



BOŠRŪ'Ī, MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD- ḤOSAYN

BOŠRŪ'Ī (Bošrūya'ī), **MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD-ḤOSAYN** (1229-65/1814-49), Shaikhi *'ālem* who became the first convert to Babism, provincial Babi leader in Khorasan, and organizer of Babi resistance in Māzandarān. Born in Bošrūya, Khorasan, the son of a local merchant, he studied from an early age in Mašhad, where he appears to have become a Shaikhi. He later studied in Tehran and Isfahan before traveling to Karbalā' to study under Sayyed **Kāẓem Raštī**, then head of the Shaikhi school. He remained in Karbalā' nine or eleven years, during which period he wrote at least two works (which have not survived) and acquired a private following, leading to a conviction among some that he would be Raštī's successor. Although absent from Karbalā' on the latter's death, Bošrū'ī returned there soon afterwards on 1 Moḥarram 1260/22 January 1844 and was immediately involved in discussions with other leading Shaikhis concerning the succession issue, which had been left open. No agreement seems to have been reached, but in April Bošrū'ī set off for Kermān to interview Ḥājj Moḥammad-Karīm Khan Kermānī (q.v.), a prospective candidate for the headship of the school. En route, in Shiraz, he renewed an earlier acquaintance with Sayyed 'Alī-Moḥammad Šīrāzī, the **Bāb**, who on 5 Jomādā I/22 May announced to Bošrū'ī his claim to be Raštī's successor and *bāb al-emām*. Bošrū'ī accepted these claims, probably after several weeks, in virtue of which he was later named *bāb al-bāb* (gate of the gate), *awwal man āmana* (first to believe) and "return of Moḥammad." Following the Bāb's assumption of the title of Qā'em (i.e., the Twelfth Imam) in 1848, the title of *bāb*



was transferred to Bošrū'ī. When, in July, 1844, the first followers of the Bāb left Shiraz in several directions to spread word of the imam's imminent appearance, Bošrū'ī headed for Tehran, where he delivered letters from the Bāb for MoḤammad Shah and Ḥāji Mīrzā Āqāsī. From Tehran he made his way to Mašhad, where he established an important center for Babi propaganda and himself carried out the task of replying to questions on behalf of the Bāb. His activities in Mašhad eventually led to trouble with the local authorities, and in July, 1848, he was ordered to leave the city. Accompanied by a large band of followers he headed into Māzandarān, possibly en route for Azarbaijan to effect a rescue of the Bāb from prison there. In September, Bošrū'ī's group, now enlarged, reached the shrine of Shaikh Abū 'Alī al-Faẓl Ṭabresī (Ṭabarsī), where they constructed a fortress of sorts to defend themselves against provincial and state troops who were sent to oppose their activities in the province. The struggle, which was led by Bošrū'ī until his death in the course of a sortie on 9 Rabī' I 1265/2 February 1849, ended with the surrender of the Babi survivors in May, 1849.

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For details of extant writings by Bošrū'ī see D. MacEoin, *Early Bābī Doctrine and History, A Survey of Source Materials*, Los Angeles, 1988, and A. Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal. The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850*, Ithaca, New York, 1989, esp. pp. 153-66.

See also E'tezād-al-Saltāna, *Fetna-ye Bāb*, ed. 'A.-Ḥ. Navā'ī, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1362 Š./1983, pp. 33-51, 244-45.

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