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BAHA'I STUDIES BULLETIN

This Bulletin is primarily designed to facilitate communication between those among us engaged in Baha'i Studies. It is hoped that it may evolve into the Bulletin of an Association for the Study of the Babi and Baha'i Religions (or the like) and be befittingly published rather than photostatically reproduced.

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A TABLET OF MĪRZĀ HUSAYN CALĪ BAHĀ'U'LLĀH OF THE EARLY IRAQ PERIOD:
THE 'TABLET OF ALL FOOD' (LAWH-I KULL AL-TA^CAM).

To date very little attention has been given to Bahā'u'llāh's (1817-92) Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^Cam despite the very considerable light it throws on his state of mind and role within the Bābī community immediately prior to his withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan (1854-6). Oriental Bahā'ī writers have not commented on it in detail and western Bahā'ī scholars generally remain, in the absence of a full translation, unaware of its importance. The following introduction, commentary and full translation will, it is hoped, draw attention to this somewhat abstruse though fascinating work.

INTRODUCTION

1) The text

The Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^Cam is written in a grammatically loose Arabic "revelatory" style reminiscent of the Arabic of certain of the Bāb's later writings and has several times been printed. The text printed in volume 4 of the late ^CAbd al-Hamīd Ishraq Khāvarī's Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī (np.[Tehran] 129 Badī^C, pp. 265-276) is poorly edited. That in volume 2 of the same writer's Rahīq-i Makhtūm (np.[Tehran] 131 Badī^C pp. 416-426) is more reliable though errors, misreadings and omissions remain. A more satisfactory text is to be found (photostatically reproduced) in (the untitled) Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Private Publication (INBA MS) Vol 36 (np.[Tehran] c. 133 Badī^C, pp. 268-77). This latter text is reproduced below (pp. 18-27) and has generally been followed in the translation (pp. 26-37).

2) The historical context

By the summer of 1853 both Bahā'u'llāh and his half-brother Mīrzā Yahyā, Subh al-Azal (c. 1830-1912) had settled at Baghdad where, as at Kazimayn and Karbala a few Arab and Persian Bābīs resided. In view of the fact that Mīrzā Yahyā had been appointed the Bāb's successor (by the Bāb around spring 1850) and also in the light of the charismatic role adopted by Bahā'u'llāh, Baghdad became an important Bābī centre. Between 1853 and 1863 numerous individuals and groups of (largely) Iranian Bābīs visited Baghdad in order to pay homage to Mīrzā Yahyā or to visit Bahā'u'llāh—who maintained an extensive correspondence with the "people of the Bayān".

5.

After the execution of the Bāb in July 1850 the various Bābī communities in Iran and Iraq had split into numerous factions; certain of them turned to leading Bābīs who made exalted claims for themselves. The authority of Mīrzā Yahyā was by no means universally accepted or understood—even in Iraq in the 1850's. Rival Bābī factions existed in Iraq in the early 1850's and caused Bahā'u'llāh and Mīrzā Yahyā much concern. In the face of this widespread Bābī factionalism and despite his own latent leadership claims, it is important to note that Bahā'u'llāh, before his withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan, upheld the leadership role of his half-brother, acted as his leading representative and spoke of him in exalted terms. It was not until the late 1850's that many Bābīs, disillusioned with Mīrzā Yahyā's ineffective leadership, sought enlightenment direct from Bahā'u'llāh. Bahā'u'llāh did not begin to make explicit claims for himself until the time of his exile from Baghdad (1863) and did not directly challenge the authority of his half-brother until the mid-Adrianople (1866-7) period of his ministry. The Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^Cam at several points presupposes that, at least during 1853-4, Bahā'u'llāh championed the authority of Mīrzā Yahyā (see below). It contains passages that underline the sorry state of the Iraqi and wider Bābī communities and throws light on the reasons for his withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan.

3) The circumstances of writing and the recipient

Written in late 1853 or early 1854 (= 1270 AH) the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^Cam was addressed to the Bābī Hajjī Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Naraqī (d. Naraq c. 1298/9 AH = c. 1881 AD).¹ He had travelled to Iraq in the hope of meeting Mīrzā Yahyā and had asked him to write a commentary on Qur'ān 3:87 (see below). Apparently unimpressed with Mīrzā Yahyā's response (no longer extant?) he sought enlightenment from Bahā'u'llāh who wrote the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^Cam. On reading this work he became Bahā'u'llāh's ardent admirer and later, as a staunch Bahā'ī, received many letters from him.

4) The exegetical background (Qur'ān 3:87).

The Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^Cam is essentially a commentary on Qur'ān 3:87 in the Shī'ī—Sufi—Bābī tradition of esoteric exegesis;

1. Hajjī Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Hajjī Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī was a grandson of Mullā Ahmad Naraqī (an accomplished poet) and a great-grandson of Hajjī Mullā Mihdī Naraqī (the author of a work on the episode of Karbala entitled Muhtaq al-Qulūb). He was apparently converted to Bābism by a certain Mullā Ja'far who had met the Bāb in Kashan.

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلَ
عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ قُلْ فَاثُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ
فَاتْلَوْهَا إِنَّ كُتُمَ صَادِقِينَ.

"All food was lawful to the children of Israel (= Jacob) except what Israel made unlawful to himself (or, itself) before the Torah was revealed. Say: Bring the Torah and study it if you are upright persons" (3:87).

This verse is probably rooted in Genesis 32:32(3) which refers to the prohibition of the sciatic nerve after Jacob's (subsequently Israel's) wrestling with God at Peniel (see Gen. 32:23ff):

"Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, because He (God) touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew of the hip."

In its Qur'anic context however, it is expressive of the Prophet Muhammad's desire—in the light of the plethora of Jewish prohibitions concerning food and the need to define Islām as against Judaism—to free his community from the burden of excessive food restrictions. Qur'an 3:87 indicates that prohibitions concerning food were not imposed upon the Israelites before the Torah was revealed to Moses; except, that is, for a prohibition, not of divine origin, which Israel imposed on himself (see Gen 32:32(3)).¹ Abū'l-Ḥasan ibn Mattuyā al-Wahidī (d.1075 AD) in his Asbāb al-Nuzūl has explained the circumstances of the revelation of Qur'an 3:87 in the following manner (as summarized by M. Seale):

"Muhammad was confronted by some of his Jewish critics who contested the claim that he professed the faith of Abraham. They asserted that this could not be the case, seeing that he ate camel's meat and drank camel's milk, both forbidden in the Law. Muhammad replied that no such prohibition existed in Abraham's day, but they insisted that it dated as far back as Noah. The issue was settled by a quranic revelation [i.e. Qur'an 3:87 which]..made it clear that there were no food prohibitions before Moses, and therefore none in Abraham's day."²

In his Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am, Bahā'u'llāh, as indicated, was not concerned with expounding the letter or the outer circumstances of the revelation of Qur'an 3:87. Rather, he gave the key terms "food" (ta'am), "Israel" and the "children of Israel" a variety of non-literal meanings—his method of interpretation is reminiscent, for example, of that of Shaykh Muhyī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī (1165–1240) and, more directly, that of the Bāb. i.e. in his Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara (1843–4) and other later expository works. He expressed

1. I draw here on the article Ghidā' in EI², Vol. II, p.1061.

2. M. Seale, The Bible and the Qur'an (London 1978), p.111. See also, for example, Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār (Teheran n.d.), Vol. XII, pp.216–7 (section on Jacob).

his conviction that Qur'an 3:87 has an infinitude of subtle meanings and claimed that he could expound its mysteries from his own day until "the days find their consummation in al-mustaghāth" (= [abjad] 2001 of the Bābī era; the time of the eschatological consummation).

It is important, in attempting to understand the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am, to ask why Mirzā Kamāl al-Dīn might have specifically asked both Mirzā Yahyā and Bahā'u'llāh to explain Qur'an 3:87. Why, in other words, was this verse in particular of importance to Bābīs during the early 1850's? This question is not easy to answer though the following theory may be on the right lines.

Qur'an 3:87 was very likely quoted by an antinomian Bābī faction in justification of their free-thinking, libertine or gnostic stance. Elitist Bābī gnostics may have felt that this verse, non-literally interpreted, indicated that they might go beyond the constraints of Islāmic and Bābī moral and legal norms—i.e. allow themselves, as the 'true Israelites' (Bābīs), "all food" (freedom). Perhaps discouraged as a result of the Bāb's martyrdom, bewildered in the face of the mass of the Bāb's legalistic pronouncements and in view of his abrogation of the Islāmic law, such groups appear to have clustered around leading Bābīs who made exalted claims for themselves. A Bābī faction of this kind was probably known to Mirzā Kamāl al-Dīn who wanted, initially from Mirzā Yahyā, an authoritative interpretation of Qur'an 3:87 in the light of its antinomian interpretation—by free-thinking or extremist gnostic-type Bābīs. Whatever Mirzā Yahyā's interpretation of this verse might have been, Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am certainly condemns libertine or antinomian views of Bābism and counters extremist claims to leadership by upholding Mirzā Yahyā's authority. It contains passages in which the need to follow the laws of the Bāb is stressed and the moral laxity of libertine Bābīs censured; most notably the following lines:

"Let not the actions of those who have been spreading wickedness in the land veil you (Mirzā Kamāl al-Dīn). They falsely suppose that they are rightly guided. Nay! By the Lord of the Realm of Unknowing! They are liars and calumniators. The nature of that party (Bābī faction) is such that they should never (even) be allowed to eat barley in these days. How then, can they possibly be allowed to eat what God hath forbidden in the Book."

It appears then, that Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am presupposes an antinomian or extremist Bābī exegesis of Qur'an 3:87. Having thus speculated it is worth noting that the Bāb, in his early Bayān ʿIllatī Tahrīm

al-Maharim. ('Exposition of the Reason for the Prohibition of Forbidden Things') quotes Qur'an 3:87. This may add weight to the hypothesis that this verse was important in the context of issues surrounding Babi legalism and antinomianism. ¹.

5) Structure --Outline of Contents.

To perhaps be over analytic the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am exhibits the following general structure.

I. Prolegomenon

Heading in praise of God.

- a) In praise of God's power as active in the focal centres of Babi authority (leading Babis).
- b) In praise of God who continues to inspire Babi leaders.
- c) The mysterious operations of the (Divine) Light.

II. An Autobiographical Supplication

- a) Bahā'u'llāh confesses his lowliness.
- b) Bahā'u'llāh, in his deep anguish, confesses his failure to call upon God.
- c) Bahā'u'llāh confesses that he inadequately bore witness of God in the light of God's transcendence, eternality and essential unknowability.
- d) Bahā'u'llāh acknowledges God's one time providential care for him and his happy condition, alludes to his role as a leading Babi, and bemoans his more recent spiritual anguish.
- e) Bahā'u'llāh testifies to the impossibility of directly calling upon God (in His essence) yet acknowledges the necessity of his doing so in the light of His (God's) benefits and favours.
- f) Bahā'u'llāh again confesses his failure to call upon God and speaks of his being comforted as a result of his mystical experiences.

1. The Bāb's Bayān 'Illati Tahrim al-Maharim is contained in Teheran Bahā'i Archives MS 6006C, pp.87-9. In it the Bāb, responding to a question about certain categories of the 'forbidden degrees' (of marriage; see Qur'an 4:23), explains the origin of things permitted and things forbidden. God, he argues at the beginning of his reply, being supremely rich or independent of need, has allowed his creatures all that he created on earth; all that is, "except what Israel made unlawful for himself" (see Q. 3:87a). In line with the typological-allegorical explanation of verses relating to Israel in, for example, his Tafsir Surat al-Baqara, he presupposes that Israel (in Q. 3:87) is to be identified with Imam 'Alī who "did not forbid any soul anything except it made that thing unlawful for itself". This inasmuch as God created all things through the pre-existent reality of the first Shi'i Imam. Before this world came into being the souls of men, by their very nature, determined things permissible. But since they forgot them in this world God sent Messengers and the Book. Such, if I understand the text correctly, is the gist of the Bāb's (initial) argument.

III. Interpretation 1 : Address to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn and explanation of the significances of "food" (ta'am).

- a) Addressing Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Bahā'u'llāh explains that he had not previously desired to respond to questions posed by Babis but in his case will do so in view of his great faith.
- b) On the importance of Qur'an 3:87 and its infinite subtle meanings four of which will be expounded.
- c) On the significance of "food" (ta'am) relative to the various levels/ stations of existence-: Hahūt, Lahūt, Jabarūt, Malakūt and Nasūt.

IV. A Lamentation, address to contemporary unbelievers, and a prayer for patience.

- a) Bahā'u'llāh laments the fact that the Bāb is no longer alive to comfort him in his grief and wishes he were one forgotten.
- b) Bahā'u'llāh addresses the "concourse" of peoples asking them to comfort him and not conspire against him. He informs them of God's role in protecting him and prays to God for victory and patience.

