 61 The Persian word *أُوينَتْ* has among its meanings: ‘to fight, squabble, wrangle.’
- 62 By the ‘people of the Book’, Muslims are implied here.
- 63 Lit.: hid themselves, went into hiding.
- 64 The word is misspelled. It might stand for *صَحَرَاءَ* ‘desert’ or *سَحَرَ* ‘early morning, dawn’.
- 65 The word is spelled this way in the original. It must stand for *مَرَاحِتَ* ‘return’.
- 66 ‘*Ílúl*’ is the 12th month of the ancient Assyrian calendar corresponding to September.
- 67 The word *كُرَيْهَ* in the original must be the Persian rendering of the Hebrew *goyim* lit. meaning, in its modern usage, ‘non-Jews’.
- 68 ‘*Ishráqí*’ (Arabic/Persian) – a follower of the *Ishrág* (see comments).
- 69 ‘Treatise’ (Persian).
- 70 See Tumanski 1899: 61–71.
- 71 The *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (The Most Holy book).
- 72 ‘His Holiness’ (Persian).
- 73 *Rabi’u'l-Avvál* of the year AH 1310 corresponds to September 1892.
- 74 This must stand for the ‘Glad Tidings’ (Persian) though Tumanski uses the singular form.
- 75 See also Buck and Ioannesian 2010.
- 76 Perhaps, it is an inapt way to articulate its universal and inclusive nature as opposed to religious exclusivity.
- 77 See Taherzadeh 1996, 3: 389.
- 78 ‘Cherished heritage’ (Persian).
- 79 Lit.: sea.
- 80 ‘Teachers [of the Baha’í Faith]’ (Persian).
- 81 The same name repeated in Persian.
- 82 ‘God willing’ (Arabic).
- 83 Cf. ‘Кроме известных нам лаухов вероятно еще много будут встречаться новых, так как плодовитость Беха Уллы в этом отношении изумительна’ (Tumanski 1899: xlviii).
- 84 For more information see Ioannesian 2006: 91 and also Shcheglova 1975, 1: 213.
- 85 ‘*Jámi'u'l-'Ulím*’ – lit.: Encyclopedia (Arabic). See comments to letter # 8.
- 86 ‘The Regions of the World from the East to the West’ (Arabic).
- 87 ‘New script’ (Persian).
- 88 In Russian text, probably, erroneously: ‘3 and 4’.
- 89 See also Browne 1889b: 498.
- 90 Here and below underlined by Tumanski.
- 91 This word is crossed out and replaced with the following word by Tumanski.
- 92 ‘God willing’ (Arabic).

- 93 Here and below underlined by Tumanski.
- 94 Underlined by Tumanski in the original letter.
- 95 'Jáni', by which (*Mírzá*) Jání's *History* is implied.
- 96 See comments on Tumanski's previous letter.
- 97 'Uncompounded Reality' (Arabic). See Tumanski's letter # 4 and comments.
- 98 The numbers here are mine.
- 99 'Commandments' (Arabic/Persian).
- 100 'Ishráqát/Splendours' (Arabic/Persian). See comments.
- 101 'Risáliy-i-Siyásíyyih', see comments.
- 102 Tumanski describes him as 'a Babi of Jewish background living in Bombay' (Tumanski 1894: 33).
- 103 'Written order, a sealed letter with an order' (Arabic/Persian).
- 104 'Saying prayers, especially praisegiving prayers, giving praises' (Arabic/Persian).
- 105 'Kitáb-i-Aqdas' (Persian).
- 106 I touch upon this issue (of the omitted or suppressed passage) in my book (Ioannesian 2003: 66–7).
- 107 There is no indication in the letter as to where it was sent from.
- 108 'Argumentation' (Arabic/Persian).
- 109 'Pseudonym' (Arabic/Persian).
- 110 'Fitnih'.
- 111 Or كتاب متنبئين?
- 112 Parenthetical notation is by Tumanski.
- 113 Lit.: Book of false prophets.
- 114 'Kitáb-i-Aqdas'.
- 115 I thank Christopher Buck for bringing this source to my attention.
- 116 'Banú-Shaybán' – the name of a tribe.
- 117 However, there is evidence that Tumanski arrived in Ashkabad by a year or two earlier than 1892.
- 118 This Tablet is Bahá'u'lláh's reply to questions asked by Ustád Javán-Mard, an early Baha'i of Zoroastrian background and ex-student of Mánikchí Sáhib (see Tumanski's letter # 1 and comments).
- 119 European scholars.
- 120 The place from where the latter was mailed is not indicated, but it may be inferred from the content of the letter that it must have been sent from St Petersburg.

## Part II Official reports and private letters of Russian diplomats concerning the Babis/Baha'is

1.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 98

[from official reports of Russian diplomatic representatives concerning the Babis 1855–1890, sent from Iran]

Копия с донесения Поверен[ного] в Делах в Тегеране, г. Зиновьева,  
Князю Горчакову, от 10 июля 1869 г.

[P. 6/a] Malgré les persécutiоns auxquelles les Babi [sic] ont été exposés en Perse depuis l'avénement au trône de Nasir-ed-din Shah, la doctrine professée par la fondateur de cette secte semble avoir poussé de profondes racines dans le sol persan.

Un grand nombre de sectateurs de Báb fut arrêté à Tauris en 1866; ces jours-ci les chefs spirituelles de la secte ont adressé une interpellation directe au Shah. Cet incident ne manquant pas d'intérêt je prends la liberté de soumettre à V. E. les renseignements que j'ai pu recueillir à ce sujet.

Translation:

A copy of the report by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran,  
Mr. Zinov'yev, to Duke Gorchakov, dated 10 July 1869

[P. 6/a] Despite the persecutions which the Babis have been subjected to in Persia since Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's enthronement, the doctrine professed by the founder of this sect seems to have taken deep root in Persian soil.

A large number of the Báb's followers were arrested in Tabriz in 1866; in those days the spiritual leaders of the sect launched a direct petition to the Shah. Since this event is not devoid of interest, I am taking the liberty of presenting to Y[our] E[xcellency] the information I have been able to collect on this matter.

Comments:

Duke Alexander Mikhaylovich Gorchakov (born in 1798) was a prominent Russian diplomat who became Russia's State Chancellor in 1867. A graduate of the famous Tsarskoselski (Royal) Lyceum, he was a friend of the great Russian poet A. S. Pushkin.

In the passage above, the year 1866 is mentioned. Whatever this year may indicate, it obviously cannot be considered a correct reference to the time when the *Tablet of Sultán* was delivered to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh of Iran, an account of which is contained in the following passage. The given Tablet, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, was sent to the Shah of Persia from Akka, to which city the Prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith was moved by the Ottoman government in 1868.

Let us go back now to the text of the report.

[P. 6/b] Un homme du peuple s'était à plus d'une reprise présenté au camp / Royal et avait témoigné le désir de parler au souverain de la Perse. Ayant essayé un refus catégorique il déclara qu'il était Babi et qu'il avait une importante communication à faire au Shah. Admis en présence de S. M. Persan l'individu en question lui présenta un écrit en langue arabe dans lequel les chefs spirituelles des Babi invitaient en termes pressants Nassir-ed-din Shah à embrasser leur doctrine et menaçaient, en cas de refus, d'une prompte et terrible vengeance.

Le porteur de ce message refusa d'en nommer les auteurs, et les souffrances les plus cruelles qu'on lui fit subir ne parvinrent à lui arracher un aveu qui eût pu éclairer le gouvt Persan sur les sourdes menées des Babi.

[P. 7/a] A toutes les questions qu'on lui adressait/ il se bornait à répondre que le Babisme avait fait de nombreux prosélytes et qu'il y en avait dans toutes les parties de la Perse et dans toutes les classes de la population, sans en excepter la cour du Shah. – Il expira sans vouloir dire davantage.

Il est facile de se faire une idée de la pénible impression que cette révélation produisit sur l'esprit naturellement ombrageux et soupçonneux du Shah.

L'ordre fut immédiatement donné de faire de minutieuses perquisitions tant au camp que dans la capitale et d'arrêter tous les individus suspects. – En opérant ces arrestations on est naturellement parvenu à mettre la main sur quelques Babi; mais ces derniers refusent de nommer leurs chefs et affrontent la mort avec sérénité.

Translation:

[P. 6/b] A man of the people presented himself at the Royal Camp on more than one occasion, / expressing the desire to speak to the sovereign of Persia. Having received a categorical refusal, he declared that he was a Babi and had an important message to communicate to the Shah. After being admitted

into the presence of His Majesty the Persian [King], the individual in question presented to him a text written in Arabic, in which the Babi spiritual leaders invited Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in a most insistent manner, to embrace their doctrine and threatened, in case of [his] refusal, a prompt and terrible vengeance.

The bearer of this message refused to name the authors, and the most cruel suffering to which he was subjected did not succeed in extracting from him a confession which could have enlightened the Persian gov[ernmen]t as to the Babis' hidden agenda.

[P. 7/a] In reply to all the questions addressed to him / he confined himself to saying that Babiism had made a great number of converts and that they could be found in all the parts of Persia and among all the classes of the population, including the Shah's court. He breathed his last without wishing to say anything else.

It is easy to imagine what a painful impression this revelation made on the Shah's naturally nervous and suspicious spirit. The order was immediately given to carry out careful searches both in the camp and in the capital and to arrest all suspects. When these arrests were made, it was a matter of course that some Babis were caught; but the latter refused to name their leaders and stayed calm in the face of death.

#### Comments:

The above passage gives the account by a Russian diplomat of what may be described as one of the most heroic episodes in the history of the Baha'i Faith, namely of how Badi', a 17-year-old follower of Bahá'u'lláh, who volunteered to deliver Bahá'u'lláh's message to the Shah of Persia, fully aware of the fatal consequences of such an action, were he able to carry out his mission. It is clear from the above report that the diplomat (diplomats) who compiled it had a vague idea of what was contained in Bahá'u'lláh's message to the Shah.

Another account of this event was published by E. G. Browne (Browne 1889b: 956–95) and was quoted by Baron Rosen (in English) in his description of the *Tablet of Sultán* in the *Collections Scientifiques* (*Collections Scientifiques* ... 1891, VI: 192–193). Rosen, while presenting to the reader the full original text of the Tablet, made some interesting remarks. He paid attention to the instructions given by Bahá'u'lláh to Badi' to approach the Shah or even his servants 'with full humility and politeness' (بكمال الخضوع و الاداب) and to simply make it known that the message was on behalf of the 'prisoner'. In this work Rosen also made the following observations:

Meanwhile I would dare ... express some doubts concerning certain details of the account obtained by Mr. Browne. It is much more probable that the envoy executed his master's orders precisely. He came forward humbly and politely to the royal camp requesting to be admitted into the presence of His Majesty

the King of Persia. He had already been refused several times, when all he had declared was that he was a Babi and had certain revelations to make ... once he found himself in the Shah's presence, he told him only that he was the envoy of 'the prisoner'; that is all; he endured the consequences of his action with a smile on his face (ibid., 194; here and below, translation from French is mine).

Rosen concluded the publication of the *Tablet of Sultán* and the brief analysis of its content with the following observation:

The attentive reader will easily notice that the message ... is full of respect to the monarch. The goal of its author is evidently to convince the Persian Souverain [sic] of the truth of the new religion and at the same time to reassure [him] of the essentially peaceful character of its propaganda. It is not surprising that Bahá'[u'lláh] did not reach his goal. As it takes a lot of patience to read the 'revelation' of the 'prisoner' from the beginning to the end and penetrate into its meaning it is more than probable that neither the Souverain nor his counselors took pains to do it. The very name of the Babis has been odious since the time of the [Babi] uprising and the attempt [on the Shah's life], and all the eloquence of the present Head of the sect will never be able to lay to rest the government's fears (ibid., 216).

Let us now turn our attention to the concluding part of the report.

[P. 7/b] En attendant les tendances subversives de cette secte se manifestent / par de profanations qui ont été commises dans plusieurs mosquées, tant à Téhéran qu'aux environs et qui ne sauraient avoir d'autre but que celui d'exaspérer la population d'ébranler sa confiance dans le gouvernement.

Les événements que je viens de retracer sont de nature à fixer la plus sérieuse attention du gouvernement du Shah, entendu que les annals d'aucun autre pays du monde n'offrent d'aussi frappants exemples de la facilité avec laquelle les différentes doctrines sociales et religieuses se sont répandues en Perse.

Translation:

[P. 7/6] In the meantime, the subversive tendencies of this sect are shown by the atrocities which were committed in several mosques, in both Teheran and other places, which could have no other purpose but to upset the population and undermine their confidence in the government.

The events which I have just described are of such a nature as to demand the most serious attention of the Shah's government, given that the annals of no other country offer such striking examples of the ease with which different social and religious doctrines have spread in Persia.

## Comments:

The concluding passage above also merits attention. Its tone, apart from the allegations it contains, reveals clearly that the diplomat (diplomats) behind the report was (were) by no means sympathetic to the Babis/Baha'i and did not look forward to the advancement of the Babi or Baha'i Cause. That the official attitude of the Russian authorities towards the Baha'i and especially towards the Babi movement reflected in the attitude of many Russian government officials and diplomats was far from being 'exceptionally friendly' is supported by the evidence of some other documents in the Archive (see letters and comments below).

Therefore it is very important to make a distinction between the personal attitude of certain Russians (diplomats and scholars) towards the Babi/Baha'i Faiths and the official position of the Russian government. If the former might have been personally attracted to the Babi and Baha'i teachings (at least some of them like Tumanski and Batyushkov were), the Russian authorities' official policy towards the Babi/Baha'i Faiths was decidedly balanced. The government did not show any preference to the Babis and Baha'i over any other religious community, including Muslims. Moreover, when it came to choosing between Babis/Baha'i and Muslims, especially in Iran, they preferred to support the latter or at best not to interfere on either side. As for the Babi movement in general, the Russian authorities had every reason to view it with suspicion, which was their standard approach to any movement, which they classed as or suspected of being 'social' and therefore 'revolutionary.' That is exactly how they viewed the Babi movement.

The narratives contained in the following documents in many respects match Shoghi Effendi's account of the same events, at the same time being complementary to it.

## 2.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 99

Бабиды в Адрианополе

Донесение Упр[авляющего] Конс[ульством] в Адрианополе от  
26 Авг. 68 г. за № 88

[Р. 1/а] Вашему Превосходительству известно, что в 1862 г. Турецкое правительство, вследствие настойчивых требований Персидской миссии в Константинополе, принуждено было интернировать персидских эмигрантов, принадлежащих к секте персидского<sup>1</sup> поэта Мухаммеда Али [sic], прозванного «Баб»; с этой целью Адрианополь был выбран местом пребывания персидских<sup>2</sup> раскольников, которые и не замедлили прибыть сюда в числе 50<sup>3</sup> человек из Багдада, первоначального места их убежища. В числе прочих «бабидов» [sic] находился также некто Хусейн Али, играющий между своими роль великого шейха<sup>4</sup>.

До последнего времени «бабиды» оставались в Адрианополе, ведя здесь тихий и уединенный образ жизни: исполняя со всей пунктуальностью свои религиозные обряды и занимаясь небольшою торговлею.

Translation:

The Babis in Adrianople

A report of the Chief of the Consulate staff in Adrianople,  
dated 26 August [18]68 No. 88

[P. 1/a] Your Excellency is aware that in 1862 the Turkish government was forced, at the insistent requests of the Persian mission in Constantinople, to intern the Persian emigrants belonging to the sect of the Persian poet<sup>5</sup> Muhammad-‘Alí, who was given the title of the ‘Báb’; for this reason Adrianople was chosen to be the residence of the Persian<sup>6</sup> dissenters who flocked here, numbering 50,<sup>7</sup> from Baghdad which was their former refuge. There was beside other ‘Babis’ someone named Husayn-‘Alí who plays the role of a great Shaykh<sup>8</sup> among his own people.

Until quite recently the Babis stayed in Adrianople living a quiet and solitary life: performing quite carefully their religious ceremonies and being engaged in small trade.

Comments:

It is curious that the Báb is defined in the document as ‘a poet,’ which suggests an analogy with the Prophet Muhammad and other Prophets of the past, mentioned in the Koran (see verses 21:5; 37:35; 52:30; 69:41), who were also referred to as ‘poets’ as they started their prophetic mission. The Báb is incorrectly named: His middle name *Muhammad* precedes his first name *‘Alí*. The indicated year of Bahá’u’lláh’s banishment to Adrianople from Baghdad is also wrong. This incorrect date (1862 instead of 1863) of the given event produced, as it seems, a confusing effect on Rosen, pushing him to an erroneous conclusion, which he expressed in the *Collections Scientifiques*:

... they (Bahá’u’lláh and His followers) must have been interned to Adrianople in 1862 and not in 1864 ... The date of the departure is confirmed by a dispatch of the Chief of the Russian Consulate staff in Adrianople dated 26 August 1868.<sup>9</sup> While it says that the Turkish government was forced to intern the Babi emigrants in 1862 and that Adrianople was chosen for this purpose, it also confirms the date of [their] arrival [there].

(*Collections Scientifiques* ... 1891, VI: 218, footnote, translation mine)

This incorrect dating influenced Browne, who was inclined to accept it with a reference to Rosen (Browne 1892b: 280). However, the latter still had a grain of

doubt about the year of Bahá'u'lláh's banishment as is obvious from his request to the Consulate for further clarification of this issue (on the possible explanation of this mistake, see our comments on the documents below). The correct date is given by Tumanski in the Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*: 'After a four-month journey Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Constantinople, probably, at the end of summer or the beginning of the fall of 1863' (Tumanski 1899: xv). Though Tumanski speaks here of arriving in Constantinople, it is obvious from the context that he did not separate this event from Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to Adrianople.

The document attributes the cause of this banishment (first from Baghdad to Constantinople and from there to Adrianople) to the insistent requests of the Persian mission in Constantinople, which matches completely the account of this event in Baha'i sources. In *God Passes By* one reads:

'Such has been the interposition of God', 'Abdu'l-Bahá ... affirms, 'that the joy evinced by them hath been turned to chagrin and sorrow, so much so that the Persian consul-general in Baghdad regrets exceedingly the plans and plots the schemers had devised', 'This Ambassador<sup>10</sup> was pressed continually by his government to persist in the policy of arousing against Bahá'u'lláh the hostility of the Turkish authorities'.

(Effendi 1995: 150, 159)

This is also echoed by Tumanski's account:

The Persian consul in Baghdad, Mírzá Busurg Khán, was hostile towards the Babis of Baghdad ... Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Husayn found an active ally in the consul, and it was decided to act through Tehran, where reports started to pour in concerning the danger for the State coming from so close a proximity of such inconvenient emigrants as the Babis of Baghdad to its borders and Shi'ih pilgrim sites. These reports produced an effect and at the urgent request of the Persian envoy in Constantinople, Háiji Mírzá Husayn Khán Mushíru'd-Dawlih, the Turkish government summoned the Babis of Baghdad to Constantinople.

(Tumanski 1899: xiv, translation mine)

That the Baha'i's lived a quiet and humble life is mentioned repeatedly throughout the diplomatic reports (see documents below).

Let us now go back to the report.

В конце Июля месяца здешний Каймакам<sup>11</sup> получил телеграмму от Верховного визиря, в которой Аали-паша [*sic*] предписывал ему немедленно же отправить, под конвоем всех персидских эмигрантов в [Р. 1/b] Галлиполи, где их будет ожидать комиссар от порты, / которому даны надлежащие инструкции для дальнейшего путешествия бабидов.

Нечего и говорить, что турецкие власти, от излишнего усердия, не преминули пересолить приказания Аали-Паша и тем возбудили крайнее

негодование и без того уже рассерженных бабидов (sic).<sup>12</sup> Адрианопольский Каймакам<sup>13</sup> прежде всего и без всякой нужды приказал заключить в тюрьму всех персидских эмигрантов, исключая их шейха, который находился в [sic] домашнем аресте. Мера эта до того ожесточила бабидов, что один из них покушался даже на самоубийство. Во время ареста каймакам [sic] продал все имущество бабидов и уплатил их долги как турецким так и греческим подданным.

Translation:

At the end of July, the local *Qaimaqam*<sup>14</sup> received a telegram from the Supreme *vazír*,<sup>15</sup> in which 'Alí Páshá ordered him to immediately send all the Persian emigrants under escort to Gallipoli, where a commissar from the

[P. 1/b] Porte<sup>16</sup> would be awaiting them, / who was given due instructions concerning the Babis' further journey.

Needless to say that the Turkish authorities did not hesitate out of excessive zeal to go overboard executing 'Alí Páshá's orders and thus roused the extreme indignation of the Babis, who had already been exasperated. First the Adrianople *Qaimaqam*, without any reason, ordered the imprisonment of all the Persian emigrants, except their Shaykh, who was under house arrest. This measure embittered the Babis to the extent that one of them even attempted suicide. While [they were] arrested the *Qaimaqam* sold the Babis' entire property and paid off their debts to both the Turkish and Greek subjects.

Comments:

'Alí Páshá ('Alí Páshá Muhammad Amín) was prime minister of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The Baha'is' entire property being sold by the Turkish authorities is confirmed by Baha'i sources:

A great tumult seized the people ... Most of our possessions were auctioned at half their value ...

(Effendi 1995: 180).

The report continues:

Несколько дней спустя, все они были отправлены, как предписывала порта,<sup>17</sup> в Галлиполи[.] Истинная причина, побудившая турецкое правительство перевести бабидов из Адрианополя на о. Хиос неизвестна, но, на сколько позволяет мне заключить сведение мои<sup>18</sup> об этой секте вообще, я готов думать, что переселение бабидов было сделано впоследствие постоянных просьб персидской миссии, которая не переставала бояться,<sup>19</sup> чтобы учение «Баба» как ни будь не заразило персиян шиитов, проживающих в довольно большом количестве в Адрианополе

и его окрестностях;<sup>20</sup> говорят также, что Порта [*sic*] тем охотнее согласилась на эту уступку, что не так давно начало распространяться в мусульманском мире сочинение здешнего шейха,

[P. 2/a] написанное в / антимусульманском духе вообще.

Предположение это подтверждается еще и тем обстоятельством, что местом ссылки бабидов назначен о. Хиос, где они будут жить исключительно между греками и конечно уже не станут заниматься пропагандой своих религиозных идей.

На кануне отъезда своего из Адрианополя шейх Хусейн Али рассыпал здешним консулам протесты, в которых во имя Бога и человечества умолял их довести до сведений европейских правительств о несправедливостях, которые делает с ними [*sic*] Порта и просит [*sic*] о дозволении поселиться ему со своими учениками в каком нибудь уголке Европы. Адрианопольское население<sup>21</sup> следило с большим вниманием за делом бабидов, крайне нападая на турецкое правительство за его нетерпимость, тогда как при всяком удобном случае<sup>22</sup> оно любит похвастаться своею терпимостью в деле веры и за чистую покровительствует даже различным сектам, появляющимся вне мусульманской религии, надеясь извлечь из них какую нибудь для себя пользу.

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[postscript under the line]:  
(№ 281 от 3<sup>го</sup> Сент. 68 г.)

Translation:

A few days later all of them were sent, as ordered by the Porte,<sup>23</sup> to Gallipoli[.] The real motive causing the Turkish government to move the Babis from Adrianople to Xios is unknown, but as far as I can judge by my general information about this sect, I am inclined to think that the Babis were moved due to the constant requests of the Persian mission which never ceased to fear that the Báb's teaching might infect the Shi'ih Persians who live in a large number in Adrianople and its environs;<sup>24</sup> it is also said that the Porte was all the more willing to make this concession given that a work by the local Shaykh had recently started to spread around the Moslem world, which is written [P. 2/a] generally in / an anti-Moslem spirit.

This assumption is also confirmed by the fact that the island of Xios is chosen as the Babis' place of exile, where they will live solely among the Greeks and surely are not going to engage in the propagation of their religious ideas.

Shaykh Husayn 'Alí, on the eve of his departure from Adrianople, sent out protests to the consuls here in which he, for the sake of God and humanity, was imploring them to communicate to European governments the injustices which the Porte was inflicting upon them and asked to be granted permission to settle in some part of Europe with his disciples. The Adrianople population<sup>25</sup> was following the Babis' case very closely, coming down sharply on

the Turkish government for its intolerance, though it upon any occasion<sup>26</sup> doesn't hesitate to boast of its tolerance in matters of faith and pretty often supports even various sects appearing outside Islam, as it hopes to gain some kind of benefit out of them.

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[postscript under the line]:  
(No. 281, dated 3rd Sept. [18]68)"

Comments:

The given passage contains an account of the third period of Bahá'u'lláh's exile from Adrianople to Akka. It confirms Baha'i sources as to the main cause of this new edict, namely 'the constant requests of the Persian mission' which feared the further spread of the Babi/Baha'i teachings. (The postscript note below the passage provides a plausible reason behind the timing of the edict.) As in the above-mentioned sources, the account mentions Gallipoli as the place where the exiles were first moved on their way to Akka. The last paragraph also corresponds to Baha'i sources in the description of the sympathy shown by the population of Adrianople towards the Baha'is, with whom they had had the opportunity to become familiar over several years, and their frustration with the government's decision to banish Bahá'u'lláh and His followers from their midst. Shoghi Effendi, quoting Áqá Rizá, writes: 'A great tumult seized the people ... All were perplexed and full of regret ... Some expressed their sympathy, others consoled us, and wept over us ...' (Effendi 1995: 180–181).

The account of events related in the above document is strikingly similar to the description given by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*. The reader will see even more remarkable parallels with it in the document below. But first let us turn our attention to the postscript note following the letter on the back of the page, which was probably not part of the original. It may provide a clue to understanding why the Persian ambassador was so anxious to have the Baha'is exiled at that particular time. The man whose opinion is quoted in the postscript is Ignatyev. The other individual mentioned is V. I. Vitman.

[P. 2/a] В препроводительном письме к В. И. Витману Н. П. Игнатьев говорит: «Настоящую причину этого нового гонения должно отнести к желанию персидского посланника доставить удовольствие шаху во

[P. 2/b] время пребывания своего в Тегеране, где Мирза Хусейн Хан ныне находится».

Translation:

[P. 2/a] In the covering letter addressed to V. I. Vitman, N. P. Ignatyev says: 'The real cause of this new persecution must be seen in the desire of the

[P. 2/b] Persian envoy to please the Shah during his stay / in Tehran, which Mírzá Husayn Khán<sup>27</sup> is currently visiting'.

Baron Rosen asked the Consulate for further clarification of certain issues. His questions are on the same page as the postscript note above:

[P. 2/b] Вопросы[:]

- (1) Есть ли в консульстве еще какие нибудь следы каких нибудь дел или донесений о Бабидах в Адрианополе за 1862–1868?
- (2) Сохранился ли тот протест, к-рый, по словам депеши, шейх Бабидов разослал консулам?
- (3) Нельзя-ли, по крайней мере выяснить с точностью, в каком месяце какого года прибыли бабиды [sic] в Адрианополь –

Бар. В. Розен

Адрес: Барону Виктору Романовичу Розену

СПб. Надеждинская 56.

Всякие воспоминания лиц, знавших Бабидов в Адрианополе в 1862–68 гг. или имевших с ними сношения, могли бы [быть] вообще интересны и важны.

Translation:

[P. 2/b] Questions[:]

- (1) Are there any more traces of any files or reports on the Babis in Adrianople in 1862–1868 in the Consulate?
- (2) Is the protest which, according to the [diplomatic] dispatch, the Babis' Shaykh sent out to the consuls still preserved?
- (3) Is it possible at least to find out exactly in what month of what year the Babis arrived in Adrianople?

Bar[on] V. Rosen

Address: Baron Viktor Romanovich Rosen

S[aint]-P[eters]b[urg] Nadejdinskaya [St., ap.] 56<sup>28</sup>

Any recollections of people, who knew the Babis in Adrianople in 1862–1868 or were in touch with them, could in general [be] of interest and value.

The document below, comprising several narratives as can be inferred from the logic of its compilers, was sent to Rosen in reply to his request for information. It is very inaccurate in the presentation of the earlier events of the Babi history in Iran and much more adequate in its account of the Adrianople period. This

indicates that the narrators were not eyewitnesses of the early Babi history but had a much better grasp of the events related to the Baha'is in Adrianople.

3.

Deposit: 777/inventory:1/unit: 99

[Сообщение из Адрианополя о пребывании там бабидов]  
([со слов некого] ... Шериф Ага)

[P. 7/a]

Сведения доставленные Персами проживающими в Адрианополе о  
бабидах

Приблизительно в 1263 году Гиджры уроженка Казвина девушка Гюррет ел Айн 18–20 лет от роду, (дочь брата) племянница Муштегида объявила, что проживающий в Тавризе молодой человек высокого рода Сеид Мехмет есть божий посланник, ожидаемый Персами (расул). Она [P. 7/b] уверовала, / что ей было откровение, гласящее, что ее женская роль препятствует ей быть ожидаемым Пророком, но что таким пророком избран Сеид Мехмет. Она вступила в переписку с Сеид Мехметом, составила значительную партию и начала проповедовать в

мечетях о свободе женщин. Она говорила что Сеид Мехмет предписал / [P. 8/a] женщинам ходить с открытыми лицами и не быть запертыми в Гаремах. Многочисленные сторонники нового пророка (его «мюриды») охраняли Гюррет ел Айн от преследований ее<sup>29</sup> Муштегида, приказывавшего ей вести скромную затворническую жизнь. Когда муштегид захотел воспрепятствовать продолжению проповедей[.]

[P. 8/b] Гюррет ел Айн со сторонниками ее (по ее приказанию?) / убили его в мечети во время молитвы. Сторонники дяди напали в свою очередь на последователей племянницы и в мечети произошла резня, продолжавшаяся потом в городе.

Спокойствие в Казвине было восстановлено при помощи войск. Гуррет ел Айн была схвачена и, по приказанию Шаха, привязана к хвосту ... лошади и растерзана.

Translation:

[Reports from Adrianople on the Babis staying there]  
([according to someone named] ... Sherif Agha)

[P. 7/a]

Information about the Babis presented by Persians living in Adrianople

Around year 1263 of Hijrih<sup>30</sup> a girl born in Kazvin named Gurret el Ayn<sup>31</sup> aged 18–20, a Mujtehid's<sup>32</sup> niece (his brother's daughter), declared that the resident of Tabriz, the high-born young man Seid Mehmet<sup>33</sup> was the apostle [P. 7/b] of God awaited by the Persians (*rasūl*).<sup>34</sup> She believed / that she had a revelation in which she was told<sup>35</sup> that her status as a woman prevented her from being the awaited Prophet and that Seid Mehmet was selected to be such a Prophet. She started a correspondence with Seid Mehmet, found a considerable number of followers<sup>36</sup> and began to preach in the mosques

[P. 8/a] about the freedom of women. She said that Seid Mehmet prescribed / women to walk around with open faces and not to be locked up in harems. The numerous followers of the new prophet (his murids) protected Gurret el Ayn from being persecuted by the Mujtehid, who ordered her to lead a humble, solitary life. When the Mujtehid wanted to prevent her from continuing [her] preaching[,] Gurret el Ayn with her supporters

[P. 8/b] ([acting] on her orders?)<sup>37</sup> / killed him in a mosque while he was saying a prayer. In return, her uncle's supporters attacked the niece's followers, which led to a slaughter in the mosque that continued later in the city.

Calm in the city was restored with the help of troops. Gurret el Ayn was seized and, on the Shah's orders, tied up to a horse's tail ... [word unclear] and torn to pieces.

#### Comments:

The account presented in the passage regardless of its inaccuracy is valuable, because, as one may infer from the text, it narrates the events of early Babi history as perceived by a nineteenth century Persian, who was neither sympathetic nor hostile to the Babi Cause. Interestingly enough, the narrator attributes the main role in those events to Qurratu'l-'Ayn or Táhirih, the greatest heroine of the Babi movement.

To cast some light on the story related in the passage, it would be useful to quote a few lines from E. G. Browne:

Hájí Mullá Muhammad Takí of Kazvín was, as mentioned by Gobineau, the uncle and father-in-law of Kurratu'l-'Ayn, the Bábí heroine. He had always disliked Sheykh Ahmad Aḥsá'í and his followers, denouncing them as heretics ... When the Báb's doctrines began to spread themselves through Persia, Mullá Muhammad Takí's hatred was increased, and reached its climax when his niece and daughter-in-law *Kurratu'l-'Ayn*, then called *Zarrín Táj*, not only embraced these doctrines, and put herself in communication with the Báb, but began openly to preach them ... Hájí Mullá Muhammad Takí publicly cursed Sheykh Ahmad Aḥsá'í. For this act he paid with his life, for he was stabbed in the mosque at Kazvín by Mírzá Sálih of Shíráz, and two or

three other Bábís. It was alleged by the enemies of Қurratu'l-'Ayn that she was a party to this assassination. Of this there is no proof, and had there been such, we may be sure that she would have scarcely escaped the vengeance of the Muhammadans. (Browne 1889b: 889).<sup>38</sup>

As to the date of this event Browne, with a reference to the *Qisasu'l-'Ulamá*, fixes for it AH 1264 / AD 1848 (ibid., footnote). Táhirih did not suffer death until August 1852.

Let us now return to the document.

[P. 16/a]<sup>39</sup> В свою очередь Сеид / Мехмет был схвачен и посажен в крепость Чегра (между Дильмаром и Урмией). Он провел в тюрьме 7 лет. Он нашел возможность сноситься со своими последователями и (по утверждению персидского Правительства) Мюриды его несколько раз проникали в Тегеран с целью убить Шаха. Однажды будто бы Шах был легко ранен выстрелами из пистолета и ударом кинжала. Схваченные мюриды сознались в своем преступлении и выдали Сеид Мехмета. /

[P. 16/b] Они были немедленно казнены. Между тем в Зингяне (?) Наибы Сеид Мехмеда (sic) начали борьбу с правительством (это было в шестидесятых годах хиджры<sup>40</sup>).

Translation:

[P. 16/a]<sup>41</sup> Seid / Mehmet was seized in his turn and incarcerated in the fortress of Chihriq (between Dilmar and Urumiyih). He spent 7 years in prison. He found a way to communicate with his followers and (according to the assertion of the Persian Government) his *Murids*<sup>42</sup> penetrated into Tehran several times attempting to assassinate the Shah. Once, the Shah was allegedly slightly wounded by gunshots and a dagger. The *murids* who were [P. 16/b] seized confessed their crime and gave away Seid Mehmet. / They were immediately executed. Meanwhile, Seid Mehmet's *Naibs*<sup>43</sup> started a fight in Zingan (?)<sup>44</sup> with the government (this was in the sixties of Hijrih).

Comments:

The account in the passage is obviously based on a confusion of events. The attempt on Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's life, which is apparently related here, took place in 1852 (two years after the Báb's execution), having nothing to do with the Báb's arrest and subsequent trial.<sup>45</sup>

The document continues:

[P. 16/b] Привезенный<sup>46</sup> в Тегеран Сеид Мехмед был представлен собранию улем,<sup>47</sup> которым он объявил что он настоящий Мехди (Мехди ...

расул) ожидаемый персиянами. Улемы были поражены этим [P. 17/a] заявлением / и в первую минуту готовы были принять его за пророка, но исследовав его внимательно они нашли что он не соответствует признакам Мехди и объявили его лжецом и обманщиком. Шах приказал распять и расстрелять его. Персидские солдаты отказались стрелять в Сеид Мехмеда. Волнение начало распространяться и для исполнения Казни<sup>48</sup> были назначены христианские солдаты. После первого залпа, едва только ранившего Сеид Мехди, осужденный разорвал веревки и убежал. Он спрятался под кровлею в домике сторожа и никто не препятствовал его.<sup>49</sup> Христианские солдаты отказались препятствовать бежавшего<sup>50</sup> и Правительство было поставлено в большое затруднение. Тогда Мушир Хишмет ет Доуле послал своих людей искать Сеид Мехмеда. / Он был [P. 18/a]<sup>51</sup> найден и зарезан. Тело его было выброшено в сточную канаву, где собаки съели его. Последователи Сеид Мехмеда уверяют, что собаки стащили все кости в одно место. Место это пользуется у бабидов большим почетом.

