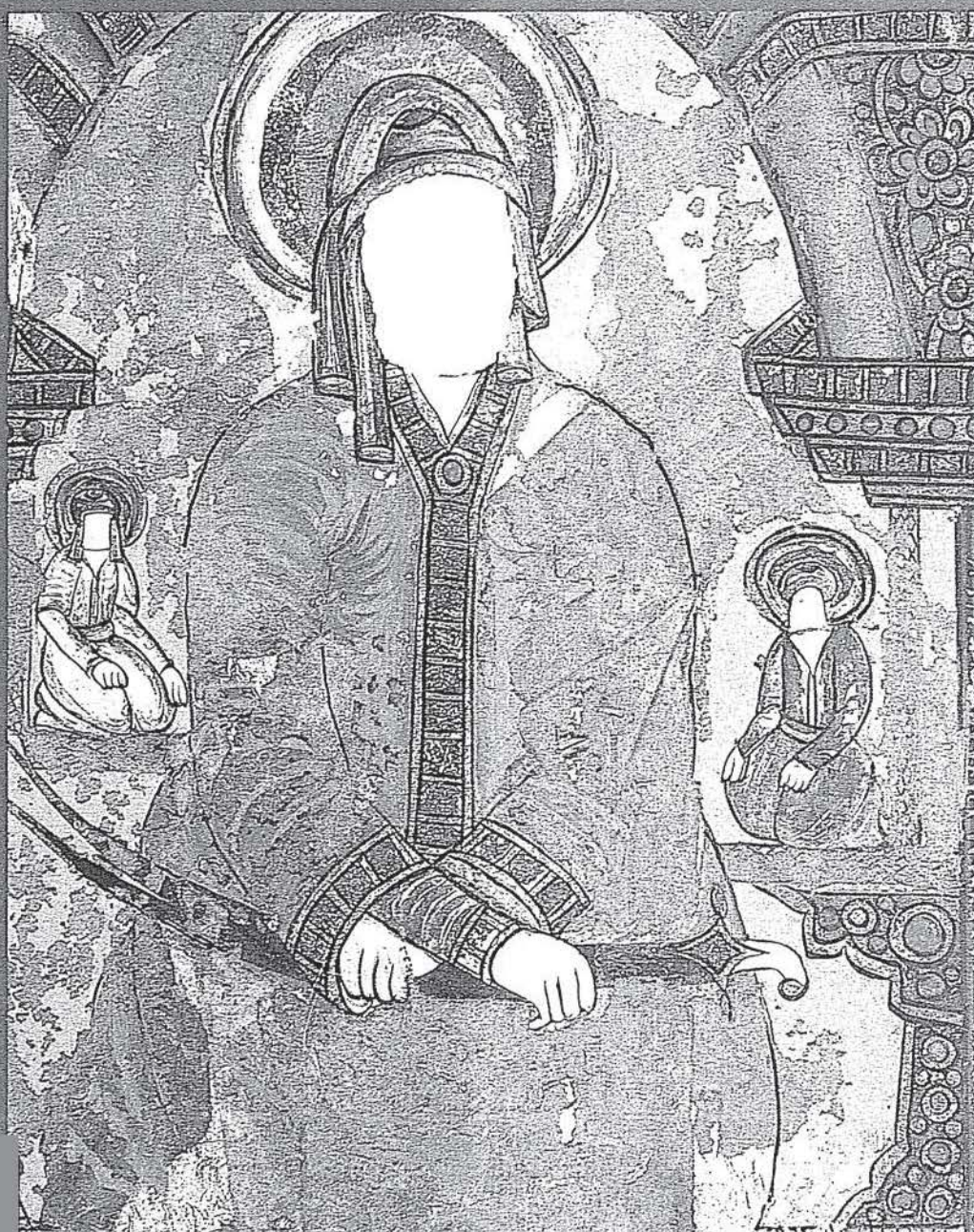


ALEVI IDENTITY



Edited by Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga, Catharina Raudvere
SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL 1998



ALEVI IDENTITY

CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

Papers Read at a Conference Held
at the Swedish Research Institute
in Istanbul, November 25-27, 1996

Edited by Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga and
Catharina Raudvere



SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL
TRANSACTIONS VOL. 8

A Critical Survey on Ahl-e Haqq Studies in Europe and Iran*

JEAN DURING

Ahl-e Haqq consider Bektashis as their closest members of a large family which includes a few other hyper-Shia¹ groups, of which only the Nusayri, and 'Ali Allâhi are clearly identified. Tradition has it that Soltân Sahâk founded the Ahl-e Haqq *maslak* in Iranian Kurdistan and Luristan. After a hundred years of spiritual reign in Kurdistan, he disappeared, then reappeared, and manifested himself in Anatolia under the name of Hacı Bektaş.² When giving an account of the Ahl-e Haqq in a seminar on Bektashi and Alevi, I found it more appropriate to make a survey of the Ahl-e Haqq studies at large but with a critical eye, and to suggest some research perspectives, rather than to focus on a specific point. Thereby the reader will get a general idea of the present situation of this religious group and its problems, and hopefully be able to draw comparisons with the case of the Bektashi and Alevi.

One and a Half Centuries of Ahl-e Haqq Research

For a long time, one of the main concerns of Western scholars working on the Ahl-e Haqq was to find out their historical and religious origin and to give an account of their practices and beliefs.³ Their views relied more on sacred texts than on field work and personal contacts with the Ahl-e Haqq and when the latter was the case, it was based on research carried out only with a few groups among a great number of communities scattered over a wide territory. After the pioneers came a new generation of scholars perhaps better equipped to sketch a realistic portrait of this religious group. These were M. Mokri, a Sunni Kurd who published in French and had full access to the original texts and to Kurdish culture, C. J. Edmonds who translated an

* I wish to thank Dr Martin van Bruinessen for his kind advice and remarks concerning this article.

1 I suggest avoiding the term "extremism shiism" to label Alevi, Ahl-e Haqq Nusayri, etc. The terms hyper-Shia or hypershiism (for *ghuluw*) are politically, as well as scientifically, more adequate.

2 Pir Esmâ'il Kuhlânî, a disciple of Soltân Sehâk, says in a *kalâm*: "Among the Bektashis, among the Bektashis / The receptacle of the essence of my King manifested himself among the Bektashis / My King has gone from Perdivar to his new house / He manifested himself in Hacı Bektaş / He founded the Bektashi path, unveiling his Science / the seven (*haftan*) have had many lives (*yurt*)". (Safizâde, 1981, 96).

About Hacı Bektaş's hierarchical rank, there are other traditions (see van Bruinessen, 1995, pp. 119-20, 134, Beik Baghban, pp. 66, 256). Some sources say he was Gabriel or Dâwud, one of the seven Archangels. Other sources consider him as a manifestation of Khân Atesh or Shâh Veys Qoli, that is a *zât mehmân* ("host of the Essence", but not *zât bashar* "the Essence in a human" like 'Ali). Edmonds (p. 94) relying on Iraqi sources, gives the names of Hacı Bektaş's companions, from which there is no doubt that he was the King (*shâh*). Sacred history does not bother with chronology, but strangely, in all the versions, Hacı Bektaş comes after Soltân (d. probably 1506), though he lived more than two centuries before him. (This anachronism is solved by some traditions according to which he lived three hundred years.) The anteriority of the Bektashis over the "official Ahl-e Haqq" is compatible with the fact that all the Ahl-e Haqq know about the existence of their Turkish cousins, whereas the Alevis have no idea of the existence of the Ahl-e Haqq in Iran or Irak.

3 Gobineau, Minorsky, Iwanov.

interesting Ahl-e Haqq doctrinal summary, and S. C. R. Weightman, who had contacts with Ahl-e Haqq in Tehran.

From 1963 onwards appeared important first hand material like the *Borhân ol-Haqq* written by Nur 'Ali Elâhi, a respected spiritual personality among the Ahl-e Haqq. This book was discussed by Weightman⁴ and mentioned by Minorsky in his article in the Encyclopaedia of Islam as an essential contribution to the knowledge of the Ahl-e Haqq tradition and practices. It is based on the most reliable traditions⁵ and uses Islamic theological concepts and Koranic references to present the doctrine in such a way that Islamic censure could raise no objection against it. After several reprints, a new edition was issued in 1975 with 400 pages of commentaries and replies to questions. All the books published in Iran after the *Borhân ol-Haqq* make extensive use of this source and mention it generally in first place in their bibliographies.⁶

The same year saw the publication of the *Shâhnâme-ye Haqiqat*, from Hâjj Ne'matollâh Jeyhunâbâdi, Nur 'Ali Elâhi's father. This is a complete sacred history in 11 000 verses in Persian stretching from primeval to modern times. In the new edition (*Haqq ol-Haqâyeq*) it includes contemporary events which took place during Hâjj Ne'matollâh's time but are still viewed as part of the same sacred history. This feature is quite rare in such writings, which generally do not include the present times. This book may be considered the main source of the Ahl-e Haqq besides the sacred *kalâms* or *daftars*, and for Hâjj Ne'matollâh as the last great Ahl-e Haqq charismatic saint in the traditional style. Whereas all the *kalâms* were written in Kurdish, Hâjj Ne'matollâh dictated it in Persian, perhaps intending to open the Ahl-e Haqq tradition to the large public of non Kurdish speakers. He was also innovative in choosing a historical approach instead of the classical paraphrase of the ancient *kalâms*. His work continues the tradition of the sacred *kalâm* written in the course of the centuries by great Ahl-e Haqq saints. It is often referred to as the *Kalâm of Mojrem*.⁷

A few years after the appearance of these sources, several works were published in Iran, some of them more or less inspired by the *Borhân ol-Haqq*. They can be classified in three main categories, though some works combine several approaches: canonic texts, erudite presentations, and insider's spiritual or catechism approaches. To these categories can be added ethnological descriptions and sociological approaches which are not concerned primarily with the Ahl-e Haqq as a religious group, but as a group representing a different culture in a wider sense.

Canonic Texts

Ahl-e Haqq canonic literature has not been systematically collected or studied. In order to open the way for further research, it may be useful to sketch a general table

4 Weightman, 1964.

5 The author possessed many copies of the sacred *Sarânjâm* collected by his father, and used a copy from the hand of Aqâ Ahmad I, successor of Shâh Hayâs, dated *circa* 1770. It could be the oldest Ahl-e Haqq manuscript.

6 Another important reference source of this author is the *Asar ol Haqq* (vol I 1979, vol II 1992, c. 700 pp each) consisting of informal conversations transcribed on the spot during *jam'* sessions. Though it is mainly a spiritual teaching not specifically addressed to Ahl-e Haqq, it provides interesting clues and anecdotes with their commentaries, for an inner approach of the Ahl-e Haqq culture, not to speak of its mystical content.