V. Interpretation 2 : An address to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn and an explanation of the significance of Qur'an 3:87 (a).

- a) Bahā'u'llāh alludes to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn's faith status and acknowledges his power of understanding.
- b) Explanation of Qur'an 3:87 in terms of the centres of Babi authority and Babi law.
- c) On the need to follow the laws of the Bāb and the errors of a Babi faction.

VI. Interpretation 3 : An address to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn and a further explanation of the significance of Qur'an 3:87(a).

- a) Bahā'u'llāh further explains Qur'an 3:87(a) in Babi terms in view of Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn's being captivated by the true focal centres of Babi authority.
- b) In view of his favours upon Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Bahā'u'llāh asks him to render thanks unto God who has guided him aright.

VII. Lamentations made in the course of Bahā'u'llāh's informing Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn of his ability to set forth endless explanations of Qur'an 3:87 and of his informing him of his desire to withdraw.

- a) Bahā'u'llāh laments his sorry plight and underlines the extent of his patience and trust in God.
- b) Bahā'u'llāh informs Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn of his ability to give endless explanations to Qur'an 3:87 in the light of God's continuing guidance.
- c) A brief lament over the inability of the people to perceive the truth.
- d) Bahā'u'llāh informs Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn of his desire to withdraw in view of the wickedness of the people.

- e) Bahā'u'llāh laments the fact that Quddūs is no longer alive to comfort him and intercede on his behalf and calls upon God to give him patience.

VIII. Interpretation 4 : Further explanations of Qur'an 3:87(a)

- a) An explanation of key terms in Qur'an 3:87(a) in terms of the Islāmic dispensation.
b) An explanation of key terms in Qur'an 3:87(a) in terms of the centres of Bābī authority.

IX. Interpretation 5 : An address to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn and a further explanation of Qur'an 3:87 (a).

- a) In view of his ecstatic state Bahā'u'llāh informs Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn of his desire to expound Qur'an 3:87(a) still further.
b) An explanation of key terms in Qur'an 3:87(a) in a Bābī context.

X. On Bahā'u'llāh's power of exposition and his claim to naught but servitude.

- a) Bahā'u'llāh explains to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn that he could give still further interpretation to Qur'an 3:87 but refrains from doing so in the light of the limitations of men.
b) Bahā'u'llāh informs Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn that despite his revelation of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am he makes no exalted claim for himself.
c) A woe upon the people of falsehood/erring Bābīs.
d) A brief address to the "People of the Concurrence"

XI. A Lament and an address to the people of the 'realm of unknowing'.

- a) Bahā'u'llāh laments the fact that everything has been effaced from his memory as a result of the evil deeds of the people.
b) A brief address to the "People of the Realm of Unknowing".

XII. Conclusion

Bahā'u'llāh rounds off his discourse, reminds Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn that his efforts to regenerate the Bābī community led a "son of adultery" to conspire to kill him, and expresses his desire for death.

Concluding verse in praise of God.

6. A synopsis of Bahā'u'llāh's interpretations of key terms occurring in Qur'an 3: 87.

Apart from the significances Bahā'u'llāh gave to "food" (ta'am) relative to the various levels/ stations of existence (see below on III.c) he interpreted the key terms in Qur'an 3:87(a) in the following manner— the concrete referents in brackets are, of course, to some extent speculative (see the commentary below for details):

1. "Food" (ta'am) = "the essence of knowledge" (nafs al-cilm)
"Israel" = "the Primal Point" (nuqṭat al-ulyā) = the Bāb
"the children of Israel" = "he whom God..made a proof unto the people in these days" = Mīrzā Yahyā (?)
2. "Food" (ta'am) = "the bearer of the Cause" (sāhib al-amr) = Mīrzā Yahyā(?)
"Israel" = "the Primal Will" (al-mashiyya al-awwāliyya)
"the children of Israel" = all Bābīs captivated by the light of the "(Primal) Will from 1844 (1260 AH) up till the (eschatological) "meeting with God".
3. (a) "Food" (ta'am) = the (Islāmic) "Guardianship" (wilayat)
"Israel" = "the Point of the Furqān" (nuqṭat al-Furqān) = the Prophet Muhammad.
"the children of Israel" = God's "trustees" (ausiyā) = the Shī'ī Imāms who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad.
(b) "Food" (ta'am) = the Bāb / Bābī wilayat : this is implied]
"Israel" = a) "the Last Objective" (wiḥat al-ukhrā), "the Mystery of Endless Duration" (sirr al-samadāniyya) = Quddūs (?).
= b) "the Countenance of Light" (tal'at al-nūr), "the Isolated Manifestation" (mujarrad al-zuhūr), "the Temple of the Divine Unicity" (haykal al-ahadiyya) = Mīrzā Yahyā (?).
4. "Food" (ta'am) = "the ocean of the unseen (bahr al-ghayb) which is hidden in the Pages of Light (sahā'if al-nūr) and treasured up in the Inscribed Tablets (alwah al-mastūr)" = the power of the Bābī revelation / scriptures (?).
"Israel" = "the manifestation of the command" (nāẓir al-amr) in these days" = Mīrzā Yahyā (?)

"the children of Israel" = "the people of the Bayān" = the Bābīs.

In addition then, to the four explanation Bahā'u'llāh gave to "food" (ta^cām) in connection with the realms of Lahūt, Jabarūt, Malakūt and Nasūt (its meaning relative to the realm of Hāhūt being known only to God— see the commentary below) a further four significances were specifically given to this term. "Israel" is given six allegorical explanations and "the children of Israel" four.

7) The role of Bahā'u'llāh and allusions to Mīrzā Yahyā.

It will be evident from the above synopsis (6) that, at various points in his Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām Bahā'u'llāh appears to identify Mīrzā Yahyā -- as one-time head of the Bābī community --with each of the key terms occurring in Qur'ān 3:87(a). To modern Bahā'īs this might seem surprising or appear to be an inappropriate understanding of difficult expressions --on my own part. Elsewhere in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām however, there are fairly obvious allusions to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role. (see below) though their detection requires some knowledge of the manner in which the Bāb had referred to Mīrzā Yahyā and the way in which he was addressed by Bābīs in the 1850's. In this respect the following notes may be useful. ^{1.}

There is no doubt that the Bāb, around the spring of 1850 (if not a little earlier) appointed Mīrzā Yahyā his successor and addressed a number of letters (or "tablets", alwah) to him— Bahā'u'llāh and other leading Bābīs were informed of this appointment. Some of them are contained in Bahā'ī as well as Azalī collections of writings of the Bāb and a few of them have been published. ^{2.} Without going into details— I do not intend to attempt to discuss why the Bāb chose Mīrzā Yahyā to succeed him—it may first be noted that though the Bāb

1. In considering this issue it must be borne in mind that no objective and detailed study of the writings and role of Bahā'u'llāh and Mīrzā Yahyā during the early Iraq period has yet been carried out. Current Bahā'ī publications contain little or no information about the early Iraq period (1853-4; or indeed the following 5-6 years).
2. Refer, for example, Teheran Bahā'ī Archives MS 6007 C p.465ff; Qismati az alwah-i khatt-i Nuqta-yi Ulā wa Aqā Sayyid Husayn Kātib (n.p. [Teheran] n.d.); Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Private Publication, Vol. 64. pp.95-102; E.G. Browne [Ed], The Tārīkh-i-Jadīd. (Cambridge 1893), Appendix IV. p.420ff; H. Balyuzi, Edward Granville Browne and the Bahā'ī Faith (Oxford 1970), esp. p.33ff.

did not regard Mīrzā Yahyā as a major manifestation of divinity or refer to him as man yuzhiruhu'llāh ('Him whom God will make manifest'— the Bābī messiah figure) he did give him lofty titles and apply certain expressions in the well-known Hadīth Kumayl to him.

The Hadīth Kumayl is the record of a conversation which allegedly took place between ^cAlī b. Abū Tālib (d.661 A.D.), the first Shī'ī Imām and Kumayl ibn Ziyād one of his close companions. ^{1.} One version of it has it that Kumayl asked ^cAlī what constitutes al-haqīqa, "the truth" or "essential reality", and that ^cAlī, being repeatedly pressed to clarify his meaning, replied by means of five enigmatic utterances: al-haqīqa is, ^{2.}

- [1] كشف سجات الجلال من غير اشارة
"The unveiling of the splendours of the Divine Majesty without a sign."
- [2] محو الموهوم و صحو العلوم
"The effacement of vain imagining and the clarification of true knowledge".
- [3] هنك الشتر تغلبة السر
"The rendering of the veil through the mastery of the secret".
- [4] جذب الاحدية لصفة التوحيد
"The attraction of the Divine Unity through the attribute of the Divine Oneness".
- [5] نور اشرق من صبح الازل على هياكل التوحيد
"A Light (nūr) shone forth from the Morn of Eternity (subh al-azal) upon the temples of the Divine Oneness (hayakil al-tawhīd)."

In his (Persian) Dalā'il-i Sab^ca and other writings the Bāb specifically relates each of these five explanations of al-haqīqa with the first five years of his prophetic mission (that is, 1260—1265 A.H. = [presumably] Jan 22nd 1844—17th Nov 1849). ^{3.} Since Mīrzā Yahyā appears to have entered

1. On the Hadīth Kumayl see, for example, D.M. Donaldson, Al-Kumayl: A Companion of the Secret in The Muslim World, Vol.28 (1938), pp.249-57; Ishraq Khāvarī, Qāmūs-i Igān, Vol.3 (n.p. [Tehran] 128 Betc), p.
2. The Arabic version of the text cited here is taken from the Bāb's (Persian) Dalā'il-i Sab^ca (n.p. [Tehran] n.d.), p.57 (also cited, E.G. Browne, The Episode of the Bāb Vol.II. [Cambridge 1891], p.352. fn.1.).
3. Refer Dalā'il-i Sab^ca, p.57. cf. also, for example, Tafsīr Ayāt al-Nūr (in Cambridge [Browne Coll.] MS F.21 [item 27], pp.155-171), p.159f; Tafsīr Hadīth al-Haqīqa [= the Bāb's commentary on the Hadīth Kumayl in Tehran Bahā'ī Archives MS 6006C] pp.74-7.

into correspondance with the Bāb and risen to prominence during the fifth year of the Bāb's mission (1265 AH = 27th November 1848—17 November 1849) he came to be addressed in terms of the fifth clause of the Hadīth Kumayl, i.e. entitled Subh al-Azal (Per. Subh-i Azal); the fact that Mīrzā Yahyā was a native of the district of Nūr in Mazan-daran may also have inspired the Bāb to apply the fifth clause of this hadīth to him. In a number of his epistles the Bāb specifically refers to Mīrzā Yahyā as Ism Allāh al-Azal, "the Name of God, the Eternal" (or the like). His Wasīyyat Nāmih ("Testamentary Dispositions") for example, is addressed to " the Name of God, the Eternal " (Ya Ism al-Azal).¹ In certain other epistles Mīrzā Yahyā is designated al-thamara ("the fruit [of the Bayān])" and, among other things, al-Wahīd (= [abjad] 28 as is Yahyā).² After the Bāb's martyrdom many Bābīs understood Mīrzā Yahyā's role in the light of the Hadīth Kumayl. They referred to him as " His Eminence the Eternal " (Ḥadrāt-i Azal), " The Eternal Fruit " (Thamarat al-Azaliyya) and the "Sun of Eternity" (Shams-i Azaliyya) through whom the divine Light (Nūr) beamed forth upon the "Temples of the Divine Unity" (ḥayākil al-tawhīd) understood to mean leading Bābīs.³

Towards the end of his ministry the Bāb wrote to Bahā'u'llāh—through Mīrzā Yahyā and referring to him as " 238 " (= [abjad] Husayn ^cAlī ح = 8 + 3 = 60 + 5 = 10 + 0 = 50 + 8 = 70 + 3 = 30 + 5 = 10 [total] = 238) —instructing him to protect and take care of his half-brother.⁴ That Bahā'u'llāh was faithful to this instruction or initially supported his half-brother is referred to in a number of Bahā'u'llāh's writings. In the Sūrat al-Haykal (written in ^cAkkā around 1873) for example, Bahā'u'llāh mentions the protection he gave his half-brother and the high regard in which he was held by leading Bābīs (after the Bāb's martyrdom):

" Then remind them that We chose one [Mīrzā Yahyā] from amongst Our brethren [the Bābīs] and sprinkled upon him a dewdrop from the Pathomless Deep of the Ocean of Knowledge; then We clothed him in the robe of one of the [Divine] Names (ism min al-asma' = very probably al-azal) and elevated him to a station such as all rose up in praise of him. We preserved him from all manner of harm to the extent that even the powerful are

1. Wasīyyat Nāmih in Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Vol.64.p.95.
2. Refer, sources mentioned in fn. p. (above).
3. cf. for example, E.G.Browne (Ed), Kitāb-i-Nuqtat al-Kāf..p. trans., idem (Ed), The Tarīkh-i-Jadīd., Appendix II.p.374ff.
4. This epistle of the Bāb is contained in ^cIzziyya Khānum, Tanbīh al-Nā'imīn (n.p. n.d.), p.32. It is undoubtedly authentic—cf. Shoghi Effendi(trans.), The Dawnbreakers.. p.317 where it is referred to.

incapable."¹

This passage hints at Bahā'u'llāh's initial support of Mīrzā Yahyā. It bears witness to his loving protection of his half-brother before his departure for Iraqi Kurdistan.