Translation:

[P. 16/b] Once taken to Tehran Seid Mehmet was brought before the assembly of the ‘ulamá’,<sup>52</sup> to whom he announced that he was the real *Mahdí* (*Mahdí ... rasúl*), awaited by the Persians. The ‘ulamá’ were amazed at [P. 17/a] this statement / and at first were ready to accept him as a prophet, but after a careful investigation they found that he did not fit the description<sup>53</sup> of the *Mahdí* and pronounced him to be a liar and imposter. The Shah ordered for him to be crucified<sup>54</sup> and shot to death. The Persian soldiers refused to fire at Seid Mehmet. A commotion started to spread, and for the execution to be carried out Christian soldiers were selected. After the first volley which slightly wounded Seid Mehdi,<sup>55</sup> the convicted rent the ropes asunder and fled. He hid under the roof of the watchman’s little house and nobody attempted to deter him. The Christian soldiers refused to prevent [the Báb’s] escape and the Persian government found itself in a very difficult position. Then Mushir Hishmet et Doule sent his people to look for [P. 18/a]<sup>56</sup> Seid Mehmet. / He was found and stabbed to death. His body was thrown into a moat where dogs ate it. The Báb’s followers maintain that the dogs dragged all the bones together into one place. This place is held in great respect by the Babis.

Comments:

The parallel between the manner in which Christ was killed and the execution of the Báb is so striking that the compiler of this account could apparently not avoid using the word ‘crucified’ to describe the surprising events attending the Báb’s end.

On the whole, this somewhat naive and awkward account of the execution of the Báb may be perceived as an attempt to explain away the fact of the Báb’s disappearance after several hundred guns had fired at him. Clearly, the writer finds it difficult

to imagine how anyone sentenced to death and determined to flee from his execution would wait to be 'crucified, tied to a pillar with ropes, [and] shot' before trying to do so. No doubt, he found it equally incredible to picture how a wounded person, tied to a high pillar could 'rend the ropes asunder', and then jump down from the pillar and escape. And if the wounded man had been strong enough to do this *after* being shot, would it not have been much easier for him to attempt an escape *before* he was tied to the pillar and shot at? However, his comparison by no means detracts from the value of the account, as it represents confirmation, from an independent source, of the fact that, when the smoke from the rifles cleared, the Báb inexplicably disappeared from the scene after he was shot, as a number of other sources attest.<sup>57</sup>

Let us now go back to the document. Starting with the next passage, we will observe many parallels with the account of the events in Baha'i sources. I will quote them to highlight these parallels.

[P. 18/a] Со смертью Сеид Мехмеда ему наследовал сын его Шейх Хусейн Али, бывший до того времени наибом отца. – Преследование бабидов продолжалось в Персии и Шейх Хусейн Али убежал с частью [P. 18/b] своих последователей в Багдад. / От времени до времени он посыпал оттуда своих мюридов в Персию, где их убивали тотчас как власти узнавали о их появлении.

Персидское правительство обращалось к Султану со требованием о выдаче бабидов, но Шейх Хусейн просил покровительства Турок, доказывая что он и его последователи сунниты, тогда как Персы шииты [P. 19/a] и что вследствие этой разницы всех их зарежут / по прибытии их в Персию. Абдул Азиз приказал привезти Шейх Хусейна и его последователей в Константинополь. Персидский Посол Мушир ет Доуле хлопотал о выдаче сектантов Персии, но Турки отказали и в 1279 (?) году Геджры отправили бабидов, после двухмесячного пребывания в Константинополе в Адрианополь.

Translation:

[P. 18/a] After Seid Mehmet's death he was succeeded by his son, Shaykh Huseyn Ali, who until that time had been his father's *naib*.<sup>58</sup> The persecution of the Babis continued in Persia, and Shaykh Husayn-‘Alí fled, with a number [P. 18/b] of his followers, to Baghdad. / From time to time he sent his *murids*<sup>59</sup> to Persia from there, where they were killed immediately after the authorities found out about their arrival.

The Persian government made demands of the Sultan to extradite the Babis, but Shaykh Husayn sought the support of the Turks, arguing that he and his followers were Sunnis, while the Persians were Shi'ites and that because of [P. 19/a] this difference they were all going to be slaughtered / upon their arrival in Persia. ‘Abdu'l-‘Azíz ordered for Shaykh Husayn and his followers to be moved to Constantinople. The Persian Ambassador Mushir et Doule made every effort to have the sectarians extradited to Persia, but the Turks refused

and in 1279 (?)<sup>60</sup> of Hijrih, sent the Babis, after their two-month stay in Constantinople, to Adrianople.<sup>61</sup>

Comments:

The document states that Bahá'u'lláh spent two months in Constantinople. In fact Bahá'u'lláh stayed in Constantinople for four months.

The definition of Bahá'u'lláh (Shaykh Husayn-'Alí) as the Báb's son might be considered a curious confusion if not a gross misrepresentation. However, the following words: 'who until that time had been his father's *naib*' may hold a clue to this mistake. 'Naib' in the given context could well mean 'secretary'. One should not forget that the Báb's amanuensis' name was also Husayn: Siyyid Husayn of Yazd (Effendi 1995: 53, Momen W. 1989: 15). The similarity of the names Husayn-'Alí and Siyyid Husayn has brought about a confusion in much more recent days. In the essay by N. A. Kuznetsova, one of the very few Soviet scholars who made a sincere effort to present an accurate account of Babi and Baha'i history, Bahá'u'lláh, however, is described as the one who 'was imprisoned together with the Báb but refuted His teaching [at the last moment]' (Kuznetsova 1978: 83). This grievous error would never have occurred but for the confusion of names, because the given episode is in fact connected with the Báb's amanuensis. If we admit a similar confusion in the case of the diplomatic document this would at least account for Bahá'u'lláh's being portrayed as the Báb's secretary though will by no means explain why he is also presented as the 'Báb's son'.

'The year 1279' (with the question mark) might hold a clue to understanding why Baron Rosen, though not without a grain of doubt, assumed that Bahá'u'lláh was banished to Constantinople and Adrianople from Baghdad in 1862 (see above). The year AH 1279 corresponded to the seven months (greater part) of the year AD 1862 and the first five months (lesser part) of the year 1863. The May of 1863 fell in the last month of 1279. Without the precise month of Hijrih being indicated in the report(s), one could easily make an error in one's calculation. This wrong conversion of dates from the Moslem lunar calendar into the Christian solar calendar may also account for the same mistake in the previous report from Adrianople.

In the last three lines of the passage (as in the previous document), the blame for banishing Bahá'u'lláh to Constantinople and further to Adrianople is laid specifically on the Persian ambassador Mushíru'd-Dawlih (Mushir et Doule), who 'made every effort to have the sectarians extradited'. This is completely in accord with Shoghi Effendi's account:

That fateful and ignominious decision, arrived at by the Sultán and his chief ministers, 'Alí Páshá and Fu'ád Páshá, was in no small degree attributable to the persistent intrigues of the Mushíru'd-Dawlih, Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Persian Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, denounced by Bahá'u'lláh as His "calumniator," who awaited the first opportunity to strike at Him and the Cause of which He was now the avowed and recognized leader.

(Effendi 1995: 159)

Let us return to the document.

[P. 19/a] Турецкое Правительство назначило на содержание бабидов

[P. 19/b] 7000Ø пиастров в месяц, причем / им была предоставлена полная свобода действий. Свободой этой Шейх Хусейн воспользовался для распространения своего учения не только между Персиянами но и между Турками[.] В конаках богатых мусульман были получены послания Хусейна, в которых он извещал, что он есть баб, дверь мира, что он являлся и прежде в виде Муса (Моисей), Иса (Иисус Христос) и [P. 20/a] других пророков. Он увещевал / всех принять его учение. Пропаганда распространялась и в Константинополе. И мюриды Хусейна были схвачены полицией в то время, когда они подбрасывали прокламации Шейха в конаки высокопоставленных лиц. Арестованные мюриды объявили, что они посланники пророка (даже бога) Шейх Хусейна. Турецкое правительство решилось отправить бабидов в

[P. 20/b] ссылку. Получив приказание Порты / Адрианопольский Паша Хуршит Паша велел посадить в тюрьму всех бабидов, за исключением Шейха, оставшегося под домашним арестом. На допросе Шейх Хусейн не отрицал, что он баб. Представители иностранных держав хотели вмешаться в это дело с целью отменить приказ о ссылке, но Турецкое Правительство, основываясь на признании самого Шейха Хусейна

[P. 21/a] устранило / вмешательство иностранцев. Старшина Персидской колонии в Адрианополе Али ага был назначен в помошь мектубчи заведовавшему высылкой бабидов. Высылка эта произошла в 1286 году. Бабидов отправили под конвоем из ...<sup>62</sup> в Галлиполи а оттуда Шейх Хусейн с сыном своим Мирза Аббасом был сослан в Акию<sup>63</sup> (Санкт

[P. 21/b] Жан д'Акр), а / брата Хусейна Шейх Мирза Яхья<sup>64</sup> на остров Кипр.

Во время ссылки Шейху Хусейну было около 55 лет. У него было пять человек детей: три сына, из которых старшему Мирза Аббасу было 22 года и две дочери. У Шейха Хусейна было два брата: Мирза Яхья и Мирза Агаджан. Мирза Аббас вел большое знакомство, он часто

[P. 22/a] посещал мечети, теке и медресе. / Шейх Хусейн с семейством жил сначала в квартале Мурадие, за мечетью того же имени. Он устроил на дворе (в саду) своего дома палатку и в ней принимал посетителей; сначала же он почти никуда не ходил и вел вообще жизнь тихую и уединенную. Спустя некоторое время он проживал в большом доме Емруллы Аги, расположенному против мечети Султана Селима, а в последнее время своего пребывания в Адрианополе он жил в доме Емин [P. 22/b] / ефенди (где было до того Французское Консульство). В этом доме он был арестован. Во время следования Шейха Хусейна один из его мюридов

Хаджи Джевгер Тебризли порезал себе горло оконной решеткой, заявляя, что он страдает во славу баба. Мюриды Шейха Хусейна вели скромный образ жизни. Они занимались всякими

[P. 23/a] ремеслами и также торговлей. / Некоторые из них были плотниками и столярами.

Translation:

[P. 19/a] The Turkish government granted an allowance of 7000 $\text{O}^{65}$  piastres [P. 19/b] per month to the Babis, moreover, / they were left full freedom of action. Shaykh Husayn used this freedom for the propagation of his teaching not only among the Persians but among the Turks also[.] In the *konaks*<sup>66</sup> of rich Muslims Husayn's epistles were being received, in which he told them that he was a Báb, the door to peace, and that he had previously appeared as Músá (Moses), 'Ísá (Jesus Christ), and other prophets. He admonished / all to [P. 20/a] embrace his teaching. This propagation spread further to Constantinople. Husayn's *murids* were seized by the police as they were throwing the Shaykh's leaflets into high-ranking people's *konaks*. The arrested *murids* declared that they were Shaykh Husayn's apostles, who himself was a prophet (even God). The Turkish Government decided to send [P. 20/b] the Babis into exile. Having received orders from the Porte, / the Pasha of Adrianople, Khurshid Pasha gave instructions to imprison all the Babis, with the exception of the Shaykh, who stayed under house arrest. During the interrogation Shaykh Husayn did not deny that he was the Báb.<sup>67</sup> The representatives of foreign countries were about to intervene in this affair in order to have the exile order revoked, but the Turkish government, based on [P. 21/a] the Shaykh's own declaration,<sup>68</sup> declined / foreign interference. The chief of the Persian colony in Adrianople, 'Alí Áqá, was appointed to assist the *mektubchi*<sup>69</sup> in charge of the Babis' deportation. This deportation took place in 1286.<sup>70</sup> The Babis were sent under convoy from ... [word unclear] to Gallipoli and from there Shaykh Husayn was sent on with his

[P. 21/b] son Mírzá 'Abbás to Akka (Saint Jean d'Acre), while / Huseyn's brother Shaykh Mírzá Yahyá was sent to the island of Cyprus.

At the time of the deportation Shaykh Huseyn was about 55 years old. He had five children: three sons, of whom the senior, Mírzá 'Abbás was 22, and three daughters. Shaykh Huseyn had two brothers: Mírzá Yahyá and Mírzá Áqá Ján.<sup>71</sup> Mírzá 'Abbás had a wide range of acquaintances; he often visited [P. 22/a] mosques, *tekke*,<sup>72</sup> and *medrese*.<sup>73</sup> / At first Shaykh Huseyn lived with his family in the Muradiyyeh quarter, behind the mosque bearing the same name. He pitched a tent in the courtyard (garden) of his house and received visitors in it;<sup>74</sup> at the beginning he went almost nowhere and lived a quiet and solitary life. After a while he settled in Emrullah Aqa's big house, situated opposite the Sultan Selim mosque, while at the end of his stay in

[P. 22/b] Adrianople he lived in Emin / Effendi's house (where the French Consulate was previously located). That is the house in which he was arrested. While Shaykh Husayn was on his way [under convoy], one of his murids, Haji Jevhar Tebrizli<sup>75</sup> cut his throat with a window bar, saying that he was suffering for the glory of the Báb. Shaykh Husayn's *murids* lived a humble life. They were engaged in various handicrafts and also in commerce. [P. 23/a] / Some of them were carpenters and joiners.

Comments:

The first part of the passage confirms that one of the main causes of Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Akka was the Turkish authorities' concern about the spread of the Baha'i Writings and the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause resulting in the growing influence of Baha'i teachings. This also matches completely the account in Baha'i sources:

The revelation of so many important Tablets, and the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh's Message to the kings and the rulers of the world, had endowed the Faith with such ascendancy that by the summer of 1868 the authorities in Constantinople had become apprehensive of its rising prestige and power.

(Taherzadeh 1996, 2: 397)

As for the representatives of foreign countries willing to intervene with the Turkish authorities on behalf of Bahá'u'lláh and His decline to take advantage of the foreign powers' help as stated in the document – a clear confirmation of this fact can be found in Baha'i sources:

Some of the consuls of foreign powers called on Bahá'u'lláh, and expressed their readiness to intervene with their respective governments on His behalf – suggestions for which He expressed appreciation, but which He firmly declined. *“The consuls of that city (Adrianople) gathered in the presence of this Youth at the hour of His departure, He Himself has written, “and expressed their desire to aid Him. They, verily, evinced towards Us manifest affection”.*

(Effendi 1995: 180)

The treatment of events related to sending Bahá'u'lláh and His followers to Akka through Gallipoli where they were taken under convoy, and Mírzá Yahyá to Cyprus also generally corresponds with the account in Baha'i sources:

The government's original order was to banish Bahá'u'lláh, Áqáy-i-Kalím and Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, with a servant to 'Akka, while the rest were to proceed to Constantinople. This order, which provoked scenes of indescribable distress, was, however, at the insistence of Bahá'u'lláh, and by the instrumentality of

‘Umar Effendi, a major appointed to accompany the exiles, revoked. It was eventually decided that all the exiles, numbering about seventy, should be banished to ‘Akka. Instructions were, moreover, issued that a certain number of the adherents of Mirzá Yahyá, among whom were Siyyid Muhammad and Áqá Ján, should accompany these exiles, whilst four of the companions of Bahá’u’lláh were ordered to depart with the Azalís for Cyprus.

(*ibid.*, 181)

The document presents an account of Bahá’u’lláh’s residing in different areas of Adrianople: the Murádiyyih (Muradiyyeh) quarter, the house of Amru’lláh (Emrullah Aqa) near the Sultán Salím (Sultan Selim) mosque, which is in full accord with Baha’i sources:

Traveling through rain and storm, at times even making night marches, the weary travelers, after brief halts at Kúchik-Chakmachih ... arrived at their destination, on the first of Rajab 1280 A.H. (December 12, 1863), and were lodged in the Khán-i-‘Arab, a two-story caravanserai, near the house of ‘Izzat-Áqá. Three days later, Bahá’u’lláh and His family were consigned to a house suitable only for summer habitation, in the Murádiyyih quarter, near the Takyiy-i-Mawlawí, and were moved again, after a week, to another house, in the vicinity of a mosque in that same neighborhood. About six months later they transferred to more commodious quarters, known as the house of Amru’lláh (House of God’s command) situated on the northern side of the mosque of Sultán Salím.

(*ibid.*, 161–2)

The episode of Hái Ja‘far Tabrízí (Haji Jevhar Tebrizli) cutting his throat is also well attested by Baha’i sources:

Hái Ja‘far-i-Tabrízí, one of the believers, finding that his name had been omitted from the list of the exiles who might accompany Bahá’u’lláh, cut his throat with a razor, but was prevented in time from ending his life – an act which Bahá’u’lláh, in the Súriy-i-Ra’is, characterizes as “*unheard of in bygone centuries*,” and which “*God hath set apart for this Revelation, as an evidence of the power of His might*”;

(*ibid.*, 180)

Hái Ja‘far ... took a razor with him to the outer apartment of the house which was crowded with military officers and government officials, put his head out of a window which opened onto the street, and cut his own throat.

(Taherzadeh 1996, 2: 406)

In the closing part of the above passage of the document, the Baha’is’ living a humble life is stressed again (see also the emphasis on the humble and peaceful life of the Baha’is in other places in the documents below).

Let us now quote the last part of the document:

[P. 23/a] Рассказывают что число их в Аккии<sup>76</sup> значительно увеличилось. Они занимаются главным образом возделыванием земли и некоторым из них удалось сделаться собственниками. Шейх Хусейн умер и сын его Мирза Аббас заместил отца. Он сделался Шейхом, и в

[P. 23/b] числе его последователей множество / Турук<sup>77</sup> и Курдов, а также уроженцев Мазандерана, Решта и Тавриза.

Мирза Яхья умер на острове Кипр. И что сделалось с его последователями неизвестно. 7000Ø пиастры были разделены. Так, обр. 5000Ø Шейху Хусейну и 2000 Шейху Яхья. Говорят будто бы содержание Шейху Аббасу увеличено.

В Багдаде, в Кербеле ..., в Персии есть еще некоторое число бабидов. Но [P. 9/a]<sup>78</sup> в Персии их убивают без всякой процедуры. / Консул наш в Багдаде Пётр Егорович Понфидин сообщает, что в настоящее время Турки не преследуют больше бабидов, которые в значительном числе проживают в шиитском городке Казимене<sup>79</sup> (против Багдада – за рекой), в Кербела и в Неджефе (город в пустыне в трех часах ходу от Кербели).

Избегая воинской повинности бабиды для ограждения себя от турецкой [P. 9/b] службы прибегают иногда к покровительству / Персидского консула и в случае надобности прибегают к защите Турук чтобы противиться притязаниям Персиян. Живут они тихо и скромно, занимаются почти исключительно торговлей и, насколько это известно Г-ну Понфидину, никакого пособия не получают.

Translation:

[P. 23/a] They are said to have greatly increased in number in Akka. They are engaged mainly in the cultivation of land and some of them have managed to become [property] owners.<sup>80</sup> Shaykh Husayn died and his son, Mírzá ‘Abbás, succeeded his father. He has become a Shaykh, and there are many / [P. 23/b] Turks and Kurds among his followers, as well as natives of Mazindaran, Rasht and Tabriz.

Mírzá Yahyá died in the island of Cyprus. It is not known what has happened to his adherents. The 7000Ø<sup>81</sup> piastres were divided. So that 5000Ø [went] to Shaykh Husayn and 2000 [sic] [went] to Shaykh Yahyá. Shaykh ‘Abbás’s allowance has been allegedly increased.

There is still a certain number of Babis in Baghdad, in Karbila ... [word unclear], in Persia. But in Persia they are killed without [following] any [due] [P. 9/a]<sup>82</sup> process.<sup>83</sup> / Our Consul in Baghdad, Pyotr Yegorovich Ponfidin reports that at present the Turks no longer persecute the Babis, who live in large numbers in the Shi‘ih town of Kazime[y]n (which is situated opposite

Baghdad, on the other side of the river), in Karbila and in Nejef (a city within three-hour walk from Karbila).

Trying to avoid military service, the Babis in order to exempt themselves [P. 9/b] from the Turkish service resort sometimes to the / Persian consul's protection, and, if the need arose, resort to the Turks' protection in order to resist the Persians' claims. They live a quiet and humble life almost fully engaging themselves in commerce, and to the best of Mr. Ponfidin's knowledge do not receive any allowance.

Comments:

The passage above testifies to the Baha'i Faith being gradually embraced by people of various ethnic backgrounds as well as to the ongoing persecution of the Baha'is in Iran.

4.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 99

Юнус Мехди Ефенди, нынешний кади в Адрианополе сообщает следующие сведения о бабидах, живших в Адрианополе:

[Р. 10/a] Когда Министр Полиции Хусин Паша захватил бабидские книги и передал их для рассмотрения Шейх уль Исламу (вероятно в 1868 году) Юнус Мехди служил в фетва хане (отделение Шейх уль Исламата). Он рассматривал эти книги и нашел их еретическими. Баб

[Р. 10/b] признавался в них таким же / пророком как Муса, Иса и Магомет[.] Шейх Мехмет Хусейн (вероятно Хусейн Али) считался также пророком, преемником первого баба и тоже бабом. – По заключению Шейх уль Ислама бабидские книги были признаны вредными и торжественно сожжены. Бабиды были отправлены в ссылку. – /

[Р. 11/a] Юнус Мехди Ефенди знает что прибывшие из Багдада в Константинополь бабиды были поселены в Адрианополе. За пропаганду их учения они были высланы в Акию. Времени он хорошо не помнит.

Мушир Махмуд Хатди<sup>84</sup> Паша видел бабидов в Акии. Они хорошо

[Р. 11/b] живут там и население/ относится к ним дружественно. Они получают какое-то пособие от Турецкого Правительства. Они имеют хорошее влияние на окружающих. Старый Шейх Хусейн Али умер, передав власть над бабидами сыну своему Аббасу.

Translation:

Yunus Mehdi Effendi, the current *qadi*<sup>85</sup> in Adrianople, presents the following information about the Babis, who lived in Adrianople:

[P. 10/a] When the Interior Minister<sup>86</sup> Huseyn<sup>87</sup> Pasha seized Babi books and handed them over to Shaykhul-Islám<sup>88</sup> for consideration (probably in 1868)<sup>89</sup> Yunus Mehdi served in the Fetvakhanih (a department of the Shaykhul-Islám-mat). [When] he was examining those books he found them

[P. 10/b] heretical. The Báb was considered in them / a prophet like Músá, 'Isá, and Muhammad[.] Shaykh Mehmet Huseyn (probably [stands] for Husayn- 'Alí)<sup>90</sup> was also considered a prophet, the first Báb's successor and a Báb too. Based on the conclusion of Shaykhul-Islám, the Babi books were recognized to be harmful and were burnt in a solemn ceremony. The Babis were sent into exile. /

[P. 11/a] Yunus Mehdi knows that the Babis who arrived in Constantinople from Baghdad were settled in Adrianople. They were banished to Akka because they tried to propagate their teaching. He does not remember the exact date.

Mushir Mahmud Hatdi<sup>91</sup> Pasha has seen the Babis in Akka. They live well [P. 11/b] there and the population / is friendly to them. They receive some kind of allowance from the Turkish government. They have a good influence over the people around them. The old Shaykh Husayn- 'Alí died, handing authority over the Babis down to his son, 'Abbás.

#### Comments:

The document states that the reason for banishing Bahá'u'lláh and His followers to Akka was the spread of Baha'i writings and Bahá'u'lláh's claim put forward in them. That this was one of the main causes of the deportation of Baha'is from Adrianople is confirmed by Baha'i sources. Thus, A. Taherzadeh, speaking of the factors which caused this deportation writes: 'Furthermore, a few among the authorities had come across some of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and become aware of his stupendous claims. All these were important factors ...' (Taherzadeh 1996, 2: 398).

The document also emphasizes the friendly relations between the Baha'is and the local population of Palestine.

The diplomatic sources quoted above lead the reader to the following general conclusions:

- (1) Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to Constantinople/Adrianople and to Akka was mainly due to two causes:

- (a) intrigues of Persian diplomatic representatives in the Ottoman Empire against the Baha'is and primarily against Bahá'u'lláh;
  - (b) the gradual spread of the Baha'i teachings and the Ottoman government's fear of a growing influence of those teachings over the population.
- (2) The Baha'is led a peaceful and humble life wherever they happened to reside (which is repeatedly stated in the documents).
- (3) There existed exceptionally good relations between the Baha'is and the local population whether in Adrianople, Akka, or Baghdad.

The text below stands out from all the diplomatic documents in Baron Rosen's archive. It is designated in the report as a 'rough translation (from German) of a "petition of the Babi Shaykh"', which obviously is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh. However, the given text itself is not titled a 'petition' but a 'protest'. The authenticity of this document can well be questioned. But regardless of whether it was actually based on any real document it can by no means be regarded as an accurate rendition of Bahá'u'lláh's letter, for if such a letter did exist this is a paraphrased (rough) translation of a translation of a 'would-be original letter'. I present it without further comments.

5.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 99

Вольный перевод прошения Шейха бабидов (с немецкого).

Протест Мирзы Хусейна Али Хана 9 августа 1868 года (Н. ?) в  
Австрийское Консульство

[Р. 12/a] Мы обращаемся к Вам, протестуя во имя бога и человечества против меры принятой относительно нас Оттоманским Правительством без всякой вины с нашей стороны. /

[Р. 12/b] Шесть лет тому назад нам предложили и мы приняли Турецкое Подданство. Вслед за тем, по просьбе Персии нас перевели из Багдада в Константинополь без всякой вины с нашей стороны а четыре месяца спустя нас сослали в Адрианополь. В настоящее время нас снова

[Р. 13/a] удаляют / из Адрианополя и мы не знаем куда нас посылают. Мы не знаем за собой никакой вины, а между тем вследствие этой меры мы лишаемся всего нашего имущества. Если Оттоманское правительство не желает держать нас у себя то пусть, принимая во

[Р. 13/b] внимание, что мы не угрожаем этой стране, оно / позволит нам перейти в страну другого Государя. Мы просим Правителей Европы, любящих свободу склониться над нами и спасти нас бедных.

9<sup>го</sup> августа 1868 год  
(Вероятно в подлиннике год  
и число были выгравлены на  
... календаре)

Подпись  
Хусейн Али  
(печать)

Translation:

Free translation of the Babi Shaykh's petition (from German).

Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí Khan's protest to the Austrian Consulate dated 9 August 1868 (A. ?)<sup>92</sup>

[P. 12/a] We address our protest to you, for the sake of God and humanity, against the measure taken in our regard by the Ottoman government through no fault of our own./

[P. 12/b] Six years ago we were offered Turkish citizenship, which we accepted. Following that, we were moved, on Persia's request, to Constantinople from Baghdad through no fault of our own, but four months later we were banished to Adrianople. At present we are being deported again [P. 13/a] / from Adrianople and we do not know where we are being sent. We are not aware of any offence which we may have committed, and yet as a result of this measure [taken against us] we are being deprived of all our possessions. If the Ottoman government is not willing to keep us on its soil, let it allow us, considering that we are not endangering this country, / to move [P. 13/b] to some other Monarch's country. We are asking the freedom-loving rulers of Europe to have mercy on us and save us poor people.

9<sup>th</sup> August 1868  
(Probably, in the original  
letter the date was engraved  
on ...<sup>93</sup> the calendar)

Signature  
Huseyn Ali  
(stamp)

The document below is exceptionally interesting, for it reveals the attitude of some Adrianople Súfi Shaykhs towards the Babi and Baha'i teachings as well as their perception and likely estimation of them. At any rate, like many other documents in the Archive it is an eyewitness account from an independent source.

6.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 99

[P. 14/a] В Английском Консульстве не сохранилось протеста бабидов. Известно также что протест был отправлен 28 Июля/9 Августа 1868, а 29 Июня/10 Июля бабиды были отправлены на повозках, под конвоем в Галлиполи. Бабиды думали, что их выдадут Персиянам для того, чтобы избавиться от них и что Персияне немедленно умертвят их. Рассказывали, что в Галлиполи их посадят на пароход, на котором уже ожидает их полицейский чиновник, и отвезут в Персию. /

[P. 14/b] По свидетельству Адрианопольских старожилов (Шейхи дервишь Мавлеви и Кадрихане, Халиль бей Дерт ... Мустафа бей и Хадри Хашим ефенди, а также Рамин бей – люди с которыми Шейх Хусейн Али был в личных сношениях) бабиды жили тихо и скромно. Шейх Хусейн Али был очень умный и почтенный человек. Он занимался изучением и истолкованием многих богословских

[P. 15/a] вопросов./ Хаджи Иззет паша находит что учение бабидов есть стремление к самосовершенствованию. Баб есть внешний признак двери, ведущей душу в рай. Кротость и самообладание, а также твердость в перенесении несчастий очищает душу и отворяет ей дверь (баб) в рай. Человек, проповедующий это, вразумляющий людей и ведущий их к спасению и есть баб. Об этом говорится и в евангелии.

[P. 15/b] Пророк Иса (Иисус Христос) называет / себя бабом, так как через него люди входят в рай. По мнению Хадр и Иззет Паши чистая доктрина бабизма была извращена людьми необразованными, в сущности же она никак не противоречит исламизму[.] И Магомет был, в возведенном смысле таким же бабом, как и Муса и Иса и все великие святые и мудрецы, поучавшие и исправлявшие человечество.

Translation:

[P. 14/a] The Babi protest has not been preserved in the English Consulate. It is also known that the protest was sent 28 July/9 August 1868, and 29 June/10 July <sup>94</sup> the Babis were sent to Gallipoli in carriages under escort. The Babis thought that they were going to be handed over to the Persians and that the Persians would immediately put them to death. It was said that they would be put on a steamer in Gallipoli, on which a police official was already waiting for them, to take them to Persia./

[P. 14/b] According to the testimony of old Adrianople dwellers (Shaykhs belonging to the dervishes of the Mevlevi and Qadrikhaneh Sufi orders, Khalil bey Dert ... [last part unclear], Mustafa bey and Khadri Hashim bey

as well as Ramin bey – who were people with whom Shaykh Husayn-‘Alí had a personal relationship), the Babis lived a quiet and humble life. Shaykh Husayn-‘Alí was a very clever and respectable person. He was engaged in the [P. 15/a] study and interpretation of many theological issues. / Haji Izzet Pasha finds that the Babi teaching is an aspiration for self-perfection. The *Báb* is the outward sign of a gate leading the soul to Paradise. Humility and self-possession, and also firmness in sustaining sufferings purify the soul and open for it the gate (*Báb*) of Paradise. The person preaching this, enlightening people and guiding them unto salvation is the one who is the *Báb*. This is also [P. 15/b] what the Gospel speaks about. ‘Ísá (Jesus Christ), the Prophet, calls / himself the *Báb*, for through him people enter Paradise. According to Hadi and Izzet Pasha, the *Báb*'s pure doctrine was distorted by uneducated people, while in essence it by no means contradicts Islam. Muhammad, in the exalted sense of the word, was also the *Báb*, and Músá and ‘Ísá, as well as all the great saints and wise men, who taught and corrected humankind.

Comments:

Hájí ‘Izzat Páshá (Haji Izzet Pasha), who is particularly quoted in this account among those Shaykhs with whom Bahá'u'lláh ‘had a personal relationship’, is obviously the person mentioned by Shoghi Effendi as ‘Izzat-Áqá:

Traveling through rain and storm, at times even making night marches, the weary travelers, after brief halts at Kúchik-Chakmachih ... arrived at their destination, on the first of Rajab AH 1280 (12 December 1863), and were lodged in the Khán-i-‘Arab, a two-story caravanserai, near the house of ‘Izzat-Áqá

(Effendi 1995: 161)

The next document consists of a copy of the dispatch sent by Russia's Consul General in Adharbayjan, Bezobrazoff. The dispatch contains the text of a written proclamation in Persian which was diffused in Tabriz. Bezobrazoff contributed greatly to the manuscript collection of the IOM, for his dedication note can be found in many of the Baha'i manuscripts preserved in the collection.

7.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 98

Из копии донесения Ген. Консула в Адербейджане Безобразова от 1876 г. № 201

[P. 8/a]

جناب اعلم العلما مدت یکسال است مکر این های و هوی را نمی شنود از شهر عکه که در دریای عثمان است از مرشدنا چند طغرا فرمان آمده است که دین خودرا اظهار نماییم و پیغمبر اخر الزمان که آقا سید رسول باشد و جناب قائم آل که صاحب العصر و الزمان باشد آقا سید قایم تشریف اورده و جناب عده العلما حاجی میرزا جواد آقا را<sup>95</sup> اعلم میدانم اخبار میدهم که جناب سید الشهاد تشریف اورده در عکه است و چند آخوند ملا محمد علی را که در شهر زنجان شهید کرددند آنهم تشریف اورده در عکه است چند روز قبل ما این حوالت را قلم نموده بدر مسجد حاجی میرزا مولی چسپانیده بودم یکنفر ولدالزنا آن کاغذ را پاره کرده بود دوباره لازم است بما به جناب حاجی میرزا جواد اخبار دهیم که رفته در بالای منبر خلق را اغوا نکنند و ماهرا تکذیب ننمایند و ده هزار / نفر مردان جنک دیده و شمشیرزن در تبریز جمع شده اند براین [P. 8/b]

آمده باشید هر کس از دوستان ما میخواهد که سر امام خود برود برود بعکه

Translation:

From the copy of the report of the [Russian] Consul Gen[eral] in Adharbay-  
jan, Bezobrazov dated 1876 No. 201

[P. 8/a] Your Excellency, the most learned of the learned! Perhaps, you don't hear the vociferation [which has been rising] for a year. Out of the city of Akka, that is in the Ottoman Sea, from our Spiritual Guide, there have come several orders that we should proclaim our Faith. The latter-day Prophet, who is our Lord, the Messenger, and His Excellency the *Qá'im* of the family [of Muhammad], who is the Lord of the epoch and age, Our Master the *Qá'im*, have appeared. Your Excellency the first of the learned, Hájí Mírzá Javád! I consider our Master<sup>96</sup> to be the Most Learned. I give [you] the news that the Lord of Martyrs has appeared. [He] is in Akka. And some *ákhúnd*: Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí who was martyred in the city of Zanjan – he has also appeared. [He] is in Akka. We wrote this proclamation<sup>97</sup> a few days ago and ...<sup>98</sup> stuck it to the door of Hájí Mírzá's mosque. Some bastard tore off that paper. It is necessary for us again to warn His Excellency Hájí Mírzá Javád that he shouldn't ascend the pulpit and lead the people astray and [P. 8/b] accuse us of falsehood. Ten thousand / battle-hardened men and gallant warriors have gathered in Tabriz. Be prepared for it. If any of our friends is willing to visit his Imam, let him go to Akka.

Comments:

‘The *Qá'im* of the Family of Muhammad’ is the Twelfth (Hidden) Imam, the *Mahdí*, awaited by Shi‘ih Muslims. The word ‘*Qá'im*’ lit. means: ‘He who shall arise’. ‘The Lord of the Age’ is the *Qá'im*'s title. This messianic figure was expected to return in the fullness of time and bring a reign of righteousness to the world, according to an eschatological tradition which has much in common with the Christian expectation of the return of Christ and Mahayana Buddhism's promise of the advent of ‘the Buddha of universal righteousness’. The Báb's central claim was that he represented this long-awaited spiritual authority. He declared that the prophecies of ‘the return’ of the *Qá'im* had been fulfilled in him.

'Lord of Martyrs' is the title of Imam Husayn.

