

## Tributes to Bahā' -ad-Dīn al-'Āmilī

(Chronological Order)

He was exceedingly praised by al-Muhibbī and others, and mentioned by 'Alī bin Ma'sūm, who said: he was born in B'albak in 943/1546, and on Abī al-Ma'ālī that he was born in Kazvin. According to the first author, al-'Āmilī was taken by his father to Persia. When he grew up, he started travelling. He toured for thirty years and met a number of renowned men, and then he entered Egypt and wrote a book entitled al-Kashkūl where he collected every original event from different sciences. He later came to Jerusalem avoiding the company of people, but his virtues were not hidden. Ar-Raḍī al-Qudsī was his student in geometry and astronomy. He then went to Ash-Shām, and arrived to Damascus, and met al-Burīnī without recognizing him. The latter did not appreciate him as he deserves, but when they conversed, al-Burīnī stood up and said: "You must be al-Bahā' al-Harithī", and two embraced. Al-Bahā' asked that his presence be kept secret and then departed for Aleppo disguised as a dervish.

He has a long renowned mystery. Al Muhibbī mentioned him in his autobiography. He wrote a collection of classical poetry where he assembled creativity, accuracy and delicacy.

**Archbishop Youssef Dibs,**

"Fī al-Mashāhīr al-Sūriyyīn fī Hādhā al-Qarn: 6, al-Bahā' al-'Āmilī [Syrian Celebrities from this century: 6, al-Bahā' al-'Āmilī]" in *Tārikh Suryah [The History of Syria]*, vol. 4, book 7, *Fī Tārikh Sūriyyah fī 'Ayyām as-Salāfiyyin al-Uthmāniyyin al-Izām*, Beirut, Al-'Umūmiyyah Press, 1903, pp. 230-231.

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Shaykh Muḥammad Bahā'u'Dīnal-'Āmilī, commonly called Shaykh-i-Bahā'ī (No. 37), was equal in fame, influence and honour with the above-mentioned Mīr Dāmād, these two being amongst the men of learning who gave most lustre to the court of Shāh 'Abbās the Great. The literary activities of Shaykh-i-Bahā'ī, who was born near Ba'labbāk in 953/1546, and died in

1031/1622, were not confined to theology. In that subject his best-known work is the *Jāmi’-i-Abbāṣī*, a popular Persian manual of Shī‘a Law, which he did not live to complete. He also compiled a great collection of anecdotes in Arabic named *The Kashkūl* (Alms-bowl), a sequel to his earlier and less-known *Mikhlāt*. He also wrote several treatises on Arithmetic and Astronomy, and composed the Persian *mathnawī* poem entitled *Nān u Halwā* (Bread and Sweet-meats).

**Edward (G.) Browne,**

“Later Shi‘a Theologians”, in *A literary history of Persia, Modern Times (1500-1924)*, Volume IV, Cambridge University Press, 1959, p 407.

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Shaykh Bahā’u’d-Dīn Muḥmmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abduṣ-Ṣamad al-Ḥarithī al-Āmilī al-Ḥamadānī al-Jabātī was one of the numerous Shi‘a doctors who came to Persia from Jabal ‘Āmil in Syria, whence he derived the *nisba* by which he is commonly known, though by the Persians he is most often spoken of as “Shaykh-i-Bahā’ī”. His father Shaykh Ḥusayn, a disciple of Shaykh Zaynu’d-Dīn “the Second Martyr” (Shahīd-i-Thānī), came to Persia after his master had been put to death by the Turks for his Shī‘ite proclivities, bringing with him the young Bahā’u’d-Dīn, who applied himself diligently to the study of Theology in all its branches, Mathematics and Medicine. His teachers included, besides his father, Mullā ’Abdu’llāh of Yazd, a pupil of Jalālu’d-Dīn-i-Dawānī, the author of the *Akhlāq-i-Jalālī*, who was in turn a pupil of the celebrated Sayyid-i-Sharīf-i-Jurjānī. In Mathematics he studied with Mullā ‘Alī Mudhahhib (“the Gilder”) and Mullā Afḍal of Qā’in, while in Medicine he was the pupil of “Alā’u-d-Dīn Maḥmūd. In due course he attained great celebrity as a theologian and jurist, and became Ṣadr or Shaykhul-Islām of Isfahan. After a while he was possessed with the desire to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and on his homeward journey visited, in the guise of a darwīsh, Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Ḥijāz and Palestine, and made the acquaintance of many learned men and eminent doctors and mystics.