The extent of Bahā'u'llāh's support of Mīrzā Yahyā is, it may now be noted, echoed at many points in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am. Among them are the following—see commentary below for details:

- a) I.a. Here the expression "Focal Centre [Countenance] of Eternality" (wiḥat al-azaliyya) may be an allusion to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role.
- b) I.b. This paragraph contains allusions to the Hadīth Kumayl and to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role. Yahyā appears to be referred to as the one who utters "unique eternal melodies" (taḡhaniyāt al-azaliyya al-wahdāniyya) and the "Light-filled Dove" (ḥamamat al-nuriyya).
- c) I.c. Here the references to the mysterious operations of the divine light (nūr; cf. the Hadīth Kumayl) may indicate that leading Bābīs partake of the light of the subh al-azal (Mīrzā Yahyā).
- d) II.f. Here Mīrzā Yahyā may be referred to as the " Dove of the Command " (ḥamamat al-amr) and the "Light-filled Bird" (warqā' al-nurā').
- e) VI.a. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that here Bahā'u'llāh, drawing on the Hadīth Kumayl, refers to Mīrzā Yahyā in exalted terms and as the "bearer of the Cause" (sahib al-amr). He appears to identify "food" (ta'am; Q. 3:87) with Mīrzā Yahyā in the light of the fact that Mīrza Kamāl al-Dīn has turned to or acknowledged his leadership role; that is, been " irradiated through the orient light of the radiance of the splendours of the Morn of Eternity (subh al-azal) whose lights have " filled the horizons", and captivated by the charm of the winning ways of the Light of Endless Duration (nūr al-samadiyya) whose traces have appeared upon the Temples of Irradiation" (ḥayākil al-Ishraq).
- f) VII.b. Here the reference to the "Countenance of Light" (tal'at al-nūr) which " in these days " beams forth may be an allusion to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role.
- g) IX.b. "Food" (ta'am) is here identified with the power of the Bābī revelation and; in all likelihood, with Yahyā's writings (—note the expression "pages of light" [sahā'if al-nūr]). This in the light of "Israel" being the "manifestation of the command" (mazhar al-amr; cf. sahib al-amr at VI.a .i.e. Mīrzā Yahyā ?) and the "children of Israel" the Bābīs.
- h) X.b. In the course of addressing the " people of the concourse " Bahā'u'llāh speaks of the "artistry of God" (san' allāh) which radiates forth from the "Lamp of Eternality" (sirāj al-azaliyya). Here, once

1. Bahā'u'llāh, Sūrat al-Haykal (in Āthar Qalam-i 'Alī Vol.4 [n.p. (Tehran) 125 Bādī^c] p.268ff), p. 275.

again, there appears to be allusion to Yahyā's leadership role.

- i) XII. In concluding his Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam Bahā'u'llāh appears to state that he draws his discourse to a close in the light of the fact that Mīrzā Yahyā (= the "Dove of Light", hamamat al-nūr) was revealing verses in Iraq (= the "land of Exhilaration", ard al-surūr ?).

Such are among the possible allusions to Mīrzā Yahyā and his role in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam. Taken individually they are admittedly highly speculative. Viewed collectively along with the interpretation given to key terms in Qur'ān 3:87 however, this line of interpretation does seem to make sense of some otherwise incomprehensible language. It could be argued that all these seeming references to Mīrzā Yahyā really refer to the Bāb or to Bahā'u'llāh himself. This though, is difficult to maintain especially since Bahā'u'llāh explicitly states — in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam (X.b.) — that he, at this time, claimed naught but servitude and used expressions derived from the fifth clause of the Hadīth Kumayl which were applied by the Bāb to his half-brother. At those points where Bahā'u'llāh refers to one who is, in his own day, the "bearer of the Cause" (sahīb al-amr) and "manifestation of the command" (mazhar al-amr) it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he is referring to Mīrzā Yahyā who, as noted, was recognised as the head of the Bābī community during the 1850's. As far as I am aware there is nothing in Bahā'u'llāh's writings or in the works of Bābī-Bahā'ī historians that contradicts the thesis that Bahā'u'llāh, before his departure for Iraqi Kurdistan, protected, exalted and referred to his half-brother in lofty terms. The Bāb after all, had appointed Mīrzā Yahyā to succeed him and it is untenable to maintain that Bahā'u'llāh immediately offered him no support or straightway denounced him as a 'covenant-breaker' (or whatever). The extreme tension and ultimate break between Bahā'u'llāh and Mīrzā Yahyā should not be read back into the early Iraq period of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry.

Finally, in this connection, I should like to draw attention to an interesting tablet of Bahā'u'llāh entitled Sūrat al-Kifāya ('The Surah of the Sufficiency').¹ Written in a style very similar

1. This writing of Bahā'u'llāh is contained (photostatically reproduced — it is not easy to read) in Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Private Publication (untitled), Vol. 36. pp. 277-80. None of the surveys of Bahā'u'llāh's writings make mention of this work.

to that of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam it contains a reply to a question about the " reality of knowledge" (haqq al-^cilm) addressed to a certain " letter of al-jūd" (harf al-jūd) and may well date from the Iraq period (1853-1863) of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry.¹ Within it are passages which could be interpreted in the light of Bahā'u'llāh's support of Mīrzā Yahyā. Apart, it seems, from referring to himself as the "Ant of Endless Duration" (nimlat al-samadiyya) which warbles forth with the verses of the divine unicity (bi-āyāt al-ahadiyya) and the "Hoopoe of Servitude in the Heaven of Manifest Justice" (hudhud al-^cubudiyya fī samā' al-^cadāl), one referred to as the " Countenance of Light" (tal^cat al-nūr) is represented as the source of true knowledge (haqq al-^cilm). Outside however, of a more detailed study of the writings of Bahā'u'llāh of the Iraq period, it is difficult to be certain whether or not this might be an allusion to Mīrzā Yahyā, or, as may well be the case, Bahā'u'llāh is applying to himself expressions once indicative of his half-brother in order to intimate his own claims.²

1. The dating of the Sūrat al-Kifāya depends in part on identifying the Bābī referred to as harf al-jūd. If it designates Aqā Muḥammad Jawād Qazvīnī, referred to by Bahā'u'llāh as ism-i jūd and ism Allāh al-jūd, then it may have been addressed to him when he visited Bahā'u'llāh in Baghdad around 1862. See E.G. Browne (Ed) Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion (Cambridge 1961), pp. ix, 15 ; Bahā'u'llāh, Kalimāt al-Firdawsīyya (in Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh [Haifa 1978], p. 74) Mazandar-ani, Asrār al-Athār, Vol. 3 ([Tehran] 28 Bādī^c), p. 56f. If, on the other hand the harf al-jūd signifies, for example, Jawād Khādim Arab Baghdādī al-Hattāb, this tablet may have been written much earlier.

2. The main text of the Sūrat al-Kifāya begins with an address to the people of al-Hā':

" O people of al-Hā' ! Hearken unto the melodies of the Crimson Leaf (waraqat al-hamrā') in the Paradise of the Realm of Unknowing (jannat al-^camā') for, He verily, is the Light of the Siniatic Temple (nūr haykal al-Sīnā) who acteth, on behalf of God, as a Manifest Light unto the worlds."

It may be going too far to suggest that Bahā'u'llāh is here alluding to Mīrzā Yahyā's role though it is worth noting that a few lines further on he refers to this tablet as " a dewdrop from the oceans of the Command" (rashh min abhar al-amr) and informs his readers that if they wish to attain the presence of the "Countenance of God" (tal^cat Allāh) it is necessary that they ascend up into the " etheric heaven" (? reading, samā' al-hawā') until they hear the "call of the 'Bird of the Almighty" (nidā' dik al-jabbār). Furthermore, addressing the "people of the earth", Bahā'u'llāh calls upon them to hearken unto the " Leaf of the Divine Ipseity" (waraqat al-huwiyya) from the "Tree of Eternality" (shajarat al-azaliyya) planted in the "Land of Endless Duration" (ard al-samadiyya) which warbles forth with captivating divine verses (bi-āyāt al-jazzabiyya al-uluhiyya). The "people of the Realm of Unknowing" (ahl al-^camā') are invited to dwell within the "Paradise of the Divine Unicity" (jannat al-ahadiyya) and the "Orchard of Eternality" (hadīqat al-azaliyya).

٢٧٣
 ان كان شخص من كف النور باذن من الله وكان يمشي في تدبيره ان
 وعلمت كل ما في نفسه ان كان شحدا بانما تفسير اخر على ان المراد
 فليظن ان هذا العسر هو العلم بالعلم من غير نقطة الا وهو من غير
 الذي جعله في نفسه من جهة بيان شدة الايام من الامور من غير
 امر اخر ونقطة الا وهو ان رقاؤه وعلمه من شحدا بان كل واحد في الكفاية
 من امره ونفسه من الارضية في الحكمة من العلم به ولقد سبق عليه
 ولا يحسب علمه الذين كانوا في ذلك من الامور من غير شحدا بان
 لا نور البصر فيهم كما يكون في نور من نور وان على شدة الفهم من كبر
 عدوانه ياكلو اشعير في تلك الايام فكيف يتغير عليهم ان يكونوا من امره
 في تلك الايام من غير شحدا بان انما يتولد من ان ياجها في علمه
 اذا استشهدت في شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة
 ونوره وهو استجدت بتجدد جذب حوازيه في العلم الذي يكتسب
 على ما كان الا شدة انما هو عرف بان الحضور من الصف من تلك الايام
 التي كانت في وسط العلم في وسط استساو في تفسيره من الازلية
 فمن صعب العلم ان يكون الامر في صف الامور من شدة شدة شدة
 الاولية في تعلق به بها كما من في استساو والارجح وما بينهما من شدة
 علماء الذين يستجدون بنا تلك شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة
 بحسب النور في العلم به وما كان به ان يظن احد ولكن ان شدة شدة

بشدة

٢٧٢
 ولقد ان ايات النور من سائر العدل وبهجهما تليذ دونه من ذلك الطعام
 يتغيرون به في سائر الامور كما يصنعون في حاجته الوجدية ارض
 الصفاة وطمعهم في الجبروت في وقتها من شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة
 الا باذن به ولكن يعملون الا بامر ولا يتحركون الا بحكمه كما وصفه الله في حقهم
 علماء كرمون ولا يستبقون بالقدر وهم بامرهم يعملون فيهما معا حتى كمال
 ارض النور في مقام الملكوت الذي تختص للعباد الذين لا يلهيهم التجارة ولا عجز زكوا
 الا ان اولئك اصحاب النور فيهم باذن به يعملون به في عيب ما امر من شدة
 وبهجهما معا حتى ان الله في ارض النور في صفاة استسنة لست في الفلحة
 التي سكرت ان اولادها الذكر فيها كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر
 لو كان نقطة الا في تلك الايام من شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة
 على ريشة في شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة شدة
 قبل تلك الايام من كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر
 ولا تقتر وبقا ولا تغفلوا في امرهم الا في عبادته بانه واية ولا يعجزن اياهم
 الا تلبسوا كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر
 وكفر في حسيه من فرغ في سائر البصر في العلم من شدة شدة شدة شدة
 لا يظنون الا على ظنونهم ولا يتحركون الا بما يؤيدهم حوازيه من كبر كبر
 كيف انتم لا تفكرون ولا تشعرون ان ياجها الا بين ان تظنوا ارباب
 انتم في عين شدة بطور وبقيا في كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر كبر

THE LAWH-I KULL AL-TA^{CA}M: PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION.

He is supremely powerful to accomplish what He willeth through a command on His part, and He is God, powerful over all things.