Mullá Muhammad-‘Alí of Zanjan, also called 'Hujjatu'l-Islám' (The Proof of Islam) was a highly placed Moslem divine who acquainted himself with the Báb's teachings and admonished his disciples to accept the Babi Faith. Later he became the target of attacks and suffered martyrdom. The Báb designated him as 'Hujjat-i-Zanjání'.

The following is an anonymous diplomatic dispatch concerning an episode of the persecution of Baha'is in Iran.

8.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 98

Донесение из Тегерана от 15 февраля [1890 г]:

[P. 10/a] В начале Февр[аля] 1890 г. 20 бабидов, из окрестностей Исфахана, спасаясь от преследований местного духовенства въехали в Исфахан и, укрывшись в здании Английского телеграфа, обратились к заступничеству английск[ого] Посланника. По его ходатайству, было дано приказание проводить бабидов в ... (исф. ? – Ю. И.) деревню Седех под охраною сарбазов. Они отправились с 5<sup>ю</sup> сарбазами, но городская чернь напала на них и убила 11 челов[ек]. Сарбазы остались при этом совершенно безучастными зрителями. Остальные 9 бабидов уехали ... вновь на телеграфную станцию. Сэр ... Вольф был сильно возмущен этим событием. Бабиды и до сих пор не могут вернуться в свои дома.

Translation:

A report from Tehran dated 15 February [1890; sender unknown]:

[P. 10/a] At the beginning of Febr[uary] 1890, 20 Babis from the vicinity of Isfahan, in an attempt to escape persecution from the Isfahan local clergy, left for Isfahan and, finding refuge in the English telegraph building, appealed to the Engl[ish] Envoy for intercession. It was decided, upon his intercession, to take the Babis, guarded by *sarbázs*,<sup>99</sup> to the ...<sup>100</sup> village of Sidih. They left with five *sarbázs*, but the city mob attacked them and killed 11 peop[le]. The *sarbázs* watched what was happening with absolute indifference, like spectators. The remaining 9 Babis left ... [word unclear] again for the telegraph station. Sir ... Wolf<sup>101</sup> was quite outraged by this event. Until now the Babis are still unable to return to their homes.

Comments:

The persecution of Babis/Baha'is in the village of Sidih is mentioned by Browne in a footnote to *A Traveller's Narrative* ... (Browne 1891, 2: 169). See also Cameron and Momen 1996: 117, 119.

## Notes

- 1 Corrected by another hand into: ширазского.
- 2 Corrected by the other hand into: шиитских.
- 3 Corrected by the other hand into: 45.
- 4 Corrected by the other hand into: или даже ... пророка.
- 5 In the original text 'Persian poet' is corrected by another hand into: poet from Shiraz.
- 6 In the original text corrected by the other hand into: Shi'ih.
- 7 In the original text corrected by the other hand into: 45.
- 8 In the original text corrected by the other hand into: or even ... of a prophet.
- 9 This is an obvious reference to the given document.
- 10 Persian ambassador in Constantinople.
- 11 Corrected by the other hand into: Генерал Губернатор.
- 12 The word '(sic)' is in the original text.
- 13 Corrected by the other hand into: Чиновник, исп[олняющий] должность Генер[ал] Губ[ернатора].
- 14 Must stand for *Qá'im-Maqám* (Local governor). It is corrected by the other hand into: General Governor.
- 15 'Vazír/vizír' means 'minister' (Arabic/Persian/Turkish).
- 16 'The Porte' or 'the Sublime Porte' is a reference to the Ottoman Empire.
- 17 Corrected by the other hand into: Аали-Паша.
- 18 Corrected by the other hand into: сведения мои.
- 19 Corrected by the other hand into: боялась.
- 20 «В окрестностях» is crossed out by the other hand.
- 21 Corrected by the other hand into: общество.
- 22 Corrected by the other hand into: между тем как оно ... вообще.
- 23 Corrected by the other hand into: by 'Alí Páshá.
- 24 The word: 'environs' is struck off by the other hand.
- 25 Corrected by the other hand into: society.
- 26 Corrected by the other hand into: while generally speaking it.
- 27 Hájí Mirzá Husayn Khán Mushi'rú'd-Dawlíh.
- 28 This street is currently named 'Mayakovskovo Street'.
- 29 «Ee» is an insertion which is not in accord with the grammatical case of the subsequent word.
- 30 The year AH 1263 corresponds to AD 1847.
- 31 I did not try to change the Turkish oriented rendering of all the names and terms to preserve the flavor of the original document.
- 32 Mujtehid (Turkish pronunciation) stands for the *Mujtahid* – the highest rank of divine in Shi'ih Islam, endowed with the right to make authoritative pronouncements.
- 33 The Turkish rendering of Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad the Báb.
- 34 'Rasúl' means 'messenger', 'apostle' (Arabic/Persian). This term is also applied to the Prophet Muhammad and other Prophets in the Koran.
- 35 Lit.: revelation saying ...
- 36 Lit.: formed a considerable party.
- 37 The question mark is in the original text.
- 38 For the Baha'i account of these events see Nabíl-i-A'zam 1974: 73–281.
- 39 Page numbers are confused.
- 40 It is spelt in the text as: гиджры.
- 41 Page numbers are confused.
- 42 'Murid' (*murid*) means 'disciple' (Arabic/Persian).
- 43 'Naib' (*ná'ib*) means 'vicegerent, deputy' (Arabic/Persian).
- 44 The question mark in parenthesis is in the original text. 'Zingan', apparently, stands for Zinjan (Zanjan).

- 45 For the Baha'i account of these events, see Effendi 1995: 17–85.
- 46 The word can also be read as: «приведенный».
- 47 This is how it is written in the text.
- 48 Originally it was written: «экзекуции» (corrected into: «казни»).
- 49 This is how it is written in the text (grammatically incorrect).
- 50 This is how it is written in the text (grammatically incorrect).
- 51 Page numbers are confused.
- 52 ‘Ulamá’—(Moslem) divines (Arabic/Persian).
- 53 Lit.: signs, indications.
- 54 The word is used in the original text.
- 55 ‘Mehdi’ is in the original.
- 56 Page numbers are confused.
- 57 For the Baha'i account, see Effendi 1995: 49–60.
- 58 ‘Naib’ – see a note above.
- 59 ‘Murid’ – see a note above.
- 60 The question mark in parenthesis is in the original text.
- 61 For the Baha'i source, see Effendi 1995: 127–162.
- 62 The name (of the place?) is not clear. The initial letter is: ‘3’, the final combination of letters: ‘иे’.
- 63 The spelling of this geographical name in the text is: Акіо.
- 64 Here and below the spelling of this name in the original text is: Яхія.
- 65 The last zero is crossed out in the original text.
- 66 ‘Konak’ – mansion (Turkish). I owe this information to Mr. A. Vitol from IOM. Italic in the text is mine.
- 67 ‘Gate, door’ (Arabic/Persian).
- 68 The word in the original lit. means: ‘confession; acknowledgement, declaration’.
- 69 ‘Mektubchi’ – lit.: paperwork official, used here to denote a government official (Turkish).
- 70 In fact this event took place a year earlier, in 1285.
- 71 Mírzá Áqá Ján was in fact Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis, and not his brother.
- 72 ‘Tekke (takiye/takíyyih)’ – a Sufi abode (Turkish pronunciation). The plural is implied here.
- 73 ‘Medrese (medresih)’ – (mostly religious) school (Arabic/Persian/Turkish). Again, the plural is implied here.
- 74 i.e. in the tent.
- 75 ‘Tebrizli’ is the Turkish for Tabrízi (from Tabriz) in Persian.
- 76 This is how the word is spelt in the document: Аккій.
- 77 Here and below the strange use of the grammatical case is in the text. Probably, instead of ‘находятся’ one should read ‘множество’.
- 78 Page numbers are confused.
- 79 This is how the word is spelt in the text.
- 80 It is not clear from the text if land or business owners are implied.
- 81 Here, like in the above case, the last zero is struck out.
- 82 The page numbers are confused.
- 83 Lit.: without any procedure.
- 84 The name is unclear. It can read as: Катди or Катби.
- 85 Qadi (Qázi) – ‘judge’ (Arabic/Persian/Turkish).
- 86 Lit.: Police Minister.
- 87 It is spelt: ‘Husin’ in the text.
- 88 A leading Moslem divine, the head of a religious court in Islam.
- 89 The text in parenthesis is crossed out.
- 90 This explanation is in the original text.
- 91 The last part of the name is not very clear. It could as well be read: Katdi or Katbi.
- 92 The second letter in this abbreviation is not clear. But since logically the abbreviation

- must stand for ‘H. Э.’ (A.D.) the second letter must be ‘Э’ (corresponding to D. in A. D.).
- 93 The word is unclear.
- 94 Double dates here stand for the Julian (first date) and the Gregorian (second date) calendars. In the original document the double dating is displayed as a fraction.
- 95 A footnote to the word : ﴿Главный ... и первый Баб, Саид Мухаммад – ‘The Major and the first Báb, Siyyid Muhammad’.
- 96 A footnote in Russian to this word in the letter: it is the primary and first Báb, Said Muhammad.
- 97 The original word literally means: a draft, check/cheque.
- 98 The word in the original might be understood as ‘hair’, but it does not fit the context.
- 99 ‘Sarbáz’ – ‘soldier’ (Persian).
- 100 The word is not quite clear. It might stand for Isf. – the first three letters of the name of the city (Isfahan) or the attribute derived from this name: Isfaháni.
- 101 The first part of the name is unclear.

# Part III From G. Batyushkov's correspondence with V. R. Rosen

1.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 25

[from a letter dated 18 January 1894, sent from Tehran]

[P. 11/a] ... Как Вы легко догадаетесь, из остальных статей меня больше [P. 11/b] всего заинтересовало письмо А. Туманского. Пришла книга как раз на 2-й неделе сознательного знакомства моего с одним из наиболее ученых и уважаемых бабидов в Тегеране, тем самым **ميرزا احسن ادیب** (نامه دانشوران) (прекратившийся на 1-ом томе ибо издание было) Правительственное, и в Персии это равнозначно погибели, так как дело, требующее расходов и не обещающее громадных доходов, не пользуется симпатией Шаха, ни его М-стров) и которому принадлежат другие произведения исторические **و غيره**. Узнал я о принадлежности его к «ним» **آنرانه**, как мы из предосторожности говорим, вследствие крайне либеральных отзывов его о мусульманстве, и готовности познакомить меня с одним из главных **أهل حق** который, впрочем, все еще уклоняется от свидания и с бабидами. Кстати пришелся раздел [sic] наследства одного русскоподданного бабида (на Кавказе их масса), у которого хранилось довольно много баб[идских] рукописей и книг. Я, очевидно, постарался раздобыть эти бумаги, как ненужные при расчетах, и таким образом /

[P. 12/a] спас от огласки достаточно (книг ?), которые могли бы существенно пострадать, ибо Пр-во и дух-во очень подозрительно смотрят на них, доказательством чему может служить бакинская история. Наследство это помогло мне вдвойне: прежде всего я знакомлюсь с содержанием **الروايات**, к-рые в большом количестве адресованы разным лицам\* и почти исключительно содержит наставления и советы, и узнаю о существовании разных книг и молитвенников; кроме того за такое одолжение мне с большой охотой доставляют и обещают книги и стихи. Так у меня уже есть: **كتاب هيكل** и **إيقان**, нечто вроде нашего законника, **كتاب أقدس**, заключающий в

себе кроме سوره الهیکل письма к царям и много других – книга напечатана в Бомбее в 1308 году (стоит конечно 19 крон) и мне обещают списки с Аккского архива (в Акке сохраняются копии со всех писем и посланий).

[footnote by Batyushkov]:

\* а ведь я должен прочитать их, чтобы узнать кому они написаны и возвратить по принадлежности.

Translation:

[P. 11/a] ... As you can easily imagine, of the remaining articles the one [P. 11/b] which has interested / me most is A. Tumanski's letter. The book arrived in the very 2nd week since I had intentionally made the acquaintance of one of the most learned and respectable Babis in Tehran, that same <sup>میرزا احسن ادیب</sup><sup>1</sup> who has compiled the Persian grammar sent to you via me for your Alekseevich, and has participated in the publishing of the <sup>نامه دانشمندان</sup><sup>2</sup> (which ceased to exist after the 1st volume, because it was a Government edition, which has no chance of surviving in Persia, since any endeavor that involves expenses and does not promise huge profit is not favored by the Shah and his M[ini]sters) and who is the author of some other historic works <sup>و غيره</sup><sup>3</sup>. I found out that he belongs to 'them' <sup>آنطاق</sup><sup>4</sup> as we refer [to them] out of caution, from his extremely liberal comments on Islam and his readiness to introduce me to one of the chief <sup>اہل حق</sup><sup>5</sup> who, however, still avoids meeting with Babis. The division of the inheritance of a Babi, a Russian subject (there is a large number of them in the Caucasus), who kept quite a few Ba[bi] manuscripts and books, happened just in time. Obviously, I tried to get hold of these papers as if they were useless when

[P. 12/a] settling [banking]accounts, and thus / saved from publicity a lot of ...<sup>6</sup>, which could otherwise have suffered considerable damage, for the Gov[ernmen]t and the cl[er]gy view them with great suspicion as proved by the Baku incident. This [division of] the inheritance has helped me in two ways: first of all I am becoming familiar with the content of the <sup>الواح</sup><sup>7</sup> which for the most part are addressed to different individuals\* and almost exclusively contain admonitions and counsels, and [also] I am finding out about the existence of various books and prayer books; moreover, for this favor [I am doing the Babis], I am being promised books and verses which are quite willingly being delivered to me [by them]. Thus, I already have: the <sup>کتاب اقدس</sup><sup>8</sup> which is something like our Book of Laws[,] the <sup>ایقان</sup><sup>9</sup> and the <sup>کتاب هیکل</sup><sup>10</sup> which apart from the <sup>سوره الهیکل</sup><sup>11</sup> comprises also letters to the kings and many other [things] – the book was printed in Bombay in 1308 (certainly, it costs 19 qirans), and I have been promised transcripts from the Akka Archive (in Akka copies of all the letters and epistles are preserved).

[Footnote by Batyushkov]:

\* you see, I must read them to find out whom they are addressed to in order to return them to the addressees.

Comments:

Mírzá Ahsan Adíb (Hájí Mírzá Hasan-i-Adíbu'l-'Ulamá'), whose name Batyushkov wrote in Persian and whom he defined as 'one of the most learned and respectable Babis', was an eminent follower of Bahá'u'lláh. He was appointed a Hand of the Cause and identified as one of the 19 Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh. In 1874 he was employed by the Qajar princes, writing a large number of encyclopedic books (Momen W. 1989: 98).

'Námiy-i-Dánishvarán' (lit.: Scholars' book) was an encyclopedic book published in Iran during Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's reign under the supervision of Prince 'Alí-Qulí Mírzá I'tizádú's-Saltanih, who was the minister of education of the time.

'Alekseevich' is a Russian middle name (patronymic). The person in question is most likely to be Valentin Alekseevich Dzukovski – a well-known nineteenth century Persian studies scholar in Russia, who among other things published the *Asrár-i-Tawhíd* ...<sup>12</sup> and wrote (together with K. G. Zalemann) a Persian grammar book. Coincidentally, one of his works is about the 'People of the Truth (Ahl-i Haqq)'<sup>13</sup> mentioned in the above passage. This scholar is repeatedly referred to in the correspondence.

As for 'the Baku incident', it is not clear what incident Batyushkov is alluding to.

The *Suriy-i-Haykal* (*Tablet of the Temple*) is a Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh which the founder of the Baha'i Faith ordered, together with his *Tablet to the Kings*, to be copied in the form of a pentacle symbolizing the human temple.

Let us now go back to the letter.

[P. 12/a] К крайнему моему сожалению я не только не имею «Catal[ogue] descript[ive] of 27 Bâbî MSS» и не мог бы найти его здесь, но у меня даже [P. 12/b] нет VII / Тома 3.В.О.\* , в к-ром верно есть разбор этой статьи, и лишен таким образом возможности узнать какие именно баб. книги еще не явились достоянием библиотек и в кредит заказал список с молитвенника содержащего ежедневные (их 3 рода) молитвы с указанием положения и движений, какими должно сопровождаться чтение их. Для образчика прилагаю Вам при сем маленькую молитву оказавшуюся в одной из приобретенных книг. От своего бабида я м[ежду] пр[очим] узнал (м[ожет] б[ыть]) этот текст уже для Вас, читавших Catal ... и VII том довольно старая новость) пополнение заглавий произведений لوح حكمت – جواهرالاسرار по списку Броуна ... в Journal As., а именно: بهاء كتاب هيكل و سراج تبيان صحيفه متعدده Приведу еще название сочинений حسن اعظم которого мой очень хвалил за ум, знание и др. качества هفت وادی / جواب از سوال ... جدید / مدنیه.

[Footnote by Batyushkov]:

\* Не могу в этом обвинять исключительно брата, который мог не знать о не выходе сих книг и к-рому я поручил (надеясь на ваше любезное содействие) пересыпать мне сюда книги по Вашему указанию.

Translation:

[P. 12/a] To my great disappointment not only do I not have the «Catal[ogue] descript[ive] of 27 Bâbî MSS» and it would be impossible for me to find it [P. 12/b] here, but I don't even have Volume / VII of the Z.V.O.,\* which must surely contain an analysis of this article, and am therefore unable to judge which particular B[ab]i books have not so far been available in libraries, [so] I ordered, on credit, a copy of a prayer book containing daily prayers (there are three kinds of them), with the indication of the poses and movements that should accompany their reading. I am enclosing herewith a short prayer, which happened to be in one of the books [I] obtained, as an example. By the way, I have found out from my Babi (m[ay]b[e], for those of you who have already read Catal ... and volume VII this is not quite a revelation)<sup>14</sup> the additional titles of the writings of بهاء<sup>15</sup> according to Browne's ... index in the Journal As., namely: انتیان<sup>18</sup> صحیفہ متعددہ لوح حکمت – جواہرالاسرار<sup>19</sup> – کتاب هیکل<sup>20</sup> and لوح سراج<sup>21</sup> of which I have written to you above. I will also mention the names of the works by عصمناعظم<sup>22</sup> whom my حسن<sup>23</sup> praises very much for his intellect, knowledge and other qualities[:]  
هفت وادی / جواب از سوال ...<sup>25</sup> جدید / مدنیه<sup>24</sup>.

[Footnote by Batyushkov]:

\* I cannot blame my brother alone for that only, who might well not have been aware of these books not [*sic*] coming out [i.e. not having been published] and whom I trusted with sending these books over to me here, upon your instruction, hoping for your gracious assistance.

Comments:

The full title of Browne's work referred to is: 'Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábí Manuscripts' published in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. 'Catal ...' (last part unclear) and 'Browne's index in the Journal As.' are presumably references to the same work.

Z. V. O. is the abbreviated title of the journal *Zapiski Vostochnovo Otdeleniya ... (Memoirs of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society)*.

*Javáhiru'l-Asrár* is a Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad in which Bahá'u'lláh comments on some Biblical subjects.

*Lawh-i-Hikmat/Lawhu'l-Hikmat* (*Tablet of Wisdom*) is a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh dealing with major philosophical issues (see also Tumanski's letter # 6 and comments).

*Lawh-i-Siráj* – a Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh, addressed to Mullá 'Alí-Muhammad Siráj, a native of Isfahan.

*Madaníyyih* – lit.: ‘Civilization,’ by which, apparently, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s *The Secret of Divine Civilization* is implied.

*Seven Valleys* – this mystical Writing by Bahá’u’lláh is misattributed here to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Let us now continue with the letter.

[P. 12/b] Наконец по [صَبَحَ ازْلٌ,] говорят, что он влачит теперь весьма

[P. 13/a] жалкую жизнь ибо дети его – почти / «<sup>28</sup>единственные адепты его, далеко не дают права надеяться на блестящее будущее, хотя разъезжали по белу свету м[ежду] пр[очим] в … бывали часто, но не выказывают тенденций заниматься спасением душ своих или других. Остальные Бабиды уже уверились в смысле слов что должен был 9 лет скрываться, для спасения от верной смерти, следовательно этим периодом ограничивается роль, и потому признаются священными лишь книги написанные за это время *مُنَاجَاتٍ وَمُسْتَقْبِطٍ*. Кстати о книгах[,] не следовало бы в переводе Туманского, хоть в скобках или в примечании пояснить имя Супехр, что это автор *السَّانُ الْمَلِكُ نَاسِخُ التَّوَارِيخِ*, а Хидайет – автор *رَضَا قَوْلَى خَانِ رُوضَةِ الصَّفَا* так как это [P. 13/a] может не быть известно всем интересующимся бабидами. / Тот же бабид вполне подтвердил Вашу догадку (в Coll. Sc.) о значении <sup>١٥٢</sup> при чем прибавил, что иногда это имя заменяется цифрой 9, так как

ب + ه + ل + س и составит 9. Для этого бабида я и просил В[алентина] А[лексеевича ?],<sup>29</sup> буде возможно, достать его издание (Иканы кажется) фотографическим способом. Если бы это было Вам затруднительно по материальным … или другим причинам, то м[ожет] б[ыть] Вы посоветовали бы мне обратиться непосредственно к Броуну *عَلَيْهِ بَهَا* чтоб он прислал книгу через Миссию в Тегеран.

В виде предварительной взятки прилагаю обращик [*sic*] молитв, а в следующий раз надеюсь прислать молитвенничек (если такой не найдут, [P. 14/a] то копию с него) и м[ожет] б[ыть] копию, или / самые *الواح مُنْقَرِفَةٍ* из упомянутого наследия. Многие из них не лишены интереса, наверно не вошли в число 27… но только (?)… выявлению отношения … к своей пастве …

Translation:

[P. 12/b] Finally about *صَبَحَ ازْلٌ*,<sup>30</sup> he is said to be dragging out a very

[P. 13/a] miserable existence now. For his sons, who are almost / his “only adherents, leave no hope for a bright future, though they have traveled extensively around the world. By the way, they have often been to …<sup>31</sup>, but without showing any tendencies to preoccupy themselves with the salvation of

either their souls or other people's. The rest of the Babis have already become convinced of the meaning of the words of نقطة اولی <sup>٣٢</sup> that بجه <sup>٣٣</sup> had to be in concealment for 9 years in order to be saved from an inevitable death. Therefore [Subh-i-Azal's] role is limited to this period and, consequently, only the books written during that period[...] and مُناجات are considered sacred. Talking of books, by the way, would it not be appropriate to explain in parenthesis or in a note the word *Supehr* in Tumanski's translation [saying] that this is the author of the *Násikhu't-Tawárikh* (لسان الملك), while *Hidayat* is the author of the *Rawzatu's-Safá* (روضة الصفا), since not everyone interested in the Babis [P. 13/b] may be familiar with it. / The same Babi wholly confirmed your conjecture (in the *Coll[ections] Sc[ientifiques]*) about the meaning of ١٥٢<sup>٣٤</sup> he added, moreover, that this name is sometimes replaced with the figure 9, because ب + ه + ا + س would make ٩.<sup>٣٥</sup> It was for this Babi that I asked V[alentin] A[leksevich]<sup>٣٦</sup> to obtain, if possible, his edition (of the *Íqán*, probably), which is reproduced photographically. If it is difficult for you materially ... or [for] any other reasons, then m[ay]b[e] you would advise me to ask Browne ب[ع] عليه<sup>٣٧</sup> directly to send the book to Tehran via the Mission.

As an initial bribe I am enclosing a sample of prayers, while next time I hope to send you a small prayer book (if I fail to find the same kind I will make a [P. 14/a] copy of it) and also m[ay]b[e] a copy or/ the very *لواح مترفة*<sup>٣٨</sup> from the mentioned inheritance. Some of them are not devoid of interest, [as] they were, probably, not included in the 27 ...<sup>٣٩</sup> but only ... [for] revealing the attitude ... towards his flock ...

#### Comments:

As for Subh-i-Azal's 'miserable existence', as stated in the letter, it is confirmed by many other accounts including the one left by E. G. Browne: 'His followers soon dwindled to a very small number, and I was informed by a Babi who visited him a few years ago, that he was living alone in great poverty, and I think, deserted by his own sons' (Browne 1889b: 517, see also Browne's letter # 7 and comments).

Certain Persian/Arabic terms mentioned in the passage require a few comments.

*Mustayqiz* (مسدیقظ) – lit.: 'Sleeper awakened', is a work by Subh-i-Azal described by Browne in his *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (Browne 1918: 218). 'Munáját' (مناجات) means 'prayers.' For the *Násikhu't-Tawárikh* (and the title of its author 'Lisánu'l-Mulk') (لسان الملك), see Tumanski's letter # 1 and comments. *Rawzatu's-Safá* (روضة الصفا) is a history in Persian consisting of seven volumes, compiled by Khávand Sháh ibn Mahmúd, known also under the nom de plume of Mírkhánd; while Rizá-Qulí Khán, who used the nom de plume Hidáyat, was the author of the Supplement to the *Rawzatu's-Safá* by Mírkhánd consisting of three volumes (see also Tumanski's letter # 1 and Browne's # 12).

The conjecture in the *Collections Scientifiques* about the meaning of ١٥٢ (152) is obviously a reference to Baron Rosen's establishing Bahá'u'lláh's authorship of Epistles in an anonymous manuscript through Bahá'u'lláh's use of the cryptogram 152 at the end of the manuscript, which equals the numerical value of the name Bahá', according to the *abjad* system (*Collections Scientifiques* ... 1891, VI: 147, Ioannesyan 2006: 89).

It is remarkable that Batyushkov, like Tumanski, uses 'May Bahá' abide upon him' (in reference to Browne).

2.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 25  
[from a letter dated 3 November 1894, sent from Tehran]

[P. 15/a]

Многоуважаемый  
Виктор Романович,

Во исполнение обещания моего присылаю Вам при сем молитвенничек, составленный بها и имеющий ту прелесть перед другими списками его, что на обложке خد حضرت غصن اعظم دستخط مبارک удостоил начертать для объяснения > или < [sic] обязательности той или иной молитвы. Читая его, я увлекся некоторыми местами по-моему поразительно напоминающими великопостные молитвы[,] и перевел его, при помощи моего бабида, которого из предосторожности более не называю, тем более, что отправляю письмо персидской почтой .../

[P. 15/b] Переводил я собственно для себя, потому не ручаюсь за точность или полировку ...

[PS P. 15/a (upside down)]:

Когда получу дестхет Гусна, не замедлю послать копию.

Translation:

[P. 15/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

Keeping my promise I am sending you herewith a small prayer book, composed by بها,<sup>40</sup> which, compared to other transcripts, has such a charming thing as خد حضرت غصن اعظم<sup>41</sup> دستخط مبارک<sup>42</sup> for the explanation > or < [sic] [clarification] of the obligatory nature of this prayer. While reading it I became attracted by some passages which are, in my opinion, so amazingly similar to our great Lenten prayers[,] and

translated it, with the help of my Babi, whom I no longer mention by name, out of caution, especially since I am sending this letter by Persian mail ... /

[P. 15/b] As a matter of fact I was translating it for myself, therefore I cannot vouch for its accuracy and polishing ...

[P. 15/a; upside down]

PS As soon as I receive the Ghusn's destkhett<sup>43</sup> I will immediately send [you] a copy.

3.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 25  
[from a letter dated 3 July 1899]<sup>44</sup>

[P. 17/a]

Многоуважаемый  
Виктор Романович

... Валентин Алексеевич говорит, что издание «Китабе Экдес» Туманского близится к концу, если не окончено. Вы знаете, конечно, какое это имеет значение в Персии и какой на нее был бы спрос. /

[P. 17/b] Некоторые уже спрашивают меня о ней вследствие чего я ... спросить Вас издан ли перевод en regard с текстом или отдельно и в сем последнем случае можно ли иметь один текст в утвердительном случае я просил бы Вас о любезном распоряжении выслать текста с переводом шт. 20 и без перевода, а одного текста 80 экземпляров. Если же обязательно взять оба текста, то я бы просил на первых порах всего 50 [P. 18/a] экземпляров. Другая моя просьба / логична с этой первой – Туманский говорит будто Вы имели ввиду напечатать бабидский молитвенник, который я рад выслать Вам ... Если молитвенник этот действительно напечатан, я просил бы выслать мне экз. 100 ...

Translation:

[P. 17/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

... Valentin Alekseevich tells me that Tumanski's publication of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is nearing completion, if not already completed. You, surely, know of what importance it is for Persia and how greatly demanded it would be. / [P. 17/b] Some people have already made inquiries to me about it and therefore I

am wondering ... [word unclear] if the translation is printed together with the [original] text or separately and in the latter case, if it is possible to have the original text alone. In case of your positive [reply to this question] I would ask you to do me a favor by sending me about 20 copies of the text with the translation and 80 copies of the [original] text without the translation.

[P. 18/a] My other request / proceeds logically out of the first – Tumanski says that you supposedly were going to publish the small Babi prayer book, which I will be only happy to send you<sup>45</sup> ... If this prayer book is actually printed, I would ask you to send me about 100 c[opies] ...

Comments:

For Valentin Alekseevich Dzukovski, see Batyushkov's letter # 1 and comments.

Batyushkov mentions Baron Rosen's intention to publish a Baha'i prayer book. There is no reason to doubt this information, for given the importance which Rosen attached to the publication of Baha'i original texts such an intention would be consistent with his approach to Baha'i studies. However, this plan was never accomplished.

We turn now to the correspondence of another Russian diplomat whose stance reflects most vividly the official position of the Russian authorities towards the Babi and especially the Baha'i Faiths.

## Notes

1 Mírzá Ahsan Adíb (a personal name).

2 'Námiy-i-Dánišvarán' (Persian).

3 'And other [works]' (Persian).

4 'That group, community' (Persian).

5 Lit.: people of the Truth (Persian) – a term applied to mystics in general but particularly to one of the religious schools in Iran.

6 The word in the original is not quite clear. It can be read as: книг – 'books'.

7 'Tablets'.

8 'The Kitáb-i-Aqdas'.

9 'The [Kitáb-i-]Iqán'.

10 Lit.: *Kitáb-i-Haykal*.

11 'Síratu'l-Haykal' must stand for the *Sury-i-Haykal* – see comments below.

12 The full title of the book: V. A. Dzukovski. *Tayni Edineniya s Bogom v Podvigah Startsa Abu Sayida. Persidskiye Texty (The Mysteries of the Union with God in the Works of the Wise Man Abu Siyyid: Persian texts)*.

13 The title of the work: V. A. Dzukovski. *Sekta Lyudey Istiny – Ahli hakk – v Persii (The Sect of the People of the Truth – Ahli hakk – in Persia)*.

14 Lit.: this text is already quite an old news.

15 'Bahá' which stands for Bahá'u'lláh.

16 'Javáhiru'l-Asrár' – see comments below.

17 'Lawh-i-Hikmat/Lawhu- l-Hikmat' – see comments below.

18 Lit.: Various Pages.

- 19 Lit.: Exposition.
- 20 ‘*Lawh-i-Siráj*’ – see comments below.
- 21 ‘*Kitáb-i-Haykal*’ – see a note above.
- 22 ‘Ghusn-i-A‘zam’ (The Most Great Branch) – a title applied to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (see comments below).
- 23 ‘Hasan’ – a person’s name.
- 24 ‘*Madaniyyih*’ – see comments below.
- 25 The Persian word is unclear. Its shape resembles: هیسیه.
- 26 Lit.: An answer to a new ... question.
- 27 ‘*Seven Valleys*’ – see comments below.
- 28 The opening quotation mark here is not followed by a closing quotation mark at a later point in the letter.
- 29 ‘Жуковского’?
- 30 ‘Subh-i-Azal (Mírzá Yahyá)’.
- 31 The word is unclear. It is not clear either where the end of the quote is.
- 32 ‘Nuqtih-i-Úlá’ (Primal Point) – the Báb’s title.
- 33 ‘Bahá’[u’lláh]’.
- 34 152 in Arabic and Persian. It corresponds to the numerical value of the letters composing the word Bahá’.
- 35 The total numerical value of the Arabic letters: b + h + a + ’ = 9.
- 36 This abbreviated name, apparently, stands for Valentin Alekseevich Dzukovski (see note above).
- 37 ‘May Bahá’ abide upon him’ (Arabic).
- 38 ‘Diverse Tablets’ (Persian).
- 39 Here and in the two other cases below, the missing words are unclear in the text.
- 40 ‘Bahá’[u’lláh]’.
- 41 ‘His Holiness the Most Great Branch Himself’ (Persian).
- 42 ‘[His] blessed autograph’ (Persian).
- 43 This is the rendering into English of the combination of Russian and Persian in Cyrillics standing for *dastxatt-i-Ghusn[-i-A‘Zam]* – ‘The [Most Great] Branch’s autograph’.
- 44 The letter was presumably sent from Tehran.
- 45 Probably, a transcript for publication.

## Part IV From V. I. Ignatyev's correspondence with V. R. Rosen

1.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 186  
[from a letter dated 14 May 1883, sent from Tehran]

[P. 6/a] ... Секта бабидов не прекращает своего существования. Их много, как говорят в Казвине; не мало и в других городах, не смотря на преследования. К сожалению, почти невозможно что-либо узнать о них достоверное: бабид не откроет из боязни, своих откровений даже и европеизму, ибо одно подозрение в принадлежности к этой секте влечет за собой для подозреваемого смертную казнь, если он не успеет откупиться деньгами. Персидские правители – сумели даже и секту эту обратить в доходную статью для себя: понадобятся им деньги – они ... и обвинят какого либо состоятельного человека в бабизме; тот и платит. / [P. 6/b] И. Г. Григоровичу удалось снять копию с корана [*sic*] бабидов, которую он, кажется, и доставил Вам. У меня есть одна бабидская рукопись – изречения Баба с комментариями на персидском языке, которую я пришлю Вам.

Translation:

[P. 6/a] ... The Babi sect continues to exist. There is said to be a large number of them in Qazvin; quite a few of them are also in other cities, regardless of the persecution. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to obtain any reliable information about them: a Babi will not open up to a European, out of fear, for the least suspicion of adherence to this sect entails the death penalty on the suspected person, if he does not have the money to buy his way out. The Persian rulers have managed even to turn this sect into a revenue-making enterprise for themselves: whenever they need money, they ... [word unclear] and accuse some wealthy person of being a Babi; he has to pay [them]. / I. G. [P. 6/b] Grigorovich has succeeded in making a copy of the Babis' Qur'an [*sic*], which he apparently has delivered to you. I have a Babi manuscript – the Báb's utterances with commentaries in Persian, which I will send you.

## Comments:

The passage of the letter starting with the words: ‘Unfortunately, it is almost impossible’ up to the words: ‘he has to pay them’ is quoted by the Soviet scholar N. A. Kuznetsova in her article (Kuznetsova 1978: 96).

The *Qayyumu'l-Asmá'*, also known as *Commentary on the Súrih of Josef*, was an early Writing of the Báb which preceded the *Bayán*. One of its two transcripts is in the manuscript collection of the IOM, added to the given collection on 12 August 1880 as a gift from I. G. Grigorovich (Chief translator of the Russian Diplomatic mission in Tehran). Its code is C 1167. The transcript was finished in AH 1297 / AD 1880, and, according to a postscript in Russian, was ‘a copy made from the original, preserved in the Library of Prince ‘Alí-Qulí Mírzá I’tizádú’s-Saltaníh, son of Fath-‘Alí Sháh, [who was] Minister of Education’. The latter (original) manuscript was dated AH 1261 / AD 1845 (Ioannesian 2006: 80–81). Given the fact that the Babis regarded the *Qayyumu'l-Asmá'* as their ‘Qur’án’ (Momen W. 1989: 190), the reference in the letter to the ‘copy of the Babis’ Qur’án’ obtained by I. G. Grigorovich must imply this particular manuscript.

As for the manuscript of ‘the Báb’s utterances with commentaries in Persian’, which Ignatyev promised to send Rosen, neither does any of the manuscripts in the IOM collection well match this description nor bear a sign of being a gift from Ignatyev.

