



## BAHMA'Ī

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**BAHMA'Ī**, a Lur tribe of the Kohgīlūya (Kūh[-e] Gīlūya). Until well into the second half of the 13th/19th century, it was one of the largest and most powerful tribes of the Behbahān region. According to Layard, who visited the Bahma'īs in 1840, they comprised some 3,000 families, and had a fighting force of "about 2,000 excellent matchlock-men and a small but very efficient body of horsemen" ("A Description of the Province of Khuzistan," *JRGS* 16, 1846, p. 23). According to C. A. de Bode, who was in the Kohgīlūya at the same time as Layard, the tribe comprised only some 2,000 families (*Travels in Luristan and Arabistan*, London, 1845, I, p. 280). But both travelers were equally impressed by the Bahma'īs' refractoriness and energy as raiders (see e.g., Layard, "A Description," p. 23). De Bode called them "the wildest and most unruly tribe among the mountaineers of Fārs" (p. 280).

The last important leader of the Bahma'īs was Ḳalīl Khan, who ruled the tribe from his fortress, the Qaḷ'a-ye A'lā (sometimes spelled Qaḷ'a 'Alā'), 53 km northwest of Behbahān. He appears to have been a picturesque bandit in the manner of Fra Diavolo (see descriptions by Layard, p. 23, and De Bode, p. 280). During Ḳalīl Khan's lifetime, his eldest son, Ja'far Khan, built the two strongholds of Qaḷ'a-ye A'lā and Dīšmūk, 20 km east of the Qaḷ'a-ye A'lā and since then the tribe became divided into the Garmsīrī, with headquarters at Qaḷ'a-ye 'Alā, and Sardsīrī, with headquarters at Dīšmūk (M. Żarrābī, "Ṭawāyef-e Kohgīlūya," *FIZ* 9, 1340 Š./1961-62, p. 291).

After the death of Ḳalīl Khan, which occurred late in the nineteenth century, there was a struggle for the succession between his sons and the sons of his



brother, Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan. In the course of this contest for leadership, Moḥammad-‘Alī Khan, a son of Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan, slew Ja‘far Khan and declared himself the new chief of the tribe. But forty days later, Moḥammad-‘Alī Khan was, in turn, killed by a son of Ja‘far Khan. These two murders and the feud that ensued led to the division of the Bahma‘ī tribe into two separate tribes, the Bahma‘ī Moḥammadi and the Bahma‘ī Aḥmadi tribes (*Żarrābī*, pp. 291-93). But in spite of this the Bahma‘īs continued their raids, retaining their warlike reputation, and, writing in the mid-1890s, Ḥasan Fasā‘ī could still say that ten Bahma‘ī riflemen were worth a hundred Baḳtīarīs (*Fārs-nāma* II, p. 275).

Fasā‘ī (*ibid.*), G. Demorgny (“Les réformes administratives en Perse: Les tribus du Fars,” pt. 1, *RMM* 22, March, 1913, pp. 117-18) and M. Kayhān (*Joḡrāfiā* II, p. 89) all estimated the number of Bahma‘īs at 3,000 families. Today, the Bahma‘īs are scattered over a wide area covering three adjacent *dehestāns*, Bahma‘ī Sarḥaddī, Bahma‘ī Sardīr, and Bahma‘ī Garmsīr, northwest of Behbahān (Razmārā, *Farhang* VI, pp. 64-65). Because they have thoroughly blended in with the local population, it is no longer possible to give an accurate estimate of their population.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in text. See also M. Bāver, *Kūhgīlūya wa īlāt-e ān*, Gačsārān, 1324 Š./1945, pp. 120-29.

N. Afšār-e Nāderī, *Monogerāfi-e īl-e Bahmā‘ī*, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968.

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