



KETĀB-E IQĀN

KETĀB-E IQĀN (abbrev. *KI*), a major work of [Mirzā Hosayn-‘Ali Nuri Bahā’-Allāh](#) (d. 1892) in defense of the religious claims of [Sayyed ‘Ali-Moḥammad the Bāb](#). The *Ketāb-e iqān* (Book of Certitude), an approximately 200-page Persian text, is fundamentally, as its author Bahā’-Allāh once stated, a Bābi *Lawḥ-e estedlāliya* (Proof-offering Tablet), that is, a treatise written in proof of the messianic claims and religious doctrines of the Bāb (Fāẓel Māzadarāni, 1967, I, p. 276). He also reckoned it a veritable *Sayyed-e kotob* (“Lord of books”) and called it divine revelation when he wrote in a scriptural Tablet to Mirzā Abu’l-Faẓl Golpāygāni (d. 1914), “The *Ketāb-e iqān* is in reality the Lord of Books and issued forth from the Most Elevated Pen (*qalam-e a’lā*) at the commencement of this supreme theophany” (*ẓohur-e a’ẓam*; Bahā’-Allāh, 1972, VII, p. 167; Idem, *KI*, p. 198, tr., 1968, p. 257). It dates from the latter years of its author’s occupying a leading role within the exilic Baghdad-centered Bābi community, about a dozen years after the execution of the Bāb in Tabriz in 1850. In the following entry the *Ketāb-e iqān* page numbers are first given according to the revised 1934 Cairo edition followed by page numbers from the Ali Kuli Khan English translation (2nd edition) then the English translation of Shoghi Effendi (USA ed.).

Bahā’-Allāh composed the *Ketāb-e iqān* primarily in response to questions about the apparent non-fulfillment of messianic and related eschatological signs in the Bāb and his emergent pristine religion (*al-dīn al-kāles*; Bāb, *Qayyum al-asmā’* 1:5). The questions were posed by a maternal uncle of the Bāb, named Ḥājj Mirzā Sayyed Moḥammad (d. 1876), known as the *Ḳāl-e*



Akbar (the elder/senior uncle). While visiting the shrine cities of Iraq (See [‘ATABĀT](#)) with a brother around 1278/1862, through the intermediary of Ḥājj Sayyed Jawād Karbalā’i (d. ca. 1300/1882), he was able to meet Bahā’-Allāh in Baghdad and pose several written questions to him (Ali Kuli Khan, 1904, p. viii; Moḥammad-Jawād Qazvini, p. 15; Fāzel Māzandarāni, p. 159; Taherzadeh, pp. 157-58). Bahā’-Allāh’s reply to these questions was said in several Bahā’i sources to have been very speedily “sent down,” or “revealed,” in one or two days (Rabbani, 1970, p. 138; Balyuzi, 1980, p. 164). The response of the *Ketāb-e iqān* persuaded the Bāb’s uncle to accept the elevated messianic claims of both the Bāb and ultimately Bahā’-Allāh also as his successor.

The aforementioned questions of the then skeptical uncle were largely centered upon the following Shi’ite Islamic themes which seemed to him unfulfilled or outwardly unrealized: (1) the latter-day *Yawm al-qiāma* (Day of Resurrection) and such associated events as “judgment,” “reward” and “punishment”; (2) the problem of the identity of the Twelfth Imam and the disparity between the Bāb’s claims and the heritage of Shi’ite traditions; (3) the contradictions between the non-literal exegesis of the Bāb and the straightforward heritage of Shi’ite doctrinal tradition; and (4) the non-fulfillment of messianic expectations associated with the expected Qā’em and his followers engaging, for example, in eschatological jihad type activities centered at Kufa (Fayzi, pp. 40-41; MacEoin; Balyuzi, 1991, pp. 164-5). Though Sayyed Moḥammad was the primary addressee in the *Ketāb-e iqān*, Bahā’-Allāh also specifically addressed a range of other individuals and groups, including Shi’ite Muslims, Šaykis (Shaykhis), various Bābi groups as the “people of the Bayān (Exposition),” and, in a few places, all of humankind, in a manner reminiscent of the style of the Bāb himself (*KI*, p. 72, tr., 1968, p. 93 ; Buck, 1995, p. 14).