There is a long stretch of time (nine years) between Ignatyev’s first letter and his second letter to Rosen. Moreover, whereas the former was sent from Iran the latter was sent from Russian Turkestan.

## 2.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 186  
[from a letter dated 25 March 1892, sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 18/a]

Глубокоуважаемый

Виктор Романович,

Простите ради Бога, что ответ мой на Ваше письмо так сильно запоздал. Полно спешной работы пред отъездом Куропаткина, а затем составления политических отчетов, которые недавно только отправил в Петербург, причиною замедления было отчасти и то обстоятельство, что нельзя было дать переписывать перевод безграмотным писарям нашей Канцелярии, а единственный порядочный писарь, который написал уже один экземпляр перевода для Куропаткина, был завален работой.

Прежде всего приношу Вам искреннюю благодарность за перевод, как от себя лично, так и по просьбе Куропаткина. Он взял перевод с собою в [P. 18/b] Петербург. При сем прилагаю / изготовленные для Вас, при содействии Туманского, копии с подлинников, а равно копии с перевода. Все Ваши поправки, по словам Туманского, бабиды признали правильными и объяснили ошибки спешностью переписки. Первая половина 2<sup>го</sup> документа до слова *انتهى*, по объяснению бабидов, записана со слов Бехауллаха его Секретарем Хаджиуллахом, который далее говорит уже от себя.

Я представил Кур[опаткину] перевод при небольшой докладной записке, в которой изложил Ваше мнение о документах.

Translation:

[P. 18/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

Please, receive my apologies for such a long delay in my response to your letter. I had a lot of urgent work to do before Kuropatkin's<sup>1</sup> departure, after which I was busy compiling political reports, which I sent to [St]Petersburg quite recently, the reason for this delay was partly the fact that it was impossible to entrust our Office's illiterate clerks with copying the translation, while the only proper clerk, who had already written a copy for Kuropatkin, was overloaded with work.

First of all I would like to express to you our sincere appreciation for the translation both from myself and on Kuropatkin's behalf. He took the

[P. 18/b] translation with him to [St]Petersburg. I am enclosing herewith / copies of the originals, made with Tumanski's assistance, as well as copies of the translation. All your corrections, according to Tumanski, the Babis considered proper and explained the mistakes by the haste in [their] copying. The first half of the 2nd document up to the word *انتهى*,<sup>2</sup> as the Babis explained, is recorded from Bahá'u'lláh's mouth by his Secretary Hajiullah, who then speaks on his own.

I presented the translation to Kur[opatkin] with a short report, in which I conveyed [to him] your opinion about the documents.

Comments:

It is hard to tell what particular Baha'i writings referred to as 'documents' are implied in the passage. It might well have been the *Glad Tidings* by Bahá'u'lláh sent to Rosen, which the latter published in the original and his translation (see more on it in Buck and Ioannesian 2010: 20–21). It is obvious from the letter that Ignatyev had communication with Tumanski in Ashkabad. We will see further proof of it at the end of the letter.

Since there is no distinction between the ‘soft’ [h] and the ‘hard’ [h] sounding like [kh] in Russian it is more than likely that Bahá’u’lláh’s ‘Secretary Hajiullah’ stands for ‘Khádimu’lláh (Servant of God)’, which was the title given to Mírzá Áqá Ján – Bahá’u’lláh’s amanuensis.

Let us go back to the letter.

Аккский узник повидимому раздумал ехать сюда, если только он вообще имел такое намерение. – Действительно, организация у бабидов хороша и, повидимому, они находятся в постоянном сношении между собой и подчиняются одной власти. Несомненно, что у Бехауллаха имеются повсюду надежные Агенты [*sic*]. Сказанные два документа, подлинные, по снятии с них копий для Куропаткина, были отправлены здешними бабидами для распространения в Персии.

[P. 19/a] Что касается будущности бабидов, то / я в ней сильно сомневаюсь. Прежде всего они сами не знают, в какой степени они сильны. Они не знают (а быть может скрывают) – сколько их. Наш Посланник в Тегеране, при возбуждении переписки по вопросу о принятии в русское подданство проживающих в Ашхабаде Бабидов, – сообщил Начальнику Области, что о распространенности бабидов в Персии возможны лишь гадательные суждения, но что есть основание предположить, что число последователей Баба достигает миллиона. Они рассеяны во всех слоях населения, не исключая и высшего класса.

Translation:

The prisoner of Akka has apparently changed his mind about coming here, if he ever really had such an intention. The Babis are indeed well organized, and apparently they are in a constant communication with each other, being under the same authority. Undoubtedly, Bahá’u’lláh has reliable Agents [*sic*] everywhere. The above documents, [which] are genuine, after being copied for Kuropatkin were sent to Persia for diffusion by Babis.

[P. 19/a] As for the Babis’ future, / I have strong doubts about it. To begin with, they do not know themselves the extent of their strength. They do not know (or maybe just conceal) how many they are. When correspondence about granting Russian citizenship to the Babis living in Ashkabad started, our Envoy in Tehran informed the Head of the [Transcaspian] Region that as regards the spread of the Babis in Persia, there could only be made conjectural assumptions, but there was reason to believe that the number of the Báb’s followers reached a million. They are spread among all the strata of society including the upper class.

Comments:

‘The prisoner of Akka’ is obviously a reference to Bahá’u’lláh. That Bahá’u’lláh might have intended to visit Ashkabad seems an improbable but not entirely impossible suggestion.

As for the ‘The Babis (Baha’is)’ future’ which Ignatyev had ‘strong doubts about’ – this is just an example of what an ungrateful job it is to make historical predictions. The prominent Russian academic V. V. Bartold, in one of his critical reviews, asserted that if the Baha’i Faith had any future at all, its chances for a future were ‘in Persia only’ (Bartold 1966: 396). Browne was most positive in predicting a future for the Baha’i Faith. Thus he wrote: ‘Of one thing there can, in my opinion, be but little doubt: the future (if Bábíism, as I most firmly believe, has a future) belongs to Behá and his successors and followers’ (Browne 1891, 2: xviii). In evaluating the chances for the future of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and their possible role in the world in the years to come Tumanski, who definitely penetrated deeper into those teachings,<sup>3</sup> held a more balanced and prudent view. In his Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* he wrote:

We, who are almost witnesses to<sup>4</sup> it, are not in the best position to make an exact evaluation of the significance of these events which stand among the most remarkable historical phenomena of the nineteenth century ... On 16 May 1892 (old calendar)<sup>5</sup> in the garden of Bahji, near Akka, there ended the activities and life of Bahá’u’lláh. His grave is still too fresh to allow [us] to draw any conclusions about his reform. At any rate the ethical aspect of the new teaching merits our attention and sympathy.

(Tumanski 1899: iii, xlviii, translation mine)

The last lines of the above passage of the letter shows that Curzon’s estimation of the number of Babis/Baha’is in Iran did not appear exaggerated to Russian high-ranking officials (see also Tumanski’s letter # 18 and comments).

The letter continues:

Еще более трудно судить о том, насколько успешна пропаганда учения Баба в настоящее время. Среди суннитов число последователей секты весьма незначительно. Мне передавал здесь один персиянин задостоверное, что не очень давно в Ахшабаде сделались бабидами даже армяне (армяно-григор. исповед.). Он не хотел мне сообщить имен этих армян. Так как они, опасаясь совершенно основательно преследования со стороны властей, а равно и своих единоверцев, тщательно скрывают о переходе в бабизм. Здесь рассчитывали, что бабизм составляет

[Р. 19/b] переходную ступень ко христианству и, кажется, на/деялись, что обласканные бабиды не только согласятся сами перейти в православие, но и окажут благодетельное [sic] влияние на других мусульман. Вышло однако наоборот: христиане сделались бабидами, но до сего времени, на сколько мне известно, ни один бабид не перешел в христианство. Если примеру двух армян последуют и другие, то придется, конечно, принять какие либо меры ...

Translation:

At present, it is still more difficult to judge how successful the propaganda of the Báb's teaching is. Among the Sunnis the followers of the sect are very few.<sup>6</sup> A Persian told me with certainty that even some Armenians (of the Armenian-Gregorian Church) in Ashkabad had recently become Babis. He did not want to disclose the names of those Armenians, for they, not without good reason, fearing persecution from both the [Russian] authorities as well as from their own [former] coreligionists, carefully conceal their adoption of Babiism. It was expected here that Babiism was a transitional stage to [P. 19/b] Christianity and apparently it was hoped / that the Babis, having been treated with so much kindness, not only would agree to adopt the Russian Orthodox Church's form of Christianity but would moreover have a beneficial effect on other Muslims. However, the opposite has happened: Christians became Babis, while not a single Babi has so far, to the best of my knowledge, embraced Christianity. If others follow the two Armenians' example, then certain measures, surely, will have to be taken ...

Comments:

Though a large number of Baha'is fleeing from persecution in neighboring Iran found refuge in Ashkabad, it would be wrong to conclude that the Baha'is were specially favored by the Russian authorities unless by 'being favored' one implies being fairly treated and regarded as any other religious non-Russian Orthodox Christian community with all the rights endowed and limitations imposed on such a community by Russian law. Of course this contrasted greatly with the Baha'i situation in Iran, where they were even denied all the rights granted by Muslim society to non-Muslims, such as Christians, Jews, and even Zoroastrians, and were not protected by any religious or civil law. On the contrary, the great benefit for Baha'is in Russia consisted in their being protected by Russian law like any other subjects or residents of the Empire. This was most clearly proved by the harsh court verdict passed on the three Shi'ih fanatics who assassinated Hájí Muhammad-Rízá Isfahání, a venerable Baha'i, in Ashkabad. However, the 'favors' of the Russian authorities did not go beyond that. As it is evident from Ignatyev's letter, they were not interested in the growth of the Baha'i Faith even in such a Muslim-dominated region as Turkistan, let alone other regions, and were determined to check it.

Let us continue with the letter:

Возможно допустить, что, при весьма вероятных смутах в Персии, после смерти нынешнего Шаха, из за престола, какой либо из претендентов и прибегнет к содействию бабидов, предварительно объявив себя их покровителем. Более всего можно было бы ожидать подобного шага со стороны Зиллис-Султана, фонды которого в последнее время значительно

пали. Но если он решится на это, то лишь в крайнем случае, т.е. когда все остальное население будет на стороне его соперника. А в этом случае бабиды конечно не помогут ему.

[P. 20/a] Само собой разумеется, что ни России, ни / Англии нет никакого расчета поддерживать бабидов, и для меня представляется невероятным, чтобы когда либо (по крайней мере в близком будущем) такой расчет явился [*sic*]. Англичане, пользующиеся всеми возможными средствами для упрочения своего влияния в Персии, в особенности среди населения, не считают однако возможным для себя оказывать какую либо поддержку бабидам. По поводу последних жестоких казней над бабидами в Йезде ни один из европейских посланников не решился сделать Шаху заявление в пользу угнетенных, конечно не из боязни возбудить неудовольствие Шаха и его Министров – неудовольствие это еще не так опасно – а из опасения, как мне кажется вооружить против себя большинство населения, – несомненно враждебно относящегося к бабидам, – и в особенности всесильное духовенство. А что духовенство в Персии всесильно – это доказали последние события в Персии из за табачной монополии и других монополий, данных Шахом англичанам.

Translation:

One can imagine that given the high probability of disturbances in Persia after the death of the current Shah, some claimant [to the throne] may resort to the Babis' assistance, first declaring himself to be their protector. It would be most reasonable to expect such a step from Zillu's-Sultán, whose funds have recently been considerably depleted. But if he were to decide to do so, it would only be as a last resort, i.e. when the rest of the population is on his rival's side. Surely, in this case the Babis will not help him.

[P. 20/a] It is taken for granted that neither Russia nor / England have any reason to support the Babis, and it seems inconceivable to me that such a reason would ever (at least in the foreseeable future) be found. The English, who use every possible means to enhance their influence in Persia, especially among its population, do not, however, consider it possible for themselves to offer the Babis any support. Not a single European envoy dared to intercede on behalf of the persecuted with the Shah during the latest executions of the Babis in Yazd, certainly not through fear of arousing the discontent of the Shah and his Ministers – after all such discontent is not really that dangerous, but rather out of their concern, as it seems to me, not to set against themselves the majority of the population, which is undoubtedly hostile to the Babis, and especially the all-powerful clergy. That the clergy in Persia are all-powerful has been proved by the latest events in Persia around the tobacco monopoly and other monopolies granted to the English by the Shah.

## Comments:

Zillu's-Sultán – lit.: ‘Shadow of the King’, was the title of Prince Mas‘úd Mírzá, Násiri’d-Dín Sháh’s eldest son.

This part of the letter was apparently written in response to Rosen’s question or suggestion as to the possibility of Russia’s offering support or protection to the Baha’ís in Iran. The categorical rejection of such a possibility for both Russia and England by the high-ranking Russian diplomat, with the explanation of the reasons behind this rejection, is an important documented proof. Needless to say that the assertion sometimes made in Iran by some Iranian circles that Baha’ís were supported and used in Iran by foreign (European) powers to promote their own political aims, in the light of Ignatyev’s above statement, appears totally unfounded.

Let us proceed with Ignatyev’s letter:

Не могу также согласиться с Вами в том, что нашей дипломатии

[Р. 20/b] следовало / бы попытаться пугать Шаха бабидами, и угрозами дальнейшего покровительства им заставить его исполнить наши требования. Во 1<sup>х</sup> угроза эта может оказаться и без сомнения окажется недействительной, что было бы неудобно для нас, а во 2<sup>х</sup> подобной угрозой, как я сказал выше, мы повредим только себе, вооружив против себя огромное большинство мусульман и духовенство. А что, если Шах на такую угрозу ответит нам: «извольте, я выполню все Ваши [sic] требования, если Вы не будете принимать к себе бабидов и выдадите тех, которых Вы уже приняли»? В каком положении мы окажемся? Конечно, выдать бабидов мы ни в коем случае не можем, ибо выдача их не соответствовала бы достоинству России как великой Державы.

...Напуганный беспорядками, которые ему подготовили друзья-англичане, Шах спешит вернуться на прежний путь и вновь приобрести [sic] расположение России. За последние 2–3 месяца он уже сделал нам [Р. 21/a] несколько уступок / по пограничным вопросам в Закаспийской области. В виду этого я стараюсь всеми силами воспрепятствовать поднятию вопроса о принятии в подданство бабидов, о чем они не перестают мечтать, напоминая о себе Начальнику Области при каждом удобном случае.

Выше я сказал, что учение бабизма среди текинцев до сих пор не имело успеха. А между тем, почва для пропаганды теперь именно как нельзя более удобна. – Замечательно, что текинцы, относившиеся, до завоевания нами Закаспийского Края, совершенно индифферентно как к исламу [sic], так и вообще ко всем религиям, становятся теперь с каждым годом религиознее и даже фанатичнее. Вероятно, мирная жизнь, с которой они не были знакомы до прихода русских, сделала из текинцев, при их природной лени и массе свободного времени, до некото-

рой степени философов и заставила их задумываться над религиозными вопросами...

[P. 21/b] Туманский продолжает заниматься бабидами и восточными языками. С терминологией бабидов он, действительно, знаком и я охотно отказываюсь от прежнего моего недоверия к его познаниям...

[P. 22/a] [PS]: Ваш подлинный перевод бабидских документов остался у меня, при деле о бабидах.

Translation:

[P. 20/b] Nor can I agree with you that our diplomats should intimidate the Shah using the Babis and by making threats of further support for them to coerce the Shah into fulfilling our demands. First, such a threat could and surely would be ineffective, which would make it uncomfortable for us. Second, as I have already pointed out above, we can only harm ourselves by such a threat, for we are going to set against us the vast majority of Muslims and the clergy. What if the Shah responds to the threat saying to us: 'So be it. I will meet your terms if you do not accept the Babis in your country and extradite those whom you have already accepted'? In what situation shall we find ourselves? Definitely, under no circumstances can we extradite the Babis, because their extradition would not correspond to Russia's image as a great power ...

Scared by the disturbances which were caused by his friends, the English, the Shah is attempting a swift return to the old way and win Russia's favor again. Over the last 2–3 months he has already made several concessions to us / [P. 21/a] in border issues in the Transcaspian Region. For this reason I am doing my best trying to prevent the issue of granting the Babis [Russian] citizenship being raised, while they never cease dreaming about it and therefore remind the Governor of the Region of it whenever they get a chance.

I have already pointed out above that the Babi teaching has not so far been successful among the Tekke people.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the soil for propaganda is more fertile than ever before. It is remarkable that the Tekke people, who before the Transcaspian Region was conquered by us, were absolutely indifferent to Islam as well as to all religions in general, are now becoming more religious and even fanatical with every passing year. Apparently, the peaceful life which they were not familiar with before the Russians came, to a certain extent made the Tekke people, given their natural predisposition towards idleness and an abundance of free time, philosophers, causing them to reflect upon religious matters ...

[P. 21/b] Tumanski continues his studies on the Babis and oriental languages. He is really acquainted with the Babi terminology and I am glad to renounce my previous mistrust of his knowledge ...

[P. 22/a] PS I keep your original translation of the Babi documents in the Babi file.

## Comments:

It deserves noting that as in the passages above, Ignatyev is very explicit in his giving preference to maintaining good relations with the government of Iran over supporting the Baha'is, even on Russian soil. This is reflected in his obstructing the process of granting the Baha'is of Ashkabad Russian citizenship. He takes up this issue in his following letter.

3.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 186  
 [from a letter dated 23 April 1892 sent from Ashkabad]

[P. 23/a]

Глубокоуважаемый

Виктор Романович,

На письмо Ваше от 8 Апр., полученное мною 20, спешу уведомить Вас, что при напечатании бабидских документов, было бы, как мне кажется, удобнее, в видах политических, не упоминать ни моего имени, ни того, что документы эти были представлены бабидами Генералу Куропаткину. Наше Мин<sup>во</sup>, как Вам известно, не совсем сочувственно относится к попыткам Закаспийских властей оказывать бабидам

преимущественное покровительство. Упоминание моего имени, при

[P. 23/b] моем / официальном здесь положении, придаст передаче бабидами посланий Бехауллаха в мои руки до некоторой степени официальный характер, что не желательно. В виду сего, было бы лучше ограничиться лишь указанием, что послания были адресованы бабидам, проживающим в Асхабаде, от которых попали к Вам.

Недавно я встретился здесь с бабидом русско-поданным, из Баку. Он уверял меня, что в Баку проживает не менее 600 челов[ек] бабидов русско-поданных и что не мало их и в других городах Кавказского Края.

## Translation:

[P. 23/a]

Most esteemed Viktor Romanovich,

In reply to your letter dated 8 April, which I received on the 20th, I need to inform you urgently that for some political considerations, when publishing Babi documents it seems to me more proper not to mention my name as well as the fact that these documents were presented by the Babis to General

Kuropatkin. As you will be aware, our Ministry is not exactly sympathetic to the attempts of the authorities of the Transcaspian Region to offer the Babis exceptional protection. [P. 23/b] The mention of my name, given my / official status here, would accord to the delivery of Baha'ullah's epistles into my hands by the Babis a somewhat official character, which is undesirable. Therefore, it would be better to confine yourself to just pointing out that the epistles were addressed to the Babis living in Ashkabad, from whom you received them.

Recently I met here a Babi, a Russian citizen from Baku. He assured me that there were no fewer than 600 Babis, Russian citizens, living in Baku and that there was quite a large number of them in other cities of the Caucasus Region too.

Comments:

The passage provides interesting information including an implicit allusion to Ignatyev's high status as a diplomat. 'Our ministry' implies the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Let us now return to the letter:

Отчет о заседании восточ[ного] Отделения Археологич[еского] Общества в Нов. Врем. от 2 Апреля я читал и тогда же усумнился в

[P. 24/a] основательности заявления/ Генерала Комарова о 40-миллионном капитале и о готовности бабидов пожертвовать большие суммы на сооружение в Закаспийск[ом] крае [sic] христианских храмов и учреждение средних и высших (?)<sup>8</sup> учебных заведений. Пока здешние бабиды изъявили, на сколько мне известно, готовность построить лишь бабидскую мечеть, которая почти уже окончена. Начальник Области, как говорят, надеялся, что бабиды, пользуясь нашим покровительством, проведут на свой счет арык, чтò, при недостатке здесь воды, было бы в настоящее время полезнее для Асхабада, чем высшие учебные заведения, но бабиды, повидимому, не выражают готовности пожертвовать на это дело какие либо суммы.

Translation:

I have read the report about the Oriental Department of the Archeol[ogical] Society meeting in the *Nov. Vrem.* dated 2 April, and immediately was [P. 24/a] doubtful as to the accuracy of / General Komarov's statement about the Babis' 40 million capital and their readiness to donate large sums towards the building of Christian temples and the founding of secondary and higher (?)<sup>9</sup> educational establishments<sup>10</sup> in the Transcasp[ian] Region. So far the Babis, to the best of my knowledge, have expressed their readiness to build just a Babi mosque,<sup>11</sup> which is almost completed. The Governor of the Region is said to have hoped that the

Babis, who live here under our protection, would build an irrigation ditch at their own expense, which given the water shortage here would be more useful at present than higher educational establishments, but the Babis are apparently not willing to donate any sum of money towards this goal.

Comments:

‘*Nov. Vrem.*’ is an abbreviation standing most probably for ‘*Novoye Vremya*’ (lit.: ‘New Time’), a political-literary newspaper published in St Petersburg in 1868–1917.

Ignatyev refers to events prior to 1890, because General A. V. Komarov was Head (Governor) of the Transcaspian Region until 1890. He was succeeded by General A. N. Kuropatkin, who held this post for eight years: 1890–1898 (more details of his background are given on p. 000). It is General Komarov who is mentioned by Bahá'u'lláh in His epistle to the Baha'i community of Ashkabad addressed to ‘Abdu'l-Karím. Praising the Russian authorities for their execution of justice with respect to the violent murder of the prominent Baha'i Hájí Muhammad-Rízá Isfahání in 1889, the founder of the Baha'i Faith referred to General Komarov as ڦنرال اکرم – ‘the most noble general’ (Tumanski 1892: 318).

A brief report on Komarov’s presentation titled: ‘Some data concerning the religious teaching, habits, and activity of the Babis of Ashkabad’ at a meeting of the Oriental Department of the Archeological Society was published in the *Memoirs* ... (Komarov 1893, Karskaya 2000: 178). The content of the presentation is not disclosed in the report. It is very likely that this is the very meeting Ignatyev refers to in the above passage of the letter. That the issue of *Memoirs* came out a year after Ignatyev’s letter was written does not preclude his referring to this event in his letter, since the material for the given issue might well have been submitted for publication earlier.

The letter continues:

На днях произошел факт, который может неблагоприятно отозваться на [Р. 24/b] торговле здешних бабидов. Один из них / Хаджи Абдур-Расуль Езди рискнул отправиться в Персию, в г. Себзевар, по торговым делам. Хотя он тщательно скрывал там принадлежность свою к числу бабидов, тем не менее персияне узнали об этом и немедленно его арестовали. Вчера ко мне явилось человек семь армян купцов, крайне встревоженных известием об аресте Абдур-Расуля, с заявлением, что он должен им значительные суммы и с просьбой сделать распоряжение (?)<sup>12</sup> по телеграфу на их счет о том, чтобы Персидское Правит<sup>го</sup> понудило арестованного окончить с ними денежные расчеты, т.е. иными словами не снимало бы с него головы, пока он не расплатится с своими кредиторами. Протелеграфировал Генеральному Консулу в Мешеде [sic], конечно, не

говоря, что Абдур-Расуль бабид. Не знаю, что будет. Если деньги армян пропадут, то наши купцы будут опасаться вести

[P. 25/a] торговые сделки с бабидами. / Бабиды рассчитывают, что в случае принятия их в русское подданство, они совершенно безопасно могли бы ездить в Персию. Между тем, именно это обстоятельство и создало бы нам большие затруднения, ибо Персидское Правит<sup>во</sup> конечно не задумалось бы расправиться по своему и с бабидами русско-подданными.

Мне предписано выехать на границу Персии для переговоров с Власовым по разным пограничным вопросам. Выезжаю на днях. – С Туманским я в вполне хороших отношениях и готов оказать ему все зависящее от меня содействие к успешному ходу его занятий ...

Translation:

An event happened the other day which may have negative consequences [P. 24/b] for the commercial activity of local Babis. One of them, named / Hájí 'Abdu'l-Rasúl Yazdí, ventured to go Persia, to the t[own] of Sabzevar, on a commercial business trip. Though he carefully concealed his belonging to the Babis there, however, the Persians found out and immediately arrested him. Yesterday, about seven Armenian merchants, extremely worried by the news of 'Abdu'l-Rasúl's arrest, came to me with a petition,<sup>13</sup> saying that he owed them large sums of money, they requested me to give the instruction on their behalf by telegraph that the Persian Government should force the arrested man to settle his debts with them, in other words, it might not take his head off until he paid off the debts to his creditors. I sent a cable to the General Consul in Mashhad, obviously, not saying that 'Abdu'l-Rasúl was a Babi. I do not know what is going to happen. If the Armenians lose their money, our merchants will be afraid to make commercial transactions [P. 25/a] with the Babis. / The Babis expect that in the case of their being granted Russian citizenship, they could travel to Persia with absolute safety. While it is this particular circumstance which would create major difficulties for us, because the Persian Government would surely not hesitate to settle its scores with Babis who are Russian citizens, in its own way.

I am instructed to go over to the Persian border for negotiations with Vlasov on various border issues. I am leaving in a day or two. I am on quite good terms with Tumanski and always ready to render him any assistance within my power for the successful progression of his studies ...

Comments:

As in the previous letter, the Russian diplomat gives reasons why he is opposed to the idea of granting the Baha'is in Ashkabad Russian citizenship and is preventing its happening.

By Vlasov, apparently, Russian Ambassador in Tehran, P. M. Vlasov, is implied.

**Notes**

- 1 For Kuropatkin, see comments to Tumanski's letter # 1.
- 2 The word means 'end, extremity, termination' (Arabic/Persian).
- 3 Suffice it to say that he translated the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* into Russian let alone some other texts.
- 4 Lit.: contemporaries of.
- 5 'Old calendar' means the Julian calendar (see comments above).
- 6 Probably, the Sunnis of the Transcaspian region, e.g. Turkomans are implied here.
- 7 The major local Turkoman tribe.
- 8 The question mark is in the text of the letter.
- 9 The question mark is in the original document.
- 10 By this phrase, high schools and universities (institutes) are implied.
- 11 This is the word used in the original letter. According to my Ashkabad-born uncle's testimony, the term was commonly applied to the Babi Temple in the region by non-Baha'i even during the Soviet era.
- 12 The question mark is in the text.
- 13 It is not clear from the Russian word used whether it was a written petition or a verbal request.

## Part V Sébastian Voirot's correspondence with V. R. Rosen

The only letter by Voirot deals with translations of Baha'i writings made in Russia and particularly with Tumanski's translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*:

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 80  
[from a letter dated 14 October 1900, sent from Paris]

[P. 1/b]

Monsieur le Baron,

Un de nos amis du Caire [*sic*] m'a parlé d'une traduction faite, je crois par un de vos secrétaires, du Kitab-i-Akdas. Cette traduction a-t-elle été publiée? On m'a cependant affirmé qu'il serait possible de l'obtenir en s'adressant personnellement à vous. Je dois ajouter que nous sommes à Paris une [P. 2/a] trentaine de personnes qui serions heureux de / pouvoir lire cet ouvrage.

Voudriez-vous me faire l'honneur de m'envoyer quelques renseignements au sujet d'autres manuscrits bâbis qui auraient été ou seraient traduites à dernier temps ? Je l'apprendrais avec le plus vif plaisir.

En vous présentant mes excuses, je vous prie d' ..., Monsieur le Baron, l'assurance de mes sentiments les plus respectueux[.]

Sébastian Voirot

23, Rue VIII<sup>e</sup>  
14X 1900

Translation:

[P. 1/b]

Dear Baron,

One of our friends from Cairo has told me about a translation, made, I believe, by one of your secretaries, of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. Has this translation been published? I have been reassured that it would be possible to obtain it by contacting you personally. I should add that there are about thirty of us in Paris who [P. 2/a] would be happy to / be able to read this work.

Would you, please, do me the honor of sending me some information on other Babi manuscripts which were or have been translated recently? I would hear of it with the greatest pleasure.

I present to you my apologies, and beg to remain, Sir, your most humble and obedient servant[.]

Sébastien Voirot

23, Rue VIII<sup>e</sup>

14X 1900

## Part VI Some separate transcripts in V. R. Rosen's archive

1.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 89  
[P. 1/b, 2/a, 2/b]

A transcript titled: *Lawh-i-Javád* (*Tablet of Javád*). The text of this manuscript is published by Tumanski in the original (without translation) in his article: ‘On the Question of the Authorship of the History of the Babis Known as Tárikh-i Mánukchí or Tárikh-i-Jadíd’ (Tumanski 1894: 43–44). The addressee of this Epistle is ‘Javád’ whom Tumanski identified as Siyyid Javád of Karbila (see Tumanski’s letter # 1). However, the text of the transcript does not match the content of the Tablet to Siyyid Javád of Karbila as described by A. Taherzadeh in the *Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*. Nor is the long extract from that Tablet quoted by Taherzadeh found in the manuscript from the archive (Taherzadeh 1996, 3: 279–280). The text of the latter does not correspond to either of the two other Tablets addressed to Javád.<sup>1</sup>

The transcript bears the title: لوح جواد (*Lawh-i-Javád*).

The text begins:

ای جواد سلطان ایجاد میفرماید سیف لسان را از غلاف بیان بقوّت رحمان براور  
و بقسمی تبلیغ این امر نما که جمیع افرینش را مجال اعراض نماید

It ends as follows:

در این ایام اطفال حرم بایاتی تکلم میفرمایند که افئه مقریین مجنوب و متحیر مانده و  
لیس ذلک علی الله بعزیز

2.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 90

[P. 1/a, b, 2/a, b, 3/a]

The chapter on the ‘Súrih of Josef’ from the *Qayyumu ’l-Asmá’* (*Commentary on the Súrih of Josef*) of the Báb (see Ignatyev’s letter # 1 and comments).

The identification of the extract is confirmed by my collating it with the corresponding chapter from a manuscript of the *Qayyumu ’l-Asmá’* in the IOM.

3.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 91

[P. 1]

Two prayers in Arabic.

### Note

1 By the two other Tablets addressed to Javád I imply the Epistle part of which is published among the ‘Excerpts from other Tablets’ in the *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, and Epistle N CIII included in the *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh* (Bahá’u’lláh 1976).

## Part VII From E. G. Browne's correspondence with Rosen

Browne's letters form two-thirds of the correspondence contained in the Archive. Interestingly enough, the first two letters of this prominent British Orientalist to Baron Rosen are in Persian. The following letter is his visiting card with a short handwritten text on the back.

1.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41  
[Browne's visiting card (undated)]

[P. 1/a]

Edward G. Browne, M. A., M. B.

Fellow of Pembroke College

Lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge

[text on the back]:

[P. 1/ b]

این نسخه اوّل است که بدمست بندۀ رسیده سائز نسخه ها تا سه چهار روز دیگر میرسد و آنچه وعده شده است البته تقدیم خواهد شد ولی راضی نبودم بیش از این انتظار بکشید و خواستم نسخه اوّل مشرّف خدمت جناب عالی بشود باقی السلام

Translation:

[P. 1/b]

This is the first manuscript which I received, while the other manuscripts will arrive in three–four days. Whatever [you] have been promised will surely be presented to you. But I did not dare make you wait any longer and wanted the first manuscript to be placed at Your Excellency's disposal. I am concluding [the letter] wishing you good health.

## Comments:

It is remarkable that Browne began his correspondence with Rosen right after the publication in July 1889 of his first work on the Babis and the Baha'is (see comments on the next letter), which was the starting point for the whole series of his books and articles in this field. It would be more reasonable to suppose that given the context which becomes clear from the next letter, what Browne implies here by a manuscript/manuscripts is not really a transcript of some Babi or Baha'i writing but rather manuscripts of his first two works prepared for publication. He elaborates more on the subject in the following letter.

2.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41  
[a letter dated 25 July 1889]

Pembroke College  
Cambridge [stamp]

[P. 2/a]

July 25<sup>th</sup> 1889

خدمت ذی سعادت جناب معارف مآب بارون ویکتور روزن دام اقباله العالی عرض  
میشود باعث تسطیر این عریضه اینست که من بندۀ چون پارسال در ایران بودم و  
پتحصیل زبان فارسی و تحقیق بعضی مطالب علمیه اشغال داشتم اتفاقاً بصحبত  
بعضی از رؤسای مذهب بایهای نائل شدم و چون شرحی که M. le Compte de Gobineau  
از احوال ایشان نوشته بود مطالعه شده بود و دانستم که باوجود  
اهمیت این مطلب منبع و این امیر بدیع خیلی نکته ها چه در تاریخ این مذهب چه  
در عقائد ایشان در زیر پرده استقرار مانده است لابد فرست را غنیمت شمرده در

[P. 3/b]

جمع کردن کتب و رسائل این طائفه و تحقیق/ و تدقیق اعتقدات آنها سعی و کوشش  
نمودم و چون بوطن مألف خود برگشتم بترتیب این مواد پرداختم و هر چند  
میخواستم کتابی مفصل درباره این مطالب بنویسم ولی مصلحت چنان دانستم که  
اولاً رساله مختصری در بیان احوال مذهب بایهای و سرکشتهای خود میان آنها و  
تفصیل اسامی کتب و تصنیفات آنها و شرح اعتقدات آنها از اول ظهور تا امروز  
بنویسم تا در هر صورت بر فحوای *القليل تدل على الكثير والجز عة تدل على*  
*الغدير والخصلة تدل على البير الكبير* نمونه باشد ازین خزینه و نوباوية ازین حدیقه \*  
لهذا دو رساله از برای The Royal Asiatic Society نوشتم یکی در بیان آنچه خودم  
دیدم میان بایهای که حالا چاپ شده است و یکی در بیان اعتقدات این طائفه و آن در  
اول پائیز چاپ خواهد شد / ان شا الله تعالى و در هنکامی که بتصنیف این رسائل  
مشغول بودم کتابی که سر کار شما در همین خصوص نوشته بودید یعنی [P. 3/a]

واز مطالعه آن خیلی خوشحال شدم و فوائد کثیره بهم رساندم لهذا چون دیدم که بواسطه آن کتاب مستطاب سر حاد علم را بسیار بیش برده اید و در توضیح مطلبی بسیار مستور و غیر مفهوم سعی بالغی فرموده اید بر خود واجب دانستم که یک نسخه ازین رساله نخستین خود خدمت سر کار ش...<sup>1</sup> معروض دارم هر چند قیمتی ندارد ممکن که سرکار در مطالعه آن نیم ساعتی بی ملاحت بسربرند و در هر صورت از لطف و کرم / آنچنان چنین توقع دارم که بر کوچکی و مختصری این یادکار بی

[P. 2/b]

لیاقت ایراد کر فته نخواهد شد که کفته اند

پیشکش مور پایی ملخ است

معلم بنده که دو ماه قبل ازین مرحوم شد یعنی Dr. Wright کویا از احبابی سرکار بوده است چرا که ذکر خیر سرکار از ایشان بسیار مسموع شده است زیاده ازین چه رزحمت دهم ان شا الله رساله همراه این عربیضه میرسد - رساله دوم که اهمیتیش بیشتر ازین است هر کاه چاپ شود ارسال دارم باقی السلام و الدعا

Edward G. Browne, M. A.

