

as Religion Index One.

It is worth noting that many of the periodicals and journals in which Bahá'ís have written are not catalogued, such as Iran, Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (now British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies) and Iranian Studies, and consequently this information does not entirely reflect research on the Bahá'í Faith in non-Bahá'í periodicals. Also many relevant articles which do not have the word Bábís or Bahá'í in the title are not included.

There is also one Islamic research index, Index Islamicus (London: Mansell). The advantage of this index is that it includes a number of journals that the above indexes do not, such as the three above. It also lists chapters, books and monographs written on a specific subject; although this is very incomplete for Bahá'í publications.

The other useful tool in Bahá'í research is The Bibliography on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths 1844-1985, published by George Ronald (1990). The non-Bahá'í periodical section classifies all known mention of these Faiths in all English language journals and periodicals lacking emphasis on significant references in established journals that researchers would initially require in an academic study of the Bahá'í Faith.

The Bahá'í Faith features in all the indexes. From an analysis of this information, a number of conclusions may be drawn which are presented in the graphs below.

The number of references to the Bahá'í Faith in the indexes from 1980-1990 inclusive is as follows:

Index

References

AHCI30

SSCI8

BHI8

Religion Index71

Religion Index,
excl. articles from World Order

21

Index Islamicus (articles only)

21

It is notable that only about 26% of these references come from original papers (excluding the World Order articles). It is interesting that with the articles from World Order, the number of articles in the

Religion Index is increased by 338%. It would then appear that The Journal of Bahá'í Studies is a serious omission from the all the indexes, and World Order from the AHCI and the SSCI. Both may be included if their editorial boards and Bahá'í academics write proposals to this effect.

Figure 1 charts the change over time in the number of Bahá'í references in the indexes. It shows that most indexes have seen a steady increase in the references to the Bahá'í Faith from the seventies. However much of this can be attributed to articles reporting the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran (17 references) and the Bahá'í temple in India (five references). Overall 35% of the entries on the Bahá'í Faith in the eighties are a consequence of these events. The implication is that the number of articles on the Faith will significantly decrease if the situation remains static.

Figures 2 and 3 compare the number of references to the Faith with some other religious movements in the AHCI and Religion Index from 1985 to 1990 inclusive. Jainism is chosen because its number of adherents is less than the Bahá'í Faith (3.6 million Jains compared to 5.3 million Bahá'ís according to "World Religious Statistics" in the 1991 Brittanica Book of the Year). Also the number of countries to which it has spread is significantly less than the Faith (10 compared to 205 countries). Although Jainism is a much older religion, one would nevertheless expect that there would be more articles on the Bahá'í Faith. However, as the graph shows, there have been 16 more articles on Jainism in the AHCI from 1985 to 1990.

The same conclusion can be drawn from these graphs. The Bahá'í Faith is suffering from a major dearth of academic literature. Mormonism, for instance, which has in excess of 8 million followers and is of comparable age historically, has had over sixteen times the number of articles written about it in these journals. This does little to support the efforts of Bahá'ís and their institutions to cultivate opportunities so that the Faith can be introduced into university and college curricula. And as Figure 4 demonstrates, the situation has actually got worse in last three years (1991-1993 inclusive).

A useful part of the AHCI and the SSCI is the ability to obtain information on various authors by looking at the number of citations that they have received in various articles. This is considered by some an important element in judging the relative standing of scholars in a particular field. The articles/books/theses may have written at any time, in any journal, but they are included only if cited in the journals covered by the AHCI between 1981-1993 inclusive. Analysis of the AHCI from 1981 to 1993 provides the following information:(4)

Author

No. of citations on the Bábí-

Bahá'í Faiths

Total no. of citations

Amanat, A.1018

Cole, J.R.I.334

Hatcher, W.S.04

MacEoin, D.2231

Martin, D.44

Momen, M.2140

Smith, P.2323

There are also two indexes to university theses which can now be accessed on CD-ROM. The University Microfilms International Dissertation Abstracts On disc has included most North American theses from 1861 to date.

There is only one reference to the Bahá'í Faith - the PhD dissertation by J.E. Bartlett in 1984 (Bahá'í World Faith:

A Case Study in Adult Socialization; University of California, Riverside).

