

Tablet to Mánikchí Sáhíb

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"Ye
are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch."

--

Bahá'u'lláh

The

Lawh-i Manikji Sahib is a prominent tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the early Akka period. [1]

Of the context and circumstances surrounding its revelation not much is known, but oblique internal allusions to significant historical events makes it possible

to trace the date of its recording to circa 1869-1872. This tablet enjoys a singular

distinction in the corpus of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, as it is the first occasion where He gives expression to the now-famous anthem: "Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch." It is also noteworthy for its style and composition...one of only a few tablets Bahá'u'lláh revealed in pure Persian. [2]

A rudimentary English translation first appeared in Star of the West, an edited version of which is reproduced below. [3] This paper concerns itself with an

epigrammatic survey of the salient themes found in this renowned tablet and with

their import and correlation to Bahá'u'lláh's writings of the same and later periods. Apart from succinct comments, no attempt has been made to analyze,

scrutinize or annotate the tablet. An effort, however feeble, has been made to enhance the pedestrian quality of the Star of the West translation in the distant hope of inching closer to the poetic eminence of the original.

Introduction

The

recipient of the tablet, Manikji Sahib [4], was a Parsi agent dispatched to Persia

by the Zoroastrian community of Bombay (now Mumbai) to aid and assist their co-religionists

in the land of their origin. [5] The Zoroastrian community of India took form in the wake of several waves of migrations by disadvantaged and persecuted

Persian Zoroastrians in the Safavid and Qajar periods, principally from the towns

of Yazd, Kirman and their surrounding villages. These ÒmigrÒs settled by and large

in the Indian provinces of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

It is

well documented that ethnic and religious minorities in Qajar Iran faced a bleak

and precarious existence. During the long and oppressive reign of Nasirud-din Shah (1848-96), political chaos, economic deprivation and moral bankruptcy progressively permeated the fabric of Persian society and wreaked havoc with its normative order.

The Shia clergy (ulama) routinely and often under the pretext of the "enjoining the good and forbidding the evil" ethic (al-amr bi'l-ma'ruf va al-nahy 'an al-munkar)

dealt with non-Muslims in a disdainful and callous manner.

[6] By branding religious minorities as "ritually impure," depriving them of blood money equivalent to a Muslim, making conversion to Islam obligatory

for any man or a woman that wished to marry a Muslim and other insufferable practices,

the clergy establishment managed to maintain an iron grip on enforced social mores

and bolstered its hold on political power. Inciting mob action to harass assumed

heretics (i.e., Sufis, Babis, and the like) were common tactics employed by the mullahs, the more unscrupulous of whom sometimes stood to gain financially...through

pillage, plunder and other insalubrious schemes...by institutionalizing what many

in the West would denounce as naked discrimination and extortion. While the Babis,

and later Bahá'ís, were singled out for particularly brutal and

bloody persecution, the Zoroastrians were never immune from lesser forms of maltreatment. [7] Upon settlement in India, these emigrants...known

as Parsis (i.e., Persians)...felt liberated to restore their sense of community,

to unstintingly practice their religion and, most importantly, to prosper in trade

and commerce under the British Raj. Having established and organized themselves,

they set out to alleviate the miserable conditions of their brethren in Iran.

Through a series of agents, Manikji being the first, they managed to absolve Zoroastrians

from the payment of special taxes (jizya) levied on religious minorities and, ultimately, to secure a royal decree for the establishment of a self-governing association called the Anjuman-i Nasiri. The primary mission of this association

was to lobby the state to intervene in cases of gross mistreatment of

Zoroastrians

and to promote and preserve the Persian language in its pure form. [8]

Manikji

met Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad in 1854 while enroute to Iran and later corresponded with Him on more than one occasion. He was impressed by

Bahá'u'lláh's

dignity and comportment and in due time became well disposed to the Babi community

through an enduring rapport with Him. This tablet was revealed in response to one of Manikji's letters in which he posed specific questions to Bahá'u'lláh on Divine Names, language preference (i.e., Persian over Arabic), education and the like. Although Manikji did not read or write Persian, he had, nonetheless, a keen interest in safeguarding it in its pure, non-Arabicised form. He hired Mirza Abul-Fadl Gulpayagani, the celebrated Bahá'í scholar and recognized expert in pure Persian, to teach in a school he helped found for educating Zoroastrian

children. [9] In subsequent letters, Manikji continued

to seek out Bahá'u'lláh's views on the validity of various religions, nationalism, the origin of humanity, and other such topics. [10]