P. Lecturer in Persian,

Pembroke College,

Cambridge

Angleterre

Translation:

Pembroke College

Cambridge [stamp]

[P. 2/a]

July 25<sup>th</sup> 1889

I have the honor [herewith] to inform His Blessed Excellency, the Refuge of Learning Baron Victor Rosen, may his exalted fortune be prolonged, that the reason for writing this petition is this - When I was in Iran last year and was engaged in the learning of the Persian language and in the studying of some scholarly matters, I chanced to come across the assembly of some heads of the Babi religion.<sup>2</sup> Since the account of their history, written by M. le Compte de Gobineau, had been studied [by me] and I realized that notwithstanding

the importance of this impenetrable matter and this marvelous Cause there still remained many subtle issues which were hidden under a veil, therefore, seizing the opportunity, I surely made every effort to collect the books and treatises of this community and to make a detailed / and [P. 3/b]<sup>3</sup> minute study of their beliefs. When I returned to my native country, I engaged myself in arranging these materials, and though I wanted to write a comprehensive book about these issues, still I considered it advisable to first write a brief work with an account of the history of the religion of the Babis, the story of my own sojourn among them, a detailed list of the titles of their books and compositions work by work, and the explanation of their beliefs from the beginning of the Manifestation up to now. Thus, according to [the saying] ‘a little proves much, one drink is indicative of a pool and a shaking (?) is a proof of a large threshing floor’, there would be an example of this treasury and the first fruits of this vineyard. Therefore I wrote two papers for *The Royal Asiatic Society*. One is an account of what I have seen among the Babis, which has already been published. The other is an explanation of the Babi teachings. That one will come out at the beginning of autumn, / if it is [P. 3/a] the will of God, the Most High. When I was engaged in writing those works, the book which your Lordship had written on this subject, i.e. ‘Collections Scientifiques de l’Institut des Langues Orientales’, came to my notice. I was very happy to peruse it and drew a lot of benefit from it. As I saw that [you] had greatly expanded the bounds of knowledge by that excellent book and made an advanced effort to explain very hidden and obscure issues, I considered it my duty to offer your Lordship a copy of this first work of mine. Even though it is not worthy, perhaps, your Lordship may find it entertaining to read it for half an hour. At any rate I count on Your

[P. 2/b] Excellency’s kindness and generosity / and that you will not be hard on me for the small size and brevity of these unbefitting memoirs, for it is said:

‘An ant’s gift is a locust’s leg’

My teacher, who passed away two months ago – Dr. Wright, was apparently one of your Lordship’s friends, for I heard him praise you a lot. I will not give you any more trouble.<sup>4</sup> God willing, the work will reach [you] together with this petition. The second work, which is more important than this, I will send you as soon as it comes out. In conclusion I will say goodbye. I pray [for you].

Edward G. Browne, M. A.

P. Lecturer in Persian,

Pembroke College,

Cambridge

Angleterre

Comments:

Compte de Gobineau was a French Orientalist, diplomat, and writer. He was also the first translator of a Babi Writing into a Western language (see Browne's letter # 25 and comments). The full reference to his work mentioned in the passage is: M. comte de Gobineau. *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*. Paris: Didier & C<sup>ie</sup>, 1865.<sup>5</sup> The two papers written by Browne for *The Royal Asiatic Society* are obviously his work *The Bábís of Persia* (Browne 1889b). Its first part was published in July, while the second in October of the same year.

Rosen's work on the subject, which made such an impression on Browne, given the date of the letter might be either Vol. I or most likely Vol. III of the *Collections Scientifiques de L'Institut des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires étrangère*. The former came out in 1877, the latter in 1886. In Vol. I Rosen briefly describes manuscripts of some Babi and Baha'i writings in Arabic,<sup>6</sup> while in Vol. III he presents a detailed account of the manuscripts in Persian.

William Wright (1830–1889) was a famous British Orientalist, and Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge.

The next letter gives us an idea of how Browne viewed the Babi and Baha'i studies in Europe and how he was going to proceed with his own research at the beginning of his professional career.

3.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41  
[from a letter dated 6 August 1889]

Pembroke College

Cambridge [stamp]

[P. 4/a]

August 6<sup>th</sup> 1889

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your kind letter & the vol. of the 'Collections Scientifiques' which arrived this morning. I am extremely obliged to you for both. I had access to the copies of both volumes (I&III) in the University Library & derived from them the greatest possible help in compiling my second paper ...

Thanks to your notices, I became aware of M. Dorn's articles in the 'Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale' (Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1864-) on "The Koran of the Bâbýs" – the Mázandaráni Insurrection – (Jan. 27 1865) on a history of the Bâbý insurrection at Sheikh Tabarsí written in Mázandarání patois – : also a notice of the six M.S.S. left by M. le Compte de Gobineau. I was very anxious to [P. 4/b] learn what books the latter represented, & where the collection / had been bestowed, especially as all the books collected by M. Gobineau would evidently belong to the earlier period of the Bâbí movement – viz. the writings of the Bâb himself & his immediate followers. Thanks to your letter, I now know that they are in the Bibl. National at Paris. Do you know what works they represent?

Comments:

It is clear from the context that 'notices' here and in the next passage refer to Rosen's description of the Babi and Baha'i manuscripts in the *Collections Scientifiques*.

Dorn's publications referred to in the letter can be found in the *Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des sciences de St.-Pétersbourg* and in the *Mélanges Asiatiques tirés du Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg* (Dorn 1866, 9: 202–231, Dorn 1868, 5: 279–289). For Dorn, academician and Director of the Asiatic Museum, see Introduction.

Let us continue with Browne's letter:

I am extremely pleased to learn that you are preparing notices of other Bâbí M.S.S. recently acquired by the St. Petersburg Library & look forward anxiously to the appearance of the book in question ...

... my second article (on the Literature & Doctrines of the Bâbís) is in the press now ... I feel painfully sensible of the incompleteness & imperfections of both my articles, but I feel very strongly that all information calculated to [P. 5/a] throw light on a movement so remarkable, & of which so little / (comparatively) is known should be placed before the public, as it is only in this way that the ground can be prepared for a thorough comprehension of the subject.

One object I had in putting forward these papers also was to call forth criticism, so that my erroneous ideas which I had formed might be removed. – Already I have received information which compelled me to modify some of the views I expressed in the first paper – e. g. I wrote to a friend of mine at Shiraz who is in some degree related to the Bâb and begged him to try to obtain for me more accurate information about the Founder of the New Religion, especially, if possible, the date of his birth. A day or two ago I had an answer: he tells me that Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad was born on Muhamarram 1<sup>st</sup> A.H. 1236: married in A. H. 1258 (2 years before the ظهور<sup>7</sup>). His

widow survived till within the last 6 years (A. H. 1300). I also learn that میرزا بحییٰ صبح ازل<sup>8</sup> is still living in Cyprus.

Comments:

The date of the Báb's birth mentioned by Browne needs correction. Actually the Báb was born on the 1st of *Muharram* AH 1235.

As a profound scholar, Browne, like his Russian contemporaries Rosen and Tumanski, saw in the great religious movement which started in 1844 in Iran with the Báb's declaration of His mission, the birth of a new religion. However, if Tumanski and Rosen in the early 1890s already applied the term 'new religion' to the Baha'i Faith, the British Orientalist remarkably, though not surprisingly in 1889, 26 years after Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His mission, still implied by the 'New Religion' and its 'Founder' the Babi Faith and the Báb respectively. Whether this was altogether due to the fact that he simply did not keep pace with history or he intentionally downplayed the importance of Bahá'u'lláh's mission which surpassed by its significance any prior event is a question which is not easy to resolve. It might well have been both. What is certain, however, is the fact that Browne, being absolutely fascinated with the person of the Báb, found it difficult to accept the idea that the Babi dispensation had not lasted longer. He admitted it himself in his article:

I must now conclude this necessarily imperfect consideration of the doctrine of the Báb to pass on to the subsequent developments of it by Behá and others. I do so with regret, for who can fail to be attracted by the gentle spirit of Mirzá 'Alí Muhammad?

(Browne 1889b: 933)

Let us continue with Browne's letter:

In this way I hope that gradually a mass of information may be collected which may make our knowledge of this subject fairly complete. I only wish [P. 5/b] that other / Orientalists would follow the admirable example which you have set them, & make known to the world the treasures concealed in their Libraries.

In case it may be of any use or interest to you, I herewith enclose a list of the Babi M.S.S. in my own collection, & those which I have been able to find in the British Museum. If any question of identity arises, I should be very glad to send fuller particulars about them, as it seems to me the first thing is to form an idea of the number of Bábí works & copies of each in Europe. I am [sic] preparing some of the texts for publication, but I feel it will be some time before they are ready ...

I remain your very sincerely

Edward G. Browne.

P. S. Is the M.S. (mentioned by Dorn) history of the Mazandaran insurrection in the St.P. Collection? If so could you not publish specimens of that? It would be very interesting not only for its contents, but also for the dialect.

The following is Browne's list of the Babi and Bahá'i manuscripts in the British Museum with their brief description. Since it contains nothing new compared to the published Catalogues I limit myself to two titles with Browne's short comments on them. The list is supplemented to the above letter and therefore goes by the same code (Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41):

[P. 6/a – 9/b]

Bábí M.S.S. in British Museum

[Concerning the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* Browne says]:

[P. 6/a] The <sup>9</sup>يقان composed by <sup>10</sup>بیان in Baghdád ... AD 1861. It is the work described by you in Vol. III of the Collections ... p. 32–51.

[Concerning the *Seven Proofs* Browne says]:

[P. 8/b]

The <sup>11</sup>دلالل سبعة

Proofs of the Bábí Faith (written about a year before the Báb's martyrdom)

Beginning:

بسم الله الافرد الافرد  
الحمد لله الذي لا اله الا هو الافرد الافرد ائما البهاء من الحد على من يظهره الحد ثم  
ادله لم ينزل و لا يزال و بعد لوح مستورا مشاهده نموده هرگاه خواسته شود مفصل  
ذكر ادله در اثبات ظهور گردد الواح اکوانیه و امکانیه نتواند تحمل نمود

A large part of the following letter is concerned with Browne's questioning the fact of the *Súrih of the Kings* (سورة الملوك) being revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

4.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41  
[from a letter dated 22 August 1889]

[P. 10/b] ... I confess that the point which puzzles me most at present with regard to the Babi literature is the relation of the <sup>12</sup>سورة الملوك described by you

to the الواح سلاطين<sup>13</sup> in my possession. The differences of style are so great that it would seem as if they could hardly be by the same author ...

[P. 12/a] On the whole I cannot help thinking that the letter described by you must be by one of the other Babi chiefs, but it is curious that the author calls himself میرزا حسین بن علی<sup>14</sup> since Beha's name is certainly میرزا حسین علی<sup>15</sup>. مازندرانی

Comments:

*Síratu'l-Mulík/Súriy-i-Mulík* (*The Súrih of the Kings*) is a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the kings of the world collectively (during the Adrianople period of Bahá'u'lláh's life). He proclaimed in it his claims and station, calling on monarchs and rulers to renounce their possessions and embrace his Cause.

Browne expressed the same doubts almost in the same language concerning Bahá'u'lláh's authorship of the given Tablet in his second paper on the literature and doctrines of the Babis/Bahá'is in which he ascribed it to Mirzá Yahyá (Browne 1889b: 957–958). Baron Rosen by his convincing arguments proved to Browne that the author of the *Súrih of the Kings* could be no one except for Bahá'u'lláh (*Collections Scientifiques ...* 1891, VI: 146–148). The British Orientalist agreed to Rosen's arguments, which put an end to his doubts (Browne 1892b: 270, 273–276, Browne 1891, 2: 108, footnote 1).

The other title mentioned in the letter is the *Alváh-i-Salátín* (*Tablets/Epistles to the Kings/Rulers*). This implies a number of Tablets addressed by Bahá'u'lláh to kings and rulers of the world individually, which includes Násiri'd-Dín Sháh (of Persia), Napoleon III, Kaiser Wilhelm I, Francis Joseph (of Austria and Hungary), Pope Pius IX, Tsar Alexander II (of Russia) and Queen Victoria (see also comments to Browne's letter # 6).

The following passage of the letter deals with Mirzá Yahyá.

[P. 11/b]<sup>16</sup> I have received important particulars about صبح ازل<sup>17</sup> from Cyprus, & a copy in his own handwriting of his appointment by the Báb as his خليفة<sup>18</sup> based on the equivalent وحيد & يحيى = 28.<sup>19</sup> These will be published in the Appendix of my article. I also got a MS work from Subh-i-Ezel, which I was unable to include in my description ... I quite hope to visit him in Cyprus in the course of ...<sup>20</sup> year, for no doubt historical publications of the utmost value could be obtained from him.

Comments:

'The equivalent وحيد & يحيى = 28' means that the numerical value of the Arabic letters composing the name Yahyá ( يحيى ) is the same as the numerical value of the letters in the word Vahíd ( وحيد ).

‘The copy of [Subh-i-Azal]’s appointment in his own handwriting’ mentioned in the letter was published by Browne in part II of his article (Browne 1889b: 996–7). It is worth noting that in the series of his works on the Babi and Baha’i Faiths, Browne published three different texts which he interpreted as the Báb’s will concerning ‘the appointment of Mírzá Yahyá as the Báb’s successor’.<sup>21</sup>

5.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41  
 [from a letter dated 20 October 1889]

Pembroke College

Cambridge [stamp]

[P. 15/b]

August 20<sup>th</sup> 1889

... I am also very glad to hear that you approve of my scheme of publishing in extenso<sup>22</sup> the History, & the ...<sup>23</sup> Beyán. I have already begun on the former, & am preparing my English translation as well as the text. The first part is tedious, being full of repetitions, & the style ... is poor ...

As for the nature of the task, though laborious, it will not be disagreeable. The only disagreeable consequence it can have is to offend some of my Persian [P. 16/a] friends if / they come to know of it – And though that would cause me regret, I cannot help it, for I feel myself bound to put before the world the knowledge which was far the most valuable result of my journey to Persia – And I confess myself strongly attracted to حضرت نقطه اولی<sup>24</sup> – were it not so, I doubt if I could have waded through the “desert of the Beyán” as I think Behá calls it in one passage while comparing his predecessor to John the Baptist. As it is, it is a labour of love to which I readily devote myself. Moreover, I cannot but feel that in the Bábí ظهور<sup>25</sup> we see before us one of those giants which may alter the whole history of a nation ...

Comments:

By the ‘History’ in the above letter, the *History of Mírzá Jání* is implied. For this work, see Tumanski’s letter # 2 and comments.

6.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 41  
 [from a letter dated 2 December 1889]

Pembroke College,

Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1889

Cambridge

[P. 17/a] I am very pleased to hear that you are busy with the 3<sup>rd</sup> MS.

[P. 17/b] containing the <sup>26</sup>سورة هیکل – <sup>27</sup>لوح اقدس & the <sup>28</sup>ایقان the. It is very kind of you to wish me to publish these, but if you have time to do so yourself I hope you will, for I am sure you could do these much better than I could, & I have plenty of Bábí MSS. Work on the History (on which I am now engaged) will take me at least 6 or 8 months[,] more[over] the <sup>29</sup>بیان will take a long time ...

I am very greatly interested in your description of your new unique MS. I think you must be right after all about the letters being all Behá's, in spite of the difficulties involved in this supposition.

Comments:

The above passage clearly demonstrates the difference of approach between Rosen and Browne. If Rosen (like Tumanski) applied himself fully to the publication of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, Browne did not consider them a priority, focusing primarily on texts related to the previous dispensation. However, the two scholars can be seen as complementing each other in their studies. Rosen did publish the original text of the *Tablet of the Temple* (*Súriy-i-Haykal*) together with the *Tablets to the Kings/Rulers* (*Alváh-i-Salátín*) in the *Collections Scientifiques* in 1891 (*Collections Scientifiques ... 1891*, VI: 149–192).

'The unique manuscript' mentioned in the passage is obviously the manuscript volume consisting of 29 Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh belonging now to the collection of the IOM, code: B 1142 (Ioannesian 2006a: 88). Bahá'u'lláh's authorship of the given Epistles was first established by Baron Rosen. The latter described the manuscript in Vol. I of the *Collections Scientifiques* (*Collections Scientifiques ... 1877*, I: 191–212). These Epistles form the first part of the Volume of the Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh published by Rosen in the original (Rosen 1908).

Speaking of the *Súriy-i-Haykal* by Bahá'u'lláh, Browne remarked:

[P. 18/a, b] I am extremely<sup>30</sup> glad you / have got the MS of this very important document & I hope you will publish all of it, or at least as much as you can –

I have again heard a few days ago that Behá is dead, and that the Bábís are keeping it very secret, having put an old man called <sup>31</sup>سید حسن شیرازی in his place. This statement is on the same authority as before, but more confidently reiterated.

## Comments:

The last lines of the above passage reporting ‘the death of Bahá’u’lláh’ in 1889 (three years before it really occurred) based on a statement from an Azali source, ‘more confidently reiterated’, reveal that the Azali sources which Browne so much relied upon for his information did not suffer from a lack of vivid imagination. Browne, though not without a grain of doubt, made reference to this unconfirmed report in his work: *The Bábís of Persia* (Browne 1889b: 517, footnote 1).

The following letter presents Browne’s account of his trip to Cyprus and Palestine during which he visited Bahá’u’lláh and Mirzá Yahyá (Subh-i-Azal). Browne draws a picture of the journey from a slightly different perspective than in his published account of that historic trip.

7.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit; 42  
[from a letter dated 6 May 1890]

Pembroke College,

Cambridge

[P. 7/a] ... My journey – as I daresay you will have desired was intimately connected with the same object. It appeared to me that for a proper understanding of the subject (apart from the great interest one feels in beholding face to face the prime movers in a great national or religious movement) it was very desirable to have a personal interview with the chiefs of both parties of Bábís, since from them (if they chose to speak) the most authentic and detailed accounts might be expected

So, having obtained some extension of the Easter vacation, I once more turned my face Eastwards, and on March 19<sup>th</sup> landed in Cyprus. Next day I [P. 7/b] proceeded to Famagusta, where I remained about / 17 days, during which time I had daily interviews with Subh-i-Ezel. I found the old man very pleasant & courteous, and by no means uncommunicative. & every afternoon, notebook in hand, I sat drinking tea with him, & writing down every fact relating to the history or doctrine of the early Babis which he let drop. But on one point on which I particularly desired information he was very reticent – viz. the origin of the schism, & the beginning of the rupture between himself and Behá. Besides the information achieved from Subh-i-Ezel himself I obtained from him 2 MSS – one containing besides some of his own writings [...] some of the writings of حاجی محمد علی بارفروشی<sup>32</sup> the other containing a work of his own called لایی و مجالی<sup>33</sup> consisting of short aphorisms. He also gave me an autograph letter of the Báb’s amanuensis آقا سید حسین بزدی<sup>34</sup> & showed me others. He also showed me some of the “talismans”<sup>35</sup> referred to by Kazem

Beg, which he said were written by the Báb himself. They are the <sup>36</sup>دوائر & هیاکل referred to in the Beyan, and mentioned by Gobineau.

Subh-i-Ezel has 5 sons with him in Cyprus, & about 3 or 4 followers (Persians – all from Zenján) who have settled there so as to be near him. He has also several daughters.

By the kindness of the Governor-General of Cyprus I was permitted to

[P. 8/a] examine all the papers / (some, however, being confidential & privileged) referring to the exiles. Unfortunately the original Turkish documents which indicated the crime wherewith they were charged appear to have been destroyed or carried off by the Turkish Ká'ím-makám or the British occupation. Nevertheless the names, ages, & etc of all the exiles sent to Cyprus, together with dates of their arrival, death or plight of some who are no longer there, & etc are fixed with precision[.] – As regards the history of the Cyprian exiles, there, I believe that I have all the information obtainable, and of all the papers I took copies which are now in my possession.

#### Comments:

The first-hand information provided by Browne in this passage clearly shows how narrow the circle of Mírzá Yahyá's followers was, which matches Batyushkov's account (see his letter # 1).

'Hayákil (pl. of Haykal) va Davá'ir (pl. of Dá'irih)' – lit.: Figures and Circles. Commenting on the phrase from the *Persian Bayán* (Wáhid 5, chapter 10): 'God hath appointed the Figures (Haykal) to Men and the Circles (Dá'ira) to Women, that they should write thereon what they will from the Bayán', Browne wrote:

These 'Figures' and 'Circles' are both talismanic in character, the former generally in the shape of a pentacle. I have in my possession several which I have received from Subh-i-Ezel and his followers. Like so much else of what is occult and mysterious in the primitive Bábí doctrine, they appear to have been discarded by the Bahá'ís.

(Momen M., 1987: 366–367, also footnote 1).

The next passage contains an account of the second part of Browne's trip which took him to Akka and provided him with an opportunity to see Bahá'u'lláh:

After leaving Cyprus (on April 6<sup>th</sup>) I proceeded to Beyrouth, & thence, after a delay of 5 days (for I had to obtain permission from Behá to approach him) to Acre. This delay unfortunately reduced my time at Acre to 5 days (for the ride thither & back occupied 3 days each way), but during these 5 days I was completely amongst the Bábís, who treated me with unbounded Kindness. I was granted 5 interviews with Behá himself, but of course I could not ask him

any questions. I sat humbly before him while he talked. His discourse was oracular but rather general in character. He spoke as “one having authority”, [P. 8/b] but / not exactly as I had expected – like a Master, and a Prophet – but not as an Incarnation of the Divinity. He is to look at a very majestic old man – but though he must be 70 at least his long beard & hair are quite black. He wears a very tall *namad* (نماد)<sup>37</sup> cap with a small white turban. His manner is gracious and dignified, but somewhat restless, suggesting great stores of energy. He talked for the most part of the necessity of all nations choosing one language as a means of international communication & one writing (a sort of sermon on the concluding text of the *Lawh-i-Aqṣas* (لوح اقتس)<sup>38</sup> & of the necessity of putting down war & international jealousy & hostility. Of doctrine properly so called he spoke little.

I might write pages on all that I saw & heard, but to the present I must confine myself to the above brief outline. Of course I hope to publish the result of my journey ere long. At Acre I obtained an authenticated copy of the *ابیقان*<sup>39</sup> written by their special scribe & (more valuable) a *new history* of the sect approved & sanctioned by Behá himself – This is chiefly valuable because it treats less of the Báb than of Behá, & because it has passed under the ... [word unclear] scrutiny of Behá & others who from the first have been engaged in all the events recorded. But of course it passes very lightly over *Subh-i-Ezel*.

[Postscript on the margin P. 7/a]:

This history I shall translate and translate as soon as I can ... Finally I may add that I am quite convinced ... that you are right about the *سورة هیکل*<sup>41</sup>: it is Behá’s work & his only ...

Comments:

The published account of Browne’s visit to Akka can be found in the Introduction to *A Traveller’s Narrative* ... (Browne 1891: xxxix–xl, also Effendi 1995: 194). It was quoted by Tumanski in his Russian translation in the Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: xxv–xxvi).

‘The Most Holy Tablet,’ probably, implies here the *Most Holy Book* (*the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*).

For Zaynu’l-Muqarrabín see a comment to Tumanski’s letter # 1.

In the following letter, Browne takes up the issue of the *Síriy-i-Haykal – Tablet of the Temple* (see Batyushkov’s letter # 1 and comments), and *Lawh-i-Nasír – Tablet of Nasír*. Both these Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh were published by Baron Rosen.

8.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 42  
[from a letter dated 21 May 1890]

Pembroke College,

Cambridge, May 21<sup>st</sup> 1890.

[P. 9/a]

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your very interesting letter of May 13<sup>th</sup> and the further proof-sheets of your work. These latter interested me very much, for though as I mentioned to you I several times had the سورة هیکل<sup>42</sup> in my hands I had not time to read it at all, nor could I secure a copy, though the Bábís promised to get one made for me and send it. There is no doubt that it is one of the most important of Behá's works – & St. Petersbourg is to be much congratulated in possessing a copy – I have sometimes fancied that the difficulty in obtaining certain of the older الورا<sup>43</sup> of Behá is not altogether fortuitous. It may be that they are less anxious to exhibit writings written during the [P. 9/b] period that Behá was still maturing his designs. Moreover I / fancy the Behá's are anxious that Subh-i-Ezel should as far as possible be forgotten & his existence ignored, for no doubt his claims are strong, if probably advanced, to be the خلیفه<sup>44</sup> of the Báb. Similarly when I asked Behá's younger sons about the لوح نصیر<sup>45</sup> they ignored its existence & apparently knew nothing about it, and the کاتب آیات<sup>46</sup> جناب خادم الله<sup>47</sup> who knows more than anyone ... about Behá's affairs, though he admitted the existence of such a لوح<sup>48</sup> would not enter into any detail concerning it.

But of course from a historical point of view it is precisely these writings of the transitional period<sup>49</sup> which are so important & valuable, and I am therefore extremely glad that you are publishing so important a document as the سورة هیکل<sup>50</sup>.

I am especially interested by the paragraph in the text which you have marked (p. 154–155) wherein Behá speaks of Subh-i-Ezel .../

[P. 10/b] As to how the matter really was one can only say اعلم الله[.]<sup>51</sup> – But I [P. 10/a]<sup>52</sup> think Subh-i-Ezel was so much the younger & weaker that / it is very unlikely he could, even had he wished, have made any such attempt, especially as he appears to have been nearly deserted by his followers at Adrianople, more of whom would seem to have gone over to Behá very soon ...

## Comments:

‘The proof-sheets’ of the *Súriy-i-Haykal* must be a reference to Rosen’s publication of the original text of the Tablet in the *Collections Scientifiques* (see Browne’s letter # 6 and comments), which the Russian scholar was preparing at that moment.

The *Tablet of Nasír* is a Tablet revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in Adrianople in honor of Hájí Muhammad-Nasír, a native of Qazvin (Taherzadeh 1996, 2: 245–259). Its text was not among the 29 Epistles of the manuscript currently contained in the collection of the IOM (see explanation on p. 000), which formed the first part of the Volume of Epistles of Bahá’u’lláh published by Rosen. It was one of the writings included in Rosen’s own manuscript that made the second part of the Volume<sup>53</sup> (the whereabouts of the latter manuscript are unfortunately unknown).

‘Jináb-i-Khádimu’lláh’ (His Excellency the Servant of God) is a reference to Bahá’u’lláh’s amanuensis – Mírzá Áqá Ján

It is hard to avoid the impression that when Browne ran into difficulty in obtaining a Baha’i text he tended to suspect ‘a deliberate effort’ behind it. This raises the question – if there were an intention to hide such a text from the outside world then why should Baron Rosen have it, especially given the fact that he was the one who saw his goal in the publication of Baha’i writings and thus making them known to the world?

9.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 42  
[from a letter dated 20 July 1890]

Pembroke College,

Cambridge, July 20<sup>th</sup> 1890.

[P. 12/a]

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> ... <sup>54</sup> which I should have answered sooner, and also for the combined proof sheets of the سورة هیکل <sup>55</sup> which I was very glad to get ...

[P. 14/a] The University Press has as I think I told you, accepted the 2<sup>nd</sup> history (the one given me by the Bábís at Acre). They are going to reproduce the original M.S. by photo-lithography & the translation (which I finished a little while ago) is already in the hands of the publisher. I am still occupied

in writing the notes &etc. The text & translation will be in separate volumes and [P. 14/b] containing / about 200 pages ... The other longer history which I obtained in Persia & which deals more with the earlier events of the Bábí movement is still under consideration of the Press Syndics, & I have laid it aside for the present till I have time to collate it with the MS. in London. Probably whether they will agree to print it will depend in great measure on the reception accorded to the first. And the publication of the large history would be more expensive a good deal as it will have to be printed.

By the way I have copies of the الراوح سلطانين<sup>56</sup> which I made from Kirman MS. with some idea of printing these before I knew that you intended to publish the whole of سورة هیكل<sup>57</sup>. If they would be of any use to you for purposes of collation I should be very pleased to lend them to you. I meant to say this before, but forgot & I fear that it is now rather late in the day – as you [P. 13/a]<sup>58</sup> have already got to the لوح پاپا<sup>59</sup> and the لوح ملک پاریس<sup>60</sup>. And / besides I expect that your MS. is a very good one & would gain but little by collation with the not very accurate text I have. The original of this latter I took with me to Acre to clarify certain points about it, & the Bábís would hardly let me have it back again, saying it was a corrupt text & had better be destroyed! However I told them that it was the only one I had of these writings, & I should like to keep it till I got a better one, so they rather unwillingly gave it back to me ...

#### Comments:

In the first lines of the above letter, Browne thanks Rosen for sending him the proof sheets of the *Síriy-i-Haykal*. In a footnote to *A Traveller's Narrative* ... he touches upon the same subject: 'Baron Rosen intends shortly to publish the whole of the سورة هیكل<sup>61</sup> including the *Epistles to the Kings* ... and he has been kind enough to send me the proof-sheets of this important work' (Browne 1891, 2: 69–70, footnote 1 and also ibid., 108, footnote 1).

'The 2<sup>nd</sup> history' obtained in Akka is obviously a reference to *A Traveller's Narrative* by Abdu'l-Baha, for it is the only historic source which Browne published in the original language and a translation in 2 volumes. This subject will be discussed fuller in other letters.

'The other longer history' implies *Jání's History* (see p. 000).

*Lawh-i-Pápá* or 'The Tablet to the Pope [Pius IX]' is part of Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablets/Epistles to the Kings/Rulers (Alváh-i-Salátín)*.

*Lawh-i-Malik-i-Páris* or 'The Tablet to the French (lit.: Paris) King [Napoleon III]' is also part of the *Tablets/Epistles to the Kings/Rulers* (for the last two Writings, see also Browne's letter # 4 and comments).

The following letter partly deals with the account of Mírzá Badí‘ – the bearer of the *Tablet of Sultán* to its addressee, Násiri’d-Dín Sháh of Persia.

10.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 42  
[from a letter dated 21 September 1890]

[P. 15/a]

Westacres, Benwell

Newcastle-on-Tyne

September 21<sup>st</sup> 1890.

[P. 15/b] ... The last / proof-sheets which you so kindly sent were exceptionally interesting to me, both because they contained the text of the instructions to the bearer of the <sup>62</sup>لَوْح سُلْطَان of which I had only heard the general purport at Acre, and also because of the very just and wise remarks which you make on the account of Mírzá Badí‘’s behaviour which I previously published. As with regard to the authorship of the collective Epistle to the Kings, so also in this case I am persuaded that your view is in all probability the correct one – when my translation of the <sup>63</sup>مقالات شخصی سیاح که در نقشیر قضیه باب نوشته است (for this is the history in question entitled)

[P. 16/a] appears you will see that the account of Mírzá / Badí‘’s conduct in presence of the Sháh there given agrees entirely with your inferences. And there can be little doubt that the account so published under the august auspices of Behá is worthy of fuller credence than the more sensational narratives current in Persia on which my previously published account was based ...

[A postscript on the margin of P. 15/a]:

... I will lend the proof-sheets containing the narrative of Mírzá Badí‘ as soon as I get them & will write again then. – Till then.

Comments:

An account of Mírzá Badí‘ is also contained in Russian diplomatic sources (see Zinov'yev's report to Duke Gorchakov – Official reports ..., # 1). Baron Rosen's remarks on the account of the episode related to Mírzá Badí‘ that was published

by Browne were quoted in my comments on that report (see also Browne 1889b: 956–957, Browne 1891, 2: 102–104).

The ‘collective Epistle to the Kings’ must imply the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* (*Súrih of the Kings*). See Browne’s letter # 4, comments and footnotes.

11.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 42  
[from a letter dated 28 October 1890]

[Stamp]: Pembroke Coll[ege],

Camb[ridge]

[P. 17/a]

My dear Sir,

Herewith I send you that portion of the History of the Bábís referring to Mírzá Bádi‘ (p. 102-*et seq.*) & the events in Baghdad–Adrianople period, as I promised also to send you a specimen of the fax-simile & the corresponding first portion of the translation ...

[P. 17/b] I must thank you very much for having continued to send me your proofs of the سورة هیکل<sup>64</sup> as they came out. They have been of the greatest possible use to me, as I have frequently had occasion to refer to them in the notes. I have lately received another MS. from Acre containing a work called کلمات فردوسیه<sup>65</sup> and an Epistle addressed to certain Christians which, as I was told in Acre, is the work properly called لوح اقدس<sup>66</sup> the book which I /

[P. 18/a] described under this name being, according to the Acre people, properly called کتاب اقدس<sup>67</sup> I must regret the confusion caused by my applying the name of the first to the second, but I had only the information gathered in Persia to go on, & in Persia the title لوح اقدس<sup>68</sup> was always applied to the book which I first described under that name. However I suppose the Acre people must know best, & they were quite clear about the matter ...

Comments:

‘History of the Bábís referring to Mírzá Bádi‘’ is *A Traveller’s Narrative* ... (see the previous letter and comments).

The confusion of titles (applying the name of the *Most Holy Tablet* or the *Lawh-i-Aqdas* to the *Most Holy Book* or the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*) occurred in Browne’s

second paper on the Babis/Baha'is (Browne 1889b: 972). The British Orientalist admits this confusion also in *A Traveller's Narrative ...* (Browne 1891, 2: 77, footnote 2).

For the *Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih* (*Words of Paradise*), see comments to Tuman-ski's letter # 7.

12.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 42  
[from a letter dated 30 November 1890]

November 30<sup>th</sup> 1890, Pembroke College,

Cambridge

[P. 19/a]

My dear Sir,

I received with extreme pleasure your very interesting letter of Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, and would have answered it sooner, if I had had time, but during the term so many things demand one's attention that correspondence gets sadly neglected. I am very glad you liked the "Traveller", or at least what you saw of him. The printing has been going on slowly lately, but the translation is nearly all printed now, & there remain the notes, introduction, & index, which will equal or exceed in bulk the actual translation. As one does not know how many books on Bábísm it will be possible to induce the Press to publish, I was anxious to record in this one the chief results of my enquiries whereas the notes taken by myself at the time were so scattered & brief that no one but

[P. 19/b] myself could work them up into / a coherent form.

I was extremely interested in your account of M. Tumanski's researches at عشق آباد<sup>69</sup>. It is indeed a "grande nouvelle",<sup>70</sup> and "Babologie" bids fair to advance with rapid strides. As [to]<sup>71</sup> the history ( تاریخ جدی<sup>72</sup> as the British Museum MS. is entitled) I too heard that it was written by Mánakji the Pársi. According to another روایت<sup>73</sup> it was written by a munshí<sup>74</sup> in his employment who is now dead. My own opinion is that it was probably the result of the joint labours of the two, as I have suggested in a Note in the "Traveller's Narrative". The occasional quotations from the دساتیر<sup>75</sup> and other Zoroastrian books, as well as the frequent glorification of ancient Persia tend to confirm the belief that Mánakjí had at least some parts in its authorship.

[P. 20/a] The history is so far incomplete that only one volume was / ever written, & consequently many important matters which the author promises to treat of in the second volume remain unsaid. My own copy & the British Museum copy end the same as described at p. 1003 of my second paper.

I was greatly interested & delighted with the account you give of the events at Ashkabad & the حملة<sup>76</sup> called forth thereby, and I hope that the prompt justice of the Governor may serve as a salutary lesson to the ظالم اهل<sup>77</sup>

Did M. Tumanski succeed in bringing back with him any specimens of the خلاد<sup>78</sup>?

I have repeatedly seen it, & have been promised specimens, but hitherto have obtained none. These seem to be several different kinds, all invented by Behá's son Muḥammad 'Alí.

#### Comments:

A whole section of one of Browne's papers is devoted to Tumanski's achievements (Browne 1892b: 318–322), whom the British Orientalist describes as 'a young artillery officer, who had spent some months at 'Ishkabad during the summer of 1890, with the intention of entering into relations with the Babi community there (which, as it appears, is pretty numerous), and learning more of the history, conditions, doctrines ...' (ibid., 318). See also comments to Tumanski's letter # 10.

A detailed account of how the *New History* was composed and of Mánukchí/ Mánikchí (Browne spells the name as 'Mánakji'), based on Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygáni's narrative, is contained in Tumanski's correspondence (see his letter # 1).