Scholars can also benefit from the notes taken by some dervishes of this master and published by M. Mokri with his commentaries: *L'Esotérisme kurde* (1966). It contains a lot of material on the Ahl-e Haqq traditions and rituals, but the author (who is actually not the editor of the book) disapproved its publication, since he could not review it.

7 They follow those of Teymur, Zulfaqâr, Darvish Qoli and Nowruz.

of the literature of this group. The essential text is the *Kalâm Sarânjâm*, also called *Kalâm Khazâne* or *Daftar-e Perdiwari*.

I have consulted a collection of texts, copied by Seyyed Nure (d. c. 1970), a Shâh Hayâsi Ahl-e Haqq from Sahne. According to Seyyed H., his son, the most important book in this collection is the *Kalâm Sarânjâm* which contains the old texts relating to the time of Soltân and his predecessors Shâh Khoshin (c. 10th century) and Bâbâ Nâ'us. Seyyed H. said that several other booklets (*daftar*) can in fact also be considered a part of the *Sarânjâm*, since they report stories from the same period. These texts may have been written later by saints who were themselves reincarnations of the same persons, or who had spiritual access to those times and were supposed to relate what had been said and what happened. The typical example is that of Qoshchi Oghli. These texts always use formulas like "Soltân declared" (*maramu*), "Benyâmin declared" etc.

Of secondary importance are the writings of what can be called the second period (17th-18th c.), such as the predictions of Khân Almâs or Il Begi, the *kalâm*s of Shâh Hayâs, Aqâ Abbâs, etc. Another category of writings consists of mystic poems relying on canonic texts or referring to them, the most esteemed being those of Sheikh Amir. During two to three centuries there has been a considerable production of mystic poetry of this kind by people who occupied a "rank" (*maqâm*) in the socio-cosmic hierarchy, or at least were acknowledged as enlightened dervishes (*didedar*).

Seyyed H.'s manuscript has 380 pages, the *Sarânjâm* itself extends to 138 pages and contains the following chapters: Shâh Khoshin 20 pp, Bâbâ Nâ'us 10 pp, a section on Soltân's time 25 pp, the story of Pire wa Pirali, of Yâdegâr and Shâh Ebrâhimi, of the Haftawâna, the Twelve Imâms 33 pp, the Cheltan, the Qawaltâs, and the recommendations of Soltân for the performance of the *jam* (ritual). According to him there are no major variations between the different versions available, but some traditions contain additional material related to Soltân's period. For instance, the *daftar Diwâna Gawra* belongs to the local Gurân tradition. All the versions do not clearly separate the different sections by means of headings. This is why the number of chapters may vary in the different copies, though the content is the same. For instance, Seyyed H.'s copy had no title for some small sections which otherwise have been called *Kalâm Goru Goru*, *Kalâm Dire Dire*, *Kalâm Kale Zarde*. The rest of the Seyyed H.'s manuscript contains selections of *kalâm* poems by great Ahl-e Haqq saints or poets, from 'Âli Qalandar, Qoli (one of the Qawaltâs), the stories of Shâh Ebrâhim, Zonnur, and 'Âbedin, texts from Seyyed Ahmad, Seyyed Farzi and his disciples Nâder Veys, Nowrus, Zolfaqâr, etc. All this is only a small part of the totality of the texts, and of secondary importance.

Publications of canonic texts can be divided into two categories: a. non-academic editions (often facsimiles of manuscripts); b. academic editions with philological, historical, religious, and anthropological comments.

The first publication of a religious text is Minorsky's Russian translation of a *Sarânjâm* (1911) which is now practically unavailable. Fifty years later, Ivanow published a collection of Persian Ahl-e Haqq texts extensively commented in the light of the history of religions. It must be said that these texts, though interesting for scholars, are totally rejected by Ahl-e Haqq disciples and never quoted in books by Iranian scholars.⁸

M. Mokri published with parsimony some fragments of the *Kalâm-e Sarânjâm* (also called *Kalâm Perdivari*, or simply *Kalâm*) in a few articles, presented as rare secret texts and accompanied by abundant comments on linguistic and cultural con-

⁸ These texts have been published under the title *Majmu'e rasâ'el-e ahl-e haqq*, Bombay, 1950.

ditions. By doing this, instead of publishing the whole *Sarânjâm*, he succeeded in preserving the mystery of Ahl-e Haqq studies. This mist of mystery was however quickly lifted by the publication in Iran of a Turkish version of the *Sarânjâm*.⁹ Later on, in 1981, J. Afshâr published another version of this Turkish source, the *Divân-e Qoshchi-oghli*.¹⁰ It starts with the story of how this saint was cured of deafness and dumbness by a miracle of Shâh Ebrâhim (16th c.). Acknowledged as a new manifestation of Gabriel after Benyâmin (in Sultân's time), he adapted the *Sarânjâm* into Turkish with his comments and poems. In 1975, Afzali, an Ahl-e Haqq *seyyed* published some important basic Kurdish texts under the title *Daftar-e Romuz-e Yârestân. Ganjine-ye Soltân Sehâk*.¹¹ Two sections of the *Sarânjâm* have been edited separately in a scholarly form by Safizâde: *Dowre-ye Haftawâna*, (1982, 900 verses, 191 pp) and *Dowre-ye Bohlul*, (1984, 60 verses, 115 pp).¹² The section *Daftar-e Cheltan* has been issued in the form of a facsimile manuscript by Awrâng and Khâdemi (1978).

In addition to these basic texts, several minor but revered *kalâm* were published in facsimile:

— The complete *divân* of Sheykh Amir (b. 1713), perhaps the most popular source of this kind among Ahl-e Haqq Kurdish speakers. The book contains a handwritten pages long introduction by K. Nik-nezhâd (nd).

— *Goftâr-e Khân Almâs* (d. 1725) has been published in the same form (1973, 54 pp).

— The *Pishbini-ye Il Begi-ye Jâf* (1980, 44 pp), edited and introduced by Safizâde, contains amazing predictions about modern society (moral decadence, freedom of women, changes in dressing, and even the invention of steam locomotives).¹³

All these are not academic editions, but the followers' own contributions to the diffusion of the canonical texts, generally without comments, introduction or index. In this process, the Turkish speakers from the Atesh Begi *khânedân* proved to be more active than the Gurân, the most conservative Ahl-e Haqq group.

9 Kalâmât-e Torki, Tehran, 1973, 336 pp. A facsimile of a dervish's copy, without introduction, comments or table of contents.

10 This story is also found in the *Shahnâme-ye haqiqat*, p. 503. The interesting point is that since he was Benyâmin in his previous life, Qoshchi-oghli could speak in his own name to relate the sacred historical events.

11 This book of ca. 740 pp is not a regular "Kalâm Sarânjâm" but a collection of canonic texts of different epochs and importance set together without chronological concern. These are: —*Daftar-e Sâvâ* (14 pp), —*Daftar-e Gavâhi-e Gholâmân* ("on Shâh Ebrâhim and Yâdegâr, on the creation of the *haftawâna* and the contracts *bayâbas*) (10 pp), —*Daftar-e Diwâne Gawra* (*dowre-ye Pire va Pirâli*) (10 pp) —*Daftar-e dowre-ye shenderavi* (*Gelim kul*) (40 pp) —*Dowre-ye Shâh Khoshin*, (24 pp) —*Zalâl zalâl* (67 pp), the *daftar* of 'Abedine Jâf (100 pp), the recents *daftar* of Nowruz (n. 1320 Hq) Seyyed Brâke's *guyande* (260 pp). It is followed by the *kalâm* of Teymur (170 pp). One finds also a presentation (40 pp), hagiographic notes on Shâh Ebrâhim and Bâbâ Yâdegâr, as well as a few pages on Zoroaster, since the author had contact with a Zoroastrian from India and tried to relate Ahl-e Haqq belief to Zoroastrianism (Beik Baghban, p. 23). The absence of a table of contents, of clear classification, content and index, the incoherent division of the sections and the pagination by chapters (50 pp being omitted) make the consultation of this corpus uncomfortable. In any case it is not a complete *Sarânjâm*, but in adding to it the other *daftar* available, one can reconstitute a good part of the corpus. These are: *Dowre-ye Haftawâne*, *Dowre-ye Bohlul* (Safizâde), *Dowre-ye Cheltan* (Awrang), *Dowre-ye Wazâwar* (Mokri, 1968), *Dowre-ye Dâmyâri* (*idem.*, 1968), *Divân-e Gawra* (*idem.*, 1977). For other later *kalâm*s, see Safizâde, 1982, p. 14). Beik Baghban's photocopied manuscript also provides some material. One can identify twelve parts: *Dowre-ye Dâmyâri*, *D. Diwâne Gawra*, *Gelim wa Kul*, *D. Shâh Khoshin*, *D. Cheltan*, *D. Wazâwar*, *K. Goru Goru*, *K. Dire Dire*, *K. Kale zarde* (these three *kalâm* being very short), *K. Khâmush*, *Farmâyesh-e Bâbâ 'Ali Darvish* (not from the *Sarânjâm*), *K. Marnow*. The absence of the *Dowre-ye Haftawâne* may be explained by the fact that they are not liked by some Gurân groups (van Bruinessen, 1995, p. 134).

12 This scholar follows the method of Mokri, with comments and linguistic analysis. Three other sections of the basic *Kalâm* have been published by M. Mokri.

13 This text, which constitutes for the follower a proof of the authenticity of their saints, has been translated into Persian verses by Adib ol-Mamâlek (end of XIX c.) and are often quoted in Ahl-e Haqq studies. Il Begi died in 961 h.

The old secret books finally became available, though their distribution was limited. Yet, strangely enough, no Western scholar paid any attention to them, nor to the numerous publications which have appeared from this period onwards. I won't quote all this material, and will limit myself to a few significant publications.

Erudite Approaches

Under this heading, one can distinguish three subcategories: a) those that adopt a neutral position, b) those which defend an ideology c) those concerned with relations to other religions.

Erudite approaches through textual sources are rare. Along with Mokri, who did not publish in Persian, Safizâde made the first contribution with his *Bozorgân-e Yârestân* (1964). He later improved in his useful *Mashâhir-e Ahl-e Haqq* (1981) 234 pp), with about 150 biographical notes on great Ahl-e Haqq saints and dervishes. This collection of written portraits and spiritual filiations provides a new view of the Ahl-e Haqq culture, which I will discuss later. The same approach is used in the two syntheses of the Ahl-e Haqq doctrines published by Iranian scholars in the *Shii Encyclopaedia* (*Dâ'yarat ol-ma'âref-e tashayyo*, Tehran, 1993).

Two publications deal with the Cheltan (Qirqlar), which are closely related to the Ahl-e Haqq: *Ilkhchi*, a geographical study of an Azerbaijani village, and the *Hamâse-ye por shokuh-e Ahl-e Haqq Cheheltanân*, by Bâbâzâde, 1968.

