



BAHRĀNĪ, YŪSOF

BAHRĀNĪ, YŪSOF B. AḤMAD B. EBRĀHĪM DERĀZĪ, Imami author and jurist. He was born in 1107/1695-96 to a merchant family in the Baḥrānī village of Māḥūz. In the wake of Bahrain's occupation by the imam of 'Oman in 1129/1717, the family fled to the mainland, settling in Qatif (Katif). After his father's death in 22 Šafar 1131/14 January 1719, Yūsuf took charge of the family affairs and commuted between Qatif and Bahrain while pursuing his studies. He finally left Bahrain for Iran soon after the abdication in 1135/1722 of the last Safavid shah Solṭān Ḥosayn. He went first to Kermān and then to Shiraz, where he enjoyed the patronage of its ruler Moḥammad-Taḡī Khan. Baḥrānī lived in Shiraz longer than is usually assumed: his *Masā'el šīrāzīya*, *Kašf al-qenā'* (both completed in 1149/1737) and *Resāla moḥammadiya* (written for his brother in 1155/1742) were all composed in that city. He then moved to Fasā, where he likewise benefited from his close connection with the governor, one Moḥammad-'Alī, who exempted him from taxes on his investments in agriculture. In Fasā Baḥrānī began his monumental legal work *al-Ḥadā'eq al-nāžera* which, though it occupied him for the rest of his life, remained uncompleted. During disturbances in 1163/1750 Baḥrānī's home was attacked and many of his books and other possessions were looted. He fled with his family to the countryside, and then proceeded to Karbalā'. There he soon became one of the foremost religious authorities: he had a large circle of pupils, and also composed numerous *fatwās* in response to questions reaching him from various places. He died in 4 Rabī' I 1186/5 June 1772 at the height of the plague which ravaged Iraq, though it is not stated that his death was caused by it.



BaĥrĀnĪ is a pivotal figure in the AĥbārĪ-OṣŭlĪ dispute in the 18th century. He originally adhered to the AĥbārĪ position, in opposition to his father's OṣŭlĪ views. Later he adopted a modified AĥbārĪ stance, accusing the hard-line AĥbārĪs of dividing the ranks of the Imamites, and praising MajlesĪ for taking a middle course (*ṭarīq woṣṭā*) between the two camps. In his *Dorar najafīya* (completed in Du'l-qa'da, 1177/May, 1764) BaĥrĀnĪ rejects the extremist AĥbārĪ view that all believers are *moqalledŭn*. He defines *taqlĪd* as the acceptance of someone else's view without that view being accompanied by a proof text (*dalĪl*). This practice, he maintains, only existed during the period of the presence (*ḥozŭr*) of the imams. In his own times, says BaĥrĀnĪ, the 'āmmĪ expects each *fatwā* to be based on the sources, and the scholar, of course, uses his judgment. Thus the AĥbārĪs engage in *ejtehād* no less than the OṣŭlĪs, and only avoid using this term because they regard it as pejorative. In his *Ĥadā'eq* BaĥrĀnĪ reverts to a more traditional AĥbārĪ position; yet his overall conclusion is that both AĥbārĪs and OṣŭlĪs are devoted followers of the imams, and that even if individuals from either camp veer from the path of truth out of ignorance or inadvertence, this is no reason to heap abuse on the group as a whole.

BaĥrĀnĪ's moderate views were not shared by all his colleagues and students: some were fiercely anti-OṣŭlĪ while others, in contrast, forsook the AĥbārĪ school altogether in favor of the OṣŭlĪs. BaĥrĀnĪ himself engaged in disputations with the leading exponent of OṣŭlĪ Shī'ism, Moĥammad-Bāqer BehbahānĪ (d. 1205/1790); however, relations between the two appear to have been civil, and BehbahānĪ, led the prayers at BaĥrĀnĪ's funeral.

Many of BaĥrĀnĪ's works have survived. These include (in addition to those already referred to) the *Lo'lo'at al-Baĥrayn*, comprising biographies of leading Imamite scholars from Bahrain and elsewhere, and the *Kaṣkŭl* (also known as *JalĪs al-ĥāẓer wa anĪs al-mosāfer*), a compilation of edifying stories, anecdotes and poems of a typical *adab* type. His *al-Nafahāt al-malakŭtĪya fi'l-radd 'ala'l-ṣŭfĪya*, which may no longer be extant, included an attack on the more extreme aspects of popular Sufism.



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