Shaykh-i-Bahā’ī was born at Ba’labakk in Syria on Muḥarram 17, 953 (March 20, 1546), and died on Shawwāl 12, 1031 (August 20, 1622). His principle works are the *Jāmi’-i-Abbāṣī*, containing legal decisions (fatāwa); the *Zubdah*; the *Miftāḥu'l-Falāḥ*; the *Tashriḥu'l-Aflāk*

(Anatomy of the Heavens), the *Khulāṣatu'l-Hisāb* on Arithmetic; the *Kashkūl* [“Beggars’ Bowl”], a large miscellany of stories and verses, the latter partly in Persian, a similar work called the *Mikhlāt*, also a persian mathnawī poem entitled *Nān u Halwā* (“Bread and Sweetmeats”) describing his adventures during the pilgrimage to Mecca, and another entitled *Shīr u Shakar* (“Milk and Sugar”). Extracts from these poems, as well as from his *ghazals*, are given in the *Majma'u'l-Fuṣahā'* (vol. ii, pp. 8-10).

**Edward (G.) Browne,**

“The philosophers” in *A literary history of Persia, Modern Times (1500-1924)*, Volume IV, Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 427-428.

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Bahā‘ ad-Dīn surpassed his father Sheikh Ḥusayn Bin ‘Abd as-Ṣamad al-Āmilī, 918-984/1512-1576, in his knowledge and reputation. The Persians knew him as “Shaykhī Bahā’ī” and he was promoted to the rank of Sheikh of Islam in Isfahan where he was one of the most brilliant personalities in the court of Shah ‘Abbās. Returning from the pilgrimage, he passed by Jabal ‘Āmil [Mount ‘Āmil], his first hometown, disguised as a dervish. Among his famous works, a book containing fatwa and legal proceedings was well known among people. Beside this book, he wrote *al-Kashkūl*, a comprehensive book, including information, anecdotes and literature, similar to a literary memoir. It was published in Egypt. There is a copy engraved on stone published in Persia.

**Philip Hitti,**

“Al-Matāwilah [the shia]” in *Lubān Fī at-Tārikh Mundhu 'Aqdam al-'Uṣūr at-Tārīkhīyah Hattah Yawminah Hādhā [Lebanon in History from the earliest eras till our today]*, trans. by Dr. Anis Frayha, reviewed by Dr. Nicolas Ziade, Beirut-New York, Franklin Press, 1959, p. 499.

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The exceptional mind that al-Bahā'ī was endowed with, and the intellect that wandered in all horizons, firmly establishing him in the sciences of his time and the heritage of the ancients, produced and abundantly. The big number of his compilations is a proof of his sublime determination and striving for knowledge. His writings brought what is new and original in every science and art [...] and constituted an encyclopedia reflecting the different learnings of his age [...]. The sources relate that the number of his writings exceed seventy seven books apart from his poems and Argos-metered-poems [arājīz], explanations and references on his writings and the writing of contemporary other scholars and his students.<sup>1</sup>

His writings were significant in the learning of his age. It was not merely a specific information on the different studies, but it polarized a general intellectual movement arousing around it several explanations and comments even three centuries after his death, for what it contained was the summit of production.