Though it presents itself as a neutral approach, the *Sarsepordegân* by Khâjeddin (1970, 188 pp) seems to emphasize the non-Islamic aspect of the Ahl-e Haqq, perhaps as a reply to the *Borhân ol Haqq*, which explicitly related the Ahl-e Haqq doctrine to Ja'fari Shiism. Due to lack of erudition this book does not meet the required academic standards.

Of the same kind is the *A'in-e Yâri* of M. Alqâsi (1979, 106 pp) with the difference that the author is a Gurân disciple who obviously addresses an Ahl-e Haqq audience. His approach is therefore more prescriptive than descriptive, and follows the classical dogmatic structure used by Afshâr (1977). Perhaps it is inspired by the *Borhân ol-haqq*, beginning with definitions and origins, then dealing with Ahl-e Haqq customs like festivals, fasting, *jam*, benedictions, initiations, ablutions, moustaches, etc. Among the interesting points are his many quotations from various *kalâms*. He published another essay (*Andarz-e Yâri*, 1980, 94 pp) with many quotations, but no index.

One can speculate whether the development of Ahl-e Haqq publications in Iran is the reason for the loss of interest in this topic among Western scholars? Not only has the field lost its originality with all this new material, but it has also become more difficult to work on. The Western contributions consist only of three or four articles by van Bruinessen. Although accurate and relevant, his approach is limited in scope and ambition. H. Halm has published a short article in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, which cannot match Minorsky's articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, in spite of the fact that the latter appears a bit outdated. Personally, I spent several years in Iran and became familiar with Ahl-e Haqq culture, mainly through its ritual songs and music. This experience led me to write a general account of the Ahl-e Haqq with special references to music (During, 1989: 293-520).¹⁴ The latest Western scholarly work on Ahl-e Haqq consists of articles by Z. Mir Hosseini, who has collected a large amount of interesting empirical data on the present situation, without, however, much

¹⁴ This chapter will soon be published in Persian as a separate book.

methodological coherence.¹⁵ This kind of work dealing with sensitive contemporary facts without a thorough knowledge of traditional culture is more akin to a journalistic approach and leads to disputable conclusions. The most significant Western publication of the last decades remains the *Yaresan* of Hamze'ee (1990), a well documented study on the Ahl-e Haqq which lays great emphasis on its relations to ancient cults and religions. Although this scholar is an Iranian of Ahl-e Haqq origin, he relies on written rather than oral sources.

A survey of Ahl-e Haqq studies may give the impression that they are sometimes conducted in a quite non-academic way. Pittman published a very interesting résumé of the *Kalâm-e Saranjâm*, without even mentioning where the texts came from, in what language, or from what time.¹⁶ H. Beik Baghban received a Doctorat d'Etat in France, but part of the thesis is merely a photocopy of a manuscript, and even printed excerpts from canonical writings. He did not edit the text, and did not take the trouble to separate the chapters, or to number the pages or to give an index or a table of contents.¹⁷ Even M. Mokri relies on a rare "not published manuscript" in his last article on Soltân Sehâk's family (the founder of the Ahl-e Haqq *maslak*), a text which had actually already been extensively used fifteen years before by Safizâde in an important study. Mokri deliberately ignores this as he just ignores any Persian publications directly related to this matter. Although he has used his copy of the *Kalâm* for years, he has never described the sacred corpus and the general content. There is still no description available of this sacred corpus at all.¹⁸ Ahl-e Haqq is complex enough in itself, not to be rendered more obscure by our own approach.

What the Ahl-e Haqq Say

A way to gain objectivity is to look at what Ahl-e Haqq themselves say. Or, to be more accurate, what they write, since the written official discourse of the elite may not reflect the illiterate or oral tradition of the people.¹⁹

Borhân ol haqiqat (J. Afshâr, 1977) is a catechism for Ahl-e Haqq. Its originality lays mainly in the fact that it relies mainly on Qoshchi-oghli's Turkish *kalâm*. The book deals with the spiritual, ethical and ritual basis of the Ahl-e Haqq documented texts.²⁰ It was probably composed as a reply to what Alqâsi wrote in his book (1979), since he belongs to the trend which rejects the Islamic basis of the sect.

There have been several pious books written in the mystical or catechism style with more quotations from Hâfez or Mowlânâ than from the Kurdish texts, such as those of Movâhed and Valâ'i. This genre, which tends to present the universal,

15 Not to mention the number of contradictions, inaccuracies, mistakes and personal deductions which can't be justified by what she calls an "anthropological or sociological approach".

16 It covers the Ahl-e Haqq history from Shâh Khoshin to Atesh Beg and probably belongs to the Atesh Begi tradition.

17 There is nevertheless some useful information in his "enquête de sociologie religieuse", such as the bibliography, the ethnic and geographical repartition of the Ahl-e Haqq and the translation of *kalâms* which document some ritual or dogmatic points, though often without references.

18 Even Beik Baghban, who had access to these texts, provides only a list of their titles (p. 24).

19 We can't include in this category the three books published in French (and several western languages) by Bahrâm Elâhi, Nur 'Ali's son. The reason is that they are no longer representative of Ahl-e Haqq tradition, except perhaps for some fundamental dogmas such as perfectionment, cosmology, *mazhariat*, successive lives, ethics, etc. which are considered as "universal". Beside this, these books, which express Nur 'Ali's personal spiritual teaching, are addressed mainly to a non Ahl-e Haqq audience.

20 It refers to some unpublished late manuscripts from Teymur II, Sheikh Nazar 'Ali Jenâb (his disciple, d. 1915), and 'Ali Ashraf Khân. The author considers the Ahl-e Haqq as Muslims and rejects the label of 'Ali-Allâhi.

humanistic and spiritual message of Ahl-e Haqqism, introduces very little original material, but is still useful for those who want to understand how the followers define themselves, how they want to be known, what they have to say to the world, how they adapt to changes. They deserve a serious study in their own right. This would be no less interesting than the speculations on the origins of the Ahl-e Haqq mythology or ritual, or on their recent political manoeuvres and internal conflicts (Mir Hosseini). I will later present the main characteristics of the Ahl-e Haqq world view, based on this literature and on the attitude of the bulk of the followers.

Ahl-e Haqq and Mainstream Islam

There are a lot of very interesting issues concerning the Ahl-e Haqq and their doctrines which deserve careful study. However, in the majority of writings -by outsiders as well as insiders- the central debate is the relation between Ahl-e Haqqism and other religions, with a special emphasis on Islam. The question is particularly delicate after the foundation of the Islamic Republic.

Orientalists have taken for granted the hypothesis claimed by early scholars that Ahl-e Haqqism is a strange crypto-Mazdean or Mithraic religion covered by an Imamite varnish. They have also taken for granted the definition of the faith as being syncretistic. It seems to be more fascinating for them to deal with the religions of the Yezidis or Druzes, than with popular Sufism. The early Western studies presented the idea that there is a new trend among the Ahl-e Haqq followers that aims at Islamizing or even reforming the Ahl-e Haqq doctrine. This conception has been taken for granted by almost all scholars, in a way which deserves a *mise au point*. The bias is also typical of Iranian intellectuals, who like to emphasize the endogeneity of their culture and spirituality, and minimise the Arabo-Islamic lore. It is quite striking that in his well documented study, Hamze'ee uses all the resources of history of religion to find some links between Ahl-e Haqq and pre-Islamic cults and doctrines. But he does not even mention its connections with Sufism. Beik Baghban, who had close contacts with the Gurân, asserts his position as follows: "La plupart des savants et chercheurs ont rangé les Ahl-e Haqq parmi les sectes islamiques, voire chiites, mais, comme nous essayerons de le démontrer, la religion de Vérité est une religion différente de l'Islam." (: 58). Khâjeddin notes that some define the Ahl-e Haqq path as *â'in-e irâni* an "Iranian religion" (: 92) which has the character of hyper-Shiism (*gholov-e shi'e*). I do not deny the ancient cultural strata on which Ahl-e Haqqism flourished, but as a contrast to this one-dimensional perspective, I will point at a number of circumstances which demonstrate the strong links between the Ahl-e Haqq and kinds of Islam and Sufism. After that, I shall discuss the polemic as it appears in Ahl-e Haqq contemporary writings.

One common argument against the Ahl-e Haqq is that they worship the Devil. However, except for two verses, there is no mention of Satan in Ahl-e Haqq texts, and the authenticity and meaning of the two are controversial.²¹ van Bruinessen (in an unpublished study) suggests that this belief appeared only at the end of the 19th century among some Gurân groups in contact with Yezidis. The recent adhesion to this myth may also have a psychological basis: Satan (the archangel Dâwud) had been secretly ordered by God not to prostrate in front of Adam and was thus only

²¹ The verses are found in the *Dowre Bâbâ Jalil* (one of the theophany anterior to Soltân). Bagtar says that his name in the pre-eternity was Sheytân and that his evilness (*sharr*) is only for God's enemies (Alqâsi, 1979, p. 51, Beik Baghban, p. 251s). Alqâsi notes that the belief in the holiness of Satan is limited to south-western Kurdistan (Gurân). There is no mention of this question in Khâjeddin or in Safizâde's books.

apparently banished. This version is not far from the story of the paradoxical rehabilitation of Satan in classical Sufi poems, such as those of Attâr.²² It is not necessary to look for a mythological background or even Sufi influences to explain the fact that some Ahl-e Haqq adopted this myth. They may feel sympathy to Satan since they find in this figure a doctrinal justification of their own situation: outwardly heretics, but secretly closer to God than any Muslim. They are proud of their position subversive élite and do not fear to say: "we don't observe the Ramadan, but we have our own fast (*marnowî and qavaltâsi*),²³ we don't pray but we give *niâz*,²⁴ we don't go to the mosque but we take part in the *jam* once a week", etc.

The non-observance of Muslim basic duties is, however, by the large majority compensated for by the respect for Islamic customs, mainly *harâm*²⁵ and jurisdiction. The fact is that all their sacred history starts with Imâm 'Ali and his companions. Between the manifestation of Khawândegâr in the pre-eternity and that of 'Ali, it is as if nothing had happened. The Scriptures mentioning the name of some heroes of the ancient Iranian epic as avatars of the archangels (i.e. Siâvash, Hoseyn and Yâdegâr are the same person), but there is not even a single mention of Zoroaster, Mani or Mazdak. The few pre-Islamic references belong to the Koranic and the Biblical tradition. 'Ali is even more present (at least his name) in Ahl-e Haqq oral narratives, praises and devotion than Soltân. Imâm Hoseyn has an eminent place, with all his incarnations (*dun*), and the blessing of the offerings (*niâz*) ends with the mentioning of the Twelfth Imâm (*Mahdî sâheb-e zamân*). Even the Prophet Muhammed is highly revered, though more in his later *dun*, when he was Seyyed Mohammad, i.e. Soltân's brother. This is enough to define Ahl-e Haqq as Twelver Shia, or Imamites.