'The events in Ashkabad' is a reference to the violent murder by Shi'ih fanatics of Hájí Muhammad-Rizá Isfaháni and the just verdict of the Russian authorities on the murderers as is confirmed by Browne's allusion to the 'justice of the Governor' towards the 'people of tyranny' in the letter and also by his account of these events in the mentioned paper (ibid., 319–320), based on Rosen's in the *Collections Scientifiques* ... Vol. VI. It would be logical to infer that by the Tablet (الخطب<sup>79</sup>) 'called forth thereby', despite the singular form of the word, two Epistles by Bahá'u'lláh to the Baha'ís of Ashkabad on the occasion of the given events are implied. The Epistles were published by Tumanski in a special article (Tumanski 1892: 314–321) and by Rosen in the mentioned volume of the *Collections Scientifiques* (see also Ignatyev's letter # 3 and comments).

For the so-called 'new script' (خط بديع), see Tumanski's letter # 8, comments and footnotes.

Let us now return to Browne's letter:

The proofs which you sent me this time were extremely interesting. I may

[P. 20/b] note on p. 219, line 5, that the / عبد الغفار<sup>79</sup> mentioned as having thrown himself into the sea would appear to be the same as one of the exiles sent to Cyprus. He is mentioned in the records which I still have occasion to quote in the notes of my book. He escaped from the Island before the English occupation, went to Acre, & after a while returned to Beyrouth, where he is believed to be still living under another name. With regard to the chronology of Nabil's poem, it is not faultless I fancy, but as to the dates of the different migrations from the data given by the Bábí writings it would appear:

- (1) That Behá', Šubḥ-i-Ezel, & etc. went to Baghdad about the end of 1852, i.e. 3 or 4 months after the great persecution of Teherán.
- (2) That they remained at Baghdad 11 years or a little more – i.e. till the beginning of 1864.
- (3) They were then transferred to Constantinople (accomplishing the journey thither slowly over land viâ Mosul, Diyár Bekir & Samsun, & thence by sea).
- (4) At Constantinople they remain 4 months./

[P. 21/a]

- (5) They reach Adrianople in 1864.

If the “Traveller’s Narrative” [To say nothing of the Musulman historian ناسخ التواریخ<sup>80</sup> which mentions Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí of Núr who can be no other than Behá as one of those arrested at Teherán in Aug. – Sept. 1852 & spared from death in default of definite evidence against him]<sup>81</sup> be true, Behá cannot have reached Baghdað much before the end of 1852. Behá himself says in the beginning of the Persian portion [:]

حسب الاذن و اجازه سلطان زمان این عبد از مقر سریر سلطانی بعراق عرب توجه نموده دوازده

سنه در آن ارض ساکن...<sup>83</sup> [Agreeably to the permission and consent of the King of the age, this servant turned from the place of the Royal Throne toward ‘Irák-i-‘Arab, and in that land abode twelve years’].<sup>84</sup>

Behá would of course reckon by lunar years. Suppose he arrived at Baghdað in Šafar A.H. 1269 (November–December A.D. 1852) which would seem the earlier date possible – suppose he remained there 11 years (for in other passages he says “11” not “12”) he could not have left Baghdað before Šafar [P. 21/b] A.H. 1280 (July 1863) and possibly did not leave till later in the / same year. Thence he cannot ... [word unclear] have reached Adrianople before 1864. On the other hand he was sent to Acre in August 1868.

It seems to me that there is an ... [word unclear] contradiction in Behá's own statements, & the sense of the matter is that if he was 11 years in Baghdad he cannot have been 6 years in Adrianople, while if he was 6 years in Adrianople he cannot have been 11 years in Baghdad – The evidence of the Russian consul which you ... [word unclear] is important & would tend to show that the Baghdad period was shorter than 11 years. An attempt should be made to find documents proving the dates of transference from Baghdad. I will try to get permission to examine our Foreign Office documents from Baghdad of that period .../

[P. 22/a] No doubt this will ultimately settle the question definitely.

Comments:

‘Abdu'l-Ghaffár was one of Bahá'u'lláh's four companions condemned to share the exile of Mírzá Yahyá and whose detachment, love, and trust in God Bahá'u'lláh praised. Browne was right in assuming that he cast himself into the sea out of despair. These events are described in Baha'i sources as well (Effendi 1995: 182).

For the *Násikhu't-Tavárikh*, see Tumanski's letter # 1 and comments. See also Browne's comment on the partiality and one-sidedness of this chronicle in *A Traveller's Narrative* ... (Browne 1891, 2: 133, footnote 1).

Browne fixes the same wrong year (1864) for Bahá'u'lláh's departure from Baghdad in a footnote to his translation of *A Traveller's Narrative* ... (ibid., 89, footnote 1). As for the incorrect date, I have already made a suggestion that the one year error in dating this event AD 1864 instead of 1863) might have been caused by a miscalculation in the conversion of years from the lunar Muslim calendar to the solar Christian (see comments on the account by Sheriff Agha in the Official reports ... # 3).

It seems that the idea to resort to diplomatic sources for the clarification of dates first came up in Rosen's correspondence with his British colleague. It is Browne's suggestion made in the above letter that appears to have prompted Rosen's request to the Russian consulate in Adrianople which resulted in a series of reports compiled by Russian diplomats there (see Rosen's questions on the clarification of dates raised before the Russian Consulate in Adrianople). However, these reports notwithstanding their value in many respects, did not settle the issue completely. The correct chronology of certain events of Baha'i history would have remained a puzzle to Rosen but for Tumanski's and his Baha'i friend – Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygáni's efforts to cast more light on this subject. In a manuscript from the collection of the IOM (catalogue code: B 1146), there is a note most likely written by Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl on the chronology of some important developments

in the Babi and Baha'i history, with an explanation of the Baha'i calendar. The manuscript is described in detail by Baron Rosen in the *Collections Scientifiques* (*Collections Scientifiques* ... 1891, VI: 251–252, N 250, also Ioannesyan 2006: 93–94).

13.

Deposit:777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 17 January 1891]

Pembroke College

Cambridge, Jan. 17. 1891

[P. 1/a]

My dear Sir,

I received your kind letter of Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> on my return here the day before yesterday. Many thanks for it and also for the enclosed proofs of the سونه الملوک<sup>85</sup> etc.

I went round to the University Press yesterday to try to find out when my book would really be out. The delay was caused by Vol. I (the Persian text), for the ink used in printing it took so long to dry ...

[P. 1/b] Many thanks for so kindly offering to convey to the Institut, the Academ, and M. Tumansky the copies which I promised to them ...

[P. 2/a] ... with it I have sent 6 copies of the articles (on Sufism and Babiism) which I contributed lately to a book called “Religious Systems of the World”[,] I received 100 separate copies of my two articles ... I cannot deny myself the pleasure of sending them to you ...

I am extremely glad to hear of the success of my application for the second / [P. 2/b] MS. of the Beyán, which I hope will arrive soon. I have finished the collation of the other MS. and intend to write to the Foreign Office today to arrange for its return to St. Petersburg. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your great kindness in the matter, and I pray you to convey expressions of my gratitude to the Institut.

I must say that the Persian Beyán is not a very readable work! While it is of capital importance and ought without doubt to be published.

I am very glad to hear of the new “bâbologue” whom you have discovered in Italy. Do you know where his memoir will appear? I should greatly like to read it.

Comments:

The 'enclosed proofs of the *Súriy-i-Mulík* (*Súrih of the Kings*) etc.' sent by Rosen to Browne were definitely being prepared for the Volume of Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh, repeatedly mentioned in my comments on letters above. The Tablet is published in the Volume under number 20.

'Vol. 1' must be a reference to the Persian text of the Traveller's Narrative, published by Browne.

'The articles on Súfiism and Bábíism' are obviously Browne's chapters of the book *Religious Systems of the World: A Contribution to the Study of Comparative Religion* (Browne 1889a). The book was first published in 1889 and published again in 1901. The article on Babiism is on pp. 333–53 of the book. The IOM library still has an excerpt of the book containing only these two chapters (one on Sufism and the other on Babiism) by Browne. It is highly likely that this unique excerpt is the author's gift mentioned in the letter. As the reader will find out later, Browne used for his work on the *Persian Bayán* of the Báb both manuscripts from what is today the IOM collection, which he collated with the other transcripts of the *Bayán* in his possession. Baron Rosen was instrumental in making the two manuscripts available for Browne.

14.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 13 February 1891]

[Stamp]: Pembroke Coll[edge],

Camb[ridge]

Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> 1891

[P. 3/a]

... I look forward eagerly to receiving the last sheets containing the حکایت<sup>86</sup> relating to the Ashkabad affair. I thank you most heartily for your kind permission to cite your yet unpublished work, and I have accordingly referred to it in many of my notes ...

[P. 4/b] I am at present collating the copy I made of the other and larger history (تاریخ جدید<sup>87</sup>) with the British Museum MS. as occasion offers. The two MSS. offer considerable variants. The Press go [sic] on slowly with my book but the notes are now gradually appearing ...

I have lately received a more curious new MS (Ezelí this time) wherein the Behá'ís are more violently attacked, but I have not yet had time to read it attentively. Since only a portion of it is at present in my hands.

Many thanks for the specimen of the خط بديع<sup>88</sup> which is the only one I have ...

Comments:

For the Tablet ‘relating to the Ashkabad affair’, see Browne’s letter # 12 and comments.

15.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 2 March 1891]

[Stamp]: Pembroke Coll[edge],

Camb[ridge]

March 2, 1891

[P. 5/a]

My dear Sir,

I have just received your second most kind letter, together with the final proof-sheets (p.p. 241–255) of your description of the Bábí MSS, which appear to me of extreme interest, especially all that portion [the Postscriptum] which deals with M. Tumansky’s most valuable researches. It is indeed to me a cause of great self-confirmation that my investigations should be so confirmed and supplemented, for we know the value of “two just witnesses”. And in no way can the truth be elicited but by the independent observations of different students. So much that was imperfectly understood by me, so much that was crude & incomplete, has been cleared up by your admirable descriptions and analyses and M. Tumansky’s fruitful labours that I think we

[P. 5/b] may really / begin to hope that the problems presented by Bábíism are in a fair way to receive a definite solution. Much work will no doubt be required ere all the important الْأَعْلَام<sup>89</sup>— all the fragmentary and essentially allusive utterances of the قلم اعلی<sup>90</sup> are grouped, sorted & arranged ...

Comments:

Rosen’s description of manuscripts for the proof-sheets of which Browne thanks his Russian counterpart refers to his publication in Vol. VI of the *Collections Scientifiques* ... See also Browne 1892b: 318.

In the following letter, Browne seeks Rosen's advice on how to proceed with his work and discusses his priorities with him as well as his ideas on how to make 'a wise selection' of writings for publication.

16.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 12 July 1891]

[Stamp]: Pembroke Coll[edge],

Camb[ridge]

July 12, 1891

[P. 7/a]

My dear Sir,

I have just returned from a most difficult holiday amongst the mountains of North Wales ...

[P. 7/b] Being at liberty to turn my attention to other work I am considering what I had better attack next, and should be extremely grateful for your advice. During the Easter vacation I spent three weeks in London and collated the whole of my transcript of the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* with the British Museum codex. The variants were considerable, and several long passages omitted in my MS. occurred in the others. I am very anxious to collate your St. Petersburg MS. with my transcript also, but I do not know whether it would be possible to obtain the loan of it. I think, however, you said that your MSS. were sometimes allowed to be sent abroad, and indeed I had heard ... [word unclear] that St. Petersburg is much more liberal than London in lending its MSS. If you think it would be possible for me to borrow it for a month or six [P. 9/a]<sup>91</sup> weeks & / could tell me the proper method of procedure, I should be extremely grateful ...

But of course the printing of oriental works is expensive, & we cannot publish the whole of the extensive literature which the Bábís have managed to produce in this short time, so that I am anxious to make a wise selection. I should like to publish the whole of the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* ... I think the historical [P. 9/b] part is very valuable, & parts of the rest are / interesting, & even amusing and throw much light on oriental ideas of "imprisonment" ... As regards the work about the Bábís, I think it would be a good thing to publish –

(i) Selections from the Báb's writings, including the whole of the Persian *Beyán*, the *Dalá'il-i-Sab'a*,<sup>92</sup> portions of the *Commentaries on the Suras*

of Joseph,<sup>93</sup> زیارات <sup>95</sup> & other shorter writings,<sup>94</sup> بقره و العصر

(ii) Selections from Behá's works, including,

كتاب أقدس <sup>96</sup>

لوح نصیر

كلمات مكتونه

كلمات فردوسیه

Some other of the shorter المواح<sup>97</sup> which you have not published, and selections from the إيقان<sup>98</sup>

(iii) Selections from Șubh-i-Ezel's writings, including portions of his نغمات الروح<sup>99</sup> (Persian) <sup>100</sup>لذالی محالی and the short account of the Bábí movement which / he wrote for me.

[P. 8/a]<sup>101</sup> The Ezelí history which I obtained from Constantinople is also very important, especially the portion which talks of the schism, wherein grave charges are brought against the Behá'ís. An abstract of this portion I have included in one of the Notes at the end of my book ... If you would give me your advice as to how I had best proceed I should be very grateful. I think that the Persian Beyán is very important, but my MS. is not a very good one, & I am waiting an opportunity [sic] to spend a few weeks in London to collate it with the British Museum MS. Unfortunately their rules are very stringent, & it is impossible to borrow any MS ...

Comments:

Browne, as it appears from the letter, considered the possibility of borrowing the transcript of the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd* from St Petersburg for his use. The only manuscript of this Chronicle in the collection of the IOM is incomplete. It is described by Rosen in the *Collections Scientifiques* (*Collections Scientifiques* ... VI: 244) and in my article (Ioannésyan 2006: 92).

For the *Dala'il-i-Sab'a (the Seven Proofs)* by the Báb, see Browne 1918: 204–205.

For the ‘portions of the Commentaries on the Suras of Joseph’, see Nicholson 1932: 59. For this Writing of the Báb, see Ignatyev's letter # 1 and comments.

The following letter, being generally along the lines of the previous one, clearly shows that Browne's original intention while studying the *Persian Bayán* was to publish it. It also reveals the fact that Baron Rosen's judgment on the value of the

*New History* was crucial for the University Press Syndicate to go ahead with its publication.

17.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 28 July 1891]

[No stamp]

July 28<sup>th</sup> 1891

[P. 10/a] ... I am very glad to hear that your Collections Scientifiques<sup>102</sup> are so nearly ready, as they will be a very great acquisition not only to "Babology", but to Oriental Studies in general ...

[P. 10/b] As you say that M. Tumanski is at present working at a popular résumé of his sojourn amongst the Babis in Ashkabad, & that he thinks of adding to it a brief account of my investigations, and also that he will soon be returning to his military duties in Asia, I thought that it might perhaps be convenient to him to be able to refer to my forthcoming work without further delay ...

[P. 12/a] Still I think there can be no doubt that you are right as to the بیان فارسی<sup>103</sup> being more important by far, and it would be a pity if the University Press after finishing the تاریخ جدید<sup>104</sup> should weary of spending money on what one of my un-initiated [*sic*] friends had termed "a religion of which nobody ever heard before". I shewed what you had written to Professor Robertson Smith, by whose opinion the University Press Syndicate would be chiefly guided in the matter, & I also shewed him my MS. of the text & translation of the تاریخ جدید, and he said that he did not think it would be advisable to urge the Press to incur the expense of publishing so large a work unless you, who were best able to judge impartially of its value, recommended it strongly. He [P. 12/b] also said that he thought that they / would certainly print the Persian Beyán for me if I prepared a text; and if I have decided to get to work on that as soon as possible, for I think ...<sup>105</sup> that its publication should certainly precede that of the کتاب افسوس<sup>106</sup>, اصل فرع<sup>107</sup> & the other the فروع<sup>108</sup> ... So now I have decided to concentrate my energy on the بیان فارسی<sup>109</sup>. It rests with your kindness to tell me how I should proceed with a view to obtaining the loan of the St. Petersburg MSS. I should be glad to begin the work during the vacation if it were possible, for from now till October 10<sup>th</sup> I [P. 13/a] shall have much more leisure than when term / time begins ...

18.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 4 August 1891]

[Stamp]: Pembroke College

Aug. 4<sup>th</sup> 1891

[P. 15/b] ... I have another piece of news – good news. This morning I received from one of my Bábí correspondent[s] at Constantinople a new MS. of the Persian Beyán. I have not had time to examine it carefully, but the writing is clear & good and the text seems good also ... I have now 2 MSS. of [P. 16/a] / my own, & there is also the British Museum Codex, besides the two St. Petersburg copies, if I should be fortunate enough to secure the loan of these ...

Comments:

‘The Babi correspondent at Constantinople’ implies an Azali with whom Browne was in constant touch. He is mentioned by Rosen in a footnote (see comments on Browne’s letter # 26). A reference to the purchase of this manuscript for Browne at Constantinople in August 1891 is made in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS* ... (Nicholson 1932: 59). His other manuscript of the *Bayán* was given to him in Rafsinjan, near Kirman on 22 August 1888 (*ibid.*). The British Museum copy was handwritten by the Baha’i poet Nabil (Browne 1889b: 911). The two St Petersburg manuscripts, one of which is incomplete, were obtained through Russia’s General Consul in Astrabad F. A. Bakulin in 1874 and 1877 respectively (Ioannesyan 2006: 79–80). It is fair therefore to conclude that the transcripts of this Writing of the Báb came to Europe from very different sources.

19.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 15 August 1891]

[Handwritten]: Pembroke College,

Cambridge

Aug. 15, 1891

[P. 17/a]

My dear Sir,

... First of all as to the Persian Beyán. It is unfortunate that delay is unavoidable, but it is very generous of your librarian to allow their MSS. to go abroad at all, and eager as I am to commence the work, I cannot but feel that they are right in safe-guarding possessions so precious in whatever way seems best to them. And after all I can always be employing myself in collating my own

two MSS, & if I am in London, the British Museum codex also. I am chiefly sorry to give you so much trouble ...

[P. 18/a] I am so very much gratified by your having so readily found time to read the proofs of my "Traveller's Narrative", and also by the kind things you say about it. Most of all am I grateful to you for pointing out the unpardonable errors I made in confusing the سورة الملوك<sup>110</sup> described in vol. i of the Coll. Scient. with the سورة هيكل<sup>111</sup> of which the text is to appear in vol. [P. 18/b] vi of the same. I cannot conceive / how I can have been so careless, neither can I imagine what you must think of my inaccuracy in this matter ...

[P. 19/a] By the way do you not think it likely that "envoyé persan"<sup>112</sup> (Coll. Scient., MSS. Arabes. Vol. I, pp. 205–6) of whom Behá complains so vividly in the سورة الملوك may very probably be Mírzá Buzurg Khán of Kazvín? [See Traveller's Narrative, p. 84, & n2 et seq. & especially cf. p. 85, L. 2–3, where he is described as addicted to drunkenness, as at p. 205, L. i of vol. i of Coll. Scient..]<sup>113</sup> ...

Comments:

The Persian Envoy in Baghdad who was so hostile to Bahá'u'lláh was really Mírzá Buzurg Khán of Kazvin. An account of his 'activities' against Bahá'u'lláh is contained in Tumanski's Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: xiv).

20.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 15 October 1891]

[No stamp]

Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> 1891

[P. 22/a]

My dear Sir,

I returned to Cambridge after my vacation at the end of last week ... this morning to my great delight I received from our Foreign Office the MS. of the Persian Beyán belonging to the Academy of Sciences, which had been transmitted to me through them from the Russian Ambassador. I need now say how much pleasure its arrival gave me, and I know not in what words sufficiently to express my deep sense of gratitude to you for all the trouble

[P. 22/b] you have taken in the matter and to the Academy of Sciences / for the generosity with which they have placed at my disposal so precious a manuscript. Pray convey to them my most sincere and warmest thanks.

Two days ago I dispatched the application for the other MS. belonging to the Institut. I was unable to do it sooner, as I wished to obtain a formal endorsement of my application from the Vice-Chancellor, thinking that too would strengthen it. My application and the Vice-Chancellor's "covering letter" were advanced to Sir Robert Morier, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. I hope they may prove as effective as your kind offices have done in the other case.

As I now have three MSS. in my possession (two of my own and the copy belonging to the Academy) I can begin the work of collation at once.

My book will, I hope, be out in about a month. The English part (vol. ii) is all [P. 23/a] printed off, and the / Persian text is approaching completion. As soon as it appears I will send off the copies I promised to you and M. Tumanski ...

[P. 23/b] A little while ago I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of the first portion of the *قيوم الاسماء* or *نفسیرسوره یوسف*<sup>114</sup> and I expect to get the remainder in a short time ...

I have also lately received full account of the persecutions of the Bábís at Yezd in May of this year. One of them is from Yezd itself ...

Comments:

The execution of Baha'is in Yazd (Yezd) also received much publicity in Russian sources. About the time when Browne wrote this letter, an article based on an eyewitness account of the persecutions of the Babis (Baha'is) in that Iranian city was published by prominent Russian scholar V. A. Dzukovski (Dzukovski 1892: 321–327). For Dzukovski, see comments on Batyushkov's letter # 1, also Ignat'yev's letter # 2.

21.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 10 November 1891]

[Handwritten]: Pembroke College,

Cambridge

Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> 1891

[P. 24/a]

My dear Sir,

I must apologize very much for leaving your kind letter so long unanswered and also for not writing sooner to thank you for your great kindness in sending

me 5 copies of your new and most precious volume of the Collections Scientifiques. One of these I have given to my friend Professor Robertson Smith, another I intend to give to Mr. A. A. Bevan of Trinity College, one of the late Dr Wright's most brilliant pupils, and the other two copies I shall likewise bestow in what may seem the most worthy manner. I must also thank you very much for sending me the proof sheets of the Bábí texts which you are now publishing which I have looked through with great interest though I have not had time yet thoroughly to examine them. I hope that the whole series of these pieces is published to compare them with that of the British Museum MSS. which contains a number of similar epistles some at least of which I suspect are identical with these./

[P. 24/b] I have been steadily collating my best MS. of the Beyán with the MS. so kindly lent me by St. Petersburg Academy. It is rather tedious work, and I find I cannot satisfactorily do more than 3 pages of the St. P. MS. a day, as the attention begins to be blunted after that. However[:]

قطرة با قطرة دريا شود <sup>115</sup>

and I have already collated nearly 1/3 of the whole, so that, all being well, I hope to have finished with it before the six months have passed.

I told [you] that I had applied to our Ambassador Sir Robert Morier, to obtain for me the loan of the MS. belonging to the Institut. I did this chiefly to avoid the delays inseparable from doing anything through the Foreign Office. Unfortunately Sir Robert Morier had just left St. Petersburg for England on account of his health. Consequently my letter fell into the hands of his Chargé d'affaires, who not feeling the same interest in the matter .../

[P. 25/a] The Academy MS. evidently belongs to the same "family" as my own, the variants being on the whole few & unimportant, & mostly evident slips and errors. Still I suppose they should be collated ...

Comments:

The above conclusion that the manuscript of the *Persian Bayán* from St Petersburg 'evidently belongs to the same family' as Browne's, their 'variants being on the whole few and unimportant', 'mostly evident slips and errors' merits special attention. Given the fact that these manuscripts had very likely been obtained from sources so different that were completely unrelated to each other (see comments on Browne's letter # 18), this conclusion proves that the assertions sometimes made that the *Persian Bayán* had been 'tampered with' or 'corrected by interested parties' are unfounded or at least greatly exaggerated.<sup>116</sup>

22.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 43  
[from a letter dated 4 December 1891]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge

[Dec. 4th 1891]

[P. 26/a]

My dear Sir,

Just a few lines to thank you for your kind letter of Dec. 1st, and also for your great kindness in sending me 5 copies of the 1st part of vol. vi of the Collections Scientifiques. I have given Mr. Bevan his copy, for which he is very grateful, and I will distribute the three others to Professor Robertson Smith, & Professor Bensly (both of whom have part 2) and whomsoever else may seem most worthy.

[P. 26/b] My Traveller's Narrative still delays / its appearance, but it cannot be more than a day or two before it is out ... The Institut & the Academy will also receive copies.

In accordance with your advice I have not delayed any longer in submitting my application to the Foreign Office for the MS. of the Persian Beyán in the Institut ...

[P. 27/a] I am very glad to hear that the printing of the حاج<sup>117</sup> goes on / so fast. I shall look forward anxiously to the appearance of the complete series.

I am very sorry M. Tumansky has left St. Petersburg without publishing his article on the Bábís ...

Comments:

It is hard to tell which particular article that Tumanski did not have a chance to publish Browne implies in his letter.

23.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
[from a letter dated 31 January 1892]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge

Jan. 31, 1892

[P. 1/a]

My dear Sir,

Just a few lines to say that I hope that the copies of my Traveller's Narrative have duly arrived, and to explain about the way they were sent.

It is customary for the Syndicate of the University Press to send copies to all who have chiefly assisted in the production of any book which they have printed, and accordingly it was arranged that they should forward copies to you, to the Academie, and to the Institut, and that I should send M. Tumansky his copy ...

I told them that the copies for the Institut and the Academie might also be sent to you ...

[P. 2/a] The other MS. Of the Beyán has not yet reached me, but I do not doubt it will come soon ... I have written an article of about 50 pages for the J.R.A.S. on the text which you have published in Coll. Sci. VI & Coll. Sc. I, [P. 2/b] which I hope will appear in the April number. The riches which / you have made available to Oriental scholars –

بیش از آنست که در همچنین ظرفی تنگ بگنجد یا آنکه میزان من چنین جواهری گران بها بسند  
ولی مقصود این بود که این فوائد بجمعی هموطنان عادن گردد. دیگر بعضی معلومات تازه که حاصل  
شد بمناسبت مقام منخنط ساخته ام

[‘are far beyond that which can be contained in such a narrow vessel or far beyond my capacity to measure such precious pearls. However, the purpose was to make these benefits available to all my fellow countrymen. Moreover, I have supplemented some fresh information obtained on the subject’ (translation mine)].

#### Comments:

A copy of *A Traveller's Narrative* ... with Browne's dedication note is still preserved in the IOM library.

The article written by Browne on the texts published by Rosen is ‘Some Remarks on the Bábí Texts edited by Baron V. Rosen in Vols. I and VI of the Collections Scientifiques de l’Institut des Langues Orientales de Saint-Pétersbourg’ (Browne 1892b), though its size exceeds 50 pages.

24.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
[from a letter dated 21 March 1892]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge

March. 21st, 1892

[P. 3/a] ... I leave Cambridge tomorrow for the vacation, & shall be away  
[P. 3/b] for about a month. I go to / London ... till Friday next (29th); then to Paris for a week or 10 days, where I hope to be able to examine the 5 Bábí MSS. from Persia by M. Gobineau, and to identify them. I hope to return

home about April 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>, after which till April 17 or 18, my address will be -

Westaires,  
Benwell,  
Newcastle-on-Tyne

I shall return here almost directly after Easter (April 20th to 21st) ... /

[P. 4/b] ... I have also prepared and sent in another article for the J.R.A.S. which I hope they will review in the July number. It continues a full and complete description (so far as space would allow) of the 27 Bábí MSS. which I have collated since I began the study of the subject. Of this also you shall have copies as soon as it is ready.

I have also formally applied to the University Press asking them to print at any rate my English translation of the تاریخ جدید,<sup>118</sup> with a few maps, fac-similes of letters written by some of the chief “apostles” of the Bábís, & etc ...

### Comments:

As the reader may know, Browne's application was granted by the University Press, and the 'New History' (*Tárikh-i-Jadíd*) with extensive commentaries and appendixes was duly published in English translation the following year.<sup>119</sup>

25.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
[from a letter dated 10 April 1892]

[Handwritten:] Westaires,  
Benwell,  
Newcastle-on-Tyne

April. 10th 1892

[P. 5/a]

My dear Sir.

I have to thank you very sincerely for your long and most interesting letter of March 28<sup>th</sup>, which I received on my return from Paris last Monday [.] I do not know whether I shall be able this time to answer it as it deserves ... but at least I cannot longer delay waiting to thank you very sincerely for it and the immense mass of valuable and interesting information which it contains[.]

First of all, before answering on the matters contained in your letter, let me tell you in brief the results of my examination of the Gobineau MSS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. They are 5 in number – 3 Arabic, & 2 Persian, and of the text which they contain I was only acquainted with 1 – the Persian Beyán – previously. At present I am unable to identify all of them, but conjecturally. I do so as follows:

Arabic

(1) Suppl. Arabe. 2509 ... /

[P. 5/b]

(2) Suppl. Arabe. 2510... Most of the súraas<sup>120</sup> have names. I think this book may turn out to be the longer<sup>121</sup> كتابنور of Şubh-i-Ezel ...

(3) Suppl. Arabe. 2511 ... /

Persian

[P. 6/a]

Suppl. Pers. 1071...

A work containing an exposition and defence of the Bábí doctrine, followed by a historical sketch of the movement down to 1850 (martyrdom of [the] Báb). This latter portion contains almost word for word most of the passages cited by the تاریخ جدید<sup>122</sup> from Hájí Mírzá Jání of Káshán's work, of which hitherto I have been unable to find any trace.

I think it, therefore, extremely probable that we have here this invaluable contemporary record of one who himself suffered death in the cause in 1852./

[P. 6/b]

Suppl. Pers. 1070...

Contains –

(1) The whole Persian Beyán<sup>123</sup>

(2) The first third of the work contained in the MS. last noticed (Suppl. Pers. 1071), i.e. most of the doctrinal part.

124

Comments:

The 'work containing an exposition and defence of the Bábí doctrine' which Browne found in Paris and later published is obviously the *History of Mírzá Jání*.

This work is much discussed in Tumanski's and Browne's correspondence with Rosen (see Tumanski's letters # 2 and comments, # 15, 16, Browne's letter # 5 and comments).

Let us now go back to the letter:

You will see therefore, that my trip to Paris has not been fruitless. I have found a new M.S. of the Persian Beyán, as I believe, the original of the كتاب الأحكام<sup>125</sup> translated by Gobineau; and, most interesting still, as I think, a book that would appear to be the original from which the compilers of the تاریخ جید<sup>126</sup> got most of their circumstantial narratives. Of course in the five or six days during which I worked at the Bibliothèque Nationale I could take rapid and brief notes & extracts of the MSS., but I mean to go back to them. I should like to write a brief account of them either for the English or the French

[P. 7/a] Asiatic Journal, / but I am not sure what is the etiquette about MSS. in foreign libraries. However, I shall write and ask M. Barbier de Mrynard, M. Schepers, or M. Zotenberg, and see if there is any objection. I feel that, if "Babology" is to progress, it is very desirable to ascertain clearly what MSS. exist in Europe, and what works they represent ... /

[P. 7/B]... What you tell me about M. Gamazof inspires me with the highest admiration for his enterprise and disinterested love of science. How I wish we had such a publication in England!

I safely received the proof-sheets of the اسورۃ الملوك<sup>127</sup> & etc which are being printed by the Academy of Sciences, and also the Zapiski (vol. vi, 1-4), for which very many thanks. I have not yet had time to examine them carefully ...

How I wish I could read Russian; unfortunately I cannot, so that the Russian part of the Zapiski is a sealed book to me. I must try and learn some when I [P. 8/a] get a little time, but a brief examination / of Russian grammar which I once indulged in led me to the conclusion that it is a very difficult language.

#### Comments:

The 'Book of Precepts (Livre des Préceptes)' or the *Arabic Bayán* of the Báb was published by Compte de Gobineau in his French translation in the Appendix within his work: *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, pp. 396-474 (see also Browne's letters # 2, 7 and comments).

M. Barbier de Mrynard was an Orientalist working at the French Mission in Tehran together with Gobineau. The former wrote a review on the latter's book (de Mrynard 1899).

For the proof-sheets of the *Súriy-i-Mulúk*, see Browne's letter # 13 and comments.

The above passage of the letter shows that Browne viewed keeping record of the existing Babi (and possibly Baha'i) manuscripts in Europe as one of the priorities of his studies.

Let us now continue with the letter:

As to the 22nd & 23rd letters in the proofs, I think that by <sup>على قبل نبيل</sup><sup>128</sup> the Báb – Mírzá ‘Alí Muhammad – is meant, not <sup>نَبِيٌّ زَرْ نَدِيٌّ</sup><sup>129</sup> (زَرْ نَدِيٌّ) as the author of the Hasht Bihisht calls the poet. The Báb not infrequently seems to call himself –

على قبل نبيل

“‘Alí before Nabil”, i.e. ‘Alí before Muhammad or ‘Alí Muhammad, as, for example, in the document published by me at pp. 996–7 of my second paper on the Bábís in the J.R.A.S.

نَبِيٌّ = ب + ن = 50 + ب = 2 + ی = 10 + ل + 30: total = 92) in a mere substitution for مَحَمَّدٌ = م + ح = 8 + م = 40 + د = 4: total = 92),

Such as the Bábís are so fond of – e.g. سَرَّ اَرْضِ اَدْرَنَةٍ = (260)<sup>130</sup>

شَدِيدٌ جَبْلٌ = چهريق (318)<sup>131</sup> /

[P. 8/b] Besides, seeing that Nabil soon (as it would appear) withdrew his claim, and now lives at Acre, a humble disciple of Behá, he must, I should think, have recalled and cancelled any “revelations” which he may have written. And also he could have no followers after withdrawing his claim, and no follower of Behá’s, I should think, would insert writings by a rival claimant in a collection of Behá’s works. You see I avail myself of one of your own weapons, whereby you disapproved my no longer tenable hypothesis that the سورۃ الملوکی<sup>132</sup> might be by Subh-i-Ezel! So if I am right here you must say, like Náṣir-i-Khusraw’s eagle –

از که نالم که از ماست که بر ماست!<sup>133</sup>

[P. 9/a] ... I cannot utilize your valuable list of chapters in your MS. of سورۃ يوسف<sup>134</sup> in this number. But if you will allow me I will insert it in my catalogue of my MSS. (to appear in July, I hope)...

The finding of the phrase <sup>بِقَيْمَةِ اللهِ</sup><sup>135</sup> يَا did, I confess, rejoice me much. I sat down one morning with the <sup>الإِسْمَاءِ</sup><sup>136</sup> قَيْمَوْمَ الْإِسْمَاءِ determined to find it if possible, though I felt it was rather like “looking for a needle in a bundle of hay”!

Comments:

As for the Epistles Nos 22 and 23 in the Volume of the Epistles by Bahá'u'lláh, they are untitled. No. 22 begins as follows:

هو الباقي الكافي للسبحان ان يا امة الله المعنى نداء الله عن هذا الغصن No. 23 starts with the words: هو العزيز العالى الرفيع اسمع نداء ربك ثم اعمل بما تؤمر. Both belong to the first 29 Epistles in Arabic of the given Volume published from the manuscript in the collection of the IOM.

Browne speaks of the word 'Nabil' being an equivalent of the name 'Muhammad' (the numerical number of both is 92) according to the *abjad* notation in the *Babis of Persia* (Browne 1889b: 997), while in a footnote to 'Mírzá Jawád's Historical Epitome' he gives the same explanation as in the above passage of the letter concerning the words *Sírr* (Mystery) and *Edirne* (Adrianople) having the same numerical value: 260 (Browne 1918: 19, footnote 1).

For Nabil Zarandí (Nabil-i-A'zam), see Tumanski's letter # 4 and comments.

Browne apologizes in the letter for not utilizing Rosen's list of chapters of the Báb's *Commentary on the Súrih of Josef* (*Síriy-i-Yúsuf*) also known as the *Qayyumu'l-Asma* in 'Some Remarks on the Babi Texts edited by Baron Rosen' (Browne 1892b). The latter is implied by the article 'in this number' of the JRAS. The catalogue which was due to come out in July is a reference to Browne's 'Catalogue and Description of the 27 Babi Manuscripts' (Browne 1892a).

'O Remnant of God' is an expression found in the Báb's *Commentary on the Súrih of Josef* and quoted in other writings. See Browne 1891, 2: 3.