- I. a. Praise be to God Who hath caused Oceans of Light to surge in the Divine Fiery Water; excited the Letters of Manifestation in the Incomparable Point of the Realm of Unknowing; made the Hidden Mount revolve about the Firmament of Manifestation, the Concealed Self, the Focal Centre of Eternality; caused the Lordly Point to circle round the Most-Splendid, All-Enduring Ornament to the end that all might testify that He is the True One. No God is there save Him. He, verily, is the Incomparable, the One, the Eternal Who neither begetteth nor is begotton. He cannot be likened to any single thing and He, God, is the Majestic, the All-Compelling.
- b. Praise be to God Who hath caused the Fiery Depths to overflow from the Purified, Sanctified Temple; made the Beauteous Deep to sprinkle forth refined, glorious dewdrops; attracted the Countenances characterised by [the letter] al-Hā' through the unique, eternal melodies; enabled the Light-filled Dove to sing forth with warblings timeless and everlasting to the end that all might perceive that He is the True One. No God is there save Him, the Beneficent, the Almighty Who cannot be described by aught save His Essence or characterised by aught save His Eminence. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the Wrathful.
- c. And Praise be to God Who hath caused the Light to circle round the Mounts[?] of His Light; made the Light to revolve around the Spheres[?] of His Light; caused the Light to beam forth in the Loci of His Light; made the Light to be retained in the Repositories of His Light; caused the Light to scintillate through the impulses of His Light; made the Light to shine resplendent in the Countenances of His Light. Praise God, Praise God; worthy of praise is He Who establisheth His own worth for besides Him there is none other.
- II. a. So praised be Thou, O our God, O My God! Bereft of splendour am I until I invoke Thee through Thy sanctified verses; no glory have I until I confide in Thee through Thine intimate Letters; no radiance have I until I experience Thee through the secrets of Thy Might; no lustre have I until I observe Thee in the hidden retreats of Thy Light.

- b. So praised be Thou, O our God. O my God! We failed to invoke Thee at the moment which Thou madest me one saddened before the surging of the Deep Sea of Thy blissfulness and made me one grieved in the land nigh unto the billowing of the Fathomless Deep of Thy Joyousness, and at the moment which, in Thy House, Thou madest me one afflicted before the high courses of the Oceans of Thy Radiance.
- c. So praised be Thou, O our God. O my God! We failed to adequately bear witness unto Thee in that Thou hast testified before all things unto Thine Own Self, through Thine Own Self, for Thou, verily, art God. No God is there except Thee. Eternally Thou hast rested upon the Throne of Glory and hath everlastingly been concealed by the essence of Bounty and Justice. Eternally and everlastingly Thou wast hidden in the Image Thou hadst aforetime in the magnificence of Glory and Beauty. Not a single person is capable of fathom-ing the fullness of Thy Interiority and no soul is able to describe the substance of Thine Identity. Whenever the holy ones attempt to become acquaint-ed with Thee they subscribe to falsity in the holy court of the King of Thy Munificence and as often as those who confess Thy Unity attempt to characterise Thee they join partners with Thee at the intimate threshold of the Sovereign of Thy Might.
- d. So praised be Thou, O our God. O my God! Thou art the One who created me free of affliction in Thy dominions and provided for me in such wise that not an atom of misfortune befell me in Thy regions until Thou enabled me to recognise Thy Remembrance and inspired me as one acknowledging the truth for Thy sake, one obedient to His command as befits Thy Truth. And Thou art the One Who deposited in mine inmost essence a lamp from Thy Being by means of which Thy Self might become known. It beamed forth in Thy Kingdom and I found a haven in the court of Thy Might until oceans of sadness surged over me, a drop of which no soul could bear to drink. I wept to such an extent that the spirit wellnigh departed from my body. I was so filled with anxiety that the spiritual ones were sorely troubled. I was overcome with sorrow so as to grievously distress the illumined ones. And praise be to Thee, O my Beloved, on account of all that Thou madest to appear through Thy Power, ordained through Thy Will, decreed through Thy Judgement and determined through Thy power of Accomplishment for all these things are a proof of Thy Cause and a path unto the Sovereign of Thy Graciousness.

- e. So praise be to Thee, O our God. O my God! How can I call upon Thee through the wonders of Thy Remembrance when the path to the gnosis of the periphery of Thine Essence is cut off? And how can I not call upon Thee in that Thou didst not create me except for the remembrance of Thy benefits and the commemoration of Thy favours. So praise be to Thee! I, verily, stand before Thee unto Whom all bow down in adoration.
- f. So praise be to Thee, O our God. O my God! We failed to entreat Thee on those darkest of nights on which the Dove of the Command sang out on Mount Sinai from the right side of the Crimson Tree with the melodies of Thine Eternity or during those lengthy periods of gloom when the Light-filled Bird warbled beyond the veils of the realm of concealed Divinity with the warblings of Thy Perpetuity. This inasmuch as Thou raised me up unto the Heaven of the Unseen through the supremacy of the Sovereign of Thine Endless Permamency; made me to ascend unto the Horizon of Evident Attestation through the power of the King of Thy Divinity; caused me to be elevated unto the hidden retreats of Thy Oneness and ennobled me through the meeting with Thy Countenance such that I came to abide in Thy sanctuary and found a haven in Thine Expanse. I reclined upon cushions of Light through Thy bounty and rose up above the Heaven of Manifestation through Thy Munificence. Thereby did my heart find peace, my soul comfort, my being delight and my essence equanimity for thereby was I numbered among those who are assured through the meeting with their Lord.

III.a. O Thou glorious enquirer who art set aglow through the fire of the Friend! Be thou assured that from the very first day that God aided me through faith in Him and confirmation in His Cause it was not my desire to respond to the enquiries of any among the servants. But since I found in thy heart a fire from the Proof of God and a brand from the Light of the Manifestation of His Self the ocean of my affection hath surged and it is my wish to reply to thee through the power and might of God. My munificence overfloweth with the sprinklings of servitude in the Land of Manifestation in order that the breezes of Light might attract thee unto the summit of exhilaration and cause thee to attain that station which God hath decreed for thee in these days in which the winds of sorrow have encompassed me on all sides on account of that which the hands of the people have committed for they have calumniated me without proof or written testimony. O Lord! Cast patience upon me and make me to be victorious over the seditious people.

- b. They know that for this paradisaical verse, this choice fruit, divine song and heavenly pearl, are subtle meanings endless in their infinitude. I, by the grace and bounty of God, shall sprinkle upon thee something of the superabundance of its meanings that may serve as a memorial for the believers, a guiding light for the estranged and a stronghold for the agitated. Then bear thou witness that for "food" are diverse levels of meaning but it must suffice thee that We expound four of them.
- c. It signifieth the realm of the Throne of Hahūt, the Paradise of the Divine Oneness. None is capable of expounding even a letter of that verse in that Paradise. This inasmuch as that realm is that of the Mystery of Endless Duration, the Unique Sonship, the Incomparable Israelicity and the Resplendent Selfhood. Its exoteric aspect is the essence of its esoteric aspect and its esoteric aspect the essence of its exoteric aspect. It is inappropriate that anyone should attempt to elucidate a single letter of it. God however, will disclose (its mysteries) when He willeth unto whomsoever He willeth. And I, verily, in view of my injury and my misery am not informed of even a letter thereof since the matter cannot be related except on the part of God, its fashioner and its originator. So praise be to God, its creator and its life-giver, above that which those who confess the Unity of God assert. By He in Whose hand is my soul! If oceans of Light should surge forth in that realm all who are in the heavens and on earth would assuredly be drowned save a number of the Letters of Manifestation. In this respect God beareth sufficient witness as regards both me and thee.
- d. It signifieth the realm of the Paradise of Endless Duration, the Throne of Lahūt, the Snow-White Light. It is the realm of "He is He (Himself)" and there is none other save Him. This Paradise is allotted unto those servants who are established upon the Seat of Glory, who quaff liquid camphor nigh unto the All-Beauteous One and who recite the verses of Light in the Heaven of Manifest Justice. Thereby are they enraptured and from that "food" derive comfort.
- e. It signifieth the Paradise of the Divine Unicity, the Golden Land, the Depths of Jabarūt. It is the realm of "Thou art He [God] and He [God] is Thou" allotted to those servants who do not cry out except with the permission of God, who act according to His command and ever restrain themselves in accordance with His wisdom— just as God hath described them (in the Qur'ān) for they are the honoured servants (of) whom (it is written): "They speak not till He hath spoken; and they do His bidding" (21:27).

- f. It signifieth the Paradise of Justice, the Emerald Land, the Fathomless Deep of Malakūt allotted to those servants whom "neither traffic nor merchandise beguile from the remembrance of God" (Qur'ān 24:27) since they are the companions of the Light. They enter therein with the permission of God and find rest upon the carpet of the Almighty.
- g. It signifieth the realm of the Paradise of the Divine Bounty, the Crimson Land, the Golden Secret, the Snow-White Mystery and the Point of Nāsūt. In it are the proofs of the Remembrance greatest if you are of those who are informed.
- IV.a. Ah! Alas! Then Ah! Alas! If the Primal Point were (alive) in these days and witnessed my grief he would assuredly, at all times comfort me, treat me tenderly and fill me with ardent joy; at every moment would he strengthen me. So Ah! Alas! Would that I had died after him before these days or were one quite forgotten, consigned to oblivion.
- b. Say: O Thou Concourse! Comfort me; do not calumniate me nor hasten my affair for I am a servant who hath believed in God and His signs (or verses) and there doth not remain of my days except a few. God my Lord is sufficient protector against you since he sufficeth me and sufficeth he whom he desired aforetime. Sufficient is the careful account of His own Self. Lord! Pour out patience upon me and make me victorious over the disbelieving peoples who do not cry out except in accordance with their own delusions or move except as their idle fancies prompt them. Say: It is not for you to ask why (it is this way) for you neither comprehend nor understand.
- V.a. O Thou Faithful One! When the breezes of love spilled over from the right side of the Siniatic Tree you were turned to the right and to the left; in that place, in the Cave of Light, you were protected with the permission of God, the Exalted—and He is God, powerful over all things—and you acknowledged and understood all that We expounded for you. Then bear witness that We desire to expound further.
- b. Then know that the significance of "food" is the essence of knowledge; that is, all branches of learning. "Israel" signifieth the Primal Point and the "children of Israel" he whom God, on His part, made a Proof unto the people in these days. "Except what Israel made unlawful for itself (or

- himself)" that is, that which the Primal Point made unlawful for his elevated ones and his servants.
- c. Then bear witness that all that God decreed in the Book through His command and His power of interdiction is the truth about which there is no doubt. It is incumbent upon all to act in conformity therewith and to assent thereto. Let not the actions of those who have been spreading wickedness in the land veil you. They suppose that they are rightly guided. Nay! By the Lord of the Realm of Unknowing! They are liars and calumniators. The nature of that party is such that they should never be allowed to eat (even) barley in these days. How then, can they possibly be allowed to eat what God hath forbidden in the Book? So praised be He, praised be He above that which the associators assert.
- VI. a. O Thou Friend! Since you were irradiated through the orient light of the radiance of the splendours of the Morn of Eternity the lights of which (or, of whom) have filled the horizons and been captivated by the winning ways of the Light of Endless Duration the traces of which (or, of whom) have appeared upon the Temples of Irradiation, then know that the intention of "food" in these days in which the Sun shineth in the centre of Heaven and the Lamp of Eternality hath shed splendour upon the Luminary of the Realm of Unknowing, is none other than the Bearer of the Cause. "Israel" (in this connection) signifieth the Primal Will by means of which God created all who are in the heavens and on the earth and what is between them. The "children of Israel" are those servants who were captivated by the Light of that (Primal) Will in the "year sixty" (= 1260 AH = 1844 AD) and thereafter up till the "Day" on which He shall assemble the people before the Lord of the Worlds. God (desireth) not that anyone be oppressed but the people wrong their own selves. So know that the Light of God hath ever been established upon the Throne of Favour and will ever remain the like of what it was; though the people neither comprehend nor bear witness.
- b. Since We have lifted you up to the summit of the Mount of Light, elevated you to the peak of the Mount of Servitude in the Land of Exhilaration, enabled you to drink deep of the Water of the Divine Oneness from the Camphor Fount at the hand of the All-Beauteous Joseph, and given you rest in the Cradle of Tranquillity about which the Gladsome Ant sang forth, therein your spirit enlivened, your soul delighted and your essence gladdened, then thank God Who created you aforetime by a command on His part and made you to be numbered among those servants who are rightly guided through the verses of God.