It is true that some aspects of the doctrine and practice are reminiscent of old culture and religions. But the permanence of these elements does not allow us to talk of "borrowing". Borrowing implies an awareness, a clear intention and the acknowledgement of the fact of borrowing, including an explicit discourse about it, as for example when the Prophet Muhammed adapted pagan rituals to Islam. Otherwise anything can be said to be derived from anything that happens to be similar.²⁶ In addition, borrowing means that the same original meaning and context are preserved. Without these conditions, any cultural artefact is to a certain extent borrowed and derived from something else, and nothing is really genuine and original. This is especially true for Islam, where religious forms are flexible and consensus tolerates non-regular cults and beliefs such as Sufism. As İlber Ortaylı has pointed out, in the Ottoman empire the Alevi did not have a status comparable to the Druzes or Nusayri, just because they were seen as Muslims.

22 See *Elâhî Nâme*, Song VIII, 4, 6. In the *Borhân ol-Haqq* (p. 317 s). N. 'A. Elâhî responds to a question in verses about Sheytân by 300 kurdish verses to demonstrate that according to the *Kalâm*, the rehabilitation of Sheytân is not acceptable.

23 Each being of three days. Beside that, some dervishes, mainly belonging to the school of Hâj Ne'matollâh, practised an ascetic vegetarian fast of forty days, generally starting ten days before Ramadan and ending with it. Asceticism in the dervish style is found only among Ahl-e Haqq mystics, not among ordinary adepts. Arguments against fasting in general, and specially during the Ramadan, are found in Ivanow's texts, the validity of which is contested by Ahl-e Haqq scholars. Only Khâjeddin refers much to it in his *Sarspordegân*.

24 Khân Atesh says in a Turkish *kalâm*: *min rakat verdi peyghambar bir âlmâ*: The prophet has given a thousand prayers for an apple (Khâjeddin, p. 63). Dehkhodâ also pointed to this fact in his article on the 'Ali-Allâhî, as well as Hamze'ee (p. 165).

25 They do not drink alcohol or eat pork, but there are exceptions among some Turks who do drink and the Gurân who eat wild boar.

26 On a similar question, J. Paul notes that "L'attitude extrémiste est de voir dans une pensée non musulmane le responsable de tout ce qui constitue la pensée et la pratique du soufisme" (p. 203) L'histoire du soufisme ne saurait s'écrire en énumérant les religions et les idées non musulmanes qui ont pu inspirer les mystiques musulmans (p. 204) Jürgen Paul, "Influences indiennes sur la Naqshbandiyya ?" *Cahiers de l'Asie Centrale*, 1996 / 1-2.

An Ahl-e Haqq authority with whom I discussed this question explained that Soltân Sehâk was a mystic of Muslim obedience, a guardian of the secrets of the prophets and the imams (as all Ahl-e Haqq do say), i.e., mainly the successive lives (*dunâ dun*), the cyclic manifestation of the divine essence (*mazhariat*) and the Seven Angels (*haftan*). The specific colour of the Ahl-e Haqq comes from the fact that Soltân had to adapt his teachings to the specific culture of the people who flocked around him. Had he been in another environment he would have formulated himself in another way. To the question: "are there Buddhist or Zoroastrian influences in the Ahl-e Haqq tradition"? Alqâsi's (1979: 104) answer is: "Taking into account the low cultural level of the rural area during Soltân's time, this possibility is excluded. Ahl-e Haqq are convinced that the origin of the prescriptions is in revelations (*kashf o shohud*) and mystic awareness, and does not stem from researches. Anyhow, the majority of them consider themselves as a branch (*kish*) of Islam." It is easier to bring arguments for this hypothesis than against it. For instance:

— The lack of any mention of any previous religions in the *kalâms*, indicates that the founders of the Ahl-e Haqq doctrine did not want to assume any other legacy than Islam and Sufism.

— The majority of early Ahl-e Haqq names show the strict Muslim -or even Sunni- origin of the followers. Many of them were mullâ or *seyyed*: Mollâ Rokneddin (who became a manifestation of Michael), Bâbâ Faqi, Seyyed Mohammed. Zahiroddin ibn Mahmud, known as Seyyed Kheder, was acknowledged as a manifestation of Gabriel. They were angels in human form and the closest companions of Soltân. Another one, Mostafâ Dâwudan, was a *fiqh* student of Mollâ Elyâs from Shahrezur. 'Abedin, to whom one chapter of the *Kalam* is devoted, was a *talebe*, hostile to Soltân before his conversion. The only non-Muslim of all the great Ahl-e Haqq is Pir-e Shahryâr Awrâmi II, who was a Magus and son of a Magian before converting to Islam and becoming a disciple of Soltân.²⁷

Safizâde and Mokri have demonstrated the reliability of the traditional, Sunni version of the origin of Soltân. Soltân's father, Sheikh 'Isi, as well as his brother Sheikh Musâ, were indeed important Sufi sheikhs (probably not precisely Qâderi and Naqshbandi as the tradition says, but rather Nurbakhshi). According to some sources they were the sons of the well known Sufi 'Ali Hamadâni, an interpretation which may express a spiritual rather than biological filiation. The kind of Sufism they professed could have had some affinities with the future Ahl-e Haqq doctrine, since there is a subversive or extravagant dimension in their claims and behaviour. In a poem, Sheikh 'Isi says that he is Jesus ('Isâ: 'Isi), son of Maryam. The writer, who is a Sunni, feels obliged to explain that this kind of mysterious statement is the expression of a mystical *hâl* (Mokri, 1994). Several miracles or anecdotes attributed to Soltân by the Ahl-e Haqq tradition are told by this author to Sheikh 'Isi. This, however, confirms that Soltân was the son of another woman than his eleven or twelve brothers. The names of some of these brothers are also found in Ahl-e Haqq sources, mainly Seyyed Mohammad and Mir Sur who was a *hâfez* (he knew the Koran by heart). Both were dervishes close to Soltân and are considered in this text as major mystics. Paradoxically, the text mentions Soltân Sehâk only briefly without a single allusion to his achievements, whereas he portrays 'Abdolqâder as an evil person (who, according to the tradition, sought to kill Soltân). As a Sunni, the author may have deliberately omitted to elaborate on Soltân and preferred to make a panegyric on 'Abdolkarim, the founder of the spiritual dynasty of the Barzanje *seyyeds* who became the promoters of the Qâdiriyya in Kurdistan.

²⁷ See Safizâde (1981, p. 49). The other personalities and their Muslim origin are well known by all the disciples.

Without going into more detail, it is obvious that Sufism was a family affair in Soltân Sehâk's environment. In this context, it could naturally happen that Soltân revealed his superiority and attracted to him his two brilliant brothers as well as a great many disciples already devoted to his family. Five members of the *haftawâna* (the second group of Seven) came from his father's followers. Yet his prestige was not restricted to the area where he was living, since many people came from far away to meet him. Some of these foreigners, such as Ivvat-e Ardebili, were attributed the highest rank, the manifestation of an archangel (*haftan*), a distinction which Soltân did not even give to the members of his own family, with the exception of his mother. Actually, this "spiritual dynasty" died out with him and his devoted brothers, since they did not marry. The celibacy of all the members of the highest hierarchical level, including Soltân himself and later 'Âli Qalandar and Zonnur Qalandar, may account for *qalandari* elements.²⁸ Therefore, with the exception of 'Ali himself, the seven manifestations of the divine essence²⁹ had no progeniture. It is only at the second level, that of the *haftawâna*, that some dervishes had children and constituted dynasties of *seyyed*. This is why, in the absence of descendants, Soltân organised the posterity of his religious movement in seven hereditary clans *xânedân* or *ojâq*, to which four others were later added. Then great charismatic figures such as 'Âli, Zonnur or Âtesh Beg (17-18th century) appeared in the Ahl-e Haqq community.

In the light of this information, Ahl-e Haqqism can be seen neither as a syncretism of Islam, nor as a form of old religious heresy, but rather as an offshoot of a kind of Sufism which adapted itself to Kurdish customs. One can not deny that the Kurdish ground was favourable to the development of non-Muslim elements, some of them even being attested by the canonical sources. But it is unlikely that representatives of Sufism trained in Islamic sciences could have converted regular dervishes to a new religion or a new mysticism cut off from any Islamic roots but nevertheless able to attract foreigners from so widespread places as Samarqand, Chinese Turkestan (Mâchin), Istanbul, Syria, Sistan, Ardebil, Basra, Fars, Esfahan, India, and Mâzânderân.

How, then, did Ahl-e Haqqism become specific enough to be considered a separate religion (although most of the followers do not agree with this statement)? Besides the absence of important Muslim practices, which makes the Ahl-e Haqq at most *bi shar'* mystics, there is the strange archaic tonality of the *Kalâm-e Sarânjam*. It is revered as a Koran, with its myths and stories written in a rare incantatory style far remote from the Sufi poetic style. This style and structure deserves a separate literary and stylistic study. It was probably shaped to facilitate memorization, and it could be that it was first orally transmitted by religious minstrels (*kalâmkhwân*) like any epic, or transmitted both by memorization and writing, since there is no great divergence in the different available versions. It is remarkable that the great sheikhs of Soltân's family and surroundings did not commit themselves to any classical doctrinal Persian prose writing and preferred to rely on oral transmission and Kurdish poetry. The explanation may be that the esoteric teachings could not be uttered in a clear tongue or in academic treatises without risk of persecution. In addition, for the provincial Kurdish culture, a poetic text in incantatory style was the best chance for the doctrine to propagate itself among common people. Chanting them with the lute, *tanbur*, in regular socio-religious events helped its diffusion. Soltân used Kurdish culture to propagate his ideas, and he reached not only Iranian Kurds, but also Kurds in Iraq and Turks living in Iran.

²⁸ See van Bruinessen 1991, p. 69.

²⁹ From 'Ali to Shâh Hayâs, 18th century.

Apart from the style of the *Kalâm*, the strong emphasis laid on the spiritual kingship has also archaic overtones. It gives the picture of a royal court hierarchically organised in rank and functions, with vizir (Pir Musî is the *vazîr*) scribes, khalif, chiefs, servants, all totally subjected and devoted to a king (*shâh*) being not only God's representative, but the divine manifestation itself, or for some, God himself. This ancient image of a double absolute power (spiritual and temporal), found perhaps its last historical manifestation in Iran, among the Ahl-e Haqq on the one hand and Shâh 'Esmâil, the Safavid king, on the other. It is no accident that Shâh 'Esmâil was a direct descendant of Sheikh Safieddin Ardebili, initiated by Soltân³⁰ and supporter of the Qizilbash, who are closely related to the Ahl-e Haqq. This kind of connection shows that instead of tracing Ahl-e Haqq customs and beliefs back to an age-old religious background, it is perhaps more relevant to look at its Sufi and Shia roots which, of course, may also include some historical elements. I shall give some examples.