He continues in the same letter:

Many thanks for the fullest particulars you give me about the Russian Consular dispatch from Adrianople. Is the Consul still living? If so, might he not perhaps be able from his own reminiscences to throw some light on the [P. 9/b] situation of the Bábís / at Adrianople, and especially the final rupture between Behá and Subh-i-Ezel? I confess that this part of the history of the Sect has a great and preeminent interest for me, and it is precisely the part which, owing to the interests involved, it is most difficult to fathom. I fancy Baghdad and Adrianople would furnish much light if one knew how to seek for it.

It would be very interesting if the سورۃالملوک<sup>137</sup> could be identical with Behá's protest written from Gallipoli, as you suggest. It seems at least a very likely hypothesis.

As to the copies of my Traveller's Narrative which M. Toumanski says the Bábís at Ashkabad wish to buy, I need not say that it would be likely to encourage the University Press very much in the publication of other / such [P. 10/a] works if so large a number were sold all at once. I have written to them to tell them about it and to ask them to give me an estimate of the cost and weight of –

- (a) 50 copies of the English
- (b) 100 copies of the Persian bound in cloth like your copy.
- (c) 100 copies of the Persian in a special paper cover to diminish the weight

Comments:

It is obvious from the above passage that Baron Rosen shared with Browne his information obtained from Russian diplomatic sources (see 'Reports from Adrianople on the Babis staying there' – Official reports ... # 3) as it is quite likely that some of the questions raised by Rosen before the Mission in Adrianople were suggested by the British Orientalist. It is also worth noting that Russian scholars (Rosen, Tumanski) as well as diplomats did not share Browne's profound interest in what he called the 'schism' or 'rupture between Bahá['u'lláh] and Subh-i-Ezel' or probably they saw more than a mere 'schism' or 'rupture' in it. Therefore it is not quite surprising that very little light if ever was cast on this issue in the diplomatic reports sent in response to Rosen's questions.

As for Rosen's hypothesis, supported by Browne, that the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* could be identical with 'Bahá'u'lláh's protest written in Gallipoli' (see 'Free translation of the Babi Shaykh's petition from German'), this suggestion would not appear very probable even if we were to assume the existence of some real document of which the mentioned 'protest' might be a very inapt paraphrase. Not only do the content of the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* and that of the 'protest' have very little in common but also their dates do not match. The 'protest' was dated 9 August 1868, while the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* was revealed much earlier as Browne rightly suggests in one of his works: 'The *Síratu'l-Mulúk* would therefore seem to have been written about the beginning of the Adrianople period' (Browne 1892b: 281).

For the Baha'is of Ashkabad wishing to buy copies of the Traveller's Narrative published by Browne, see Tumanski's letter # 1.

Let us now return to Browne's letter. In the passage below, the British Orientalist makes very interesting confessions which among other things cast some light on his doubts and personal preferences.

... The only difficulty I see is, will the books be allowed to pass through Russia without difficulty? I understand that there are difficulties in the transmission of books through Russian territory. They would, I suppose, be most cheaply sent by steamer to Odessa or Batoumi, thence rail to Bákú, steamer to اوزون آطه<sup>138</sup> and rail to Ashkabad ... /

[P. 10/b] I am less anxious for the English volumes to go than the Persian, firstly because I doubt if they would meet the approval of any Bábí (the Behá'is would not like Note W), and secondly because I very much doubt whether there are 50 Bábís or even Persians sympathizing with Bábís who know English, and I do not see what use they would have for so many copies. Indeed my feelings about the Traveller's Narrative are curiously mixed: I sympathize profoundly with the Bábís as a whole, but hardly know what to think as between Behá and Subh-i-Ezel. My book would certainly please neither: the former would by no means approve of the English, the latter would never forgive me for editing Persian. An abstract love of arriving at the

[P. 11/a] truth by comparing the different accounts / would, I fancy, seem to both of them a very unintelligible motive. If I had printed a book like the Persian Beyán or the Tárikh-i-Jadíd I should be much more desirous of giving it an Eastern circulation than in the case of this Trav. Narr. As between Bábís and Muhammadans I have no doubt which way my sympathies lie; as between Ezelís and Behá'ís I have: or rather my sympathies in different senses lie both ways ...

26.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
 [from a letter dated 19 July 1892]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

July, 19th, 1892

[P. 14/a] ... The collation of the Beyán goes on steadily, and I hope to finish the Institut MS. in 8 days more, as it has to be returned by August 1/13.<sup>139</sup> / I [P. 14/b] have not yet transcribed the text as I am noting all the collations first, and do not wish to begin the actual transcription till I have made some definite arrangement about publishing. I suppose I shall have to ask the University Press to do it, but I fear they will get tired of Bábís. It might be cheaper to lithograph it.

Have you heard that Behá is dead? I received the announcement simultaneously from one of his sons and from an Ezelí at Constantinople, so there seems to be no doubt about it. The Ezelí added that differences had already arisen about the succession between 'Abbás Efendi [*sic*] and his brother Muḥammad 'Alí, the candidature of the latter being supported by

[P. 13/a]<sup>140</sup> Áká Mírzá Áká Ján “خادم الله”.<sup>141</sup> Another schism would be a more fatal thing to the Bábí cause, but this ... [word unclear] may be a mere canard

...

Comments:

Interestingly enough, about the same time Tumanski sent Rosen quite a different account of the events in Akka.<sup>142</sup> The account was published by Rosen in the *Memoirs* ... Vol. VII, pp. 310–311. Since it is directly related to Browne's above letter it will not be irrelevant to present it here in full (in my English translation):

[From E. G. Browne's letter I found out back in summer that in the circles of Subh-i-Azal's adherents there was rumor concerning differences arising in Akka after Bahá'u'lláh's death. E. G. Browne's correspondent<sup>143</sup> maintains literally that a disagreement has occurred between Bahá['u'lláh]'s oldest son,

‘Abbás Effendi, and one of his brothers, Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí on succession and that the latter has been supported by Áqá Mírzá Áqá Ján, known under the title of Khádimu’lláh, a special and close servant of Bahá’u’lláh. I wrote about all that to Al. Grig. Tumanski, and this is what he wrote to me on this subject 8 Sept. 1892:] V[iktor] R[osen].

[Tumanski's reply]:

... I have delayed my reply a little. The reason for this [delay] was my waiting for the arrival of the Babis, who had gone to Akka (زوار)<sup>144</sup> and had been there during the passing of Bahá[‘u’lláh]. Five of them had gone there, namely: (1) میرزا جعفر شیرازی (جعفر شیرازی)<sup>145</sup>, (2) اقا میرزا افغان (آقا میرزا افغان)<sup>146</sup>, (3) اقا سلیمان کلیمی (اسکندر رشتی)<sup>147</sup>, (4) میرزا باقر بختار (میرزا باقر بختار)<sup>148</sup> They arrived at Akka five days before the passing of <sup>حضرت</sup><sup>150</sup> and stayed the whole time there. According to them, there has been no discord between the *Aghsán* (i.e. Bahá’u’lláh’s sons) nor could there be any discord, for the order of the succession to the عرش is firmly set in both the <sup>كتاب اقدس</sup><sup>151</sup> and in the Will and Testament. The first days following Bahá’u’lláh’s death all the Babis held fast to the ordinances of the <sup>كتاب اقدس</sup><sup>152</sup> and finally on the ninth day gathered in the قصر<sup>153</sup> where ‘Abbás Effendi unsealed in their presence the envelope, sealed with Bahá’u’lláh’s seal, pulling out of it the <sup>كتاب عهدي</sup><sup>153</sup> and handed it to Bahá’u’lláh’s nephew, Majdu’d-Dín, to read it <sup>باحسن الاحان</sup><sup>154</sup>. In addition, the Babis use the family upbringing and the existing relations between its members as a proof that no discord would be possible [among them]. Muhammad-‘Alí was in full harmony with the rest of the family members during the whole time they were in Akka. Moreover, the Babis view Subh-i-Azal’s son, Muhammad Effendi’s embracing Behaism as an indication of [their] great success.

Al. Tumanski

Ashkabad, 8 Sept. 1892

The letter quoted above was not found among Tumanski's letters in Rosen's archive. For the original, see Rosen 1893a.

27.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
[from a letter dated 28 August 1892]

[No stamp]

Aug. 28th 1892

[P. 15/b] ... I must again thank you most heartily for all the interesting & valuable information you give me in your last letter, as well as for all that you before gave me, with so generous a permission to make use of it. You will

see that I have not scrupled to do so, e.g. in the description of the  
 سوره یوسف <sup>۱۵۵</sup> تقسیر I have given your list of names of chapters, which was too  
 late for the April number ...

Comments:

For the ‘April number’ of JRAS and Rosen’s list of chapters of the *Commentary on the Sūrah of Josef*, see Browne’s letter # 25 and comments.

The following letter is written on a postcard.

28.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
 [from a letter dated 5 October 1892]

Westaires,  
 Benwell,  
 Newcastle-on-Tyne  
 Oct. 5th 1892

[P. 17/a] Many thanks for your most interesting letter, which reached me this morning, and gave me very great pleasure. Also for the very interesting proofs. I postpone answering your letter in full till I return to Cambridge (on Saturday next, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>), as I have not the <sup>۱۵۶</sup> بشارات لوح here, and am anxious to send you the collation as soon as possible ...

Comments:

*Lawh-i-Bishárát (Glad Tidings)* is one of the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh published by Rosen in the original and his Russian translation (see Introduction and Tuman-ski’s letter 5 and comments). This subject will come up in more detail in further correspondence (see the following letter).

29.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit:44  
 [from a letter dated 9 October 1892]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

Oct. 9th, 1892

[P. 18/a] ... I ... send you the collations of the <sup>۱۵۷</sup> بشارات لوح ... I have inserted them in the margin of the proof you sent me. The only important are:

- (1) The suppression of the پانزدهم<sup>158</sup> بشارت (about the advantage of Republican, or rather, as the context shews, of what we call "Constitutional government"), in your MS. I have no doubt at all that you are right in your conjecture as to the reason of this suppression. Other similar suppressions are found [*sic*] in the سلطان<sup>159</sup> لوح as contained in the Trav. Narr., evidently effected to avoid giving offence to a non-Bábí public.
- (2) The transposition of my long passage which in your M.S. concludes the لوح<sup>160</sup>.

There are a few verbal variants of no great importance (e.g. حکیم<sup>161</sup> & etc.) all of which I noted in the margin .../

[P. 18/b] I also send you a complete copy of the letter written by Behá's son, Mírzá Badí'u'lláh to accompany the Lawh, as I think it may interest you ...

I must thank you very sincerely for the very interesting document you sent me, viz the كتاب عهدي<sup>162</sup> (which I had not previously seen), and the poems on Behá's death. I do not know if I told you that I was well acquainted with the 'Andalíb, who was at Yezd while I was there. I afterwards heard he had gone to Shíráz. He is a most enthusiastic Behá'í. I should think he was not more than 35–40 years of age at most. It was from him that I obtained the copy of [P. 19/a] Kurratu'l-'Ayn's / poem beginning[:]

لمعات وجهك اشر قت الخ

Many thanks also for your notices on the St. Petersburg تفسير الاسماء<sup>163</sup> I have not yet had time to compare them with my copy ... I must also thank you for pp. 89–104 of the collection of اللوح<sup>164</sup> which you are printing, and for calling my attention to the expression[:]

كُنْ تَبَاضَ كَالشَّرِيَانِ فِي بَدْنِ الْأَمْكَانِ<sup>165</sup>

which is interjected by the Ezelis in so sinister a manner. Very probably you are right (and on the whole I hope so) in supposing that they have invented the context in which they place it; still it is possible that the words were twice used; or that they were quoted in the letter addressed by the Ezelis for I think Behá not infrequently quotes his own previous sayings thus in the course of other epistles. You will see, for instance that his son, Mírzá Badí'u'lláh, concludes his letter (enclosed copy) with the words –

انه على كل شئ قادر و بالاجابة جدير<sup>166</sup>

which are nearly the same as the closing words of the پانزدهم<sup>167</sup> بشارت (p. 187, L. 20) ...

## Comments:

The above letter, in which Browne pointed out the differences between his copy of the *Glad Tidings* and Rosen's which was sent from Ashkabad in December 1891 served as a basis for Rosen's article in the *Memoirs* ... (Rosen 1892). The letter is also mentioned in the article:

... I found out that a copy of the epistle 'Glad tidings' was also sent to Browne from Akka and that it contains 15 glad tidings instead of 14. This circumstance led me to ask E. G. Browne to kindly share with me the variants (points of difference) of his copy – a request which my English colleague, just as had been anticipated, granted with much willingness.

(*ibid.*, 311–312, translation mine)

Rosen gave in the article the whole list of variants sent him by Browne with a particular emphasis on the 'additions' in Browne's copy and missing in his. One of such additions is the fifteenth glad tiding which deals with a constitutional monarchy. This part is quoted by Rosen in full in the original Persian from Browne's letter and in Rosen's Russian translation.

As for the *Will and Testament* (Covenant) of Bahá'u'lláh mentioned in the letter, see Tumanski's letter # 2 and comments.

Browne relates to Rosen that he was acquainted with poet 'Andalíb ('Alí Ashraf Láhijání, also known as 'Fázil' and 'Nabil-i-Akbar'), whom he describes as 'a most enthusiastic Behá'i'. Tumanski also shares his great impression of that man whom he personally met and whom he defines as 'this inspired Babi' (see his letter # 6 and comments).

The poem attributed to Táhirih (Kurratu'l-'Ayn) is discussed by Browne in 'The Bábís of Persia' (Browne 1889b: 1002).

'The collection of the Tablets' being printed by Rosen is a reference to the Volume of the Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh which was being prepared by Rosen for print. The quoted expression which, according to Browne, 'is interjected by the Ezelis in so sinister a manner' is from the *Tablet of Wisdom*, addressed to Nabil-i-Akbar (see p. 41). In the published Volume it is on p. 95 (No. 20). Browne's casual remark in the letter about it does not allow the reader to understand what exactly he implies by 'its being interjected.'

The whole long passage which contains the quoted phrase: 'He is powerful over every single thing ...' in the fourteenth glad tiding in Rosen's publication is not part of the authoritative text of the given Writing of Bahá'u'lláh.

30.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 44  
[from a letter dated 11 November 1892]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge

Nov. 11th  
1892

[P. 21/a] ... I have not received the whole of the transcript of Hájí Mírzá Jání's History, which contains many interesting facts suppressed (generally for obvious reasons) by Mánakjí ... /

[P. 21/b] Also it is interesting to note how Mánakjí renders or changes the strong expressions applied to the Shah, &etc – e.g. where the Tárikh-i-Jadíd has –

چون محمد شاه بریاضن جلت انتقال فرمود<sup>168</sup>

or some such expressions while Hájí Mírzá Jání has in the same place –

چون محمد شاه بجهنم رفت !<sup>169</sup>

All that humanitarianism and talk of civilization which is so conspicuous in Mánakjí is totally absent from H. M. J.,<sup>170</sup> who rejoices to that –

در حدیث است که حضرت قائم چون ظاهر شوند ده هزار میلار اسگ گردن میزند<sup>171</sup>

Evidently H. M. J. needed careful revision to meet the present views of the Behá'ís, and one no longer wonders at the rarity of MSS. of his work! I very much doubt if M. Tumanski will be able to obtain a copy from the / Bábís of [P. 20/a]<sup>172</sup> Ashkabad, and if he does, I shall be much surprised if it contains all that the Paris MS contains ...

Comments:

Browne's doubts expressed in the above lines proved altogether unfounded. First, Tumanski did obtain a copy of the *History of Mírzá Jání* with the help of such a prominent Baha'i as Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygáni, whom he had met at Ashkabad. Second, the British Orientalist who regarded every case of a passage being absent from a transcript as 'suppression' would be surprised to find out that it is exactly his copy of the given Chronicle in which an account of how Bahá'u'lláh took upon himself the flogging intended for his half-brother Mírzá Yahyá in Amul was suppressed. The account is preserved in Tumanski's transcript (see Tumanski's letter # 15 and comments).

31.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
 [from a letter dated 29 January 1893]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

Jan. 29. 1893

[P. 1/a] ... By this post I am sending you 1 bound copy of the “Remarks” on your texts, and the “Catalogue” together with the small popular treatise on Súfiism & Bábíism which you have already seen ...

Comments:

The ‘Remarks’ are obviously a reference to the article: ‘Some Remarks on the Bábí Texts edited by Baron Victor Rosen’ (see Browne’s letter # 23 and comments). ‘The catalogue’ apparently stands for the ‘Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábí Manuscripts’. For the ‘popular treatise on Súfiism and Bábíism’, see letter # 13 and comments.

32.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
 [from a letter dated 20 March 1893]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

March 20. 1893

[P. 10/a]

My dear Sir,

Just a few lines (all I have time for at present) to thank you very sincerely for your kindness in sending me 10 copies each of the tirages à part<sup>173</sup> of the كتاب عهدی<sup>174</sup> and the مربیه<sup>175</sup> and the لوح بشارات<sup>176</sup> Most of these I have distributed amongst the students attending my lectures, ... I told them that they were indebted by your kindness for these interesting texts, which I hope they appreciate.

[P. 10/b] I herewith am able to send you the whole of Appendix II of my / forthcoming work, containing all that have [sic] room to say of Hájí Mírzá Jání’s History. I think you will see even from this brief account how interesting it is, and how well it deserves to be published. Instead I regard the منسوخ<sup>177</sup> تاریخ جدید<sup>178</sup> as partially

Comments:

‘Appendix II’ implies the corresponding Appendix to the *New History*: ‘On Haji Mírzá Janí’s history, with especial reference to the passages suppressed or modified in the *Tárikh-i-Jadíd*’ (Browne 1893: 327–83).

33.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
[from a letter dated 27 April 1893]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge

April 27, 1893

[P. 12/a]

My dear Sir,

I have to thank you very sincerely for your letter of April 15<sup>th</sup> with its very interesting enclosure, all the contents of which were entirely new to me, (except for the resumé of the ... [word unclear] facts which you so kindly gave me in a letter some months ago). No copy of the <sup>رسالة</sup><sup>۱۷۹</sup> اسكندریه has come to me, and I fancy I have become suspected amongst my good friends at Acre & Alexandria of Ezelí proclivities. Anyhow some months have elapsed since I heard anything from them, and the last letter had a tone of reproach. It [P. 12/b] is a pity, but it cannot be / helped, as someone had to hear the Ezelí side of the question, and this must of necessity displease the Behá’ís. It is a most fortunate thing that, thanks to M. Tumansky’s energy & tact my excommunication will not injure the cause of science ...

Comments:

As for the *Risáliy-yi-Iskandaríyyih* (*Treatise of Alexander* [Tumanski]) which is a work by Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygáni specially written for and addressed to Tumanski, see comments on Tumanski’s letter # 1. It is hard to see what made Browne believe and moreover take it for granted that anything addressed specially to another person and even bearing the addressee’s name as its title should be also sent to him. It appears that later he partly admitted his mistake. See his letter # 36.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
 [from a letter dated 31 May 1893]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

May 31, 1893

[P. 15/a] ... I am very glad to hear that M. Toumansky is getting on so / well  
 [P. 15/b] at Ashkabad, and I confidently anticipate the most precious results  
 of his labours. To his last memoir on the Tárikh-i-Jadíd &etc I owe, as I said,  
 a very great debt of gratitude. I wish I knew the truth about Áká Seyyid Jawád  
 of Kerbelá!

Comments:

The controversy around the figure of Siyyid Javád Karbilá'í arose with regard to the authorship of the Azali treatise 'Hasht Bihisht' ascribed to him by Azalis. Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl in his account of Siyyid Javád<sup>180</sup> who, according to Tumanski, was Abu'l-Fazl's mentor tried to clear up this issue by showing that Siyyid Javád was a convinced Baha'i and therefore he could not have been the author of the Azali treatise. It appears that this account did not dispel Browne's doubts completely, for he wrote:

One point, however, I must again briefly allude to: I mean the share in the work here ascribed to Seyyid Jawád of Kerbelá. In my *Catalogue and Description of 27 Babi MSS*<sup>181</sup> ... I expressed a doubt as to the correctness of this portion of Mírzá Abu'l-Fazl's statement, my grounds for this doubt being the ascription to Seyyid Jawád of the *Hasht Bihisht*, a controversial work of strongly-marked Ezelí proclivities, and assurances given to me by Şubh-i-Ezel to the effect that Seyyid Jawád was one of his staunchest adherents ... Both the Ezelís and the Behá'ís claim him; and I think, we have not yet sufficient evidence to enable us to decide between them ...

(Browne 1893: xlii–xliv)

Tumanski viewed the matter in a completely different light. He wrote in his article:

Generally speaking I feel necessary to add that a great number of Babis in Ashkabad knew Hájí Siyyid Javád personally. There is even a photo which shows him with Hájí Muhammad-Taqí who is presently in jail in Tehran. I do not know what relation Siyyid Javád may have had to Azal's adherents in general and to the composition of the 'Hasht Bihisht' in particular, but I will try to clarify whatever I can. I personally do not have the least doubt about his

belonging to the Behaists, but it is possible that some of his writings fell into the hands of Azal's followers, and since he was among the 'Hurúf-i-Hayy'<sup>182</sup> the compilers of the 'Hasht Bihisht' used his name to give [their composition] more authority.

(Tumanski 1894: 43, translation mine)

Probably, it was this assurance given by Tumanski that led Browne to give up his former view, for it appears from his above letter that he was ready to reconsider his earlier opinion (see also Tumanski's letter # 1).

35.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
[from a letter dated 26 July 1893]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge

July 26, 1893

[P. 16/b] ... I was much interested by what you told me about your Recueil<sup>183</sup> of the الواح,<sup>184</sup> and I sincerely hope that / M. Toumansky's researches at Ashkabad may throw a glow of light on many doubtful points. I am very sorry, however, to hear that you intend now to leave Bábíism for a while (only a short while, I hope) in favour of more classical & ancient Arabic ...

36.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
[from a letter (on a postcard) dated 22 August 1893]

[Handwritten:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge,

Aug. 22, 1893

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your kind letter of July 31, and for the corrections you point out. It was very stupid of me not to see that the title رسالہ اسکندریہ<sup>185</sup> bore reference to M. Toumansky's name and that it should be translated "Epistle of Alexander" – luckily the proofs, though passed, had not been printed off, and I was able to make the required correction. I am very grateful to you for having saved me from so stupid a blunder ...

37.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
 [from a letter dated 19 November 1893]

Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge,

Nov. 19, 1893

[P. 19/a]

My dear Sir,

I cannot tell you how pleased I was to receive your kind letter together with the last number of the Zapiski and the “authorized version” of the Bábí scriptures, for all of which I offer you my most sincere thanks. I was on the point of writing to you to tell you that the translation of the <sup>تاریخ جدب</sup><sup>186</sup> is published, and that copies have been sent to yourself and also to the Institut des Langues Orientales and the Academie des Sciences, all of which I hope will arrive safely. I am going to send another copy to you tomorrow for M. Toumanski; and I pray that you will be kind enough to transmit it to him at [P. 19/b] Ashkabad if he has left St. / Petersburg before it arrives. Of the short Persian text at the end of the book, which contains Subh-i-Ezel’s account of the Bábí movement, I have had 100 “tirages-à-part”<sup>187</sup> made for myself to give to my friends and to such as may be interested in the matter, and of these I have sent 10 copies to you, thinking that they may be useful to some of your pupils. Should you desire more copies I shall be very pleased to send them.

Comments:

The copy of the *New History* sent for the Institute is still preserved in the IOM library.

Let us now proceed on to the other passage of the letter:

I am extremely grateful to you for obtaining for me this new collection of Bábí scriptures, for as you know, my relations with Acre have ceased; at least it is a long time since I have heard from them, & from the Ezelis either, for that matter. I think they will regard me as – /

[P. 20/a]

الى هؤلاء و لا الى هؤلاء<sup>188</sup>

I am interested to hear that the name written in خط بدیع<sup>189</sup> at the end of the volume is that of حسین الذی سجن فی الخرطوم<sup>190</sup> for, unless, I am much mistaken,

he is the Bábí <sup>داعی</sup><sup>۱۹۱</sup> whom I met at Shíráz. He himself told me of his exile to Khartoum in company with Hájí Mírzá Hydar 'Alí of Isfáhan, whom also I met ... /

[P. 20/b] As regards the Bábís I am rather doubtful whether I shall go on with any more of their books or not. I should like to publish both the Beyán <sup>بیان</sup><sup>۱۹۲</sup> and Hájí Mírzá Jání's history, but most of my orientalist friends have dissuaded me, saying that enough has been done for the present. However

۱۹۳ تا خدا چه میخواهد

I should be sorry to abandon the Beyán after going through the labour of collating 3 MSS. – ...

Comments:

The issue of the 'new script' and the volume written by 'Husayn who was imprisoned in Khartoum' was apparently discussed with respect to Tumanski's description of one of his manuscript volumes of Baha'i Writings. The description was also included in his Introduction to the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tumanski 1899: xxviii). See also Tumanski's letter # 8 and comments.

38.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 45  
[from a letter dated 12 December 1893]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge,

Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> 1893

[P. 21/a] ... Many thanks also for the new sheet of the الواح<sup>۱۹۴</sup>... Your idea of [P. 21/b] giving an index of the opening words is admirable /, as it will enormously facilitate the identification of الواح contained in other collections.

I have also to thank you very cordially for your suggestions as to the Persian Beyán. At present I have only made the collation of 3 MSS. (my own & the 2 St. Petersburg ones of which you so kindly obtained the loan for me), and have not transcribed the text, thinking that in the end I might be compelled to lithograph it instead of printing it. If, however, there were any likelihood of its being printed, here or at St. Petersburg, I should be only too [P. 22/a] glad to continue the work – i.e. to collate the London / & Paris MSS. & to transcribe the text with the notes, &etc. I could easily write them in French & get some of my French friends to revive & correct them, if necessary ...

## Comments:

We find out from the above letter that Rosen's original idea was to supply the Volume of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistles with an index of opening words. This would have greatly facilitated the use of the Volume. Unfortunately, because of Rosen's sudden death in the middle of his work on the Volume and due to the fact that its publication was completed by another person, this idea was never implemented.

39.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 46  
 [from a letter dated 23 August 1894]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge,

Aug. 23. 1894

[P. 1/a] ... Dr. Oldenbourg completely charmed us ...

[P. 2/a] Your remark about the question of the <sup>195</sup>معصومية الانبياء is very interesting & quite new to me .../

[P. 2/b] I was bitterly vexed at what happened to me at Odessa, but it was probably my own fault (though if so I offended through ignorance), and a similar misadventure might have occurred anywhere

مُكْنَسَاتِرَةً وَ حَلِيمًا <sup>196</sup> ...

## Comments:

Sergey Fedorovich Oldenburg (1863–1934), an outstanding scholar specializing in Central Asian studies, was an Orientalist who did research on a wide range of issues. A member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Oldenburg for many years was its Permanent Secretary, 'the spirit and soul' of the given Academy. In 1930, he became the first director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences founded in Leningrad on the basis of the former 'Asiatic Museum.'

The issues raised in the letter are a puzzle. The context does not allow the reader to understand whether Rosen's remark about the infallibility of the prophets was made privately (in a letter which is the most likely possibility) or in a published work. It is equally impossible to guess what incident in Odessa Browne is referring to. However, it would be safe to assume that the 'misadventure' might be related to some complications with the books sent by Browne when they were passing through Russian customs at the Black Sea port of Odessa.

40.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 46  
[from a letter dated 27 October 1894]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge,

Oct. 27. 1894

[P. 4/a] ... I have one or two spare copies of a lithographed Bábí / (Ezeli) book called

[P. 4/b]

رجم الشيطان في ردائل البيان<sup>197</sup>

This will seem to you an extraordinary little for a Bábí work, but the ingenious author, so as to ensure the ... [word unclear] circulation of the book, has written a weak refutation alongside his apology, and pretends that the refutation (which is utter rubbish) is the essence of the book. I daresay you have that book, but If not I should be glad to send you a copy, and another for any one of St. Petersburg Libraries ...

I feel my countrymen are tired of Bábís [*sic*], and that there is little chance of my getting either the Beyán or Mírzá Jání's history published, unless it be at my own expense ...

Comments:

The Azali work in question is also described by Browne in the *Materials* ... (Browne 1918: 192–193). The same subject comes up in the next letter.

41.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 46  
[from a letter dated 10 December 1894]

[Printed:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge,

Dec. 10. 1894

[P. 5/a] ... I at once sent off the two copies of the رجم الشيطان في ردائل البيان which I promised you ... I hope that they will have reached you safely by now .../

[P. 5/b] I thank you very sincerely for what you say about the Beyán. I am almost certain that it would be impossible to get it printed here, unless it were

at my own expense: and I fear I could not afford this. To show you how difficult it is to get books, which cannot prove remunerable, published here, I may tell you that I have just applied to the Press to print my Catalogue of Persian MSS. in the University Library, and that even about this I am having [P. 6/a] some difficulties and / anxiety, nor has the MS. yet been accepted ...

Comments:

The above letter clearly shows that the main reason why, after going through so much labor of collating several transcripts of the *Persian Bayán*, the British Orientalist eventually had to give up the idea of publishing it was lack of depositing for its publication.

The following letter deals with the issue of the assassination of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh of Persia and its implication for the Babis/Baha'is (this assassination occurred in 1896). The letter indicates that Browne visited Famagusta where Subh-i-Azal was exiled and, apparently, met with him there more than once.

42.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 46  
[from a letter dated 9 May 1896]

[Handwritten:] Pembroke College,  
Cambridge,

May 9, 1896

[P. 9/a]

Dear Sir,

Your letter of Feb. 26 reached me in the Island of Cyprus at Famagusta, and I wrote a short reply from thence .../

[P. 10/a] The assassination of the Shah of Persia is naturally enjoying a great deal of attention here.<sup>198</sup> I am very sorry that the first telegrams connected it with the Bábís, as I am convinced that they have nothing whatever to do with it, but no doubt it will be made an excuse for renewing the persecutions. My own belief is that the assassination is the work of a political Society organized by Sheykh Jemálu'd-Dín el-Afghání – an able but dangerous man, who has been expelled from nearly every country in Western Asia. I met him in London in 1891, where he was trying to stir up public feeling against the [P. 10/b] Sháh by articles / in the magazines on what he called “The Reign of Terror in Persia”. He conducted an Arabic newspaper called <sup>199</sup>العروة الوثقى in Paris in 1884 which was intended to stir up Muhammadan feeling against the English. He was also concerned in a reactionary Persian newspaper called

the <sup>قانون</sup><sup>200</sup> published in London in 1890–1. He has nothing whatever to do with the Bábís, but is a zealous Muhammadan whose ideal is the union of all Muhammadans to resist European influence. He is, I suppose, safe for the present, as I see that the Sultan refuses to give him up to the Persian Ambassador at Constantinople ...

Comments:

A similar rejection of the idea that there existed any connection between the assassination of the Shah of Persia and the Babis/Baha'is is found in Batyushkov's book:

Given the latter feature of the Babis, the common opinion in this country,<sup>201</sup> based on foreign newspaper sources, that Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's murder could have been the work of the Babis appears totally unsubstantiated. In fact the Shah's assassin, Mírzá Rízá Karbilá'í is one of the followers of the famous Shaykh Jamálu'd-Dín, who was forced to leave his homeland and who is now residing in Constantinople. This learned and educated Afghan traveled a lot around Europe and Asia and arrived at the conclusion that a republican form of government would be most suitable for Persia.

(Batyushkov 1897: 28, translation mine).

43.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 46  
[from a letter dated 8 October 1896]

WESTACRES,  
BENWELL,  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE<sup>202</sup>  
October 8, 1896

[P. 13/b] ... I have still some material which I hope soon to publish in the J.R.A.S. –

(1) A short account of the siege of Zanján written, at my request, from his own reminiscences, by an old Zanjání Bábí (Ezelí) in Cyprus ...

[P. 14/a] Have you seen Andreas' work on Bábísm? I was grievously disappointed in it, for I cannot see that it contains anything new, and it seems to me unworthy of a man enjoying so high a reputation in scholarship as Andreas ...

Comments:

For the account of the siege of Zanjan, see Browne 1918: 234. 'Andreas' work' must be a reference to Andreas, Dr. F. C. *Die Babis in Persien, [ihre Geschichte]*

*und Lehre*], Leipzig, 1896 (Browne 1918: 175–6). The latter is a short booklet surveying the history of the Babi and the Baha'i Faiths to about 1880.

44.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 47  
 [from a letter dated 7 October 1897]

[Stamp:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

Oct. 7. 1897

[P. 1/b] ... In this month's J.R.A.S. I am publishing a translation of an account of the siege of Zanján written by an eyewitness ...

Comments:

The account was published in the J.R.A.S. for 1897 (pp. 761–827).

45.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 47  
 [from a letter dated 2 February 1898]

[Handwritten:] Pembroke College,  
 Cambridge

Feb. 2. 1898

[P. 5/a] ... Ross<sup>203</sup> has got back safely, and came down here last week to see me. He was very much pleased with his journey, more so with Samarqand & Bukhárá than with Tíhrán, and spoke more enthusiastically of the kindness he [P. 5/b] had / met with in Russia, especially in St. Petersburg. It was a very great pleasure to see him and hear all about his adventures. He got a very good MS. of Dawlatshah, which he has sold to the British Museum, but he was good enough to make it a condition with them that it should be lent to me to collate. I am glad to hear from him that he is giving the Tárikh-i-Shámí for your series. He is very full of the Bábís, who seem to have given him a regular ovation, and says that there are at least 15,000 in Tíhrán alone, and that unquestionably it is the future religion of Persia, so you see he goes beyond me in this matter ...

[P. 6/b] P.S. I think I told you about the Bábís in America (Chicago). There are about 400 Americans who account themselves of the sect. I send you herewith (enclosed with the J.R.A.S. extracts) a little work published by their leader, Kheyru'lláh, which may amuse, though it can hardly instruct you.

Comments:

Sir E. Denison Ross (1871–1940) was a British Orientalist, specializing in Iranian and Turkic studies, professor of London University. He was not alone in his prognosis concerning the Babi Faith (by which at that time the Baha'i Faith was implied) being the future religion of Persia. A similar view, though less categorically stated, was expressed by Batyushkov in his book:

As for the future of Babiism it is quite hard to make predictions in this respect; at any rate its spread would undoubtedly be of great benefit to Persia ... Maybe in the near future some Shah will become convinced of the merits of this teaching, proclaiming it the dominant [Faith], and the Persian people, exceedingly gifted as they are, with a renewed spirit and a renewed strength will revive the glorious past of their poetry and literature which for some unclear reason is considered irreparably lost.

(Batyushkov 1897: 28, translation mine)

The passage above also provides information about the birth and the first steps of the Baha'i community in the USA (see also Browne's letter # 47). Ibráhím George Khayru'lláh (Kheiralla) was the first Baha'i teacher in America. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá refused to sanction his doctrines and beliefs, which he attributed to the Baha'i teachings, he became a Covenant-breaker (see his letter to Rosen on p. 197).<sup>204</sup>

46.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 47  
[from a letter sent 18 March 1899]

March. 18. 1899

[P. 8/b] ... P. S. They have just got some interesting Bábí MSS. at Leiden which De Goeje has most kindly lent to me to examine.

Comments:

Michael Jan de Goeje (1836–1909) was a Dutch Orientalist specializing in Arabic studies, professor at Leiden.

47.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 47  
[from a letter dated 1 November 1899]

Nov. 1. 1899

[P. 10/a]... I hope that you are well, and that your official work leaves you some time free for the Bábís. I think I told you that the sect has established

itself in America. And has several hundred ardent behaits in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. I had a visit from one of them last June. As a rule they seem to know very little about it, but some of them perform pilgrimages to St. Jean d'Acre, and are received there by the <sup>اعصان</sup><sup>205</sup>...