Dating of the text. Though the exact date of the writing of the *Ketāb-e iqān* remains unknown, it is clear from internal and historical evidence that it was written in the early 1860s, a year or so prior to Bahā’-Allāh’s claiming an exalted theophanic-messianic status when he initiated the Bahā’i religion in April-May 1863. The dating to 1861-62 seems most likely in light of a reference in the *Ketāb-e iqān* to an “eighteen year” period of Bābi persecution. When computed in terms of the Bābi calendar, this results in 1278/1861-62 (1260+18 = 1278 AH) (*KI*, p. 176, tr., 1968, p. 226; Dahāji, p. 41). Consequently, another reference in the *Ketāb-e iqān* to the Islamic year 1280 (1863-64) can hardly be taken literally. Edward G. Browne initially dated the *Ketāb-e iqān* to



1274/1857-58 (*KI*, pp. 134, 195, tr., 1968, pp. 172, 251) but later favored an 1861-62 dating (Browne, 1889, p. 945; Idem, 1909 p. 302), as did Shoghi Effendi (Rabbani, 1970, p. 138; idem, 1981, p. 429; Buck, 1995, pp. 7-12, 38-90).

The reference in the *Ketāb-e iqān* to previously composed scriptural Tablets (*alwāḥ-e mastūra-ye qabl*) (*KI*, p. 15, tr., 1968, p. 19) is a clear allusion to Bahā'-Allāh's slightly earlier Arabic *Jawāher al-asrār*, a work which according to a manuscript colophon dates to the Bābi year *al-bahi*, which, according to the *abjad* system, computes to the Bābi year 17, or 1277/1860-61 (Bahā'-Allāh, INBMC, XLVI, p. 40). This again suggests a *Ketāb-e iqān* date of 1278/1862-63, as do most other Bahā'i sources, although this may have to be revised in the light of a letter of Sayyed Moḥammad about his meeting with Bahā'-Allāh, apparently written in 1861 (Fayzi, pp. 42-43, Buck, 1998, Rabbani, 1999).

Structure and contents. Following indications in the original text for the English translation, Ali Kuli Khan and Shoghi Effendi, not inappropriately, divided the text into two parts (*KI*, part 1, pp. 2-72, tr., 1968, pp. 3-93, part 2, pp. 72-199, tr., 1968, pp. 95-257). At times Part One has a very close relationship to the *Jawāher al-asrār*, while sections within Part Two echo portions of the Bāb's Persian *Dalā'el-e sab'a*. The issues within Shi'ite messianism that led to the writing of the *Ketāb-e iqān* were not dissimilar to those raised when Bahā'-Allāh composed the *Jawāher al-asrār* for Sayyed Yusof Sedehi (Eṣfahāni), a one-time resident of Karbalā' and pupil of the Shi'ite *marja'-e taqlid* (source of emulation) [Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī](#) (d. 1281/1864). Both of these major works of Bahā'-Allāh open with a consideration of the reasons for the rejection of past prophets in order to convince the reader of the falsity of anti-Bābi sentiments and to argue against literalistic eschatological expectations as mapped out by many relevant Shi'ite traditions (*KI*, pp. 1-5, tr., 1968, pp. 3-6; Bahā'-Allāh 1965, III, pp. 4-31). As an illustration of the way that “throughout all ages and centuries” Messengers of God have, like the Bāb, been subjected to “heinous cruelties,” Bahā'-Allāh provides a brief account of the prophetic missions of the rejected pre-Islamic figures Noah, Hud, Ṣāleḥ, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (*KI*, pp. 5-15, tr., 1907, pp. 7-19). The account of these maligned prophets is derived from accounts in the Qur'an as well as from the narratives of the *Qeṣṣaṣ al-anbiā'* (Stories of the Prophets), and certain early sections of the *Rawzat al-ṣafā* of Mirḳvānd (d. 1428).