- VII.a. Now, at this moment, I cease not to complain of my sorrow and anguish unto God for He (alone) acknowledgeth my anxiety, is aware of my plight and heareth my lamentation. By He Who hath made the Bird(s) of Light to soar in the Land of Manifestation! None is to be found as dejected as I for now do I dwell at the point of dust in obscure ignominy. There is no possessor of spirit in the Dominion (of God) except he weepeth over me to the degree that the heavens are wellnigh cleft asunder, the earth split open and the mountains levelled. This inasmuch as the Eye of Time hath not seen anyone as oppressed as I. And I, verily, have been patient and forbearing; have sat between the hands of God, trusted in Him and committed the affair unto Him perchance He might comfort me and protect me from all that the people have committed.
- b. Then know, O Kamāl, if I should expound that verse (of the Qur'ān [3:87]) from this day until the days find their consummation in al-mustaghāth (= [abjad] 2001) — which is the "Day" when the people will rise up before the Countenance of the Living One, the Wonderous— the extent to which God would favour me through His grace and bounty (with numerous explanations) could not be estimated. This inasmuch as the Mystery of the Divine Oneness hath been set in motion, the Ocean of Endless Duration hath surged and the Countenance of Light in the Heavens of the Realm of Unknowing hath beamed forth from the right side of the Tree of the Command in these days in which the Sun of Manifestation hath risen in unique manner though the people are neither cognisant of its magnitude nor mindful of its subtlety.
- c. So Ah! Alas! If they (the people) could but perceive the Proof would never be hidden from them nor the Favour be beyond their grasp. Say: It not for you (to ask) why (it is so) lest you join partners with God Who created you and aided you through a Light from before Him; if, that is, you are of those who (truly) believe.
- d. Give ear, O Kamāl ! to the voice of this lowly, this forsaken ant, that hath hid itself in its hole, and whose desire is to depart from your midst, and vanish from your sight, by reason of that which the hands of men have wrought. God, verily, hath been witness between Me and His servants. God it is Who beareth witness unto Me in all respects.
- e. So Ah! Alas! If the Last Point, the Countenance of My Love, Quddūs, were (alive) he would assuredly weep over my plight and would lament that which hath befallen me. And I, for my part, would at this moment beseech his

- eminence and supplicate his holiness that he would enable me to ascend unto the court of his might and recline on the cushion of his sanctity as I was wont to do in those days (now past) when I was free of the aforementioned misfortunes. O Lord! Cast patience upon Me and make me to be victorious over the transgressors.
- VIII.a. O Thou Faithful One! If you be of those who dwell in the Snow-White Forest, the Isle of al-Furqān, then know that "food" signifieth the Guardianship which God decreed for His people. The intention of "Israel" is (in this connection) the Point of al-Furqān and of the " children of Israel" His trustees (= the Imāms) who succeeded him (Muhammad) and by means of whom God recompenseth His righteous servants.
- b. And if you be of those who dwell in the Crimson Isle, the Orchard of the Bayān, then know that We abandon the "food" (of the Islāmic wilayat?) and desire the Primal Point (= the Bāb), the Pure Wine of the Divine Oneness in an elevated station. The intention of "Israel" (in this connection) is the Last Countenance (= Quddūs ?), the Mystery of Endless Duration in an elevated station and the Countenance of Light, the Isolated Manifestation, the Temple of the Divine Oneness (= Mīrzā Yahyā ?) in an elevated station whom the aggressors caused to be imprisoned in the land and concealed in the cities. So praised be God above that which the hands of the people commit. And God is not unaware of the actions of the people.
- IX.a. Since, at this moment, the fire of love surgeth in the heart of al-Bahā' (= Bahā'u'llāh) and the Dove of Servitude singeth in the Heaven of Concealed Divinity, the Hoopoe of Light warbleth in the midst of the atmospheres, the Siniatic Tree burneth of itself through the Fire of its self above the Ark of the Testimony beyond (Mount) Qāf, the Land of Realization, and the Ant of Servitude hideth in the Vale of the Divine Oneness in this "Night" through the mystery of fidelity, I desire to (further) expound that verse (of the Qur'ān [3:87]). This inasmuch as God hath, at this moment, informed me (about it) through His grace and bounty. And He, verily, is the Mighty, the Generous.
- b. Then bear witness that "food" signifieth the Ocean of the Unseen which is hidden in the Pages of Light and treasured up in the Inscribed Tablets. "Israel" signifieth the Manifestation of the Command in these days and the "children of Israel" the people of the Bayān. And that "food" was allowed for them (the Bābīs); that is, for all who desire to ascend unto the Heaven of Bounty and to drink of the Water of Manifestation (or Pure Water)

from that Cup, the Goblet of Servitude, which resembleth naught but a shadow in the land. I, however, ask God's forgiveness on account of that limitation. So praised be God, One worthy of praise and mighty beyond the attempts of the negligent to describe Him.

- X.a. So Ah! Alas! If there should surge upon me a sprinkling from the Ocean of (Divine) Authorization from the Sovereign of the Realm of Unknowing and King of Glory I would expound that verse (Qur'an 3:87) with the accents of the spiritual ones, the sanctified myriads, and the melodies of the enraptured ones, but since I have not inhaled the fragrance of realization or accomplishment then that which I have (already) set forth for you must suffice you for it is (sufficient) proof unto those who were, in the days of their Lord, given to remembrance.
- b. In view of the fact that you have sought and derived warmth from the Fire of Love and have found pleasure in the charm of the trace of ink in these apposite Tablets then bear witness and be assured that I have claimed naught but servitude to God, the True One. And God is my arbitrator against that which the people falsely allege.
- c. Say: 'Woe unto you on account of that which your hands have committed; hereafter shall you be brought before the Knower of that which is hidden and that which is manifest (see Qur'an 9:106b) and assuredly, in this respect, be questioned.'
- d. Say: 'O People of the Concourse! Be not astonished at the artistry of God, the mercy of God and His blessings upon you, if you are of those who are informed. Fear God and know that the artistry of God radiates forth in the image(s?) of the Lamp of Eternality among the artistry of the people. How is it that you neither consider (this) nor bear witness (unto it)?'
- XI. a. Then Ah! Alas! By He Who hath restrained(?) the dove of sorrow in the breast of al-Bahā' (= Bahā'u'llāh)! All that I have witnessed from the day on which I first drank the pure milk from the breast of my mother until this moment hath been effaced from my memory, in consequence of that which the hands of the people have committed. And God is aware of all that pertains to the people though they are not informed.
- b. Say: 'O People of the Realm of Unknowing! Issue forth from your habitations and present yourselves in the sanctum of Light, the manifest Cloud of Unknowing, the most-great House of God, as hath been decreed, with the permission of God, the Exalted. Who beareth witness, in the Tablet of the Heart.'

- XII. I, verily, conclude this discourse in that the Dove of Light sang forth aforetime at the moment of its(his) arrival in the Land of Exhilaration and warbled with the accents of the heart. And you know, O my beloved, that, for the sake of God, I desired authorization since patience, on account of my love for the unveiled beauty of God, had departed from me. And you know that a son of adultery willfully desired (to shed) my blood. Nay, by the presence of Thy Might! I do not pledge allegiance to him(?) either in secret or publicly. It is God (alone) Who causeth the day (of the spilling) of my blood to draw nigh and when my tears shall be sprinkled upon the dust. So, O would that this my day were the day (of the shedding) of my blood for my ardent desire is for the soil. So praised be God, One worthy of praise and Mighty, above that which the associators assert with respect to His description. And praise be to God, wonderful Lord of all the Worlds.

[The above translation is, at certain points, tentative in the extreme. I would be more than happy to receive corrections or critical comments. Two sections of the translation, it should be noted, are those made by Shoghi Effendi in his God Passes By (Bahā'i Publishing House, Wilmette Illinois 1979), p.118 — see VII.d. and XI.a (above)].

COMMENTARY

No full commentary on the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am will be attempted here. The following notes must serve, I hope, to clarify a few points of interest. As far as I am aware there are no comments by Bahā'u'llāh or 'Abd al-Bahā on this difficult text. Only further research into the Iraq period of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry will serve to confirm or disprove the following speculations.

I. a. This, the opening paragraph of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am, seems to me to have to do with God's continuing to guide and inspire leading Bābīs after the martyrdom of the Bāb. That God had excited the "Letters of Manifestation" (ahraf al-zuhūr) = leading Babis (?) in the "Incomparable Point of the Realm of Unknowing" (bi'l-nuqtat al-'amā'iyya al-fird-āniyya) = the Bāb (?) perhaps signifies that the Bāb, from the exalted heavenly realm, directs Bābī affairs through leading devotees. Thus, it

seems likely that by the "Firmament of Manifestation" (falak al-zuhūr), "Concealed Self" (nafs al-batūn) and "Focal centre of Eternality" (= 'Eternal Face/Countenance'; wijhat [wajh] al-azaliyya, n.b. azaliyya) about which the "Hidden Mount" (tūr al-ghaybiyya = the Siniatic heights of God's self-disclosure?) revolves alludes to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role (the phrase "Concealed Self" may allude to his virtual "occultation" during the early Iraq period). Bahā'u'llāh's own role is probably indicated in the words, "caused the Lordly Point (nuqtat al-rubūbiyya = the Bāb?) to circle round the Most-Splendid, all-Enduring Ornament (or 'archetype'/model; tarz al-abhā'iyya al-samadiyya; n.b. abhā'iyya = Bahā'u'llāh subject to divine guidance?)— the use of "all-Enduring" (samadiyya) may allude to Bahā'u'llāh's being seen as occupying the role Quddūs assumed during the Bāb's lifetime (i.e. coming to be seen as his leading representative) in the light of his half-brother's leadership role (cf. below on VI.a. VII.b. and VIII.b.). If these speculations be on the right lines then, in the opening paragraph of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām, Bahā'u'llāh, in allusive language, praises God for continuing to guide leading Bābīs, most notably Mīrzā Yahyā and Himself. This to end end that all may turn to God or become Bābīs.

That God "neither begetteth nor is begotton" (lam valid wa lam yulad) is a Qur'ānic expression (see Qur'an 112:3) originally designed to counter Christian incarnationalism.

I.b. It may be that this paragraph is to be understood in the light of Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role. In the opening lines there are allusions to the fifth clause of the Hadīth Kumayl. The "countenances characterised by [the letter] al-Hā" (cf. the opening lines of the Sūrat al-Kifāya quoted below) are probably the Bābīs whom God has enabled to be attracted by the "unique, eternal melodies" (tashaniyāt al-azaliyya al-wahdāniyya; n.b. azaliyya [cf. Yahyā's title Subh al-Azal] wahdāniyya [cf. Yahyā's title al-Wahid]); to Yahyā as the Bāb's successor(?). By the "Light-filled Dove" (hamāmat al-nūriyya; cf. the use of nūr in the fifth clause of the Hadīth Kumayl) is probably meant Mīrzā Yahyā (cf. II.f.; XII).

I.c. Here Bahā'u'llāh speaks of the mysterious operations of the Divine Light (nūr — this word occurring no less than 12 times). God he appears to indicate, had made His nūr available to leading Bābīs; divine guidance, in other words, is still available. If the repeated use of "light" (nūr) is inspired by the fifth clause of the Hadīth Kumayl (= "A nūr shone forth from the Morn of Eternity [subh al-azal]..) then there may again be allusion to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role.

II.a. Immediately following an account of the mysterious operations of the Divine Light Bahā'u'llāh underlines his own lowly estate by declaring that he is devoid of "splendour" (diyā'), "glory" (bahā'), "radiance" (sana') and "lustre" (shu'cā') until he turns to God and experiences Him through various means.

II.b. Having confessed his lowliness Bahā'u'llāh states that, in view of his sadness, grief and affliction, he had failed to call upon God. This in terms of his standing before or being face to face with the ever-present possibility of spiritual rapture.

II.c. Bahā'u'llāh continues to explain that he failed to adequately bear witness unto God in the light of His transcendence and unknowability. Even the exalted holy beings and those who confess God's unity fail in their attempts to know the ultimate Godhead.

II.d. Here Bahā'u'llāh states that, during the days before he became a Bābī, he was free of difficulties; not an "atom of misfortune" befell him until he recognised God's Remembrance (Dhikr = the Bāb). As a Bābī God then made him a means by which His "Self might become known" until "oceans of sadness" overcame him. Such was the will of God.

II.e. By means of rhetorical questions Bahā'u'llāh testifies to the impossibility of directly calling upon God — in His essence — yet acknowledges the necessity of his doing so in the light of God's benefits and favours.

II.f. Once again Bahā'u'llāh confesses his failure to call upon God; probably during the period following the martyrdom of the Bāb referred to as "those darkest of nights" and "those lengthy periods of gloom" when Mīrzā Yahyā was head of the Bābī community. Yahyā appears to be referred to as the "Dove of the Command" (hamāmat al-amr) which sings out from the Siniatic heights (cf. on I.a -b, above) with God's "eternal melodies" (bi-tashaniyāt azaliyyatūka; n.b. azaliyya) and the "Light-filled Bird" (hamāmat al-nūriyya) which warbles beyond the realm of "Concealed Divinity" (al-cāmā'). Possibly alluding to his own secret messianic aspirations — despite the role of Mīrzā Yahyā — Bahā'u'llāh underlines the exalted nature of his mystic experiences (in the 'Black Pit' [Sīyāh Chāl] in Tehran in late 1852?). Though he was extremely saddened by the condition of the Bābīs following the Bāb's martyrdom he found comfort through his close communion with God.