48.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 48  
[from a letter dated 6 February 1900]

Feb. 6. 1900

[P. 2/a]

My dear Baron Rosen,

I am most delighted to receive yesterday Captain Toumansky's edition and translation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and other Bábí works, with Commentary, Introduction, etc. As I do not know his address, I am taking the liberty of sending you my letter of thanks to him, hoping that it will not trouble you too much to forward it to him. I have naturally only had time at present to glance at it ...

Comments:

Tumanski's translation containing the original text of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and many Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh as supplements did not appear until 1899, which was one year before the given letter was written.

49.

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 49  
[from a letter dated 10 February 1901]<sup>206</sup>

Cambridge[,] Feb. 10. 1901

[The letter is addressed:]  
À Monsieur Le Baron  
Victor Rosen  
W. O. Quai Nicholas 1  
St. Petersburg

[P. 3/a] ... I had a visit last week from a Bábí <sup>داعی</sup><sup>207</sup> on his way to America – a very intelligent & interesting man, who put me en courant as to the very serious quarrel and schism which has arisen between 'Abbas Efendi – <sup>غضن اعظم</sup><sup>208</sup> – and his younger brothers. The latter represent the stationary

or conservative element, while the former, so far as I can learn, wishes to be regarded in the same light as Behá'u'lláh ...

Comments:

In his numerous statements, 'Abdu'l-Bahá categorically denied the possibility of his being 'regarded in the same light as Bahá'u'lláh'.<sup>209</sup>

With respect to the 'stationary or conservative element' as Browne characterized Muhammad-'Alí, it would be interesting to compare Browne's assessment with E. Bertels' who was a prominent Russian and later Soviet Orientalist specializing in Iranian studies. He wrote in his article (critical review):

'Abdu'l-Bahá, being fully aware of the need for the teaching to be further developed so that it might preserve its vitality, symbolized the progressive trend. On the contrary, Muhammad-'Alí was inclined towards conservatism; he held on to the literal meaning of his father's words. Unless this conservatism were considered as an ostensible means of maintaining [him in the position of] authority, his disrespectful attitude towards the Will and Testament of his father would seem absolutely inexplicable. However, like Subh-i-Azal he did not receive support in the wider circles and therefore has no significance for the history of Behaism.

(Bertels 1925: 204, here and below translation mine)

In another passage Bertels says:

The issue of this schism gave rise to abundant literature both in the East and in the West, especially among the Baha'is in America, where the number of followers of this teaching has recently grown considerably. However, the great majority of these books are completely unknown to the wider public in Europe, therefore it is a pity that one of the best experts on Behaism, the English prof[essor] E. Browne, has published a polemical treatise by a follower of Muhammad-'Alí named Mírzá Javád Qazvíní in his book, which came out in 1918 under the title: *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*. Of course impartiality requires that the scholar should listen to both parties, but the publication of a pamphlet of the party which is obviously wrong without documents speaking in favor of its opponents would create an extremely unfavorable prejudice against the right party.

(ibid.)

## Notes

1 The spot is punctured with a puncher. The damaged word might be: لش.

2 Lit.: the religion of the Babis.

3 The page numbers are reversed.

4 Lit.: why should I trouble you any more [?].

- 5 I reference here the first edition of the book. It was reprinted later.
- 6 Rosen's more detailed description of the Babi and Baha'i manuscripts in Arabic can be found in *Collections Scientifiques ... 1891*, VI: 141–255.
- 7 'Manifestation' (Arabic/Persian).
- 8 'Mírzá Yahyá Subh-i-Azal' (Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother).
- 9 'Íqán'.
- 10 'Bahá'.
- 11 'Seven Proofs'.
- 12 'Súratu'l-Mulúk/Súriy-i-Mulík (*The Súrih of the Kings*)', see comments.
- 13 'Alváh-i-Salátín (*Tablets/Epistles to the Kings/Rulers*)', see comments.
- 14 'Husayn bin 'Alí'.
- 15 'Mírzá Husayn 'Alí Mázindarání'.
- 16 Page numbers are confused.
- 17 'Subh-i-Azal'.
- 18 'Vicegerent' (Arabic/Persian).
- 19 'Yahyá & Vahíd = 28'.
- 20 The spot is damaged by a hole punch.
- 21 The multiplicity of these 'wills' concerning the same person with regard to the same issue should be sufficient ground for questioning their authenticity. I address this subject in my book (Ioannésyan 2003: 58–64). For different aspects of this issue, see Effendi 1995: 28–29, 92–93, 97–98, 114, 167, 324–325.
- 22 Underlined by Browne.
- 23 The word in the original text is unclear. It could be read with some difficulty as 'Persian'.
- 24 'His Holiness the Primal Point' (Persian) – a reference to the Báb.
- 25 'Manifestation' (Arabic/Persian).
- 26 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 27 'Lawh-i-Aqdas'.
- 28 'Íqán'.
- 29 'Bayán'.
- 30 Underlined by Browne.
- 31 'Síyyid Hasan Shírází'.
- 32 'Jináb-i-Quddús (Hájí Muhammad-'Alí Bárfurúshí)'.
- 33 'La'álí va Majálí.' See Browne's letter # 16 and a note.
- 34 'Áqá Síyyid Husayn Yazdí'.
- 35 Underlined by Browne.
- 36 'Hayákil va Davá'ir'.
- 37 'Namad' – the same word spelt in Persian.
- 38 Lit.: *The Most Holy Tablet* – see comments.
- 39 'Íqán'.
- 40 'Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín' – see comments.
- 41 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 42 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 43 'Tablets'.
- 44 'Vicegerent'.
- 45 'Lawh-i-Nasír (*Tablet of Nasír*)' – see comments below.
- 46 'Jináb-i-Khádimu'lláh' – see comments.
- 47 'The scribe of the verses' (Persian).
- 48 'Tablet'.
- 49 Underlined by Browne.
- 50 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 51 'God knows the best' (Arabic).
- 52 Page numbers confused.
- 53 In the given Volume its number is 56 (p. 152).

- 54 The word is unclear but could be read as 'list'.
- 55 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 56 'Alváh-i-Salátin'.
- 57 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 58 Page numbers confused.
- 59 'Lawh-i-Pápd' – see comments.
- 60 'Lawh-i-Malik-i-Páris' – see comments.
- 61 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 62 'Tablet of Sultán' (see above).
- 63 'A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Báb' (Persian).
- 64 'Súriy-i-Haykal'.
- 65 'Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih' – see comments.
- 66 'Lawh-i-Aqdas (Most Holy Tablet)'.
- 67 'Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Most Holy Book)'.
- 68 'Lawh-i-Aqdas'.
- 69 'Ashkabad'.
- 70 'Great news' (French).
- 71 The text here is punctured.
- 72 'Tárikh-i-Jadíd (New History)'.
- 73 'Version' (Arabic/Persian).
- 74 'Secretary' (Arabic/Persian).
- 75 'Canons' (Persian).
- 76 'Tablet'.
- 77 'People of Tyranny' (Persian).
- 78 'New script'.
- 79 'Abdu'l-Ghaffár' – see comments.
- 80 'Násikhu't-Tavárikh' – see comments.
- 81 The brackets here are Browne's.
- 82 'Lawh-i-Sultán'.
- 83 Cf. Collections Scientifiques ... 1891, VI: 199.
- 84 The translation of the phrase is not part of the letter. I quote Browne's translation from *A Traveller's Narrative ...* (Browne 1891, 2: 110).
- 85 'Súratu'l-Mulúk/Súriy-i-Mulúk'.
- 86 'Tablet'.
- 87 'Tárikh-i-Jadíd'.
- 88 'New script'.
- 89 'Tablets'.
- 90 'The Most High Pen' – reference to Bahá'u'lláh.
- 91 Page numbers confused.
- 92 'The Seven Proofs' – see comments.
- 93 See *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS ...* (Nicholson 1932: 59).
- 94 Chapters 2 ('The Cow') and 103 ('The Afternoon') of the Qur'an. See Browne 1918: 202–203 and Nicholson 1932: 59.
- 95 'Visitations.' See Browne 1918: 205.
- 96 Mentioned here respectively are: *The Most Holy Book*, *The Tablet of Nasír*, *The Hidden Words* and *The Words of Paradise*.
- 97 'Tablets'.
- 98 'The Book of Certitude'.
- 99 See Browne 1918: 219–20.
- 100 'Pearls and Points of Effulgence'. See Browne 1918: 217.
- 101 Page numbers confused.
- 102 Here and below highlighted by Browne.
- 103 'Bayán-i-Fársí (Persian Bayán)'.
- 104 Here and below 'Tárikh-i-Jadíd'.

- 105 The word is unclear. Probably: with you.
- 106 ‘*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*’.
- 107 ‘Root’ (Arabic/Persain).
- 108 ‘Branch’ (Arabic/Persian).
- 109 ‘*Persian Bayán*’.
- 110 ‘*Súratu l-Mulúk/Súriy-i-Mulúk*’.
- 111 ‘*Súriy-i-Haykal*’.
- 112 ‘Persian Envoy’ (French).
- 113 The brackets are Browne’s.
- 114 ‘Commentary on the *Súrih* of Josef or the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*’.
- 115 ‘A drop upon a drop makes a sea’ (Persian).
- 116 I became convinced of the fact that the transcripts of the *Persian Bayán* which are at the disposal of European scholars are not textually different from each other in any significant way when I had a chance to compare the two St Petersburg manuscripts with Nicolas’ French translation and Browne’s *Summary of the Persian Bayán* in Momen M. 1987.
- 117 ‘Tablets’.
- 118 ‘*Tárikh-i-Jadíd*’.
- 119 The full reference to the published version of this chronicle is: *Tárikh-i-Jadíd: The new History of the Báb*. Translated by E. G. Browne. Cambridge, 1893.
- 120 Here and below underlined by Browne.
- 121 ‘*Kitáb-i-Núr*’. See Browne 1918: 216.
- 122 ‘*Tárikh-i-Jadíd*’.
- 123 See Browne 1918: 205.
- 124 The line under this part separating it from the rest of the letter is drawn by E. Browne.
- 125 ‘*The Book of Precepts*’ – see comments.
- 126 ‘*Tárikh-i-Jadíd*’.
- 127 ‘*Súratu l-Mulúk/Súriy-i-Mulúk*’.
- 128 ‘‘Alí before Nabíl’ (Arabic).
- 129 ‘Nabíl-i-... Zarandí’ (the middle word is not entirely clear). See comments.
- 130 ‘The Land of Mystery = Edirne’.
- 131 ‘Mighty/gloomy mountains = Chihríq’.
- 132 ‘*Súratu l-Mulúk/Súriy-i-Mulúk*’.
- 133 ‘Who shall I complain of [if not] of myself and about myself!’ (Persian).
- 134 ‘*Súratu l-Yúsuf/Súriy-i-Yúsuf*’.
- 135 ‘O Remnant of God!’ (Arabic). See comments.
- 136 ‘*Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*’.
- 137 ‘*Súratu l-Mulúk/Súriy-i-Mulúk*’.
- 138 ‘Uzun-Ata’ is most likely a reference to Uzun-Ada, a seaport in the Transcaspian region.
- 139 Probably, the double dates are due to the two different calendar systems used in Russia about the turn of the twentieth century.
- 140 The text on p. 13/a is in the margin of the page.
- 141 ‘Khádimu'lláh (Servant of God)’ – a title given to Mírzá Áqá Ján.
- 142 For a Baha’i source on the events following the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, see Effendi 1995: 246–52.
- 143 A zealous Azali living in Constantinople [a footnote by Rosen].
- 144 ‘Pilgrims’ (Arabic/Persian).
- 145 ‘Áqá Mírzá Abu'l-Hasan Afnán’. This name has Tumanski’s footnote to it: ‘i.e. the Báb’s relative’.
- 146 ‘Áqá Sulaymán Kalímí’. The footnote: ‘a former Jew’.
- 147 ‘Mírzá Ja‘far Shirází’.
- 148 ‘Mírzá Bágir Bassár’. The footnote: ‘The blind poet, author of the ode in honor of the Tsar, known to you [see Collections Scientifiques, etc. VI, p. 251, N 1 V. R[osen].’.

- 149 'Áqá 'Askar Rashti'.
- 150 'His Holiness'.
- 151 Here and below: 'The Most Holy Book'.
- 152 'Mansion'.
- 153 Lit: *The Book of My Covenant* – i.e. *The Will and Testament* of Bahá'u'lláh.
- 154 Lit.: in the best of tones – i.e. in a beautiful and melodious voice.
- 155 'Commentary on the Súrih of Josef'.
- 156 'Lawh-i-Bishárát (Glad Tidings)'.
- 157 'Lawh-i-Bishárát'.
- 158 'The fifteenth glad tidings' (Persian).
- 159 'Lawh-i-Sultán (Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh)'.
- 160 'Tablet'.
- 161 'The "Knowing" for the "Wise"' (Arabic/Persian).
- 162 Lit.: *The Book of My Covenant*.
- 163 'Tafsíru'l-Asmá' (Commentary on the Names)'.
- 164 'Tablets'.
- 165 'Be thou as a throbbing artery, pulsating in the body of the entire creation' (Arabic).
- 166 'He is powerful over every single thing and it is natural for Him to respond to prayer' (Arabic).
- 167 'The fourteenth glad tidings' (Persian). The reference in parenthesis is to Rosen's publication.
- 168 'When Muhammad Sháh departed to the gardens of Paradise' (Persian).
- 169 'When Muhammad Sháh went to hell!' (Persian).
- 170 This abbreviation must stand for [the History of] Hájí Mírzá Jání.
- 171 'The tradition says that when His Holiness the Qá'im is made manifest a dog will cut off the head of ten thousand mullas' (Persian).
- 172 The text is in the margin of the page.
- 173 A separate excerpt of an edition (French).
- 174 'Glad Tidings'.
- 175 'Elegy on the death'.
- 176 'The Book of My Covenant'.
- 177 'Tárikh-i-Jadíd'.
- 178 'Canceled/obliterated/abolished' (Arabic/Persian).
- 179 'Risáliy-i-Iskandaríyyih (Treatise of Alexander [Tumanski])'.
- 180 The account was published by Tumanski (Tumanski 1894).
- 181 Here and below italics is Browne's.
- 182 'The Letters of the Living' (the first 18 followers of the Báb). This part of the information provided by Tumanski needs correction. Siyyid Javád Karbilá'í was not among 'The Letters of the Living'.
- 183 'Collection' (French).
- 184 'Tablets'.
- 185 'Risáliy-i-Iskandaríyyih'.
- 186 'Tárikh-i-Jadíd'.
- 187 See footnote 173.
- 188 'Neither belonging to these nor to those' (Arabic). I thank Dr. A. Knysh from the University of Michigan for consultation on the translation of this expression.
- 189 'New script'.
- 190 'Husayn who was imprisoned in Khartoum' (Arabic).
- 191 This term, usually applied by the Isma'ili's to their traveling preachers, can in the given context be translated as 'a teacher'.
- 192 'The (Persian) Bayán'.
- 193 'Let us see what God wills' (Persian).
- 194 Here and below 'Tablets'.
- 195 'Infallibility of the prophets'.

- 196 Lit.: be covering and enduring (Arabic). This could be understood as: ‘be tolerant to other’s mistakes (i.e. don’t expose others’ mistakes) and patient’.
- 197 ‘The Stoning of Satan: or the infamies of the *Bayán*’ (Arabic).
- 198 i.e. in England.
- 199 ‘The Sure Handle’ (Arabic).
- 200 ‘The Law’ (Arabic/Persian).
- 201 Russia.
- 202 This is indicated as a stamping on the paper.
- 203 In the letter dated 5 October 1895 (the letter is not related to our subject and therefore is not included in this book), the person involved is mentioned by his full name: Mr E. Denison Ross [P. 7/a].
- 204 See about Khayru’lláh in Momen W. 1989: 129, Hatcher and Douglas Martin 2002: 54–5, Browne 1918: 115–50.
- 205 ‘Aghsán (Branches)’ – descendants of Bahá’u’lláh.
- 206 The letter is written on a postcard.
- 207 ‘Teacher’ – see a note above.
- 208 ‘The Most Great Branch’.
- 209 I discuss this issue in my book (Ioannesian 2003: 204–7).

## Part VIII I. Khayru'lláh's letter to V. R. Rosen

Deposit: 777/inventory: 2/unit: 477  
[the letter dated 23 January 1901, sent from Chicago]

Chicago Jan. 23<sup>d</sup> 1901  
4643 Evans Ave.

[P. 1/a]

Monsieur  
Le Baron Victor Rosen  
W. O. Quai Nicholas 1. St Peter.  
Sir,

Although I have not the honor of knowing you personally, I have read in Prof. Brown's works concerning your important writings on Behaism. I thought it would be interesting to you to read my work "Behá'u'lláh" which proves, from a biblical and scientific standpoint, the truth of this religion, which is spreading in the U.S. of America. This work could have reached you two months ago, had I known your address. Thanks to Prof. Browne of Cambridge, England, who instructed me how to forward it to you. It was sent by mail[.]

I remain Monsieur  
Le Baron very respectfully yours  
I. G. Kheiralla

[signature]

[enclosed is the card which reads: g. [sic] Kheiralla]

## Part IX Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání's transcript

Among the materials in the Archive is a very well preserved manuscript of Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání's *History of Hájí Muhammad-Rizá Isfahání*, written in the author's hand. It is erroneously described in the Archive record as 'being copied by Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání' (see below). The manuscript consists of 19 pages; the page numbers are completely confused.

The History presents the author's eyewitness account of the assassination by Shi'ih fanatics of a venerable Baha'i – Hájí Muhammad-Rizá Isfahání, which occurred in Ashkabad in 1889 and the execution of justice with respect to the murderers by the Russian authorities (see also comments on Ignatyev's letter # 3). A brief account of this event can be found in Tumanski's and Rosen's publications (Tumanski 1892: 316–7; Collections Scientifiques ... 1891, VI: 247–8) and in Baha'i sources (Effendi 1995: 202–3, Cameron and Momen 1996: 117–8).

Deposit: 777/inventory: 1/unit: 92

The title in Russian (in the book of Archive records):

История Хаджи Мухаммада Ризы на перс. яз., переписана Абу-л-Фазлем Гюльпайгани в раби' первом 1308 года /=1889/ в Самарканде

*History of Hájí Muhammad-Rizá in the Pers[ian] lang[uage], copied by Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání in Rabi' u'l-Avvál 1308 /=1889/ in Samarkand*

The manuscript begins:

بسم الله ذي العظمة والاقتدار  
بعد حمد الله رب العرش والثرى و مالك الاخرة والاولى و الصلوات على وسايط  
فضيله بين الورى معروض ميدارم که چون حادثه شهادت حضرت شهيد سعيد مرحوم  
 حاجی محمد رضا روحی لتراب مرقده الغدا در بلده طبیه عشق آباد و عدالتی که از  
اولیای دولت قویه بهیة روسيه اطیال الله ذیلها من المغرب الى المشرق و من الشمال  
الى الجنوب در این محکمه ظاهر شد شایسته ثبت در تواریخ و سزاوار مذکرة در  
انجمان دوستان جمیع امصار و بلدان است

The manuscript ends with the colophon:

در یوم ۲۹ شهر جمادی الاولی ۱۳۰۷ بخانه فانی ابوالفضل کلپایکانی تحریر یافت

The postscript goes:

این نسخه ثانیه است که بقلم نشر آن در بلده طبیه سمرقند در شب دهم شهر ربیع الاول  
سنه ۱۳۰۸ صورت اختمام یافت

# Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Baron V. R. Rosen's extremely rich collection of archival materials on the Babi and Baha'i Faiths from the St Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences is a precious source for research in the given field, which considerably broadens the scope of studies on this subject. These materials being closely related to the published works by V. R. Rosen, A. G. Tumanski, G. Batyushkov, and E. G. Browne cast more light on many issues covered in those publications. At the same time, they are also very illuminating with respect to the Babi and especially Baha'i studies undertaken by European scholars in the second half of the nineteenth century – the century which witnessed the birth and development of the new religion during the first decades of its existence. These materials demonstrate that there emerged a group of scholars in Europe at the time, who, driven by the same purpose – collecting information about the new phenomenon based on primary sources, first-hand reports and accounts as well as on their own experience of communication with adherents of the new religion – combined their efforts in their research, widely and willingly sharing the materials and information they obtained. They might be right or wrong in their assumptions, judgments, and conclusions, but since they were definitely honest in their approach they tried to stay unbiased towards the subject, setting a good pattern for the future generations of scholars. However, large parts of this priceless archival collection have so far remained unexplored. Some of its items, such as manuscripts of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygáni's autograph of the *History of Hájí Muhammad-Rizá Isfahání*, have a special value of their own. It has been my intention in this book to introduce these materials to the reader as an integrated whole, bound by a single thematic framework. Hopefully, the Babi and Baha'i studies explored here will be useful to scholars and those interested in the subject.



Figure 1.1 Article by Tumanski in the newspaper *Kavkaz* (beginning)

Figure 1.2 Article by Tumanski in the newspaper *Kavkaz* (end)

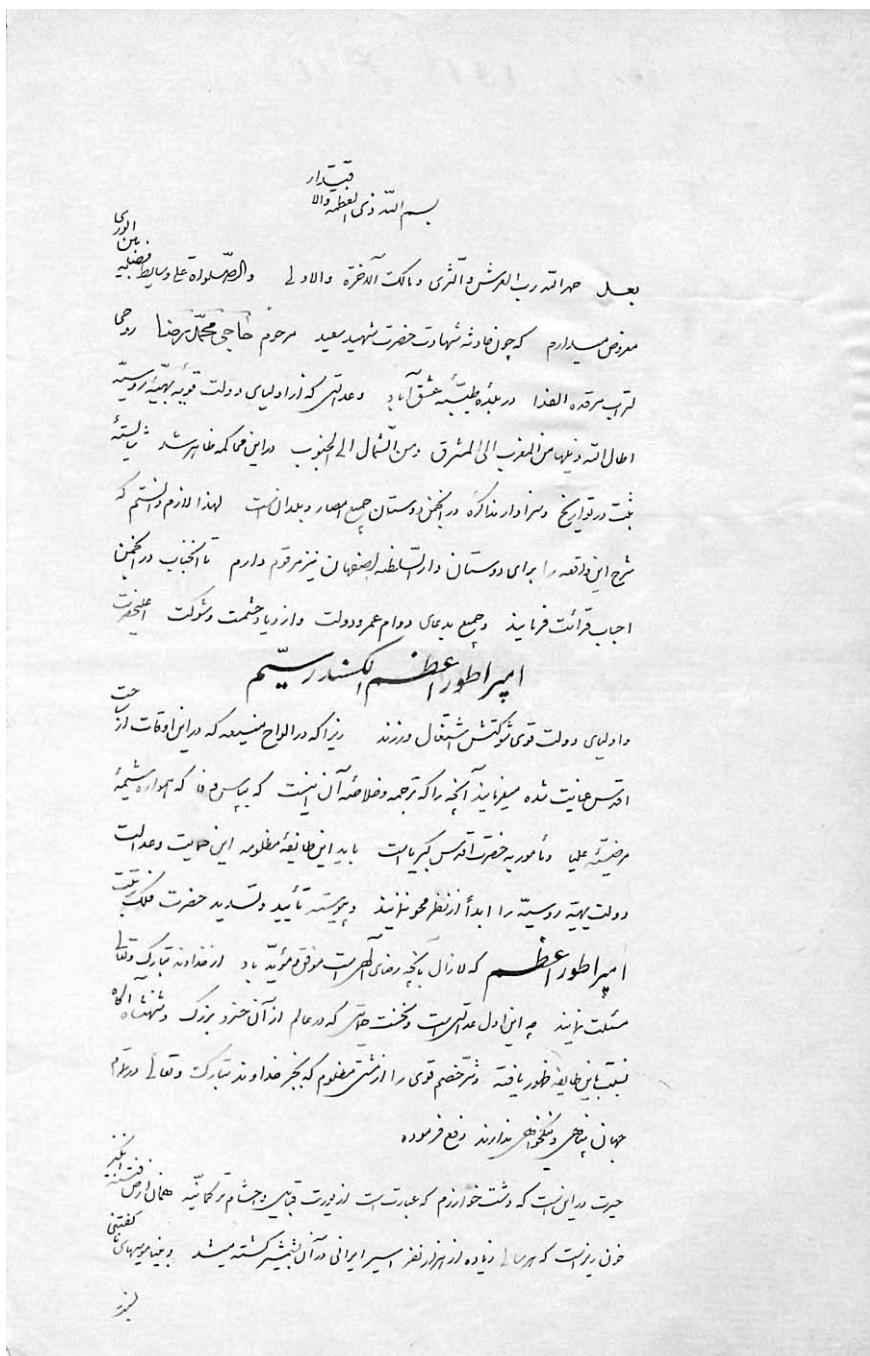


Figure 2 The opening page of Abu'l-Fazl Gulpáygání's transcript of the *History of Hájí Muhammad-Rízá*

تلك آيات نهرت في خدر المفأة، وهو حج القدس حين دُرِّدَ اسم الأعلم عن  
شطر البحان في أرض الصامدون به عظيم إذا تل جنود وحاشية بخلاف  
الذى اضعفت عنه كلّ من في السموات والأرضين واشتقت قدامهم شمس  
الجال في كل قدر لطيف

قد مِيزَتْ الأسواء في هودج القدس وخرج جال الهوية بنظر عز كرم  
قل تدانت هيفن التراب الساحل بعظيم إذا يك هودج الخدر  
يُستبشر سفينة قدس سبب ان ياملأع القدس قد جاء العذر بما عدنا  
بلسان صدق عليم ناستعد فنسنك لتحول نفس الله على ذلك ما يسو  
هذا الأمر المحدث القديم سبب ظهر عليك كل ما وعدناك بالحق ان  
انت من الصابرين واخبرناك من قبل كل ما يقصى وما انتقت به  
احد من العالمين واغفلناهم عن ذلك بما اكتسبت ايدهم وإن هذا  
لعدل مبين فواهشان الذين يدخلون في ظلك ستأخذهم عذاب  
فته عظيم قل تائدة هذاحك انته قد استقام بالعدل وبفضل  
بين الحق والباطل والشك عن اليقين ولكن انت طهرت النظر عن  
حدودات البشر ولا يرتدوا صرعن هذا المنظر المنير وهم عالم  
من رواحه الفضل لعل تخلصهم عن ظنهم وتفليهم الما الله العزيز  
الحكيم ونطمئن قل لهم عن هويهم وتبليهم الى وطن قدس بديع  
ولعل تحرق بذلك جهات التقليد ويترى جال التوجيد

ففيها

Figure 3.1 Transcript of Bahá'u'lláh's *Lawh-i-Sámsún*, p.1

Figure 3.2 Transcript of Bahá'u'lláh's *Lawh-i-Sámsún*, p.2

يُعَذِّرُ قَلْبَهُ مِنْ هُوَأَهْوَاءً خَفِيفَهُ فَوَاهِهُ أَدَاءً إِسْبَرَتْ سَكَانَ  
أَهْلَ الْبَرِّ وَحَتَّى سَكَانَ الْبَرِّ بَارِجَ جَالَ الْهُوَيَّةَ عَنْ هُوَدِجَ الْبَقَاءَ وَ  
اسْتَقْرَعَ عَلَى فَلَكَ قَرْبَ دِفَعَ قَلْبَ أَهْلَ السَّرِّ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَالغَيْبِ وَ  
الظَّهَوِيرَ لَا تَنْهِيَّ بَوْاعِنَ شَيْئَ شَيْئَ افْرَجَهُ أَمْرَكَ الْمَقْدِسِ الْمُتَعَالِ الْعَلِيمِ  
قَلَّانَ هَذَا فَجَعَ الَّذِي أَخْذَ الْمُوْجَودَاتِ كَلَّاهَا وَاحْاطَهُ مِنْ فِي الْعَالَمَيْنِ  
وَلَنْ يَأْخُذَ أَهْمَادَنِ اهْدَانِ يَوْجِهُونَ الْمُشَطِّرَ أَهْلَهُ الْعَزِيزِ  
الْمُنْبِرَ قَلْهُ أَفْضَلُ يَقْلِبُ كَلَّالَ الْذَرَاتِ إِلَى جَالَ الْهُوَيَّةِ أَقْرَبَ مِنَ  
أَنْ يَذْكُرَ الْحَبِيبَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَلْقَى مِنْ يَاتِ الْرَوْحِ وَنَبِسْطَ  
بَاطِنِ الْفَضْلِ عَلَى كُلِّ مِنْ فِي الْمَلَكِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ أَنَادِيُكَ  
يَا لَجَّةَ الْمَقْدِسِ فِي أَخْرَى الْقَوْلِ بِمَا وَدَدَ عَلَيْكَ لِجَّةَ أَهْلَ الْعَالَمِ الْقَوْمِ  
أَنْ طَطَّامَ الْأَحَدِيَّةِ فَاسْرُرْ فِي ذَائِكَ بِمَا اسْتَوْقَى عَلَيْكَ طَطَّامَ الْأَسْرِ  
وَإِنْ هَذَا لِفَضْلِ عَظِيمٍ أَنْ يَأْمَقَ الْعَرْفَابِيَّهُ فِي دِرْوَحَكَ بِمَا وَدَدَ  
فِكَ قَعَامَ أَهْلَهُ الْمُتَعَالِ الْعَزِيزِ الْقَدِيرِ هَبْنَيَّكَ بِمَا اسْتَخْبَرَ فِي هُوكَ  
أَدَوَاهُ الْمُغَرِّبِينَ وَاسْتَقْبَلُوا حِينَذِكَ الْذَرَاتِ وَقَامُوا فِي هُوكَ  
وَكَاهُوا مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ لِيَرْعِلُهُمْ دَنَّأَمَ الْمَقْدِسِ عَنْ شَطَرِ الْأَحَدِيَّةِ  
مِنْ هَذَا الرَّضْوَانِ الْمَقْنَعِ الْمَغْطَا، الْمُسْتَوْدِ الْمَشْهُورِ الظَّاهِرِ الْخَفِيِّ  
فَطَوَبِيَّهُ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ فِي ظَلَّهُ وَشَرَفَ بِلَقَائِهِ وَشَرَبَ عَنْ كَاسِهِ وَ  
بَحْلَهُ الْمُكَمِّلِ الْقَوْمِ وَبِذَلِكَ اتَّمَنَا الْفَضْلَ عَلَى الْأَرَبِينَ وَالْأَخْرَى

Figure 3.3 Transcript of Bahá'u'lláh's *Lawh-i-Sámsún*, p.3

وأنزلنا من سحاب القدس ما يطهر به أفراد العارفين وقدرنا لكل  
الأشياء مصير الهدایة أن يقبلن إلیه ويكونن من المتقين و كذلك  
قدرنا في مآء الأمور ما يغنى به العالمين

Figure 3.4 Transcript of Bahá'u'lláh's *Lawh-i-Sámsún*, p.4

This history I shall translate & translate as soon as I can, in the hope of getting it published.  
Finally I may add that I am ~~you~~ convinced both by your arguments & by ~~his~~ his own: it is Beha's work & his only. I saw (but could & Berg said that you were right about the ~~work~~) & argue: it is Beha's work & his only.

My dear Sir  
not as the  
My several copies  
of the whole,  
including the  
very interesting  
portion printed in  
the sheets you  
sent me -

Pembroke College,  
Cambridge,  
May 6- 1890.

Edward G. Browne:

I only returned to England from a two months absence in the Levant (of which I shall speak in more detail immediately) on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and so did not till then receive the very interesting proofsheets which you so kindly sent me, & which I have read with the utmost attention. I know not how to thank you sufficiently for the extremely kind way in which you speak of my own work in this field - And praise coming from such a source is indeed the greatest reward which one can receive.

My journey - as I daresay you will have divined - was intimately connected with the same object. It appeared to me that for a proper understanding of the subject (apart from the great interest one feels in beholding face to face the prime movers in a great national or religious movement) it was very desirable to have a personal interview with the chiefs of both parties of Babes, since from them (if they chose to speak) the most authentic and detailed accounts might be expected.

So, having obtained some extension of the Easter Vacation, I once more turned my face Eastwards, and on March 19<sup>th</sup> landed in Cyprus. Next day I proceeded to Famagusta, where I remained about

Figure 4.1 Browne's letter dated 6 May 1890, p.7 front

17 days, during which time I had daily interviews with Sibh-i-Eyal. I found the old man very pleasant & courteous, and by no means uncommunicative, & every afternoon, note-book in hand, I sat drinking tea with him, & writing down every fact relating to the history or doctrine of the early Babís which he let drop. But on one point on which I particularly desired information he was very reticent - viz. the origin of the schism, & the beginning of the rupture between himself & Béhá'. Besides the information elicited from Sibh-i-Eyal himself, I obtained from him 2 MSS. - one containing besides some of his own writings some of the writings of حناب قدوس (حاجی ملا محمد علی بالغزوي) : the other containing a work of his own called حلاۃ consisting of short aphorisms. He also gave me an autograph letter of the Bab's amanuensis (آقا سید حسین بروز) & showed me others. He also showed me some of the "talismans" referred to by Karam Beig, which he said were written by the Bab himself. They are the كواكب & دوام referred to in the Bayan, and mentioned by Goriran.

Sibh-i-Eyal has 5 sons with him in Cyprus, & about 3 or 4 followers (Persians - all from Zanján) who have settled there so as to be near him. He has also several daughters.

By the kindness of the Governor-General of Cyprus I was permitted to examine all the papers

Figure 4.2 Browne's letter dated 6 May 1890, p.7 back

(some, however, being confidential & privileged) referring to the exiles. Unfortunately the original Turkish documents which indicated the crime whenever they were charged appear to have been destroyed or carried off by the Turkish Ka'üm-makam on the British occupation. Nevertheless the names, ages, sex, of all the exiles sent to Cyprus, together with dates of their arrival, death or flight of some who are no longer there, &c. are fixed with precision. As regards the history of the Cyprian exiles, then, I believe that I have all the information obtainable, and of all the papers I took copies which are now in my possession.

After leaving Cyprus (on April 6<sup>th</sup>) I proceeded to Beirut, & thence, after a delay of 5 days (for I had to obtain permission from Beha' to approach him) to Acre. This delay unfortunately reduced my time at Acre to 5 days (for the ride thither & back occupied 3 days each way), but during these 5 days I was completely amongst the Babis, who treated me with unbounded kindness. I was granted 5 interviews with Beha' himself, but of course I could not ask him any questions: I sat humbly before him while he talked. His discourse was oracular, but rather general in character. He spoke as "one having authority," but

Figure 4.3 Browne's letter dated 6 May 1890, p.8 front

not exactly as I had expected - like a Master, even a Prophet - but not as an Incarnation of the Divinity. He is to look at a very majestic old man - but though he must be 70 at least his long beard & hair are quite black. He wears a very tall nomad (دوی) cap with a small white turban. His manner is stately and dignified, but somewhat restless, suggesting great stores of energy. He talked for the most part of the necessity of all nations choosing one language as a means of international communication & one writing (a sort of sermon on the concluding text of the سُلْطَان) & of the necessity of putting down War & international jealousy & hostility. Of doctrine properly so called he spoke little.

I might write pages on all that I saw & heard, but for the present I must confine myself to the above brief outline. Of course I hope to publish the results of my journey ere long. At Acre I obtained an authenticated copy of the ایقان written by their special scribe ذیت المقرئین & (more valuable) a new history of the sect approved & sanctioned by Béhá' himself. This is chiefly valuable because it treats less of the Báb than of Béhá', & because it has passed under the careful scrutiny of Béhá' & others who from the first have been engaged in all the events recorded. But of course it has very lightly over-drawn.

Figure 4.4 Browne's letter dated 6 May 1890, p.8 back



Figure 5 Baron Rosen's grave site in the Novodevichye Cemetery in St Petersburg, Russia (Summer of 2011)

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