Aspects of these brief sketches of the prophets opening the *Ketāb-e iqān* are carefully, though subtly, related to the Bāb so as to incline Sayyed Moḥammad to a positive view of his mission. The aborted and largely unsuccessful mission



of Noah, for example, parallels that of the early mission of the Bāb, who in view of an inspired realization that the Divine Will had been altered (through *bedā'*), had cancelled an 1845 Bābi jihad oriented congregation in Karbalā' (*Qayyum al-asmā'* 1:29; Bāb, "Prayer in reply to questions", pp. 173-75). Bahā'-Allāh's retelling of the Noah story in the *Ketāb-e iqān* and what he has to say about the spiritual sovereignty of the crucified Jesus (*KI*, pp. 5-7, 102-5, tr. 1968, pp. 6-9, 132-35) strongly suggests the possibility of divine victory for the Bāb as the expected Qā'em, despite his long imprisonment and his execution in 1850. Designed to modify the triumphalist messianism implicit in many Shi'ite prophetic Hadiths, others cited in the *Ketāb-e iqān* picture the expected Qā'em as a rejected figure whose Persian and other followers are to be severely persecuted (*KI*, pp. 190-193, tr., 1968, pp. 245-48). Among the writings of the Bāb referred to in the *Ketāb-e iqān* are his early *Qayyum al-asmā'* (mid. 1844), characterized as "the first, greatest and mightiest of all Books" and the *Tafsir* on the [Letter] "H" (*al-hā*), both of which are cited in connection with the Bāb's predictions of his own martyrdom for the sake of the future Bābi messiah (*KI*, p. 180, tr., 1968, pp. 31-32).

The Bible, the Qur'an, Hadith texts and other literary citations. In the *Ketāb-e iqān*, Bahā'-Allāh does not hesitate to cite the Bible in arguing for the truth of the prophet-hood of Moḥammad and the Bāb. He denied the legitimacy of the charge of biblical *taḥrif* (distortion) and highlighted the need for the non-literal exegesis of its often abstruse, allegorically-oriented eschatological predictions. Like Faḵr-al-Din Rāzi, Moḥammad b. 'Abd-al-Karim Šahrastāni and others in Islamic history, Bahā'-Allāh rejected the notion of a complete textual corruption (*taḥrif-e naṣṣ*) of the Bible and other divinely revealed sacred books. He preferred to speak of a widespread distortion of the meaning (*taḥrif-e ma'āni*) of scriptures at the hands of ignorant and misdirected religious leaders. He saw scriptural *taḥrif* not primarily as a practice of concrete textual alteration (*tabdil*), but as a misplaced hermeneutic (*KI*, p. 57, tr., 1968, pp. 75-76). Biblical distortion was, he said, only limited to a few specific instances (*KI*, pp. 65-67, tr., 1968, p. 86; Bahā'-Allāh, 1965, III, p. 27).

Bahā'-Allāh refers to the Hebrew Bible only once in the *Ketāb-e iqān*, in a paraphrased Islamo-biblical form, when he cites Isaiah 65:25 in Persian as a *ḥadiṭ-e mašhur* ("well-known Tradition," *KI*, p. 73, tr., 1968, pp. 113-14). As in the *Jawāher al-asrār*, he cites the New Testament more extensively than the Old Testament. In this respect he makes use of an Arabic Christian textual tradition very close, if not identical, to that printed in the 17th century Paris



and London Polyglot Bibles. The New Testament text published in these Polyglot Bibles was often reprinted in the West with revisions, one of which may have been presented to Bahā'-Allāh by missionaries or diplomats during his Baghdad years (Lambden, 2002, pp. 291-316).