Until

the early 1860s the Babi, and later Bahá'í, communities in the Middle East drew their ranks chiefly from the local Muslim populations...lower-ranking mullahs being some of its most ardent converts. Subsequently, the Bahá'í community succeeded in attracting adherents from two distinct religious minorities

in Iran: the Jews and the Zoroastrians. The only other religious minority of consequence,

the Christians (Armenians, Assyrians and other sects), remained relatively intact

and immune to the phenomenon of Babi and Bahá'í conversions. [11] The brutality of the Muslim clergy in putting the Iranian Bahá'ís through horrific tortures and bloody massacres on the one hand, and the meekness with which these assumed heretics accepted their lot on the other, increasingly led members of these religious minorities, who, as was noted, were not immune to lesser

forms of abuse, to empathize with the plight of the Bahá'ís and to look more closely into their beliefs and practices, thereby leading many of them to enlist within the ranks of the nascent Bahá'í community.

Even after having converted, however, they continued to maintain strong bonds with their former religious communities, customs and contacts. [12] For Zoroastrians the tracing of Bahá'u'lláh's

ancestry to the last monarch of the pre-Islamic Sasanian dynasty...Yazdigird III...and

His claim to be Shah Bahram Varjavand, the latter-day Savior promised in their Scriptures, provided further impetus for their rapid conversion. [13]

Ironically, the Zoroastrian priests (dasturs) and the Muslim clergy found themselves united in pressuring these converts to abandon their newfound religion.

Manikji, it appears, was not merely a promoter of the Persian language or a protector of Zoroastrian rights. His activism and influence spanned the socio-cultural, religious and political spheres. Being reform-minded, he routinely communicated with Persian intellectuals, political activists and dissenters such as Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzada, Aqa Buzurg Kirmani, Mirza Malkum Khan and the like. [14] Also, doubts have persisted about the nature of his Anglo-Indian connections and his possible role as a British mole. [15] He frequently commissioned others to write on topics that held his interests, but would either tamper with the finished product or would claim authorship for material he did not write. [16] As mentioned, he employed prominent Bahá'ís and specifically commissioned Mirza Husayn Hamadani to write a history on the Babi religion that came to be known as New History (Tarikh-i Jadid), a work not devoid of controversy. Despite the growing tensions between the Zoroastrian dasturs and prominent Zoroastrian converts, however, Manikji retained a favorable outlook toward the Babis and Bahá'ís and continued to maintain a warm friendship with Bahá'u'lláh.

Synopsis

A brief outline of the salient themes found in the tablet appears below:

i Praise of God

The tablet begins with references to Water of Life and First Rays (i.e., Divine Revelation) as the source of creation. Bahá'u'lláh confirms speech as God's primary bequest to mankind and his use of wisdom and intellect as ever-pleasing to the Almighty.

ii Greetings and salutations

As common literary devices in personal correspondences such as this tablet, Bahá'u'lláh's expressions of fondness for Manikji and His buoyant optimism for their continued friendship follow the recollection of their meeting in the land of Arabia (i.e., Baghdad).

iii Response to question about Divine Names

While affirming God as the Divine Physician, Bahá'u'lláh, in a possible reference to the rulers and the clergy, laments the recklessness

of the "selfish" in misleading the masses, and underscores the importance of being attentive to the changing exigencies of time and place (i.e., dynamic pragmatism).

In the tablet to Queen Victoria, He uses a similar metaphor to associate the state of humanity to a sick body that is misdiagnosed and untreated owing to the selfish desires of ignorant physicians. He further declares: "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.