There are two references to the Bábí Faith - B.T. Lawson's

PhD in 1987 (The Qur'án Commentary of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad, The

Báb; McGill University) and a study by M.R. Afshari (A Study

of the Constitutional Revolution within the Framework of Iranian History;

Temple University, 1981; PhD).(5) The

Index to Theses: Great Britain and Ireland classifies dissertations

from 1970 to 1990. This makes mention of Peter Smith's PhD on A Sociological Study of the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions (Lancaster

University, 1982). Clearly both of these indexes fail to include a significant number of important dissertations.(6)

The overall impression given by this research is that the academic study of the Bahá'í Faith in non-Bahá'í periodicals

is not thriving. This is not a particularly original finding. A 1989 article

surveying the achievements of the Bahá'í community indicate

that one of the present problems of the Bahá'í community

is intellectual:

Despite the recent increase in the attention paid to

Bahá'í scholarship, there is a general paucity of systematic

studies of Bahá'í doctrine. Despite - perhaps because of

- the great wealth of authoritative Bahá'í texts, there are

few studies of Bahá'í theology and philosophy.(7)

The information presented here has a number of important implications for the international Bahá'í community and Bahá'í

scholars. If Bahá'ís are interested in incorporating the

Faith as a subject to be taught in university curricula, then there is

a difficulty. Among the primary criteria universities use to assess the

introduction of a new course is the amount of research interest there is in the subject and the availability of resource materials -- both of which can be assessed by the number, quality and range of articles published on the subject. It would seem that at the moment Bahá'ís should be aware that firm proposals for the Faith to be included in university courses may be treated cautiously.

It is also of interest that the recent emphasis placed on correlating the Bahá'í Faith to social principles and contemporary needs has not translated itself into the academic literature. The vast majority of articles appearing in these journals are on Bahá'í history and theology. Social psychology makes a small contribution.(8)

Surprisingly there is not even one paper on the Bahá'í approach to peace issues or international relations. This, of course, is not the state of affairs in the Bahá'í community where there are many conferences, publications and books exploring the Bahá'í approach to current social problems.

For Bahá'í scholars, this information on how the Bahá'í Faith emerges from these academic indexes has a number of corollaries. The first is that they should be informed of this literature. A number of recent articles address concerns that need to be met. For instance, Aflatooni's review of *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions* by Smith highlights what he considers to be a serious omission -- the "issue of the exclusion of women from the highest Bahá'í administrative body, the Universal House of Justice. For some reason Professor Smith does not touch on this question".(9)

Another example is an article in *Faith Freedom: A Journal of Progressive Religion* where the author depicts an anti-liberal tradition in Bahá'í history and concludes that ". . . unity [has been] maintained at a great price, and now through a form of democratic centralism".(10) Also the repeated, though debatable, assertion that the Bahá'í Faith is a "new religious movement" rather than a world religion is made in a number of articles by MacEoin.(11) German-speaking Bahá'í scholars should be acutely aware that a recent introductory book by Francesco Ficicchia, a covenant-breaker, has been reviewed positively in a number of journals. One reviewer describes it as "a thorough study . . . based on a comprehensive study of the sources". Another supports the contention made by the publishers that it is "a standard work of comparative religion".(12)

In addition, Bahá'í scholars may consider submitting proposals to some of the indexes to include *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies and World Order*. Academically trained Bahá'ís may also decide to write more articles and book reviews for academic journals.

Of relevance to this discussion is a consideration of some of the reasons that

may have led to the the lack of academic writing on the Faith. Hopefully this may serve to stimulate consultation on how to improve the situation. The non-Bahá'í scholar may consider it not worthy of serious study for a number of reasons but in the Bahá'í community, these reasons may include:

In some quarters, there is the belief that an academic approach to the Bahá'í Faith is inappropriate. This attitude is put succinctly in a recent article: ". . . there are always fundamentalist elements in any religious community that deny the need for delving into and analyzing their religion".(13)

The scarcity of Bahá'ís studying theology, philosophy and Islamic Studies at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

The idea that Bahá'í scholarship is for the future while the present challenge is teaching.(14)

The lack of full-time funding or research facilities.(15)

The emphasis in the last decade to apply Bahá'í principles to current social problems with a concomitant neglect of the Bahá'í approach to some important contemporary theological and philosophical problems.

On the whole, Bahá'í books which are published are aimed at a general Bahá'í market or they are introductory books for non-Bahá'ís. As the market cannot sustain academic books, consequently there may be a reluctance to publish this sort of material.(16) This not only seriously hampers the development of Bahá'í studies but also interferes with the goal of teaching prominent people - an important priority for the international Bahá'í community.

[Note: This is an updated and revised version of a paper published in the Bahá'í Studies Bulletin 6.2-3 (1992). I am grateful to Stephen Lambden for his comments on earlier drafts of this paper.]