Like many others, Khâjeddin put forth arguments for the syncretistic aspects of Ahl-e Haqq beliefs, but his argument is not convincing. For instance, he sees in the moustache (*shâreb*) a vestige of Zoroastrianism, and ignores the fact that it is common to all Shii Sufi orders.³¹ He considers the common meal as derived from the Christian communion, though it is also found in many other dervish groups and attested by old customs. He finds a connection between the Jewish fast and the three Ahl-e Haqq days, but the Ahl-e Haqq themselves argue that the Muslim tradition establishes the *ayyâm ol biz*, three days of fast every month.³² Is the belt that the followers wear during the *jam* borrowed from the Zoroastrian *zonna* and reduced to a simple string? It could also be the belt of the biblical prophets. In any case, it is said to express the idea of being ready to serve God. Is it legitimate to trace the custom of sitting "on the knees" (*do zânu*) back to Zoroastrianism, when it is prescribed in the Islamic *namâz* as well as in Oriental *bonnes manières* as a mark of respect? Following this author, one is led to the conclusion that Ahl-e Haqq is a syncretism of Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian elements.

Hamze'ee's work, however, goes much further in the comparative approach and discovers some really convincing similarities. In spite of the many parallels he draws between Ahl-e Haqqism and ancient religious trends, he still fails to establish any historical link. For instance, he considers the divinization of 'Ali as a survival of ancient Iranian religions, while Khâjeddin relates it to Hinduism. Considering that it could also be viewed as being borrowed from the divinization of Jesus in Christianity, how can we speak of borrowings or influences, when three different religions or more are considered to be "at the origin of a belief"?

In such a situation it is much more rational to adopt the Ahl-e Haqq point of view that 'Ali was recognised as a manifestation by some of the initiated. This belief is so natural to Shii mysticism that Miller could express it in terms which apply perfectly to the Ahl-e Haqq: "one is inclined to suspect that the real God of the Sufis is 'Ali. He performs the functions of the Divinity for them. Him they know and love and through Him they hope to attain some knowledge of the Unknown God whom he reveals".³³ Anyhow, there is an important detail which establishes a clear-cut distinction between Christians and 'Ali-Allâhi or Nosayri:³⁴ for the Christians the

³⁰ He was in charge of collecting wood (*hizum kesh*) and obtained from Soltân a spiritual rank as well as the political kingship for his ascendants up to seven generations (Elâhi, 1979, no. 1765).

³¹ A Ne'matollâhi told me that according to his sheikh, if a dervish cuts a single hair of his moustache, he should sacrifice a cow as a matter of compensation.

³² They also mention the three days of Adâm expelled from Paradise, the three days of Jonas in the whale, of Hoseyn in Kerbela, etc. and eventually of Soltân in the cave, to argue that it always existed.

³³ 1923, p. 363.

³⁴ Even Alevis recognise only two manifestations: 'Ali and Hacı Bektaş.

Divinity revealed itself only once, whereas for the Ahl-e Haqq it manifested itself at least seven times.³⁵

In usual Ahl-e Haqq devotion, the figure of 'Ali is so strongly present that it overshadows even that of Soltân, even though it is not a problem since they are both the same. This is why some Ahl-e Haqq groups are not reluctant to claim to be 'Ali-Allâhi. The veneration of a human being as a *qotb*, *vali* or *mazharollâh* is actually not a common attitude in classical Sufism. The veneration or quasi divinization of the sheikh is rarely found among Arabs, but is typical of Iranian culture in the broad sense. Hamze'ee³⁶ developed this point by referring to the early Islamic heretic movement of Khorramdini. For the same reasons, Khâjeddin sees Hindu influences in Ahl-e Haqq: 'Ali and Soltân are like incarnations of Brahma, and the *haftan* similar to Krishna, Sarasvati, Kâli, etc.³⁷ Actually, it seems to me that the veneration of the sheikh by the dervishes is much stronger in Kurdistan than elsewhere in Inner Asia, something I also witnessed among the Qâderi. Only their strict loyalty to Islamic doctrine prevents them from talking of *zât* and *dun* incarnation.

If the first pillar of the Ahl-e Haqq faith is the knowledge of the cosmic hierarchy and its manifestation among mankind, the second one is the doctrine of successive lives (*dunâ dun*), considered in the old time as a secret, the unveiling of which could lead to death.³⁸ It is tempting to see the *haftan* as avatars of the Zoroastrian *ameshâspands*³⁹ (one of them being also of feminine gender), but the other side of the doctrine, that is their transmigrations into human existences, is totally absent from most of the ancient Iranian religions. On this matter again, Ahl-e Haqqism must be related to its own origins, that is, Islamic heterodoxies which shared these beliefs. There is no need to look for Buddhist or Hindu influences. In early Shia gnosis, the imâms are pre-eternal entities emanating from God's light, they are superior to the prophets but were present in each of them.⁴⁰ Besides this "the belief in some form of reincarnation is found in embryonic form in the ancient corpus of the Imâms" (ibid.: 110). In any case, in the primitive Shiism "one always feels the continuity with the Christian, Jewish, and even Mazdean tradition".⁴¹ If the Ahl-e Haqq gives the same impression, it is just because they are influenced by Shia and Sufism.

How the Ahl-e Haqq Define Themselves

I mentioned in the introduction that one of the aims of this paper was to put forth arguments for a balanced evaluation of Ahl-e Haqqism, since its non-Islamic aspects have been so much emphasized by scholars. In their defence, one must admit that their opinion partly has been shaped by the way some Ahl-e Haqq followers define themselves. Yet the issue of self-definition is far from clear, since the many groups belong to different cultures or social strata. In addition, times are changing and forcing them to modify their image.

³⁵ Khâjeddin: 94, Elâhi, 1975, p. 635.

³⁶ p. 47 s.

³⁷ Once a Ahl-e Haqq *pir* asked me about Hinduism, (a religion he did not recognize), then after a few explanations on the gods and their incarnation, he said, "so they say the same as us".)

³⁸ The importance of this dogma is attested by the considerable place it occupies as a narrative device in the Kalâm. For instance, it is told that Nasimi (the famous *horufî*) was sent to martyrdom by his *pir* because he had publicly revealed the secret of Ahl-e Haqq and debated with a mollâ.

³⁹ Safizâde, 1982, p. 23, Hamze'ee, p. 113.

⁴⁰ Amir Moezzi, pp. 41, 82.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Ahl-e Haqq are referred to by expressions or concepts such as *tâyefesân*, *yâresân*, 'Ali-Allâhi, Kâkâ'i (in Irak). Sheytânparast and Dâwudi are labels given by non-Ahl-e Haqq. Ahl-e Haqq call their faith a *din* or *mazhab* (religion), a *maslak* or *râh* (path), *reshte* (branch), *ferqe* (community), *â'in* (ritual), thus covering a wide spectrum extending from a distinct religion to an Islamic spiritual path or branch. This divergence reflects the contrast between rural and urban culture, a structure which accounts in similar ways for the differences between Alevi and Bektashi. Rural environment has favoured the preservation of ancient elements, the resistance to Islamic influences and the development of folkloric elements, not to mention deviations, whereas in urban and learned environments open to various religious expressions, the Sufi or Islamic dimension has prevailed. Up to a point, self-definition is conditioned by the religious environment: in Kurdistan, Ahl-e Haqq live among Sunnis who are hostile to them, and only in a few large cities like Kermânshâh can they meet other dervishes (from the Qâderi branch) with whom they may feel some affinities.⁴² Outside Kurdistan, they live in a Shii environment where the figure of 'Ali is omnipresent, and they can meet with all kinds of dervishes, some of them being close to them, like the Khâksar. It is therefore more natural for them to feel part of the Muslim society in the towns.

The claim to belong to a religion totally separate from Islam is rarely found at the present day, but when it is the case, one should be cautious about the meaning involved in the concept of religion. *Din* or *mazhab* differ in some respects from the Western concept of religion.⁴³ The problem for the Ahl-e Haqq who claim to belong to a separate religion would be that Islam does not recognize any religion after Muhammed. On the other hand, with all the Islamic elements it contains, it is impossible for them to pretend to be an age-old religion, even though in their homeland (Dâlâhu) they are often called Zoroastrians by Sunni neighbours. The term *Gurân* which designates an Ahl-e Haqq group is considered as being derived from *gabrân*: the Zoroastrians.

On the other hand, some followers themselves claim to be true Muslims. Khâjeddin quotes some of these claims collected during interviews. Their attitude could, of course, be that of fully converted Muslims (*chaspide*), or, it could be sheer dissimulation (*taqie*). Those who are Ahl-e Haqq by birth (*chekide*) never respect the Ramadan or perform *namâz*, which banishes them to the margins of Islam. Probably, the majority of the followers consider Ahl-e Haqqism as a particular branch of Shia Islam. The term 'Ali-Allâhi does not, as we have said, account for the Ahl-e Haqq belief in the divine successive manifestations, yet it is still much used by outsiders with pejorative connotations. Anyway, the Ahl-e Haqq feel themselves close to the 'Ali-Allâhi, Nusayri,⁴⁴ and particularly to the Cheltan (Qîrqlar) and Bektashis. All Ahl-e Haqq recent books state that the followers of this branch can be found in India, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Perhaps the Isma'ilis who are numerous in these countries were considered to be Ahl-e Haqq. All that we know is that Bâbâ Yâdegâr was sent to these countries to propagate his faith. These connections have never been docu-

⁴² In all my researches I have never come across any expression of hostility, disapproval or scorn between Ahl-e Haqq and Qâderi in spite of their essential differences. The fact that the Qâderis invoke 'Ali and the Imâms during their *zikr* is appreciated by the Ahl-e Haqq.

⁴³ Alqâsi uses also the expression *mazhab-e Ahl-e Haqq* (or *haqiqat*) as well as *din-e Gurân*; other terms are *â'in-e yâri* (*â'in*: tradition, liturgy; *yâr*: the beloved, God). While *din* can have the meaning of "religion" (Islam, Judaism), *mazhab* rather covers the concept of "confession" inside a "religion": *mazhab-e sonni*, *mazhab-e shii esnâ 'ashari*.

⁴⁴ Ahl-e Haqq know almost nothing about the Nusayri community, but the figure of Nusayr is part of their mythology. He appeared during Shâh Khoshin under the name of 'Abedin (as the *Kalâm* says). Nusayr proclaimed the divinity of 'Ali, a blasphemy for which 'Ali himself had to kill him. Yet, in his mercy, 'Ali resus-

mented, except by Alqâsi, who mentions the Baluchi Zikri as a variety of Ahl-e Haqq. This should be checked more carefully, but although there are similarities in form this does not mean that there has to be any connection between those two groups.