Over thirty-five pages of Part One of the *Ketāb-e iqān* consist of a detailed “spiritual” interpretation of Matthew 24: 29-31(a), in proof of the mission of Moḥammad as the “return” of Christ (Bahā'-Allāh 1965, III, pp. 4-31). Bahā'-Allāh does this so that the reader might adopt the non-literal hermeneutical position when weighing up the Islamic predictions relating to the Bāb that he later cites in the *Ketāb-e iqān*. Bahā'-Allāh's quoting and paraphrasing New Testament texts in the *Ketāb-e iqān* (e.g. Matt. 24:29 f., 2:2, 3:1-2; John 3:5b-7; Luke 9:60, Mark 2:3 f.), and his strong arguments against biblical *tahrif*, led to the Bahā'is engaging in biblical interpretation in Iran, Egypt, and elsewhere in the Middle East, and more extensively in the West. In the *Ketāb-e iqān*, the sacred texts revealed from age to age, namely the Torah-Hebrew Bible, the Enjil-Gospel(s), the Qur'an, and the Bayān (the main work by the Bāb) are the centerpieces of divine guidance. Veritable “cities” of the “Word of God,” they enshrine all good and must be forever available. A future such “Book” will be that of the Bābi messiah *man yoḏhero-hu Allāh* (Him whom God shall make manifest) (*KI*, pp. 151-54, tr., 1968, pp. 196-200). Bahā'-Allāh subsequently claimed to be this latter figure and wrote perhaps 20,000 *lawḥs* (scriptural tablets), some in the form of books of varying length.

Like the first two Šayḳi leaders and the Bāb, Bahā'-Allāh frequently refers to the Qur'an and various traditions of the Twelver Shi'ite Imams as authoritative and divinely inspired sources. Aside from making numerous allusions to the Qur'an, he explicitly cites the text itself approximately 135 times (Buck, 1995, p. 235). He interprets it in novel ways, occasionally registering or contesting standard *tafsir* (exegesis) (*KI*, pp. 87-88, tr., 1968, pp. 115-16). For Bahā'-Allāh, the Qur'an is a repository of all mysteries (Qur'an 6:59) even containing, for example, a reference to Moḥammad-Karim Khan Kermāni, his Šayḳi adversary, through his self-adopted title Aṭim (Sinful) and his miserable fate as the Karim (“Honorable”) eater at the infernal “tree of Zaqqum” (Qur'an 44: 43-44, 49; *KI*, p. 147, tr., 1968, p. 190).

Bahā'-Allāh several times in the *Ketāb-e iqān* censured a literalist or fundamentalist mode of Qur'anic exegesis. He taught that the sacred books have many levels of meaning, from the literal to scores of deep allegorical and even abstruse levels. Consonant with this he argues from Hadith that the Bāb



vastly supplemented the totality of pre-Bābi revelations (“two letters”) with the rest of the alphabetic “totality” (twenty-five of twenty-seven letters) of knowledge (*KI*, p. 189, tr., 1968, p. 243).

Aspects of certain Qur’anic verses deemed *motašābahāt* (ambiguous, requiring exegesis) such as the first *al-horufāt al-moqaṭṭa’a* (isolated letters) A-L-M., are succinctly interpreted by Bahā’-Allāh. It is said that in these specific letters “the mysteries of the Divine Ipseity” (*howiya*) are enshrined and that within their “shells” the pearls of the “Divine Unicity” (*aḥadiya*) are treasured up (*KI*, p. 156, 1968, pp. 202-3).

Bahā’-Allāh cites several standard as well as several less known Shi’ite Hadith compendia in the *Ketāb-e iqān*. These sources include [Abu Ja’far Moḥammad Kolayni](#)’s (d. 941) *al-Kāfi fi ’elm al-din* and its supplementary volumes *Rawżat al-kāfi*, Moḥammad-Bāqer Majlesi’s (d. 1699-1700) *Behār al-anwār*, the *’Awālem al-’olum* of Majlesi’s student ‘Abd-Allāh b. Nur-Allāh Baḥrāni (d. early 17th century), a rich repository of Shi’ite messianic Hadith for Bābis, and the *Yanbu’*, possibly a compilation of Ebn Jonayd Eskāfi (d. 991; *KI*, p. 189, 1968, p. 243 ; Ešrāq Kāvāri, 1970-72, IV, pp. 1866-67). An unspecified *Ketāb al-arba’in* (Book of the forty [traditions]) is also cited in the *Ketāb-e iqān* (p. 188, tr., 1968, p. 242) as is the *Do’ā’ al-nodba* (Supplication of lamentation), a prayer included in various Shi’ite devotional compilations of Ebn Ṭāwus (d. 1226) and others (*KI*, p. 28, tr., 1968, p. 35). Additionally, for example, Traditions are relayed through Mofazzal b. ‘Omar Jo’fi (d. ca. 762-3), from Imam Ja’far al-Šādeq (d. ca. 765), and through Komayl b. Ziād (d. ca. 704) from Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb (d. 661) about *al-ḥaqiqa* (truth, reality) (*KI*, p. 77, tr., 1968, pp. 102-3). Some of the more esoteric Hadiths cited in the *Ketāb-e iqān* seem to have originated in the *Mašāreq anwār al-yaqin* of Rajab Borsi (d. ca. 1411), perhaps as mediated through early Shayḳi writings where unusual traditions are frequently cited and commented upon (see *KI*, p. 130, tr., 1968, pp. 167-68).