This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician." [17]

iv Exhortations to turn to God

In moving imagery Bahá'u'lláh reckons those that recognize His station as having attained immortality and those that reject Him as never capable of attaining life.

v Response to question about preferred language

Manikji's question pertained to his preference for Persian over Arabic. Bahá'u'lláh's response clarifies that both are meritorious and that the purpose of language is the conveyance of a message, for which either language is adequate. In later tablets...for instance Splendours (Ishraqat) and Effulgences (Tajalliyat)...Bahá'u'lláh designates Arabic as the "eloquent" tongue and calls Persian "luminous." [18] Acknowledging Manikji's bias, however, Bahá'u'lláh bestows supplementary praise on Persian as the mother tongue of the Manifestation of God for this age.

vi Detachment from earthly possessions

In reference to the misdeeds of some (presumably His followers), Bahá'u'lláh gives vent to His disappointment that such acts have kept others from realizing His Message. He further deems detachment as a prerequisite for the elevation of humanity to the heights of nobility and makes human tranquility contingent upon personal benevolence.

vii Abandonment of alienation and enmity

Echoed in numerous other tablets, the uninhibited association and fellowship among all nations is a

central theme here and anchors Bahá'u'lláh's call to unity.

viii Advice against avarice

In a lucid analogy that brings into focus the literary excellence of this tablet, Bahá'u'lláh cautions that covetousness and greed can veil the light of the soul just as the thin eyelid obstructs vision.

ix Admonition to combine speech with action

Impact of speech is conditioned upon the speaker being in step with the needs and expectations of the hearer. Bahá'u'lláh encourages the exercise of moderation in speech and links soft speech to the nurturing efficacy of milk, whereas coarse speech is equated to a sharp dagger. In the *Lawh-i-Maqsud* and elsewhere Bahá'u'lláh expounds on this topic. [19]

x Continued exhortations to turn to God

Drawing upon evocative imagery such as "Sun of Wisdom," "Ocean of Knowledge," and "Falcon on the arm of the Almighty" Bahá'u'lláh further explicates His station.

xi Glad tidings of the unity of mankind

Perhaps the pivotal message in this tablet...and in Bahá'u'lláh's entire revelation...is the call to the unity of mankind. In countless tablets He elevates it above all human aspirations. His persistent appeals to adopt a common tongue and script buttress this plea to unity. In *The Most Holy Book* Bahá'u'lláh states: "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." In the same book, Bahá'u'lláh instructs world leaders to adopt a single language and script and affirms that doing so will bring about "the greatest instrument for promoting harmony and civilization." The unity of mankind, in Bahá'u'lláh's revelation, is one of two signs that herald the coming of age of the human race. [20]

xii Admonitions to adopt a virtuous life

Affirming the past as the mirror of the future, Bahá'u'lláh calls for the recognition of His station. He further promotes the pursuit of useful sciences and encourages truthfulness, detachment, faith, moderation (especially in speech), wisdom and tactfulness. Bahá'u'lláh concludes the tablet by inspiring confidence in the ultimate destiny of mankind to attain to the

fruits
of His mission.

Conclusion

This paper has offered a peek, however pithy, into one of Bahá'u'lláh's most outstanding tablets of the early Akka period. A more exhaustive study of it awaits the ambition of the future seeker and student. It is not unreasonable to posit, however, that many of Bahá'u'lláh's tablets of the later Akka period, such as those cited in the Synopsis section above, draw heavily upon the themes first introduced in this tablet. While the non-trivial enterprise of arriving at a definitive and cohesive taxonomy of the vast corpus revealed by the Supreme Pen still eludes many a student in Baha, it is yet possible to attempt to frame and contextualize this tablet for a better understanding of its core message. Challenges abound, however. Many of Bahá'u'lláh's writings are not yet available in English or are otherwise inaccessible to a wide audience in the West, and much of what is published must be approached with caution and meticulous scholarship. Bahá'u'lláh's writings are often steeped in cryptic allusions and technical terms that cannot be easily deciphered.

Against this backdrop, the scholarship of Mirza Abul-Fadl Gulpayagani is edifying. His provision of a framework for the classification and enumeration of the "styles" encompassing Bahá'u'lláh's revelation is de rigueur and foundational for such a survey. Bahá'u'lláh wrote in one of nine styles such as: proclamations, prayers and meditations, commentaries and interpretations of past religious scriptures, laws and ordinances, mystical writings, addresses to rulers and kings, philosophical writings, ethical teachings and, finally, social teachings. [21]

As evidenced by the main themes found in this tablet, it can be placed into the last of these categories even as it comprehends elements of some of the other styles, such as ethical teachings.