His explanations on Algebra were the best of what the scholars or those working on Algebra in Arabic could come to.<sup>2</sup>

The explication on his books exceeded those works, and the notes on his writings surpassed double their number. These books were also translated into Persian and some were translated from Persian into Arabic for he excelled and composed in Persian, and his poetry in Persian was more than his poetry in Arabic<sup>3</sup>. Besides, some of his writings were translated into European languages, among them his famous book *Khulāṣt al-Ḥisāb wal-Handasah*, translated into German by Professor Nesselman in Berlin in 1843 and published there.<sup>4</sup> This book was translated into many Eastern languages, Persian for example, and considering its importance, it was also translated into French in 1864<sup>5</sup>. There are several explanations on the book not published in Arabic and Persian, and other published footnotes approximating forty.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al Ghadīr, 11/260-262.

<sup>2</sup> *Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Lubnanyyah* , 6,274.

<sup>3</sup> Al malouf, al 'Irfan, 23/54.

<sup>4</sup> Sarkis, Mu'jam a Matbu'at. 1363.

<sup>5</sup> Zaydān, Tarikh Adab al Lughat al 'Arabiya, 3,353.

<sup>6</sup> Al Ghadir, 11/265-267.

### **Muhammad Kāzīm Makkī,**

*Al-Ḥarakāt al Fikriyyah wal-‘Adabyyah fi Jabal ‘Āmil*, [Intellectual and Literary movements in Mount ‘Āmil] al-Tab‘ah al-Ūla, Beirut: Dar al Andalus, 1963, pp.100-101.

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Al Baha'i was endowed with a brilliant mind and creative thinking. He was able while roaming in Arabic and Islamic countries to acquire a general culture and wide knowledge that helped him to write a number of religious, literary and scientific works.

His writings constituted an encyclopedia grouping the different learnings of his age [...]. It was the center of gravity in the sciences of his epoch not simply as specific information on the different studies, but as a general intellectual movement assembling around it many explications and comments even for more than three centuries after his death as it included the summit of production.

The explications on his books are triple of what he composed and wrote. His books were so renowned that they were translated into Persian. Also, the books that he wrote in Persian were translated into Arabic and to many other European languages among them his famous book *Khulāṣat al-Hisāb wal-Handasah*.

### **‘Abd-ul Majid al-Hurr,**

*Ma ‘ālim al-‘Adab al-‘Āmilī. Min Bidayat al Qarn al Rabi‘ ’al-Hijrī / al Thāmin ‘Ashar al- Milādī*, [The Literature of Mount ‘Āmil from the beginning of the fourth century AH/seventeenth century AD] Beirut, Jami‘at al Qidīs Yusuf, Kulliyat al-‘Adāb wal ‘Ulum al-Insaniyyah, Far‘ al-‘Ādāb a ‘Arabiyyah, Uṭruḥah U‘iddat li-Nayl Shahādat al Doctorat (Halaqat-Thalithat) fil-Lughat al-‘Arabiyyah wa Adābuha, Ishraf ad-Doctor Aḥmad Makki, 1981. P.244.

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Al-Bahā’ī lived in an age loaded with extremism in all aspects. Wise men, scholars, men of Ḥadīth, Dervish, puritans, worshippers and Sufis lived beside thousands of crooks, conjurers and licentious, and between them all complete rupture and deep rooted enmity. The philosophers

were divided into peripatetic and illuminists and the jurists into interpreters and narrators [...] each party fought the other in word and deed, and accused the other of foolishness, apostasy or hypocrisy. This is apart from the belief in astrology, superstitions, delusions, and magic.

[...] In this turbulent age when people departed from the limits of moderation, Al-Bahā'ī rose above fanaticism and criticized the mistakes of others without distinction. In his Arabic and Persian poems he criticized the legalists who ruminate the opinion of others taking advantage of their religious status to deceive the common people, or approach the Sultans. He also accused the Sufis who overpowered the *Tarīqah*, the way, over the Truth, and the commoners who believe every whooper. Also, his Sufi and Gnostic tendencies permeated all his Persian poetry.

