



are derived by means of the Abjad system. This is interpreted as an indication that the promised Man *yu?hiruhu'lláh* will not appear until this length of time has elapsed. This argument was probably developed by the Azalis in order to dismiss Bahá'u'lláh's claim. They certainly referred to this in their rejection of Bahá'u'lláh, as Browne confirms: "To these texts the Ezelis specially appeal in justification of their rejection of Bahá'u'lláh's [sic] claim to be the Promised Deliverer..." (JRAS April 1892, p. 299) It is clear from the words of the Báb in the Persian Bayán, however, that the Azali view does not conform to that of the Báb when the latter expresses the hope that the Promised One would come before the end of the Mustagháth: None knoweth save God as to when the Manifestation shall be. Whenever it occurs all have to follow the Point of Truth and thank God. However, it is hoped of God's grace that it will arrive before the Mustagháth and the Word of God will be exalted by it. (Persian Bayán III:15) It is obvious from these words that the Báb regards the Mustagháth as a period of time during which the Manifestation will appear. Bahá'u'lláh evidently shares the Báb's cyclical view and also sees Ghiyáth and Mustagháth as cycles within which the Promised One will appear. He speaks of the year 9 within the Mustagháth in which Man *yu?hiruhu'lláh* has appeared. (Ra?íq-Makhtúm, p. 514) In response to the Azali objection that He was already announcing the advent of the Promised One, Bahá'u'lláh argued: Shake off, O heedless ones, the slumber of negligence, that ye may behold the radiance which His glory hath spread through the world. How foolish are those who murmur against the premature birth of His light. O ye who are inly blind! Whether too soon or too late, the evidences of His effulgent glory are now actually manifest. It behoveth you to ascertain whether or not such a light hath appeared. It is neither within your power nor mine to set the time at which it should be made manifest. God's inscrutable Wisdom hath fixed its hour beforehand. (GWB 50) The Báb, too, was convinced that the Promised One 'might appear at any time,' (TN, intro, p. xvii) as Browne correctly observed.