III.a. Addressing Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Bahā'u'llāh informs him that he had not previously desired to respond to questions posed by Bābīs but will enlighten him in view of his great faith. This despite the fact that he is much grieved and misrepresented by "the people" (see below on XII).

III.b. Qur'ān 3:87 is described in exalted terms and said to be possessed of an infinitude of subtle meanings. "Food" (ta^cam) has "diverse levels" of meaning four of which will (initially) be explained ;i.e. the meaning of "food" relative to the realms of (1) Lāhūt, (2) Jabarūt, (3) Malakūt and (4) Nāsūt— its meaning in Hāhūt being known only to God (see below).

At this point it may be noted that there are innumerable references in the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh to the hierarchy of metaphysical realms mentioned above. Well known in theosophical Sufism and given a variety of interpretations the following notes must suffice to give some idea of their meaning: ¹.

Hāhūt = the realm of the Divine Ipseity (huwīyya > huwa = "He is"); the inaccessible realm of the Divine Essence.

Lāhūt = the exalted realm of God's Self-disclosure; the transcendent realm of the Divine Epiphany.

Jabarūt = the realm of the Divine Omnipotence; the realm of the Divine Decrees or spiritual powers.

Malakūt = the realm of the Divine Sovereignty; the world of the Kingdom or sphere of the Angels (cf. Qur'ān 6:75;8:185, etc.).

Nāsūt = the realm of the Divine creation; the world of humanity.

In drawing on the hierarchy of the metaphysical realms in order to express something of the esoteric senses of the "food" (ta^cam) mentioned in Qur'ān 3:87 Bahā'u'llāh echoes a hermeneutic method adopted by the Bāb who frequently gave Qur'ānic verses, terms and letters of the alphabet a variety of senses in these realms. In his Tafsīr Sūrat al-^cAsr (Commentary on Sūra 103 of the Qur'ān) for example, he comments on the letter ayn (the 4th letter) as follows:

"Now as regards the fourth letter [of Sura 103] which is the letter ayn [ع]. It signifieth the sublimity of the Divine Unicity (culuw al-ahadiyya) in the realms of Lāhūt (maqāmāt al-lāhūt); the sublimity of the Divine Uniqueness (culuw al-wahidiyya) in the grades of Jabarūt (shu'unāt al-jabarūt); the sublimity of the Divine Mercy (culuw al-rahmaniyya) in the realms of the dominion (al-mulk) and Malakūt ; the sublimity of the Divine Perpetuity (culuw al-samad-

1. For further details see, for example, L. Gardet, art. ALAM in EI² Vol. 1. pp.350-2; A. Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam (University of North Carolina Press 1975), 270.

(āniyya) in that God revealed Himself (tajallā Allāh) unto all (and) in all in the realities of the "selves" (fī haqā'iq al-anfus) and the "horizons" (al-āfaq ; see Qur'ān 41:53) in the land of Nāsūt.¹

Furthermore, though not immediately apparent, Bahā'u'llāh (at III.e-f), in his initial comments on the meaning of "food", draws on other mystical configurations found in the writings of the Bāb. In particular the following correspondences may be diagrammatically expressed:

"REALMS"	"COLOURS"	"PARADISES" ("Attributes")
<u>Hāhūt</u>		<u>Oneness</u> (<u>jannat al-ahadiyya</u>)
[1] <u>Lāhūt</u>	<u>White</u> (<u>nūr al-baydā'</u>)	<u>Endless Duration</u> (<u>jannat al-samadiyya</u>)
[2] <u>Jabarūt</u>	<u>Yellow</u> (<u>ard al-safra'</u>)	<u>Uniqueness</u> (<u>jannat al-wahidiyya</u>)
[3] <u>Malakūt</u>	<u>Green</u> (<u>ard al-khadra'</u>)	<u>Justice</u> (<u>jannat al-^cadl</u>)
[4] <u>Nāsūt</u>	<u>Red</u> (<u>ard al-hamra'</u>)	<u>Bounty</u> (<u>jannat al-fadl</u>)

These correspondences are not accidental. The various expressions indicative of the four colours are set out according to the scheme adopted by the Bāb in his Persian Bayān (see III.10. IV.18. cf. VIII.5) and other writings. E.G. Browne had noted the Bāb's use of such 'correspondences' and drawn up the following chart: ².

Fire	Air	Earth	Water
White	Yellow	Green	Red

1. Tafsīr Sūrat al-Asr in Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Private Publication Vol. 69 (pp.21-119), p.41. See also for example, Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar (Commentary on Sūra of the Qur'ān); Camb. Univ. Lib. Browne Coll. MS. Or. F 10(7), fol. 19f.

2. Refer, E.G. Browne, Index of Chief Contents of the Persian Bayān in [idem. Ed.], Kitāb-i Nuqtatu'l-Kāf. (Leyden 1910), LXI.f.

"Heart" (<u>fū'ād</u>)	Spirit (<u>ruh</u>)	Soul (<u>nafs</u>)	Body (<u>jism</u>)
Diamond	Topaz	Emerald	Ruby
Creation	Provision	Life	Death

It should be clear then, that in his Lawn-i Kull al-Ta^cam, Bahā'u'llāh does not use esoteric terminology in an arbitrary fashion. The hierarchy of metaphysical realms are mentioned in classical order (not all authorities include Hāhūt: Lāhūt often expressing the Divine transcendence); loosely speaking from the world of God → the world of mankind. Corresponding, among other things, to the four elements, the four colours are set forth in accordance with the Bābī scheme—i.e. white → yellow → green → red. The various attributes associated with the succession of paradises (or gardens) bear some relation to the senses that might be attributed to the hierarchy of metaphysical realms as well, it seems (cf. below) to the Bābī hierarchy conceived to be —: God/ the Bāb (n.b. ahadiyya); Quddūs (n.b. Samadiyya); Mīrzā Yahyā (n.b. wahidiyya); Bahā'u'llāh (n.b. adl) and the believers (n.b. fadl).

Also worth noting is the fact that the terms Hāhūt and Lāhūt (expressive of the most elevated spiritual heights) are both in genitive relationship with the word "throne" (carsh) while the terms Jabarūt and Malakūt (expressive of the lower yet also heavenly realms) are both in genitive relationship with terms expressive of 'water', namely, tamātām (= [loosely] 'depths') and qamāqām (= [loosely] 'fathomless deep')—note also the rhyme. ¹. This may well be expressive of Qur'anic or mystical cosmology; the notion that the 'throne of God' rests upon the 'waters' (see, for example, Qur'an 11:7). The word carsh is linked with the upper divine realms and tamātām and qamāqām with the lower yet heavenly spheres where celestial "water" (cf. Gen 1; for the ancients the source of rain) was thought to be stored.

- Internal rhyme is a feature of many of Bahā'u'llāh writings. Certain alwāh are meant to be heard and have, when chanted in their original tongue, an hypnotic and Dhikr-type effect. Content is, at times, along with strict grammar, subordinate to the dhikr dimension. Western and some oriental critics of Bahā'u'llāh's grammar and style often fail to appreciate these facts. An English translation of, for example, the opening line of Bahā'u'llāh's Surat al-Khitāb (= ذكّر الله على هيئة النار في هيئة النور من سريرة الانسان بادن الرحمن قد كان في قطب الجنان بالحق مشهوراً) could not possibly reflect the rhythm of the Arabic (text from an unpublished MS).
- Note also that nasūt (in paragraph III.g) is in genitive relationship with "point" (nuqtat): thus, Throne, Waters, Point.

III.c In this paragraph, though Bahā'u'llāh relates the significance of "food" (ta^cam) to the "throne of Hāhūt" and "Paradise of the Divine Oneness" (jannat al-ahadiyya) he underlines the fact that the most exalted level of the mysteries of Qur'an 3:87 cannot be explained by anyone. In the realm or station (maqām) of the Divine Ipseity God alone is informed of its meanings. Not even Bahā'u'llāh himself—in view of his oppressed condition—is informed of a single letter of its hidden secrets. Few, it is made clear, could sustain the impact of the disclosure of the spiritual forces which exist in the most transcendent realm. Should "oceans of light" (abhar al-nūr) surge forth from the world of the Godhead all would be "drowned" save a number of exalted Bābīs (? = "Letters of Manifestation"; ahraf al-zuhūr).

When Bahā'u'llāh states that the realm or station (maqām) of the "Paradise of the Divine Oneness" is that of the (loosely) "Unique Sonship" (ibniyyat al-ahadiyya), the "Incomparable Israelicity" (Isrā'iliyyat al-firdāniyya) and "Resplendent Selfhood" (nafsāniyyat al-lama^caniyya) he may be suggesting that the unfathomable archetypes of the mysteries of Qur'an 3:87 (note the use of three of the key terms in this verse [ibn = son > banī the oblique plural, banī Isrā'il = "children/sons of Israel"; Isrā'il and nafs = 'self' cf. nafsihi = "his self"] in relative adjectival form in construct state with similar forms expressive of God's singleness and resplendence) exist in this lofty sphere. Here the exoteric (zāhir) and esoteric (bātin) aspects of Qur'an 3:87 (? — or perhaps this transcendent realm) are one and the same. In the exalted world of the Divinity there is no 'exteriority' and no 'interiority'. Such 'limitations' are transcended.

III.d. The "Paradise of Endless Duration" (jannat al-samadiyya) is here described as the realm or station (maqām) of "He [God] is He [God, Himself]" (هو هو; see further on III.e. below). It is appropriate, as this expression indicates, that the highest 'knowable realm' is that in which nothing but God Himself is disclosed or truly existent; all things being 'subsumed' in God' and all 'stations' expressive of His glory. The realm of Lāhūt, it might be deduced, is the most lofty sphere occupied by God's divine Manifestations and chosen ones. Indeed, the exalted inhabitants of this realm are those who are established upon the "Seat of Glory" (kursi al-jalāl). Allusion is made to Qur'an 76:5 when it is said that they drink "liquid camphor" (mā' al-kāfūr) nigh unto the "All-Beauteous One" (al-jamāl). ¹.

¹. cf. Bahā'u'llāh, Haft Wādī in Āthār-i Qalam-i Ā'la Vol. III (n.p. [Tehran] 121 Badī^c) p. 130 where Qur'an 76:5 is quoted in connection with the secrets of the 'seventh valley' (faqr-i haqiqi wa fanā' asli).

III.e. The "Paradise of the Divine Unicity" (jannat al-wāhidiyya) is described as the realm or station (maqām) of "Thou art He [God] and He [God] is Thou" (أَنْتَ هُوَ وَهُوَ أَنْتَ). This, in other words is the realm of the affirmation of Divinity on the part of exalted beings one level below that of the realm of the claim of identity with God beyond duality. (that spoken of in III.d.) The phrases "He is He" (هُوَ هُوَ see III.d.) and "Thou art He and He is Thou" (أَنْتَ هُوَ وَهُوَ أَنْتَ in III.e.) form part of certain Shī'ī traditions (ahādīth) indicative of the exalted status or divinity of the Prophet Muhammad and the Imāms. Such traditions were frequently quoted by the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh. In writings of the Iraq and later periods Bahā'u'llāh quotes them in connection with the exalted claims of the Messengers or Manifestations of God. He argues that the great Prophets claim Divinity but not identity with the absolute unknowable essence of God since they also affirm their humanity or distinguish themselves from the absolute Godhead. Explaining the mysteries of the "City of Unity" (madīnat al-tawhīd) in his Jawāhir al-Asrār (late 1850's) he, at one point, writes:

"And this is the station (maqām) which hath been mentioned in the tradition (hadīth), "I, verily am He [God] and He [God] is I [Myself]" except that He is [what] He [is] and I [am what] I [am] (أَنَا هُوَ وَهُوَ أَنَا هُوَ هُوَ أَنَا أَنَا). And if, in that realm (maqām), the 'Sealed Temple' (haykal al-khatm = the Prophet Muhammad?) should say, "I verily, am the Point of Origin" (nuqtat al-badā') he, assuredly, speaketh the truth. And if he should say, "I, verily, am other than that" this likewise is a certain truth. And if he should say, "I verily, am the Lord of the Dominion and the Kingdom" (sahib al-mulk wa'l-malakūt) or "the King of Kings" (malik al-mulūk) or "the Sovereign of the Divine Realm" (sultan al-jabarūt) or (I am) Muhammad or 'Alī or their progeny' or aught else such is undoubtedly confirmed on the part of God..." 2.