End Notes

Within the U.K., both of these can now be accessed from computer networks through the Institute for Scientific Information Data Service at Bath, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

2. Ed. D. Haynes. Evanston: America Theological Library Association. It began in 1969, and is published annually.

3. Ed. E. Treesh. Begun in 1960, published annually.

4. This represents a correction from the previous version of this article which was published in Bahá'í Studies Bulletin. The latter was a source index while this is a citation index.

5. This reference has not been noted by Collins or in any other Bahá'í publications. The abstract contains the following passage: "Throughout the rest of the study attention is focused on the role played by the pishevaran and merchants in the Bábí Revolt, the Tobacco Protest Movement and the

Constitutional Revolution and parallels are drawn, wherever possible, between these movements and between them and traditional revolts in Iranian history."

6. For a list of other PhD theses, see Collins' Bibliography 303-310.

7. Smith, P. and Momen, M. "The Bahá'í Faith 1957-1988: A Survey of Contemporary Developments", *Religion* 19 (1989): 63-91.

8. See, for example, Ullman, C. Cognitive and emotional antecedents of religious conversion. *J. Pers and Social Psychology* 43.1 (1982):183-192; Ebaugh, H.R. and Sharron, L. Ideology and recruitment in religious groups. *Rev Rel Res* 26 (1984):148-157; Ebaugh et al. Life crises among the religiously committed: do sectarian differences matter? *J Sci St Rel* 23 (1984):19-31.

9. In *Review of Religious Research* 30.1 (1988): 110-111.

10. Worsfold, A. "Peace, Liberalism and Otherwise in the Bábí-Bahá'í Faiths", *Faith Freedom: A Journal of Progressive Religion* 42 (1989): 40-44.

11. See for instance MacEoin, D. "Bahá'ísm: a religious revolution in the making?" *New Humanist* 102 (1987): 9-11.

12. Henninger, J. "Bahá'ísmus, A world religion of the future", by F. Ficicchia. *Anthropos* 78.5-6 (1983): 936-939; and Kleimkeit, H.J. "Bahá'ísm - global religion of the future - History, teaching and organization in a critical inquiry", by F. Ficicchia. *Zeitschrift fur religions und Geistesgeschichte* 36.1 (1984): 93-94. See also Schumann, O. in *Islam: Zeitschrift fur Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients* 62.1 (1985): 184-186. I am grateful to Morten Bergsmo for these translations from German.

13. Momen, M. "Scholarship and the Bahá'í Community", *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* 1.1 (1988): 26.

14. This is further discussed by S. Lambden in *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin* 3.3 (1983): 82-86; "The concrete support of Bahá'í scholarship would have important consequences for internal Bahá'í 'deepening' and external Bahá'í 'teaching'. It would serve to enable certain individuals to be more adequately informed about their Faith and enable them to befittingly communicate it to others. It would also equip individuals to 'defend their Faith' against distorted and hostile misrepresentations..."

15. See Lambden, S. "Some thoughts on the establishment of a permanent Bahá'í Studies Centre and Research Institute", *Dialogue* (1988): 34-40.

16. If one uses the books reviewed in non-Bahá'í academic journals as a crude indicator of the number of scholarly books published from 1970-1993, Bahá'í publishers have had the following number of their books reviewed in academic journals:

Publisher	No. Books Reviewed	Total No. Reviews
-----------	--------------------	-------------------

George Ronald	1016	
---------------	------	--

Kalimat Press		
---------------	--	--

813

Oneworld

22

American BPT

11

British BPT

00

It is of interest that the four books published by non-Bahá'í companies (by Amanat, Hatcher and Martin, Hakime, and Smith) received more book reviews than all the Bahá'í books combined. See my note on "Reviews of Books on the Bábí-Bahá'í Religions in Academic Journals, in Associate, newsletter of the ABS-ESE, no. 7 (Jan 1993): 4-5.

METADATA

Views18337 views since posted 1999; last edit 2012;

previous at archive.org.../fazel_bahai_academic_journals;
URLs changed in 2010, see archive.org.../bahai-library.org

Language

English

Permission

author and publisher

Share

Shortlink: bahai-library.com/55

Citation: ris/55

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations

Compilations-NSA

Compilations-personal

Documents

East-asia

Encyclopedia

Essays

Etc

Excerpts

Fiction
Glossaries
Guardian
Histories
Introductory
Letters
Maps
Music
Newspapers
NSA-documents
NSA-letters
Personal
Pilgrims
Poetry
Presentations
Resources
Reviews
Scripts
Software
Statistics
Study
Talks
Theses
Transcripts
Translations
UHJ-documents
UHJ-letters
Video
Visual
Writings

home

sitemap

series

chronology

search:
author

title

date

tags

adv. search

languages

inventory

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Baha'i Faith and Academic Journals (Used by permission of the curator)