While the foremost theme of the tablet accentuates the call for the unity of mankind, Bahá'u'lláh also stresses the need to act in accordance with the exigencies of time and to be alert to the problems of the day. He, moreover, advises all nations and races to dispel alienation, enmity and estrangement. Other social and ethical teachings present in this tablet include the necessity to use language with wisdom, to adopt virtuous traits, to eschew greed, to take up useful

sciences

and so on. In numerous later writings, Bahá'u'lláh continues to expand and elaborate on many of the same topics. For example, in Glad Tidings (Bisharat), Words of Paradise (Kalimat-i Firdawsiiyyih) Splendours (Ishraqat) and

other tablets of the post-Aqdas era, Bahá'u'lláh explains how a universal language and script are necessary ingredients for achieving the unity of the human race. In the Lawh-i-Maqsud, Bahá'u'lláh goes further to mandate the establishment of a universal auxiliary language and script as "‡

incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding." [22] In a tablet revealed in the latter

part of the Akka period...associated with His departure from that city, circa 1877...called

the Tablet of Unity (Lawh-i-Ittihad), Bahá'u'lláh expounds on some of the very same themes found in this tablet. While defining the various meanings

of unity, He consistently recalls the principles of moderation in speech, the necessity of placing deeds before words, the hazards of vainglory and dominance and finally, the exhortation to associate with all peoples in a spirit of unity and fellowship.

Ostensibly

a reply to a letter of a friend, this tablet enjoys a marked distinction in Bahá'u'lláh's

voluminous revelation for its weighty content and for its lofty and lucid diction.

Manikji deserves our abiding gratitude for eliciting this majestic tablet from the Supreme Pen and for his unrelenting services towards furthering the principles

of education and human rights in Qajar Iran...principles that he, it should not escape our attention, avidly shared with Bahá'u'lláh.

Translation

As mentioned,

a rudimentary translation by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab was first published in Star of the West. What appears below is an extensively edited and modified variant of that translation. Where necessary I have filled the gaps in non-translated sections (such as the exordium and other phrases), corrected mistranslations, and supplied variant renderings, which, it is my belief, more closely convey the

sense of the original. The texts in italics are either from the Gleanings or from the Tablets and have been reproduced in lieu of the equivalent Star of the West text. An Arabic prayer is appended at the end of the tablet, which is not translated here or in Star of the West. To the extent possible, I have endeavored to approximate the literal denotation of the original.

However,

evidence of the unattainable goal of a "befitting rendering of Bahá'u'lláh's matchless utterance" can be found throughout this translation. I pray that the reader will excuse all such shortcomings and deficiencies.

In the
Name of the Incomparable Lord!

Praise be unto Him, the Eternal Seer, who through a dewdrop of the ocean of His Generosity raised up the firmament of existence, begemmed it with the stars of knowledge and summoned mankind to the court of perception and understanding! This dewdrop, which is the Primal Word of the Almighty, is at times called the Water of Life for it quickens the lifeless souls in the desert of ignorance and at other times it is known as the First Rays. When this radiance shone forth from the Sun of Wisdom, the Primary Movement was made manifest through the bounty of the Incomparable, the Wise One. He is the Knower, the Merciful! He is sanctified above every statement and attribute! The seen and the unseen fail to attain a measure of His understanding.

The world of being and everything therein bears witness to this Utterance. Thus it is established that the First Bestowal of the Almighty is speech and its acceptance by Him is conditioned upon wisdom. It is the First Instructor in the School of Existence and the Primal Emanation of God. All that is visible is but through the radiance of its Light and all that is revealed is through the appearance of its Knowledge. All names originate from His Name and the start and end of all affairs are in His Hand.

Your letter reached this Captive of the world in this prison. It brought happiness, increased friendship and renewed the remembrance of former times. Praise be unto the Possessor of the Universe for permitting our meeting in the land of Arabia. We met, we conversed and we listened. It is hoped that forgetfulness shall not follow that encounter, that the passage of time shall not erase its remembrance from the heart and that from what was sown shall sprout the flora of friendship, verdant, luxuriant and imperishable.

You have asked about Divine Names. The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

We
can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable
afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned.

They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all

men,
themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover
the
cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have
conceived
the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

Incline

your ears to the sweet melody of this Prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices,
that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as
dead!

The Hand of Divine bounty profereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and
drink

your fill. Whoso hath been re-born in this Day, shall never die; whoso
remaineth
dead, shall never live.