In a recent article in the Shii Encyclopaedia the Ahl-e Haqq are divided into three groups: Muslim Ahl-e Haqq, 'Ali Allâhi and Sheytânparast, the "devil worshippers". This quite provocative article was based on the claims of the Gurân Ahl-e Haqq before the 1979 Revolution.⁴⁵ Still recently several groups professed their devotion to Satan and wrote a manifest signed by numerous *seyyed*. At the last moment they understood that they were tying the noose around their own necks, and stopped the diffusion of this pamphlet before it reached the libraries. Some "regular" Ahl-e Haqq told me that it is really a piece of anthology.⁴⁶ But the most interesting is that they replied to Halm's article in the Encyclopedia Iranica with another one, which was published at the same time as an addendum,⁴⁷ and in addition with a whole book entitled *Ahl-e Haqq chi miguyad (What says the Ahl-e Haqq?)*. In the preface of this book the author, M. Valâ'i, addresses himself to the writers of the mentioned article and gives all the arguments he can to prove that the Ahl-e Haqq are nothing but good Muslims who even gave many martyrs to the Islamic revolution.⁴⁸

We may object that this is just *takie* "dissimulation", but it can also be the expression of the Islamic trend which, despite some scholar's' opinions, has always existed within Ahl-e Haqqism. There is no reason for accepting the statement of some scholars that a "reformist Islamic movement" was initiated by H. Ne'matollâh Jeyhunâbâdi (d. 1921), an author quoted in all the studies on Ahl-e Haqq.⁴⁹ A short glance at the treatise published by Edmonds shows that a Kâkâ'i from Iraq born around 1870 shares the auto-definition and the views expressed in 1963 in the *Borhân ol-haqq* of Ostâd Elâhi. Nevertheless, this book is viewed by some orientalis (such as Mir Hosseini) as a manifestation of Ahl-e Haqq reformism, although the majority of the Ahl-e Haqq and scholars (including the author mentioned above) always refer to it when they need clear data on Ahl-e Haqq doctrines and practices. Half of the references in Hamze'ee are taken from this author's and his father's work.

cited him. Again Nosayr proclaimed his faith and again 'Ali executed him. This was repeated four times. The Ahl-e Haqq quote this story to distinguish themselves from 'Ali Allâhi, saying that Nosayr's mistake was *holul*. Khâjeddin points to the fact that *shii gholov* is probably the only religion in which the leader himself rejects the belief of his followers (p. 95). A more subtle interpretation would be that this was the first lesson in *taqie*.

In any case, spiritual life and religious style of the Nosayri's are very different from that of the Ahl-e Haqq. In comparative religious studies, an anthropological approach recalls much more than a doctrinal one. Thus, comparing Ahl-e Haqq and Alevi, the general impression is that they share the same sensibility and religious experience, the same values and the same images of sainthood. There is no doubt that any Ahl-e Haqq would feel at ease among Alevis, and vice versa. The main difference between the two groups is the Alevi emphasis on the Twelve Imams and the place devoted to Muhammed, which, compared to the Ahl-e Haqq world-view, is much more Islamic. On the other hand, what could appear exotic to the Alevis is the constant reference to the cosmic hierarchy and the cyclicity of sacred history.

45 In those times, many Ahl-e Haqq defined themselves openly as 'Ali-Allâhi (Khâjeddin, p. 97) and had their own "propaganda centres" in Kermânshâh. With the Islamic regime, this label has become highly suspect.

46 Arguments for the rehabilitation of Satan are given by Alqâsi (1979, p. 51).

47 This article is not defensive, and only presents the dogmatic and ritual basis of Ahl-e Haqqism.

48 He says that this encyclopaedia article is a historical attack on the Ahl-e Haqq and equates it to racism and concludes that any book that is contrary to the Koran and the rules of Islam is rejected by the true Ahl-e Haqq (p. 13).

49 In the same vein is the claim that Hâj Ne'matollâh "broke the seal" (Mir Hosseini) by writing a Persian *Kalâm* accessible to the non-initiated. Although this work was not even published or diffused during his life time, it was accepted later as a canonical text in many Ahl-e Haqq circles, though he himself did not present it as a *Kalâm*.

Ahl-e Haqq and Sufism

The most common view is that Ahl-e Haqqism comes *after* Islam both historically and theologically. Historically, Ahl-e Haqqism is the last step in the unveiling of religion, which commenced with the cycle of the *shari'at* represented by Muhammed, developed in 'Ali as the *tariqat* cycle, was followed by the *ma'refat* cycle (Bohlul and the great Sufis), and culminated in the era of *haqiqat* proclaimed by Soltân Sehâk.⁵⁰ All the messengers of God adapted the law to the conditions of their time. Thus, the Muhammedan law (*shar'*) was amended by other divine apostles. In the same way, the divine manifestations following Soltân modified points of the ritual and clarified the doctrine. This is why there are some ritual divergences even between the Ahl-e Haqq *khânedâns*. The levels of gnosis have also another interpretation: that is, *shari'at* is compared to the shell and *haqiqat* to the fruit. The level of *haqq* is the ultimate one to which only the elite who have reached the station of God's proximity have access. The followers say that at this level the law and prescriptions are different. For instance, the aim of fasting is to get closer to God. Hence, one who already is in His presence does not need to fast any more. Statements of this kind may sound very pretentious, but they reflect the idea that the Muslims belong to the *shari'at* step, and the Sufis only to the *tariqat*, or at best to the *ma'refat* step, and if they want to go further they must become Ahl-e Haqq (*sarseporde*). A follower quoted by Khâjeddin expresses this idea in a concrete way: "The Sufi must first observe the Ramazan and pray five times a day, for two or three years, sometimes for twelve; when he then is steady in his faith, his *pir* allows him to be initiated in our path". This is the rule in principle among Khâksâr Shia dervishes.⁵¹

If the Ahl-e Haqq had been heretics or non-Muslim, the Qâderi or Ne'matollâhi would never have opened the doors of their *khânegâh* to them. Yet, according to the hierarchical steps of mysticism, this mark of hospitality is not reciprocal. The mentioned dervish says: "we never allow a Sufi to take part in our *jam* if he is not at the step of Truth, but we can go to their meetings". He adds: "we respect the Koran [...] our religion is Islam, the Twelve Imâm branch, but our ideas differ from yours [...] We are not a branch of *tasawwuf*, but the Sufis would like to be a branch of us". J. Afshâr, a Turkish dervish is even more explicit: "The Ahl-e Haqq are Muslims and Twelver Shias, respectful of all the principles (*osul*) of Islam and with their heart and soul they assume the *Sunna* of Mohammad and the Islamic prescriptions such as circumcision, marriage, ablutions, funeral prayers, etc."⁵²

Some Research Perspectives

According to the encyclopedist Dehkhodâ the Ahl-e Haqq are Twelver Shias and represent one of the seventeen (!) Sufi paths. This opinion is shared by many scholars and literate people in Iran. Very much has been said about Ahl-e Haqqism as a religious and mythological system. Yet, despite its profound Sufi or '*erfâni*' roots, there has been almost no research on this topic from the point of view of *tasawwuf*. This is due to the fact that Sufi studies are generally based on classical texts, on official discourses and doctrines which are almost non-existent among the Ahl-e Haqq.

⁵⁰ There is an absolute unanimity on the fact that the Ahl-e Haqq faith is the ultimate step of Islamic mysticism ('*erfân*'). See Alqâsi, 1979 (p. 12), Valâ'i (p. 19) who discusses also the different levels of *shari'at*, *tariqat*, etc. (p. 82s). This point is documented by the *Kalâm* (see Elâhi, 1975, p. 188; and Afshâr, 1977, p. 45).

⁵¹ See also Alqâsi, 1979, p. 7; and Chahârdehi (1990).

⁵² 1977, p. 111.

An anthropological or phenomenological approach is therefore required. The Western academic point of view, which has been based on written sources, should be modified since the most essential part of Sufi transmission and tradition is never written, discussed or even uttered. It is deduced from facts and anecdotes and implicitly expressed in behaviour. In the following I shall evoke some peculiarities of the Ahl-e Haqq way which I have found original and interesting to investigate.

The Cycle of Manifestations: Zât and Dun

One of the pillars of the Ahl-e Haqq system is the notion of *zât*, of essence or souls at a high level who manifest themselves in successive human lives. A close examination of this system shows that the seven archangels (*haftan*) and their different manifestations through history correspond to mystical types: Gabriel-Benyâmin is generally the founder of a spiritual movement (not necessarily a prophet), like Plato, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Ja'far Sâdeq. If Gabriel is the *pir* (the Alevi would say the *morshed*), Dâwud is the *dalil* (Alevi: *rahbar*), the guide who indicates the way. He manifests complete compassion and has the function of successor and intercessor, like Khezr, Imâm Rezâ, and Shams-i Tabriz. Another typical figure is Yaqiq, whose destiny is generally to be a martyr. He was 'Esmâ'il, Siâvash, John the Baptist, Imâm Hoseyn, and several Ahl-e Haqq saints who died for the cause like Yâdegâr, 'Âli Qalandar or Teymur I. The idea of the essence *zât* leads to strange paradoxes, among which is the belief that hierarchical rank is more important than function and achievements. Thus, Moses or even Muhammed, have a lower status than Qanbar or Salmân Fârs, who were the archangels Michael and Gabriel, even if the intensity of their manifestations looks very pale compared to that of those prophets.⁵³

How these ranks were attributed is another question: who decides who is who? The person himself or a consensus of believers? The Ahl-e Haqq religious society relies on a category of clear-sighted dervishes, the *didedârs*, those who have inner sight and who can identify the spiritual nature of beings. They may have played a role in this, at least to prevent any illuminated to pretend to be such or such an angel. We know nothing about the way these ranks were testified or acknowledged, but the question is too important to be ironically ignored. These ideas are still strong among Ahl-e Haqq but for almost one century nobody has been officially and unanimously recognised as a manifestation of an "essence".⁵⁴

If the attribution of *zât* remains a mystery, the question of the divine mission is sometimes put forth through very concrete events. The divine particle (*zarre-ye zât*), which can inhabit⁵⁵ a saint, and make of him a supreme *vali* above all human beings, is really "something" which comes and goes under the form of a bird (a white falcon) or a spark, in a way which is obvious only to the initiates. This reminds us of the Zoroastrian *farr-e izadi* (Hamze'ee notes it), and, to a lesser extent to the Jewish patriarch's blessing or the Sufi *baraka*. Some people retain this particle all their lives, others lose it. This was the case of king Jamshid, according to the tradition, who "was illuminated for a certain time", but then thrown into jail because he denied

⁵³ Alqâsi admits that the intensity may vary considerably, yet it does not seem to be taken into account by the followers (1979, p. 13)

⁵⁴ The last were Seyyed Brâke, Teymur and Hâjj Ne'matollâh. It seems that in the Sahne-Kermânshâh tradition, another concept prevailed, that of illumination (see below).