Bahā’-Allāh also refers to other literary sources in the *Ketāb-e iqān*, such as the lengthy Persian *Eršād al-’awāmm* of Moḥammad-Karim Khan Kermāni (d. 1871), which was published several times in the 1850s in Bombay and Tabriz. Bahā’-Allāh specifically mentions that he sought out and read parts of this book. He contrasts Kermāni’s listing of twenty-five or more branches of often esoteric knowledge allegedly necessary for fathoming the mysteries of the *me’rāj* (ascension to Heaven) with an equal number of ethical hallmarks of spirituality necessary for the true seeker to enter the archetypal, certitude (*iqān*)-generating, Book-centered “City of God.” (*KI*, pp. 152-54, tr., 1968, pp.



196-98). Renewed from age to age, this “City” is the source of all good and in the future will be the Book of the universal Bābi messiah, *man yoẓhero-hu Allāh*. (*KI*, pp. 152-155, tr., 1968, pp. 196-200). Bahā’-Allāh did not explicitly make this claim for himself in the *Ketāb-e iqān*, where his focus was on the messianic identity and divine status of the Bāb as indicated in many Shi’ite messianic traditions.

Bahā’-Allāh underlines the spiritual interpretation of the *me’rāj* (ascent) of Moḥammad in the *Ketāb-e iqān*. This in line with the sometimes non-literal interpretations proposed by various Shi’ite philosophers and mystics, including the first two Šayḳi leaders and the Bāb (cf. *Qayyum al-asmā’*, *sura* 68). He counters Karim-Khan Kermāni’s corporeal (*bā jesm*) exegesis and denial of its spiritual (*ruḥāni*) interpretation in his *Eršād al-’awwām* (Kermāni, p. 450). Like Moḥammad, the “Lord of the *me’rāj*,” the spiritual seeker should come to true understanding through purity of heart and soul unencumbered by such esoteric sciences as *kimiā* (alchemy) and *simiyā* (gematria related magic) reckoned essential by Kermāni (*KI*, pp. 144-45, tr., 1968, p. 186). For Bahā’-Allāh primacy should be given to non-literal (*bāṭeni*) levels to the meaning of the *me’rāj* of Moḥammad.

In the initially theological second part of the *Ketāb-e iqān*, the incomprehensibility of the ultimate Godhead is underlined, as is the subordinate “divinity” of the great divine manifestations (*mazāher-e elāhiya*) who have the right to declare “I am God” (*anā Allāh*) (*KI*, p. 138, tr., 1968, p. 178). The great founder-Prophets of religion are distinct individuals but exhibit an essential spiritual oneness, such that they are all the alpha and the omega of Reality and could claim to be the spiritual persona or “return” of each other. Each could legitimately claim to be the “seal of the prophets.” The alleged “finality of prophet-hood” read by most Muslims into the *kātam al-nabiyin* (Qur’an 33:40), for Bahā’-Allāh is indicative of Moḥammad as the “acme of prophethood” and not his being the “seal of the prophets” as the last of them. Divine guidance through divine messengers had no beginning and will have no end.