The summary of what he intends to say is that man cannot reach the truth except through solitude, away from gossip and from treacherous people. Solitude, however, is not solitude if it is not covered with the garment of asceticism, and asceticism is not genuine if it is not linked with true knowledge that lead to the truth which is molded with fear and awe.<sup>1</sup>

Al Shaykh Al-Bahā'ī pursued, while in Iran, a different life from his contemporaries amongst the scholars who had the same or a lower status than his. They exaggerated their self-glorification, not going out except with escorts resembling the parade of kings.<sup>2</sup> He, on the other hand, used to visit the districts of poor people, enter their huts, sit with them, and enquire about them. It was recounted that Shah ‘Abbās wanted to draw his attention in a kind manner that these visits do not fit the status of Sheikh al-Islam, so one day he told him: “I heard that one of the great scholars is frequenting the huts of the poor and the vile and this is not appropriate”. The Sheik replied: “This is not true for I am often in these places and it never happened that I saw any of the big scholars there”.<sup>3</sup>

### Dalal ‘Abbās,

“Al Muqaddimah” *al Tadayyun wal-Nifāq bi Lisan al-Qīt wal-Fār* ( trans. from Persian, and edited, by Bahā’-ad-Dīn al ‘Āmilī, 1st edition, London-Beirut, Riad ar-Rayyes, lil Kutub wan- Nashr, 1996. pp. 15-16, 18,21-22.

<sup>1</sup>Al-Qasīdah al-Khamisah min Mathnawi al -Khubz wal-Ḥalwa, Tarjamat Nafīsi, p.122

<sup>2</sup>A‘yan ash-Shi‘a, vol 7, p. 145 Namadhij li-Mithli Ha‘ula’ al-‘Ulama’

<sup>3</sup> A‘yan ash-Shi‘a,, vol.9. p.236 and Mustadrak al-Wasa’il. Vol. 3, p.440.

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Considering his works, he is counted in the eleventh century Hegira one of the most brilliant, renowned and influential scholars. Apart from his high Islamic culture and his mastery of jurisprudence and religious studies, he was knowledgeable in Literature, Geometry, Arithmetic, Algebra, Astronomy, wisdom, ‘Ilm al-Kalām and other sciences that were not hovered by others as it was said. His fame in religious studies prevailed and in spite of this he was known to have used the atomic energy and to discover some of the laws in sound reflections [...] and that he used this discovery in some of the mosques in Isfahan where you were able to hear the voice of the Imam wherever you were in the Mosque. If the Imam, however, moved one step from his place then nobody will hear him except those around him. He also set rules for the plain geometrical and dimensional patterns [...] it is also said that he made a watch with continual movement not needing to be rounded , apart from several other matters that we select from due to its peculiarity and because it made the man a legendary figure.

### **Muhammad ‘Abd ul-Karīm an-Numayrī,**

“Tarjamat al-Mu’allif” inl *Mikkhlāt*, by al Sheikh al ‘Alīm Bahā’-ud-Dīn, Muhammad bin al- Husayn al- ‘Āmilī who died in 1031 AH<sup>1</sup>, published, corrected and footnoted by Muhammad ‘Ab- ul Karīm aa-Numayrī, vol 1, Beirut, Lebanon, Manshurāt Muhammad ‘Ali Beydoun, Dar-al Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1997, pp. 4-5.

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As for Philosophy, al Bahā’ī embarked in all its spheres. We mention the most important: *Al-Jiz’ul ladhi lā Yatajazza*, *Imtina ‘alā Mutanāhī*, *Al Aqalim ‘ind al Masihiyyīn*, *Ash-Shu ‘ūr wa Ma’tāh*, *Al- ‘ululiyah*, *al Nafs al-Insaniah*, *Al Sa ‘ādah*, *al-Wajib al-Wujūd wal-Mawjūd*, *al-Ma’rifah*.[the indivisible, the finite, Regions for the Christians, the human soul, happiness, the given and the known]

We summarize his opinion in some of these works:

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<sup>1</sup>It is indicated that the book of *al Mikhlāt* that is published is attributed wrongly to al ‘Amili , consult in this matter Dalal ‘Abbas in her book *Baha’ al Din al ‘Amili adibān wa faqihān wa ‘aliman*, vol 1, Beirut, Dar al Mu’arikh al ‘Arabi, 2010, pp277-288.