[23]

You have written regarding languages: Arabic and Persian
are both good, for that which one desires of a language is to attain insight
into the discourse of the narrator and this can be obtained from either tongue.
However, as in this day the Sun of Wisdom shines forth from the horizon of
Persia this language is all the more praiseworthy.

O friend! When the Primal Word appeared in these latter
days, a number of the heavenly souls heard the Melody of the Beloved and
hastened toward it, while others, finding the deeds of some at odds with their
words, stayed far and were deprived from the radiance of the Sun of Knowledge.

Say,

O ye sons of earth! Thy Lord, the Pure One, proclaims: In this glorious Day
whatever will purge you from corruption and will lead you towards peace and
composure,

is indeed the Straight Path. [24] Purity from the stains of desire means
detachment from all things that occasion loss and abate human nobility, which
in turn comes about when one favors his own words and deeds, notwithstanding
their

merit. Serenity is attained when one becomes the well-wisher of all who are on
earth. He who is informed will readily testify that if all the peoples of the
earth were to attain to these Heavenly Utterances they would by no means be
prevented

from the Ocean of Divine Generosity. The heaven of righteousness has no Star,
and shall not have any, brighter than this. The first Utterance of the Wise One
is this: O ye sons of earth! Turn away from the darkness of alienation and seek
the radiance of the Sun of Unity. This is that which shall benefit the people
of the world more than aught else.

O friend! The Tree of Utterance has no better a Blossom
and the Ocean of Wisdom has no brighter a Pearl than this. O ye sons of wisdom!

Flimsy as it may be, the eyelid yet prevents the eye from seeing the world and all that is therein. Consider then what would result when the curtain of greed veils the vision of the heart. Say, O people! The darkness of avarice and envy obscures the light of the soul even as clouds eclipse the radiance of the sun. He who listens with the ear of intelligence to this Utterance shall unfurl the wings of freedom and soar with great ease toward the heaven of understanding.

When

the world was environed with darkness, the Sea of Generosity was set in motion and Divine Illumination made visible the deeds. This is that same illumination foretold in the heavenly books. Should the Almighty desire it, He will sanctify the hearts with pure speech and shine the Light of the Sun of Unity upon the souls

and thereby regenerate the world. O people! Words must be demonstrated through deeds, for the latter is the true witness of the former. Words alone shall not quench the thirsty nor unlock the doors of sight to the blind. The Heavenly Wise

One proclaims: A harsh word is like unto a sword, while gentle speech like unto milk. In this manner will the children of the world attain to knowledge and improve

their lot. The Tongue of Wisdom proclaimeth: He that hath Me not is bereft of all things. Turn ye away from all that is on earth and seek none else but Me.

I am the Sun of Wisdom and the Ocean of Knowledge. I cheer the faint and revive the dead. I am the guiding Light that illumineth the way. I am the royal Falcon on the arm of the Almighty. I unfold the drooping wings of every broken bird and start it on its flight. [25]

The

Peerless Friend says: The path of freedom has been opened! Hasten ye! The Fount of Knowledge is gushing! Drink ye! Say O friends! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. [26] Truly I say: Whatsoever abates ignorance

and augments knowledge has been and shall be pleasing to the Creator. Say, O people!

Walk under the shadow of Justice and Righteousness and take shelter under the pavilion of Unity. Say, O thou possessor of sight! The past is the mirror of the

future; see and be apprised thereof that perchance you may recognize the Friend and not be the cause of His displeasure. In this day, the best fruit from the Tree of Knowledge is that which benefits mankind and improves his condition.

Say! The tongue bears witness to My Truth; do not defile

it with falsehood. The soul is the treasury of My Mystery; do not surrender it to avarice. It is hoped that in this Dawn, through which the universe has been illumined with the rays of the Sun of Understanding and Knowledge, we may

attain to the good pleasure of the Beloved and drink from the Ocean of Divine Recognition.

O friend! As ears are few to hear, for some time now the Pen has been silent in its own chamber, to such an extent that silence has overtaken utterance and has been deemed more favorable. Say, O people! Words are revealed according to capacity, so that newcomers may stay and beginners may make progress. Milk must be given according to prescribed measure, such that the babes of the world may enter into the Realm of Grandeur and be established upon the Court of Unity.