As in the writings of the Bāb, Bahā’-Allāh interprets Qur’anic references to the eschatological “encounter with God” (*leqā’ Allāh*) as indications of a concrete meeting with the divine Person of the Manifestation of God (the Bāb) on the “Day of God,” which is equated with the era of the mission and religious dispensation of the Bāb (*KI*, pp. 107-10, tr., 1968, pp. 138-40). The Bāb’s call to humanity initiated the “Day of resurrection.” Like the Bāb, Bahā’-Allāh



reinterpreted a good deal of Islamic apocalyptic eschatology; “life” and “death,” for example, are states of spirituality and materialistic unbelief, respectively, while individual “resurrection” is essentially a transition to true heavenly life. With the advent of the Bāb, the “dead” to truth are resurrected to new “life”; faith in him precipitates a new level of spiritual “life” consonant with a new era of divine revelation. A multiplicity of individual resurrections through faith in the Bāb constitutes the realization of the *Yawm al-qiāma*, (the Day of Resurrection). The physically dead do not literally come alive again.

In arguing for the truth of the Bāb as the expected Shi‘ite Qā’em, Bahā’-Allāh cites some prophetic Hadiths and highlights the Bāb’s constancy in his messianic convictions, despite persecution, imprisonment, and eventual execution (*KI*, pp. 179-80, tr., 1968, pp. 230-32). He cited predictions from the Twelver Shi‘ite Imams, which to him indicated the Bāb’s being the real 19th century persona and spiritual “return” of the expected Twelfth Imam. The Bāb came at the right time with twin Shi‘i-Šayḳi forerunners (*nurayn-e nayyerayn* “twin shining lights”), the Arab born *ensān-e kāmél* (Perfect Man) [Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā’i](#) (d. 1826) and the Persian sage Sayyed Kāẓem Rašti (d. 1843; *KI*, p. 51, tr., 1968, p. 65). The Bāb came in the year “sixty,” understood as 1260 AH/1844, the year of the commencement of his religious mission. This, according to him, was predicted in a disclosure of Imam Ja‘far al-Šādeq to his disciple al-Mufaẓḡal and cited, for example, in early Šayḳi literature (Aḥsā’i, I/1, p. 83). For Bahā’-Allāh, this year “sixty” indicated “the year of the *ẓohur*” (manifestation) of the Bāb as the “Ipseity of Light” (*KI*, p. 196, tr., 1968, pp. 253-54).

Such prophetic testimonials deemed fulfilled in the *Ketāb-e iqān* led the Bāb’s uncle and many others to view the youthful Bāb as a Širāzi Sayyed fit to be the expected Qā’em who legitimately came at the right time with a “new book” and a “new law” within a new *amr* or religious Cause. Throughout the *Ketāb-e iqān*, Bahā’-Allāh argues that the Bāb was the Shi‘ite universal messiah figure and that the onset of the Day of Resurrection had commenced in both a concrete and a spiritual sense with his call to humankind through Mulla Ḥosayn Bošru’i (d. 1849), whom he refers to as the “locus of the radiance of the Sun of the [Bābi] theophany.” This took place one thousand years after the disappearance around 260 AH of the son of Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askari, traditionally reckoned the occulted Twelfth Imam (*KI*, p. 173, tr., 1968, p. 222).

Literary style and technical vocabulary. Edward G. Browne described the *Ketāb-e iqān* as “ a work of great merit, vigorous in style, clear in argument,



cogent in proof, and displaying no slight knowledge of the Bible, Qur'an, and Traditions" (Browne, 1889, p. 254). It is marked by clarity of style as well as exegetical-eisegetical depth and a richness of intertextual and mystical vocabulary. Its author frequently utilizes mystical and sometimes esoteric Shi'ite-Bābi terminology in a lucid fashion. Bahā'-Allāh delights in the use of the interpretive genitive, which often lends poetical depth to the meaning, (e.g., *bayzā-ye 'erfān* "white [hand] of gnosis," *reẓwān-e Enjil* "paradise of the Gospel"; *KI*, pp. 8, 19, tr., 1968, pp. 11, 24).