## The human Spirit

Al Bahā'ī's opinion on the human soul is that of the Sufis. It is kind and Godly, spiritual, and far from corporeality. Its relation to the body is that of devising and leadership. He saw it in three parts: the leading soul, the peaceful soul and the blaming soul.

If it is subdued to the animal instinct and the nature of the body, it will be the ordering spirit commanding pleasures and sensual desires. It is the abode of evil. It is the source of low morals and the source of evil actions.

If it commands the animal spirit and is subject to the Divine spirit, implanted with satisfactory virtues, it is the assured spirit expecting in front of Jerusalem, free from abomination persisting in obedience longing for exalted degrees.

If it does not possess any of the virtuous morals, nor the destructive vices, but tends towards the good at times and to what is evil at other times, and if she blames herself if something emanates from her, then it is the blaming soul, enlightened to the degree of her awareness in the moments of inattentiveness.

## Duty

Ash-Shaykh al-Bahā'ī believes that it is our duty to thank God. It is, in fact, the perfect duty. The mind has no choice but to realize this fact, for whoever looks at himself and the hidden and apparent potentials that he is endowed with, and the strange composition and several elements that encompasses his making, acknowledges the inevitability of the existence of a Necessary Being because he is the origin of this subtle constitution and its cause. Thanking Reason for the kindness of the necessary existence is a duty. Doing the contrary is contention and fallacy which deserve punishment, for the responsibility resides in reason.

The duty that al-Bahā'ī is mentioning the duty of reason and not that of law. He linked morals with duty of reason. He believed that good action is beautiful in itself, while bad action is detestable in itself for reason orders and asserts it apart from the rules of the law and religion. This is why al-Bahā'ī showed indignation towards the people of the Law because they constructed weak proofs to negate the rational in beauty and hideousness.

### **Kamal Yusuf el Hague,**

“Imam Shi‘ī min Lubnan: al-Bahā’ī (1547-1622/ 953-1053)” in *Mu’allafāt al-Kāmilah*, vol. eleven in *Falsafah al-Lubnanyyah [The Complete Works: vol. 11: the Lebanese Philosophy]*, first publication, Jūniyah, Bayt al-Fikr, Kamal Yūsuf el Haj Foundation, 2014, pp.824-825, 829-832, 840-841.

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Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Hussayn bin ‘Abd as-Şamad bin ‘Iz-id-Din al-Harithi al-‘Āmili al-Ḥamadani surnamed Baha’ud-Din known as Al-Baha’ al-‘Āmili and Munla Baha’-ud-Din, the most known of the surnamed ‘Āmili. Ibn Ma’ṣūm wrote his biography as well as ash-Shihab al-Khafagi, Abu-l-Ma‘āli al-Talūbī, al-Badī’ and al-Muhibbi .They elaborated in praising him and describing his knowledge, virtues, kindness, poems and prose [.... and in his writings] what attests to his intelligence and high spirit and abundance of merits [...] His reputation spread in the different districts so students and scholars came to him. He was admired and approached by ‘Abbās Shah who did not separate from him, took along in his travels and acknowledged him as chief of scholars. His conditions improved so he took a vast abode which became a refuge for orphans, widows, students, poor people and the needy. He was in spite of his affluent circumstances pious and indifferent to the world, desiring to concentrate on travelling, teaching and writing. He was not able at the beginning to leave the Shah, so he started composing the magnificent works [...].

### **Al-Mu‘allim Butrus al-Bustani,**

“‘Amili” in *Dā’irat al-Ma‘arif*, vol. 11, Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah, [n.d.], p. 462.

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