A similar passage is contained in Bahā'u'llāh's Kitāb-i Iqān (written between 1858 and 1862). After underlining the unknowability of the essence of God and stressing that His divine Manifestations represent Him in all respects— it being impossible to relate to God independently of them—

1. For a note on the source of such traditions see, for example, Ishraq Khavarī, Qamus-i Iqān Vol.1. (n.p. [Tehran] 127 Badī^c), p.166f. and Vol.4 (n.p. [Tehran] 128 Badī^c), pp.1802-3.
2. Bahā'u'llāh, Jawāhir al-Asrār in Āthār Qalam-i A'clā Vol.III (n.p. [Tehran] 121 Badī^c), pp. 35-6.

he writes:

"..They [the messengers or manifestations of God] are the Treasuries of divine knowledge, and the Repositories of celestial wisdom. Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed a light that can never fade. Even as He hath said: "There is no distinction whatsoever between Thee and Them; except that they are Thy servants, and are created of Thee." This is the significance of the tradition: "I am He, Himself, and He is I, myself" (أَنَا هُوَ وَهُوَ أَنَا)." 1.

Again, responding to criticisms surrounding his claim to Divinity in his Lawh-i Shaykh.. (Ibn-i Dhi'b; c.1891), he writes:

"Men have failed to perceive Our purpose in the references We have made to Divinity (أَلُوهِت) and Godhood (بَدِيَّت). Were they to apprehend it, they would arise from their places and cry out: "We verily, ask pardon of God!" The Seal of the Prophets [Muhammad].. saith: "Manifold are Our relationships with God. At one time, We are He Himself, and He is We Ourselves. At another He is that He is, and We are that We are" (لَمَّا مَعَ اللَّهِ حَالَاتٍ نَحْنُ فِيهَا هُوَ وَهُوَ نَحْنُ وَهُوَ هُوَ وَنَحْنُ نَحْنُ).

The "Paradise of the Divine Unicity" (jannat al-wāhidiyya) and world of Jabarūt is then, the realm of the affirmation of Divinity. It is appropriate that it is allotted to exalted believers who do nothing save at God's bidding for they are manifestations of "Thou art He and He is Thou" described in Qur'ān 21:27. 3.

III.f. That "Paradise of Justice" (jannat al-^cadl) is allotted to those believers whom nothing distracts from the remembrance of God (see Qur'ān 24:27). As "companions of the Light" (ashāb al-nūr) they find rest upon the "carpet [or expanse?] of the Almighty" (bisāṭ al-^cizz) in the realm of Malakūt. 4.

III.g. What is here, relative to the "Paradise of the Divine Bounty" (jannat al-fadl), meant by the expressions "the Golden Secret" (sirr al-safrā'), "the Snow-White Mystery" (mustasirr al-baydā') and "Point of Nasūt" (nuqtat al-nasūt) is not clear. It is possible that the first two of these expressions allude to leading Bābīs who represent the Bāb on earth (the Bāb being alluded to as the nuqtat al-nasūt; note the use of the colours

1. Bahā'u'llāh, Kitāb-i Iqān (NSA of the Bahā'is of Germany 1980), p.75; trans. Shoghi Effendi, The Kitāb-i-Iqān (London 1961), p.65.
2. Bahā'u'llāh, Lawh-i..Shaykh.. (n.p. n.d.), pp. 51-2; trans. Shoghi Effendi, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (Wilmette 1971), p.43.
3. cf. Bahā'u'llāh's Chahār Wadī (in Āthār-i Qalam-i A'clā, Vol.III) p.147 where Qur'ān 21:27 is also quoted.
4. cf. Bahā'u'llāh; ibid., p.146 (Qur'ān 24:27 quoted).

yellow and white used in connection with the higher realms of Jabarūt and Lahūt). Alternatively, all three expressions may simply indicate that the forces of the higher worlds are operative in the human world. Thus the statement that the "proofs [or 'guides' ?] of the Remembrance" (adillā' al-dhikr; dhikr= the Bāb ?) are greatest (akbar) therein.

IV.a. In this paragraph Bahā'u'llāh laments the fact that the Bāb, referred to as the "Primal Point" (nuqtat al-ūlā; the spiritual source and locus of being), is no longer alive to comfort him (see the parallel lament over the absence of Quddūs to comfort him, paragraph VII.e.). When he writes, " Would that I had died after him [i.e. along with the Bāb] before these days or were one quite forgotten, consigned to oblivion" he draws on Qur'an 19:22 (the virgin Mary's lament over the birth of her fatherless child, Jesus).

IV.b. Here Bahā'u'llāh addresses the " Concourse" (most likely his fellow Bābīs) calling upon them not to falsely accuse him, acknowledge that he claims naught but servitude, and be conscious of the fewness of his days (see further X.b. and XII). God protects him as he protected others (more specifically the Bāb ?) before him and bears witness to the truth of his standing within the Bābī community. It is not for the ignorant (among the Bābīs ?) to attempt to question his motives. or determine God's will.

In this paragraph we find hints of opposition to the efforts of Bahā'u'llāh to regenerate the Bābī community (from other Bābīs) during the early Baghdad period. Apart from what will be said below in this connection attention may at this point be drawn to the following words of Shoghi Effendi—probably based on the Tārīkh-i Nabīl (Vol. II) and expressive of opposition to Bahā'u'llāh during his first year in Iraq :

" A clandestine opposition, whose aim was to nullify every effort exerted, and frustrate every design conceived, by Bahā'u'llāh for the rehabilitation of a distracted [Bābī] community, could now be clearly discerned. Insinuations, whose purpose was to sow the seeds of doubt and suspicion and to represent him as a usurper, as a subverter of the laws instituted by the Bāb, and the wrecker of His Cause, were being incessantly circulated. His Epistles, interpretations, invocations and commentaries were being covertly and indirectly criticised, challenged and misrepresented. An attempt to injure his person was even set afoot [see XII below] but failed to materialize." 1.

1. Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By (Wilmette Illinois, 1979), p. 117.

V.a. In this paragraph Bahā'u'llāh, addressing Mirza Kamāl al-Dīn, acknowledges his steadfastness— despite his being tested— and in the light of his power of understanding, informs him of his desire to expound Qur'an 3:87 still further. He draws on abstruse Siniatic imagery rooted in the Qur'an and much developed in many of his own and the Bāb's writings and alludes to certain verses of the (Qur'anic) Sūra of the Cave (18: 17-18).

It is difficult to understand what Bahā'u'llāh intended by the words, " When the breezes of love (arvāh al-muhabba) spilled over from the right-side of the Siniatic Tree (shajarat al-tūr) you [Mirza Kamāl al-Dīn] were turned [or 'he/it turned you' : yucallibuka; cf. 'We turned them' nuqallibuhum in Qur'an 18:18a] to the right and to the left" (or ' on [your] right-side and on your left'; dhāt al-yamīn wa dhāt al-shimāl, see Qur'an 18:18a). It may be that Bahā'u'llāh refers to himself as the one from whom " breezes of love" (= the inspired words of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am ?) spilled over from the Siniatic-Tree (= Bahā'u'llāh ? ; the phrase " right side" yamīn is, in this connection, an allusion to the side of the Mount (tūr) from which God called out to Moses, see Qur'an 19:52f, etc., cf. Exodus 3:1) turning him to the right and to the left (= testing the extent of his faith by revealing divinely inspired verses despite Mirza Yahyā's leadership role?). He remained in the "Cave of Light" (kahf al-nūr ; steadfast in faith ?) by God's leave. Alternatively this whole paragraph may allude to the fact that Mirza Kamāl al-Dīn remained faithful to Mirza Yahyā (= the Siniatic Tree) from whom he had been denied access and received a disappointing commentary on Qur'an 3:87. He, in other words, remained faithful to Bābism (was protected in the "Cave of Light") despite being tested in faith (= " turned to the right side and to the left "). That, whatever, the significance of this difficult paragraph, the allusions to Qur'an 18:17-18 have to do with Mirza Kamāl al-Dīn's being tested in faith and remaining steadfast is clear. This inasmuch as the story of the 'Companions of the Cave' has (see Qur'an 18: 18:13ff, esp. 18: 13-14 and 17b) to do with steadfastness in the true path under difficult circumstances and was understood by Bahā'u'llāh on these lines. In his Chahār Wādī (Four Valleys, c. 1858 ?) Bahā'u'llāh quotes Qur'an 18:16 in the context of difficulties or tests encountered by the mystic wayfarer :

"On this plane(maqām) the tempests (talātum) are many and the surging waves (tamātum) innumerable. Now is the wayfarer lifted up [to heaven] now is he cast down [to hell]. Thus hath it been said: " Now thou drawest me towards the throne of the realm of unknowing (carsh al-^cama) ; again Thou castest me into the nethermost fire (nār al-ighmā)". The mystery treasured in this plane (maqām) is divulged in the following blessed verse from the [Sūra of the] Cave: "And thou wouldst have seen the sun, when it arose, declining to the right from their cave and when it set leaving them on their left; while they were in its spacious chamber. This is one of the signs of God. Guided indeed is he whom God guideth; but for him whom God misleadeth, thou shalt by no means find a patron" (18:16)."¹.

Though subject to tests and trials or changes of fortune, it may be deduced from the context in which the above words were written (see the whole of the second of the 'Four Valleys'), there are lofty souls who are not distracted from the true path. In Qur'an 18:16 the fact that the sun, when it had risen, declined to the right-hand side of the Cave, and then, when setting, passed by its left-hand side appears to indicate, for Bahā'u'llāh, the positive and negative operations of the Divine Providence (n.b. Qur'an 18:16b). Though the 'sun' appeared at diverse points those within the 'cave' of true faith remained steadfast— remained within it. — they saw the will of God at work in all things and at all times. That the 'cave' (kahf) may be understood to signify the state of true faith (n.b. 'Cave of Light' kahf al-nūr) may, it might be added, be deduced from, for example, the Bāb's Qayyūm al-Asmā¹ (Commentary on sūra 12 of the Qur'an, written 1844). In chapter LXXIII (on Qur'an 12:72) of this work, which is entitled "The Cave" (al-kahf) and which, in large measure consists of an interesting midrashic type rewrite of Qur'an 18:9ff, the Bāb identifies Himself with the "Cave" : " And the Cave (kahf) is this Gate (al-bāb) inscribed in the Mother Book (umm al-kitāb) about the [Sinaitic] Fire..". The companions of the Cave (ashāb al-kahf) are seven letters (n.b. the 7 letters of ^cAlī Muhammad the Bāb's name) of "Thy [God's or the Bāb's ?] names " and the "companions of the Bāb" (ashāb al-bāb) who came to believe in him. Qur'an 18:17-18 has to do with the " forerunners about the Bāb" (sābiqūn haul al-bāb ; i.e. the Bāb's first disciples and their coming to faith in him).².

1. Bahā'u'llāh, Chahār Wādī, (in AQA, Vol. III; see above), p. 145. trans., (adapted) in Ali-Kuli Khan and M. Gail, The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys (Wilmette Illinois 1968), p. 50.

2. For details see Qayyūm al-Asmā¹ LXXIII, Camb. Univ. Lib. Browne Coll. MS F. 11., f. 127b. ff.

In the light of the foregoing it may then, be deduced that the reference in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn's being " turned to the right and to the left" but remaining protected in the "Cave of Light" has to do with his being tested and remaining steadfast in the Bābī faith.

V.b. Having, in abstruse language, borne witness to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn's steadfast faith and power of understanding, Bahā'u'llāh sets forth an interpretation of key terms in Qur'an 3:87:

"food" (ta^cām) = the essence of knowledge (nafs al-^cilm) or, in other words, "all branches of learning" (kull al-^culūm);

"Israel" = the "Primal Point" (nuqtat al-ūlā), that is, the Bāb;

"the children of Israel" = " He whom God..made a Proof (hujja) unto the people in these days" ; as noted, below, an allusion to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role (?).

The words " except what Israel made unlawful for itself (or himself) " indicates that which the Bāb made unlawful—presumably in his legalistic pronouncements. The Bāb abrogated Islāmic law replacing it with his own.

V.c. Bahā'u'llāh here calls upon Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn to acknowledge the divinely inspired and binding nature of the laws of the dispensation of the Bayān. (= " all that God decreed [presumably through the Bāb] in the Book"). All Bābīs must accept and follow the laws of the Bāb.