⁵⁵ That is a *zât mehmân* (see note 1) or *shâh mehmân*; one uses also the expression *tajalli-e zât* (or *haqq*) "illuminated by the essence (or the divine)".

his spiritual ambitions and became a normal man.⁵⁶ Aqâ Seyyed Ahmad (c. 1800), another *zât mehmân*, in moments of exaltation proclaimed he was the Truth, like Hallâj did. As a punishment for his pride he was not allowed to transmit his *zarre* to any of his forty sons, who were perfect dervishes. Instead, he had to give it to the son of his servant.

Manifestation and History

In the same line is the notion of *zohur*, manifestation or even parousia.⁵⁷ There are different levels of *zohur*: universal and apparent, or restricted and esoteric (*khâs*). Thus, a great saint, may archive the parousia according to his disciples, but this does not mean that he will put an end to History and establish God's realm on Earth. There are several stories of *zohur* which give the impression that the saint plays with its two levels.⁵⁸ The last of these messiahs was the Seyyed Mohammad Kelârdashti (Alamgir) who enjoyed the image of a king, with royal clothes, flags and so on.⁵⁹ The shâh arrested him, fearing a popular upheaval, but released him after he understood that his ambitions were only mystical. Teymur was not so lucky and was executed in Kermânshâh in 1865.⁶⁰ His movement, like all the others, is interpreted by contemporary Ahl-e Haqq as purely spiritual, even if he presents himself in his poems as an agitator, but it is much more probable that many followers believed that the Time had really come. Here, too, the convenient explanation would be that all these charismatic figures were just exalted millenarists, but if so, why is this story and its tragic "failure" repeated from generation to generation? The millenarist expectation could be the misunderstanding of common people, or the best way for the saints to motivate people, a spiritual pedagogy or a literary motif.⁶¹ A wise Ahl-e Haqq dervish drew my attention to the fact that the great *bâtendâr*, the Ahl-e Haqq seers, always commence their career with a great noisy show demonstration or agitation (*shuluq*), generally as a theatre play, in order to proclaim their mission, and to establish their authority and to give a warning to the people and a chance for them to repent. This is accompanied by a dualist perception of the world in which there is no progress without resistance and trials, no saints without enemies, no light without darkness,⁶² no grace without a price. The archetypal example is that of Imâm Hoseyn, though martyrdom is not the rule. This principle produces saints of a totally different style than the official Sufi sheikhs.

⁵⁶ According to some oral traditions he was condemned to death by the mollâs of Kermânshâh. Beik Baghban (p. 216) reports a short hagiography of him, without references.

⁵⁷ Another term is *dowrân-e bâqî*, the cycle of resurrection, a formula which can be understood also as the mystic state of subsistence (*baqâ*) coming after the stage of annihilation (*fanâ*).

⁵⁸ Perhaps like Jesus-Christ who cultivated ambiguity when he entered in Jerusalem acclaimed as a King of this world. The double meaning of *zohur* is clearly explained by Jesus addressing the Phariseans: "God's realm does not occurs as a fact one can observe. One cannot say: here it is or there it is, since God's realm is in you".

⁵⁹ Pictures are found in Chahârdehî, c. 1978. Apart from the pictures, this book, like all the publications of this author, must be taken very cautiously.

⁶⁰ Hamze'ee, pp. 140-1.

⁶¹ It is found in the poems of Sheykh Amir and Nowruz (Alqâsi, 1980, p. 46). A closely related theme is the announcement of the *zohur* at the end of time.

⁶² The *Shahnâme* speaks of the seven chiefs of darkness (*sardâr-e zolmâni*) as the negative reflection of the chiefs of light. The cosmic dualism of light and darkness could be a vestige of Zoroastrian philosophy, but there is no opposition in Ahl-e Haqq theology between spirit and body, as is found in Iranian dualism. In primitive Shiism, God created 75 armies of Light, but Ignorance wanted its armies too, and God created 75 armies for it.

Power

Another characteristics of Ahl-e Haqq thought is the integration of violence at the highest mystical level. The absolute saint can even kill and destroy, like Shâh Khoshin when he was awakened from his sleep. Bâbâ Nâ'us, who was a manifestation of the Essence, is said to have represented the divine attribute of wrath: he could annihilate entire villages on a simple pretext. Of course, there is always a wisdom in that, as in the story of Khezr, who kills the innocent child. The violence is present in the figure of Imâm 'Ali who killed many enemies of Islam, as well as in a Biblical prophet like Elias, but there is nothing of this sort in the Sufi traditions. It could be that in their past of persecutions, Ahl-e Haqq developed the idea of divine destruction as a response to their enemies. In the beginning of this century there were still dervishes who asked their *pir* Hâjj Ne'matollâh the permission to sing "mortal songs" directed towards their enemies.⁶³

In a milder form, rivalry or competition is an important factor totally integrated into the spiritual progress as a dynamic element. The story of Hacı Bektaş transforming himself into a dove attacked by Karaca Ahmet, and then into a lion, indicates that power belongs to the stronger and must be obtained by force, by ruse, or by merit, all means being, of course, only the expression of God's will. The *haftan* (the seven archangels) are hunters "equipped with bows and nets" who arrange spiritual "conspiracy"⁶⁴ and thus succeed in capturing the divine Essence. This principle of struggle for spiritual life (even between mystics) seems to reflect some rivalry between respectable saints. However, the initiated say that it is competition, not animosity.⁶⁵

Thus, power is an integral part of the Ahl-e Haqq religious view. Although it is not temporal and political, it has to be taken, kept and transmitted, if possible within the family. After Soltân, the spiritual authority was delegated to seven persons who more or less kept it to their descendants, in a way which froze the mystical Ahl-e Haqq stream despite the effort of some charismatic saints.⁶⁶ The system of *seyyed* and representatives of the original *pir* and *dalil* harmed Ahl-e Haqq spiritual life and ended in generating clashes, animosity and persecutions. In the beginning, the *khânedân* system did not prevent mystics who were not *seyyed* from displaying their charisma and from having disciples, like Teymur I and Teymur II. Some of them could even open new *khânedân* like 'Ali Qalandar or Shâh Ayyâz.

The first to suffer from the power of the *seyyeds* was probably Hâjj Ne'matollâh, though he was so respectful to the local religious authority that he left his village for several years. The *seyyeds* of the country and their partisans planned to kill him, but they feared him and abandoned the idea. After his death (1921) they threatened his son Nur 'Ali Elâhi who was only 26, but failed to kill him (*Asar ol-haqq*, no.1889). At the end of his life, he had perhaps a thousand disciples and supporters, many of them of non-Ahl-e Haqq origin. He was not a leader as some scholars present him, but he was respected if not accepted by all his disciples during his life-time.

⁶³ This song, *Donyâ fânian*, was sung at funerals, but outside this context it had mortal effects (see During, 1989, p. 349). Their leader did not allow it to be used for destructive purpose.

⁶⁴ See the story of the *haftan* arranging the weddings of Sheykh 'Isi and Khâtun Razbar in order to allow the supernatural birth of Soltân (Safizâde, 1981, p. 51s).

⁶⁵ According to oral traditions, a great saint robs the light of the clear-sighted (*didedâr*). That is, when the saint meets these people, their spiritual light vanishes and they lose their influence. Common people think that they are "light robbers". The truth is that those lights can only be seen at night, like candles, but when the sun is up, their light are no more perceptible.

⁶⁶ Since the *haftan* had no descendant, the *khânedân* were given or transmitted to the members of the second hierarchy, the *haftawâna*. Some say that the *haftawâna* were only intended to attract the followers in order to reinforce their power. This may be the reason why, among the Gurân, the *haftawâna* are considered as tenebrous beings, opposed to the *haftan*, although this view is in contradiction with the dogma.

Nevertheless, Ahl-e Haqq *seyyeds* managed to destroy his shrine⁶⁷ with the help of some local authorities, a gesture which provoked public protest by one of the most revolutionary âyâtollâhs.

A long time ago Elâhi had foretold the decline of the Ahl-e Haqq socio-religious system and the betrayal of the clerics. During the last 20-30 years, many things have changed: the secrets, once revealed, are no longer secret nor sacred, the archetypes have lost their power, the celestial hierarchy has withdrawn into the other world, the *tâyfesân* has blood on his hands, and the dervishes look for political support.

In these conditions, the legacy of a dozen Ahl-e Haqq spirituals, masters, sages and poets, now handed on by learned disciples, is no longer mystical, but rather cultural, if we can separate the two. The essence has maybe evaporated, but at the bottom of the alchemical pot remains the substance of an original humanism which is also the achievement of the elite of this religious community.

The Ahl-e Haqq Legacy: Towards an Original Humanism

The Ahl-e Haqq humanism is very similar to the Alevi ideology and perhaps to that of other similar communities. It relies on several characteristics rooted in the original religious practices and doctrines.

- *Social link and solidarity.* In Ahl-e Haqq devotion, the offering (of food *niâz*) is more important than ritual individual prayers. This fact implies the value accorded to conviviality, charity, and equality since all the *niâz* are distributed in a perfectly equal way.

- *Promotion of endogenic culture vs formal exogenic ritual.* The followers do not pray in Arabic, since, they say "God does not speak Arabic". Their devotion is that of the heart and of emotion and sentiments.

- This goes along with their *artistic taste* as expressed in poetry and music. Like Ali, Ahl-e Haqq play the sacred lute during the *jam*.⁶⁸

- *Tolerance and openness* to other religions. Several religions are integrated in the Ahl-e Haqq world view, thanks to the system of manifestations (*dunâ dun*): Benyâmin was the Mahdi, Ja'far Sâdeq, Jesus, Zoroaster, Abraham and Buddha. Even the Greek philosophers are manifestations of these essences.

- *This tolerance extends to culture:* Women occupy a high position in society compared to other Muslim societies. Many of them are mentioned in the holy books, and one among the seven angels and of the *haftawâna* appears always in a woman's clothes (*dun*).⁶⁹

Ahl-e Haqqism is not restricted to remote Kurdish populations, but has a universal dimension: therefore the *Kalâm* was adapted in Turkish and inspired the Persian *Shâhnâme-ye Haqiqat*. The links with other communities in other countries form part of the Ahl-e Haqq myth. This is to be seen in the story of the Cheltan who come from very strange places, including France (*farang*), and bear strange names. This mani-

67 The shrine was rebuilt, and, since no corpse could be found, it is now revered as a holy place even by the non-Ahl-e Haqq population of the region. Nearly ten years after these events, all the Ahl-e Haqq followers of what has sometimes been called "Hâji Ne'mat's *khânedân*" cut their moustaches in order to dissociate themselves from the Ahl-e Haqq community. This fact is reported by Mir-Hosseini, but should not be interpreted as reformism.