As an example of the terminology and style of the text, one can cite the quasi-cosmological term *sorādeq*, used on ten occasions in the *Ketāb-e iqān*. The term, in light of a Hadith cited by Majlesi and others, denotes a succession of pavilions around the divine throne, each specifically characterized by a name of God as expressed by a particular divine attribute such as glory (*majd*) and splendor-beauty (*bahā'*; Majlesi, LVIII, p. 43). Among the nine genitive phrases commencing with *sorādeq* is *sorādeq al-'amā'* (the beclouded pavilion) (*KI*, p. 76, tr., 1968, pp. 101-2) reminiscent of [Ebn al-'Arabi](#) and the Bāb, who both made considerable use of the term *'amā'* and commented upon its source Hadith about the location of God "in a cloud" (*fī'l-'amā'*) before he fashioned the creation (*Ṭabari*, pp. 206-7).

Manuscripts, editions, and translations

The original autograph manuscript of the *Ketāb-e iqān* appears to be lost, though an early copy presented to Ḥājj Mirzā Sayyed Moḥammad in the handwriting of 'Abd-al-Bahā exists at the Bahā'i International Archives in Haifa (Israel). This manuscript copy has a few marginal corrections and a note in the handwriting of Bahā'-Allāh expressing his desire for martyrdom in the path of the Bāb and his wish to leave Baghdad (Fāẓel Māzandarāni, 1967, I, p. 266; Taherzadeh, p. 158). In the entry "Iqān" in his *Asrār al-ātār*, Fāẓel Māzandarāni mentions a second early manuscript dated 1280/1863-64, which would appear to be that transcribed for Ḥājj Mirzā Ḥasan-'Ali, the younger uncle (*kāl-e aṣḡar*) of the Bāb. This manuscript is now in private hands, as is another important early 1871 manuscript from the Bahā'i copyist Āqā Mirzā Āqā Rekābsāz Širāzi (d. 1288/1871; Fāẓel Māzandarāni, 1967, I, p. 268; Balyuzi, 1980, p. 164). Over the succeeding decades, scores of sometimes unsatisfactory manuscript copies of the *Ketāb-e iqān* were made.

The first undated lithographed edition of the *Ketāb-e iqān* most probably appeared in Bombay in the early 1880s (Buck, 1995, p. xviii). Aware of textual



corruptions in manuscripts of the *Ketāb-e iqān*, Bahā'-Allāh arranged for another Bombay printing in 1310/1892-93 at the Naşiri Press, owned by members of the Bāb's family, in the hand of the famous calligrapher Mirzā Ḥosayn Eşfāhāni, titled Moşkin-qalam (d. ca 1912; Fāzel Māzandarāni, 1967, p.278; Buck, 1995, p. 106). Later printings of the original text appeared in slightly revised editions such as the Cairo printings of 1900 and 1933-34. This latter revised edition has been several times reprinted in Tehran (1976), Germany (1980), and Karachi (1997). Anti-Bābi-Bahā'i attacks on the *Ketāb-e iqān* include materials contesting the textual integrity and veracity of the *Ketāb-e iqān* (e.g. Najafi, pp. 460-85; cf. Buck, 1995, pp. 18-36) and the truth of doctrines expounded therein. Other general attacks on this work include that of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Salām, the Şayḡ-al-Eslām of Tbilisi, which was voluminously dealt with by the Bahā'i apologist Mirzā Abu'l-Faẓl Golpāygāni (d. 1914) in his *Ketāb al-farā'ed* (completed 1898).

Perhaps initiated by 'Abd-al-Bahā' after the Cairo 1900 printing of the *Ketāb-e iqān*, the first European translation was most probably the 1904 printed English translation of Ali Kuli Khan (d. 1928), assisted by the American Bahā'i Howard MacNutt. Apparently later in the same year the first French translation was published by the early French Bahā'i Hippolyte Dreyfus (d. 1928) and Mirzā Ḥabīb-Allāh Şirāzi. Both of these translations were revised and reprinted many times. The far from literalistic, though for Bahā'is authoritative English translation, is that by Shoghi Effendi (d. 1957), which was first published in New York in 1931. This printing has been slightly revised and reprinted many times. It has also served as a basis for translations into other languages, although new translations direct from the original are also in progress in scholarly academic circles.

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Please note that in the article the *Ketāb-e iqān page* numbers are first given according to the revised 1934 Cairo edition followed by page numbers from the Ali Kuli Khan English translation (2nd edition) then the English translation of Shoghi Effendi (USA ed.).



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