O friend! We have seen the pure ground and have sown the seed of knowledge thereupon. Now it is left to the rays of the sun...will they singe the seedling or cause it to grow? Say: In this day, through the greatness of the Peerless, the Wise One, the Sun of Knowledge has appeared from behind the veil of the soul. All the birds of the meadow are inebriated through the wine of Understanding and are content with the remembrance of the Beloved. Well is it with him who comprehends.

Notes

Persian

words have not been transliterated for ease of document formatting and transportability over the Internet. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Amin Neshati whose perceptive suggestions and valuable editing greatly improved the quality of this paper.

[1] The original tablet can be found in *Majmuy-i-Alvah-i Mubarak* (Cairo, 1920) p. 259-67. It is also published in *Daryay-i-Danish* (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985) pp. 2-10. A short description appears in A. Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3, (Oxford: George Ronald, 1996) p. 270.

[2] Bahá'u'lláh used pure Persian (*Parsiy-i-sari*) rather sparingly, except when corresponding with Zoroastrians or for other special occasions. The Persian spoken in His time, and to today, borrows heavily from Arabic, the language of Islam. He used Arabic as the primary language of revelation and many of His prayers and tablets in Persian are heavily Arabicised. An Arabic prayer appears at the end of this pure Persian tablet, perhaps to reinforce Bahá'u'lláh's affirmation that both Persian and Arabic are worthy of praise.

[3] See *Star of the West*, vol.

1:1 1910 pp. 5-7. For a partial translation, see section CVI in *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, trans., Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976) p. 213.

[4] His full name is Manikji Limji

Hataria. In Hindi, the suffix 'ji' is appended to names and titles of venerated

persons as a sign of respect and endearment, the closest English rendering being

'dear.' Also, it is customary in India to use 'Sahib' as a formal designation

or title of a respected personage, somewhat equivalent to 'Excellency' in English

or to 'Jinab' in Persian.

[5] S. Stiles, "Early Zoroastrian Conversions

to the Bahá'í Faith in Yazd, Iran," J. Cole and M. Momen, eds.,

Studies in Babi and Bahá'í History: From Iran East and West,

vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Kalimat, 1984) p. 70.

[6] For a fuller treatment of clergy-instigated

persecutions see S. Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Iman*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp. 251-57.

[7] For a brief account, see Taherzadeh,

Revelation, vol. 3, (Oxford: George Ronald, 1996) pp. 260-5.

[8] M. Fischer, "Social Change and

the Mirrors of Tradition: The Bahá'ís of Yazd" H. Moayyad, ed.,

The Bahá'í Faith and Islam, (Ottawa: The Association for

Bahá'í Studies, 1990), pp. 25-55. On the proliferation of political associations (anjumans) during the reign of Nasirud-din Shah and their influence

on the court, see A. Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe* (Washington, DC: Mage, 1997).

[9] See Stiles, *op. cit.* On

Manikji's illiteracy in Persian, see A. Gulpayagani, *Letters and Essays*, trans., J. Cole (Los Angeles: Kalimat, 1985) pp. 78-79.

[10] J. Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium*

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) pp. 147-150.

[11] M. Momen, *The Babi and Bahá'í*

Religions (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981) pp. 244-250.

[12] See Stiles, op. cit.

[13] H. Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh:
The King of Glory (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980) pp. 9-12. See also Fischer,
op. cit.

[14] M. Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*
(Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982) pp. 169-171.

[15] Personal interviews with members
of the Sifidvash family, a prominent Bahá'í family of Zoroastrian
lineage now living in California, December 2000.

[16] D. MacEoin, *The Sources for
Early Babi Doctrine and History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992) pp. 153-160. See also
Gulpayagani, supra.

[17] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings
from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í
Publishing Trust, 1983) p. 255.

[18] Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets
of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette: Bahá'í
Publishing Trust, 1988) p. 49. See also pp. 22, 68, 127.

[19] On "impressive and penetrating
speech," see *ibid.*, p. 172.

[20] Bahá'u'lláh, *The
Kitab-i-Aqdas* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992). See p. 11,
K189, n193-4.

[21] See A. Mazandarani, *Asrar-ul
Asar* (Tehran: Mu'assasiy-i Matbu'at-i Amri, 129 BE) vol. 4, p. 128.

[22] See *Tablets*, pp. 164-71.

[23] See *Gleanings*, p. 213.

[24] See *Tablets*, op. cit.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*