68 The *tanbur* has two strings, the highest being generally doubled. It is played by all the fingers of the right hand, not with a plectrum. These characteristics are also those of the west Anatolian ancient Alevi *sâz*, a similarity which attests cultural links between the Ahl-e Haqq and the Alevis, perhaps due to their Kurdish roots.

69 Nevertheless, there is no mention of any female essence among the other levels of the hierarchy.

feels itself concretely in the openness to foreigners, who are actually more warmly welcomed by them than by other Iranian Muslims.

-*Progressivism*. Perfectionism (*takamol*) is the key word of all Ahl-e Haqq literature and dogmas. Each being (mineral, vegetal, etc.) is carried upwards in a cosmic stream which culminates (for man only) in God. This philosophy echoes that of the great Safavi theosophers of the Mollâ Sadrâ school who professed the pre-eminence of existence over essence and the trans-substantial movement (*harekat-e jowhari*). It provides a dynamic vision of the world (balanced by the static structures of the sacred history, which repeats itself from era to era, from *dawr* to *dawr*). Ahl-e Haqq do not feel bound to their past like the Islamist, since the sacred “beginning” can always re-actualise itself in new manifestations and with new personalities.

- *Elitism* is part of the Ahl-e Haqq culture: they have the conviction that they stand above standard Islam, and belong to a kind of avant-garde. They possess the key of understanding of historical events, which permits them to interpret all contemporary events in a sometimes paradoxical way. For them, there is always a hidden meaning behind the appearances.

- This leads them to *subversion*. They never fear the law nor the blame: “support people’s blame, to support the blame is good” (*tana kish khâsa, bekishu ta’ne*) says Sheykh Amir in his famous verses chanted in opening the *jam*. They often like to show themselves as provocative, professing shocking beliefs or non-conformist practices. However, this subversion is never really political or mundane, even if they are persecuted. In spite of an “anti-establishment” tendency⁷⁰ which promoted their enthusiasm for the Revolution, unlike the Alevis, the Ahl-e Haqq never rebelled against authorities, even if the Qâjâr Government feared some upheavals. In modern Iran the Ahl-e Haqq have not taken a political stand, like the Alevi in Turkey. They just endeavour to remain on good terms with the Islamic Republic.

Bibliography

Awrang, M. and A. Khâdemi 1357/1978: *Kalâm-e Cheltanân*, Tehran.

Afshâr, J. 1356/ 1977: *Borhan-ol haqiqat*, Tehran.

— c. 1981: *Ahl-e haqq yâ Divân-e Qoshchi-oghli*, Tehran.

Afzali, S. Q. Sh.-E. c. 1975: *Daftar-e Romuz-e yârestân. Ganjine-ye Soltân Sehâk*, Tehran, (Râsti).

Alqâsi, M. 1358/1979: *‘A’ in-e Yâri*, Tehran.

— 1359/1980: *Andarz-e yâri (Ahl-e haqq)*, Tehran.

Amir Hayâtî A-Q. n. d.: *Nâdâ ol-haqq*, Tehran, (Ferdowsi).

Bâbâzâde, P. 1347/1968: *Hamâse-ye por shokuh-e Ahl-e Haqq Cheheltanân*, Tehran, (Derakhshân).

Beik-Baghdan, H. 1975: “Religion de vérité. Enquête de sociologie religieuse chez les Ahl-e Hakk d’Iran”, Thèse dactylographiée, Strasbourg.

Chahârdehi, N. c. 1978: *Khâksâr va Ahl-e haqq*, Tehran.

— 1369/1990: *Asrâr-e ferqe-ye Khâksâr-Ahl-e haqq*, Tehran, (Bek Farhang).

During, J. 1997: “Ahl-e haqq, Hierarchie cosmique et typologie spirituelle”, P. Lory ed., *Dictionnaire de l’ésotérisme*, Paris.

— 1997: “Le système des offrandes dans la tradition Ahl-e Haqq”, in B. Kellner-Heinkele ed., *Alevism in Turkey and Comparable Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East in the Past and Present*, Berlin.

⁷⁰ van Bruinessen, 1995, p. 132.

- 1992: "Les *dastgâhs* sacrés des Ahl-e haqq du Kurdistan. Approche comparative et procédés de transformation", in J. Elsner and G. Jähnichen eds., *Regionale maqâm-Traditionen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin.
- 1989: *Musique et Mystique dans les traditions de l'Iran*, Paris.
- Edmonds, C. J. 1957: *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, London.
- 1969: "The Beliefs and Practices of the Ahl-i Haqq of Iraq, *Iran* 7, 89-106.
- Elâhi, N.'A. 1354/1975: *Borhân ol-Haqq*, Tehran (1st ed. without commentaries, 1343/1965).
- 1358/1979 *Athâr ol-Haqq*, Tehran (vol II, 1992).
- 1966: *L'Esotérisme Kurde*, Paris.
- Gobineau, A. de 1922: *Trois ans en Asie*, 2 vols., Paris.
- Gramlich, R. 1965, 1976, 1981: *Die schiitischen Dervishorden Persiens*, 3 vols. Erster Teil: Die Affiliationen. Zweiter Teil: Glaube und Lehre. Dritter Teil: Brauchtum und Riten, Wiesbaden.
- Hamze'ee, M.-R. 1990: *The Yâresan, A Sociological, Historical and Religio-Historical Study of a Kurdish Community*, Berlin, K.Schwartz.
- Ivanow, W. 1948: *Satpanth. Indian Ismalism. An 'Ali allâhi Fragment*, Collectanae, vol. I, Leiden.
- 1953: *The Truth Worshippers of Kurdistan*, Leiden.
- Jeyhunâbâdi, Hâj Ne'matollâh 1966: *Shâh Nâma-ye haqiqat* (Le Livre des Rois de Vérité), M. Mokri éd., Tehran, (Bibliothèque Iranienne).
- 1363/1984: *Haqq ol-Haqâyeq (Shâhnâme-ye haqiqat)*, augmented by N. 'A. Elâhi, *Hâshie bar Haqq ol-Haqâyeq*, B. Elâhi éd., Tehran.
- Khâjeddin, S. M-'A. 1359/1980: *Sarsepordegân. Târikh va Sharh-e Aqâyed-e Dini o Adâb o Rosum-e Ahl-e Haqq*, Tehran (1st ed. 1349/1970).
- Minorsky, W. 1920, 1921: "Notes sur la secte des Ahl-e Haqq", *Revue du Monde Musulman* (1920: 20-97; 61-84; 1921: 204-302).
- Art. *Ahl-i hakk*, in *E.I.*
- Mir-Hosseini, Z. 1994: "Redefining the Truth: Ahl-i Haqq and the Islamic Republic of Iran", *BJMES* 21/2, 211-228.
- 1996: "Faith Ritual and Culture among the Ahl-i Haqq", Ph. Kreyenbroek and Chr. Allison eds., *Kurdish Culture and Identity*, London, pp. 111-134.
- 1994: "Inner Truth and Outer History: the Two Worlds of an Iranian Mystical Sect", Ahl-i Haqq of Kurdistan, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26/4, 267-85.
- Mokri, M. 1956: "Cinquante deux versets de Cheikh Amir en dialecte gûrânî", *JA*, Paris, pp. 391-422. Also in *Contribution scientifique aux études iraniennes*, Paris, 1970, pp. 199-230.
- 1961: "Le soufisme et la musique", in *Encyclopédie de la Musique Fasquelle*, Paris, vol. III, pp. 1015-1041.
- 1966: "Trad., intro. et comm. de Nur 'Ali Shâh Elâhi", *L'Esotérisme Kurde*, Paris.
- 1967: *Le chasseur de Dieu et le Mythe du Roi-Aigle (Dawra-y Dâmyâri)*, Wiesbaden.
- 1968b: *Le secret indiscible et la pierre noire en Perse (Dawra-y Wazâwar)*, Paris.
- 1974: "Le *kalâm* gourani sur le Cavalier au coursier gris, le dompteur du vent", *JA* 262, 47-93.
- 1974: "Le cycle des fidèles compagnons à l'époque de Buhlûl", Paris.
- 1977: "La grande assemblée des fidèles de vérité au tribunal sur le mont Zagros en Iran", (*Dawra-y Diwâna Gawra*), Paris.

- 1994: “Note sur la généalogie des fondateurs de la secte des fidèles de vérité (Ahl-i Haqq) d’après un manuscrit inédit de source sunnite”, *JA* 1, 37-110.
- Movâhed-Bashiri, D. 1357/1978: *Shenâkht-e râh-ravân-e ‘eshq-e ‘Ali*. “Ahl-e Haqq”, Tehran.
- Nikitine, B. 1956: *Les Kurdes*, Paris.
- Niknezhâd, S. K. ed. n. d.: *Divân-e Sheykh Amir* (facsimile of a manuscript).
- ed. 1352/1973: *Goftâr-e Khân Almâs*, Tehran.
- ed. c. 1352/1973: *Kalâmât-e Torki*, Tehran.
- Pittman, Ch. 1937: “The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq”, *The Moslem World* 27, 147-163.
- Safizâde, S. (Burâke’i) 1343/1964: *Bozorgân-e Yârestân*, Tehran (2nd ed. 1361/1982).
- 1360/1981: *Mashâhir-e Ahl-e Haqq*, Tehran.
- 1360/1981: *Pishbini-e kâni ‘Ilbegi-e Jaf*, Sanandaj, (Bahâr).
- 1361/1982: *Dowre-ye haftawâna*, Tehran.
- 1361/1982: *Nêveshtehâ-ye Parakande dar bâre-ye Yârestân*, Tehran.
- 1363/1984: *Dowre-ye Bohlul*, Tehran, (Tahuri).
- Stead, F. M. 1932: “The Ali-Ilâhi sect in Persia”, *The Moslem World* 22, 184-189.
- Suri, M. 1344/1965: *Sorudhâ-ye Dini-e Yârestân*, Tehran.
- Valâ’i, S. M. 1373/1994: *Ahl-e Haqq che miguyad?*, Tehran.
- van Bruinessen, M. 1978: *Agha, Sheykhs and State. On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*, Utrecht.
- 1991: “Haji Bektash, Sultan Sahak, Sh. Ahl-e Haqq Mina Sahib and Various Avatars of a Running Wall”, *Turcica* XXI-XXIII.
- 1995: “When Hacı Bektaş still bore the name of Sultan Sahak”, in G. Veinstein and Popovic eds., *Bektachiyya*, Paris, pp. 117-138.
- forthcoming: “A Kizilbash Community in Northern Iraq: the Shabak”.
- “Satan’s Psalmist” (unpublished paper).
- Weightman, S. C. R. 1964: “The Significance of the Kitâb Burhân-ul Haqq”, *Irân*, pp. 83-103.