As noted below it may be deduced from the second part of paragraph V.c. that Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn had been troubled by an antinomian Bābī faction (in Iraq ? or in Naraq ?). This "faction" (al-fi'at, the correct reading) imagined themselves to be rightly guided but evidently disregarded the legalistic aspects of the Bāb's writings. Such Bābī factions, some libertine others gnostic in their transcendence of legal norms, were probably widespread in Iran after the Bāb's execution. In this respect it is worth drawing attention to the missionary H.A. Stern's encounter with anti-Islāmic and militant if not antinomian Bābīs in Mazandaran in the early 1850's :

"In returning to my lodging, I met a good number of Mahomedans who enquired whether I had any tracts against their Prophet. Upon my asking why they wanted such pamphlets, they replied with great caution.. " Because we detest Mahomed and ridicule his Koran." During the short conversation I had with them in the street, I learnt that they were secret followers of Baba [sic.= the Bāb]. I informed my acquaintances in the street, that I should be glad to see them in the caravanserai, but they were afraid to meet me, for fear of exciting suspicion. One of them, who from his white turban appeared to be a mullah,

said, "Inshallah," (i.e., please God) "we shall yet drive Mahomed, Ali, and all the Imams from Persia; and whether we become Ingleese [English] or Russ [Russian], (meaning Christians of either Churches) is to us a matter of indifference, since all creeds are better than that of the Arabian robber." I was glad to get out of their company, for although they appeared to belong to the aristocracy of the place [apparently Barfurush], still their language was too violent, and their opposition and hatred to the Prophet of Mecca [Muhammad] too bitter, for any lengthened conversation in the public thoroughfare." 1.

VI.a. Bahā'u'llāh here addresses Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn. In the light of the fact that he had turned to the true sources of guidance it is explained that "food" (also) signifies the "Bearer of the Cause" (sahib al-amr; a technical term indicative of an individual who is a source of religious authority and guidance); that is, Mīrzā Yahyā.

It is difficult to maintain that the "Morn of Eternity" (subh al-azal) whose "lights" (anwar, pl. of nūr) have "filled the horizons" (an allusion to Qur'an 41:53) is anyone other than Mīrzā Yahyā, Subh al-Azal. By the "Light of Endless Duration" (nūr al-samadiyya) whose traces have appeared upon the "Temples of Irradiation" (hayakil al-ishraq; here there is obvious allusion to the 5th clause of the Hadīth Kumayl) is probably meant Quddūs or Bahā'u'llāh 2. or possibly Yahyā again. Furthermore, there is very likely reference to the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā when it is stated that the "Lamp of Eternality" (siraj al-azaliyya; n.b. azaliyya) "in these days" (fi tilka'l-avyām) sheds splendour upon the "Luminary of the Realm of Unknowing" (misbah al-camā').

It may thus be deduced that, in the first part of paragraph VI.a., Bahā'u'llāh informs Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn that Mīrzā Yahyā is the "bearer of the cause" (of the Bāb). At the time when the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am was written, it may be noted at this point, acceptance of the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā also implied acceptance of the authority of Bahā'u'llāh.

Having identified "food" (ta'am) with the "Bearer of the Cause" (= Mīrzā Yahyā) it is appropriate that Bahā'u'llāh goes on to identify

1. H.A.Stern, Dawnings of Light in the East. (London 1854), pp.261-2.
2. Derivatives of the root SMD in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am occur in contexts suggestive of Quddūs or Bahā'u'llāh—Bahā'u'llāh may, early in the Iraq period, have been seen as the "return" of Quddūs (?); cf. above on I.a., III.b. and below on VII.b. Samad (= [loosely] 'Endless Duration') is a Qur'anic hapaxlegomenon (Qur'an 112:2 only). Quddūs, it is worth noting in this connection, wrote a commentary (now apparently lost) on the letter sad of Samad (or on the Surat al-Tawhid, Sūra 112).

"Israel" with "the Primal Will" (al-mashiyya al-awwaliyya) by means of which God created all things. For the Bāb the Divine Manifestations and holy souls are 'incarnations' of al-mashiyya (= the Divine Will; and not the ultimate Divine Essence [al-dhāt]). In many passages in his writings he represents al-mashiyya as an hypostatic reality which God called into being (from nothing) in order to (indirectly) create the phenomenal world—God, in his transcendence did not directly create anything. 1. In his Tafsīr Surat al-Hamd he explicitly states that God called His Will (al-mashiyya) into being from nothing and made it the cause of all else besides Himself. 2. Also worth noting in this connection is the fact that the Bāb in his Tafsīr Surat al-Baqara, commenting on Qur'an 2: 83 about ten years before Bahā'u'llāh wrote the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am, had identified "Israel" with al-mashiyya and the "children of Israel" with all that was brought into being by it. 3.

Presupposing that the Bāb is an 'incarnation' of al-mashiyya Bahā'u'llāh also identifies the "children of Israel" with the Bābīs; that is, those who came, in the "year sixty" (= 1260 AH = 1844 AD; the first year of the Bāb's ministry) to believe in him and all who, up till the eschatological consummation, will come to believe in him. The "Day" on which "He (= God) shall assemble the people before the Lord of the Worlds" (= God or, for Bābīs man yuzhiruhu'llāh [the Bābī messiah figure]) is the eschatological "Day" spoken of in the Qur'an (see, for example, Q. 83:6) when, following the final resurrection, God will gather all people and execute judgement. In his later writings Bahā'u'llāh explains the eschatological gathering before God in terms of his own mission—he having appeared in the station of "Godhead" (though not as an incarnation of the Divine Essence). 4.

At the end of paragraph VI.a Bahā'u'llāh, having acknowledged Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn's faith status and referred to Bābīs who have and those who will come to believe, assures him that God's guidance will continue to be given to the people of the Bayān. God, he explains—probably in the light of Bābī factionalism and apostasy and the slow growth-rate of the community—desires good (the Bābī Cause) for the people but the people limit

1. See for example, Tafsīr Surat al-Baqara (Tehran Bahā'i Archives MS 6014 C) p.88ff; Sāhifa-yi Adliyya (n.p. [Tehran] n.d.), p.16; Tafsīr Bismillāh (Tehran Bahā'i Archives MS 6014 C) p.301ff
2. Tafsīr Surat al-Hamd (in Iran National Bahā'i Archives Priv.Pub.Vol. 69), p.10ff.
3. Tafsīr Surat al-Baqara, p.223. See further ibid., pp.168,176,270.
4. See in particular, Bahā'u'llāh's letter to Jawād Tabrizī (Adrianople period?) in Iran National Bahā'i Archives Priv.Pub.Vol.73.p.183ff.

themselves (cf. Qur'an 3:176). The people, he states, are unaware of the fact that the "Light of God" (cf. Yahya's leadership role) has always been and will always be established upon the "Throne of Favour" (^carsh al-^cata'). Though, in other words, the Bāb is no longer alive, divine guidance is still available and his cause will ultimately triumph.

VI.b. This paragraph appears to be expressive of Bahā'u'llāh's role in guiding Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn to an 'orthodox' Bābī perspective. In difficult symbolic language it is indicated that Mīrzā Yahyā and Bahā'u'llāh are sources of divine guidance and Baghdad the centre of the Bābī world.

That Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn was lifted up to the summit of the "Mount of Light" (tūr al-nūr) and elevated to the peak of the "Mount of Servitude" (tūr al-^cubudiyva) probably indicates his coming to accept the leadership roles of Mīrzā Yahyā and Bahā'u'llāh: the former being alluded to as tūr al-nūr (n.b. nūr) and the latter as tūr al-^cubudiyva (n.b. ^cubudiyva; cf. on IX.a. and X.b.)¹: That he was "enabled to drink deep of the Water of the Divine Oneness (mā' al-ahadiyya) from the Camphor Fount (^cayn al-Kafūr) at the hand of the All-Beauteous Joseph (yūsuf al-jamāl)" indicates his initiation into the 'Bābī mysteries'. It is difficult to decide who might here be intended by the "All-Beauteous Joseph"; the Bāb, Yahyā, Bahā'u'llāh or even man yuzhiruhu'llāh (in the unseen realm) might be alluded to.² Bahā'u'llāh almost certainly intends himself by the phrase "Gladsome Ant" (nimlat al-mahbūr). The expressions "Land of Exhilaration" (ard al-surūr) and "Cradle of Tranquility" (mihād al-am[i]n) very probably signify Baghdad as the haven or locus of the light of Bābī authority.³

- Perhaps, if "Mounts" (tūrān— unless it be "cycles" and kūrān "eras" or the like) at the beginning of paragraph I.c. be construed as a dual form of tūr (= the [Sinaitic] Mount), there is cryptic allusion to the leadership roles of Yahyā and Bahā'u'llāh.
- The reference to the "All-Beauteous Joseph" is rooted in the Bāb's imāmological, mystical and qabbalistic interpretation of the 12th sūra of the Qur'an. In his Qayyūm al-Asmā', a commentary—though not in the classical sense—on this sūra, the Bāb equates Joseph with the Imam Husayn in the light of belief in his imminent eschatological return and his role as "gate" (bāb) to the hidden Imam (see for, example, chapters V.XXXII., XXXIV. XC). Subsequent to his transference to Adhirbayjan he claimed to be both "Joseph" and the return of the Imam Husayn (in certain writings he makes the following equations: Joseph [abjad 156] = qayyūm [lit. 'self-subsisting', abjad 156] = the Qā'im = the Mahdī; see for example, Letter to Hajji Mirza Sayyid ^cAlī in Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Private Pub. Vol. 58 p.176; Persian Bayan VII.1.IV.4.5., cf. Dalā'il-i Sab^ca [Persian n.p.n.d.] p.49.) Then, towards the end of his ministry, he came to see Joseph as a type of man yuzhiruhu'llāh (the

It is of considerable interest that Bahā'u'llāh refers to himself as the "Gladsome Ant" (nimlat al-mahbūr) which "sings out" (= reveals verses?) about the "Cradle of Tranquility" (= Baghdad? —or, to offer another suggestion, the haven of the Bābī Cause?) wherein Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn found rest (= true guidance?). By referring to himself as an "Ant" (nimlat) he may wish to draw attention to his (at this time) claim to nothing but "servitude to God" (see X. b.). Such is suggested by the expression "Ant of Servitude" (nimlat al-^cubudiyva) in paragraph IXa (on which see below). That, in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam, Bahā'u'llāh intended himself by these genitive expressions is clear from paragraph VII.d. where he clearly refers to himself as "this lowly, this forsaken Ant" (see below). As far as I am aware the only other writing in which Bahā'u'llāh refers to himself as an "Ant" (nimlat) is the Surat al-Kifāya (that this is so may be indicative of its being dated to the early [pre-Sulaymaniyya?] ^cIraq period) where, at one point, we read:

"O people of the Concourse! Harken unto the song(s) of the Ant of Endless Duration (nimlat al-samadiyya) which warbleth with the verses of the Divine Unicity" (bi-āyāt al-ahadiyya), ['] He, verily, is the True One (al-haqq), the Point of the Realm of Unknowing (nuqtat al-camā'), the Essence of the Divine Ipseity (jawhar al-huwiyya). ['] So exalted be God, the King, the True One, Who hath ever been powerful over all things. This is the Call of the Hoopoe of Servitude (hudhud al-^cubudiyva) in the Heaven of Manifest Justice (sama' al-cadāl) who standeth before (tilqa') the All-Glorious One (al-jalāl), ['] He, verily, is the Unseen (al-

Bābī messiah figure) whom he, in his Kitāb al-Asmā' ('Book of Names' c. 1849-50), it is worth noting, refers to as the "All-Glorious Joseph" (yūsuf al-bahā') whom the Bābīs (= "Jacob") await (see Ishraq Khavari Qamus-i Iqan Vol.4. [n.p. [Tehran] 128 Badi^c] p. 1875).

In his writings of the post-Baghdad period Bahā'u'llāh occasionally claims to be the true Joseph: this claim being essentially equivalent to claiming to be the return of Imam Husayn and man yuzhiruhu'llāh. It is not clear however, whether the phrase yūsuf al-jamāl in paragraph VI.b. applies to him. It seems more likely that the Bāb or Yahyā is intended. There may be some connection with Bābī speculations surrounding the return of Imam Husayn (n.b. nūr = [abjad] 256 = 2 × 128 = [abjad] Husayn).

- On "the land of exhilaration" (ard al-surūr) see below on XII. I suggest that the "Cradle of Tranquility" (mihād al-am[i]n) signifies Baghdad in the light of the Bābī understanding of the expressions ama^{an} (= 'a place of tranquility/ safety') and balad ama^{an} ("a city tranquil/ secure") in Qur'an 2: 125-6 (originally descriptive of the Meccan Ka'ba or "House"; see for example, Qayyūm al-Asmā' LV and LXXXVII. cf. Bahā'u'llāh's eventual designation of his house in Baghdad as the "Most-Great House of God" [or the like] and its becoming a place of Bahā'ī pilgrimage).

ghayb), the Pure Wine of Manifestation (sirr al-zuhūr), the Mystery of the All-Beauteous One (sirr al-jamāl)]. So praised be He, He is God Who hath ever been witness unto all things." 1.

The exact source of the motif of the "ant", as applied by Bahā'u'llāh to himself is not clear. It may be that it is rooted in a Bābī exegesis of Qur'an 27:15ff. Obscure interpretations of Qur'anic verses and prophetic stories are not uncommon in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. No less obscure for example, than Bahā'u'llāh's referring to himself as an "ant" is the Bāb's equating Imam 'Alī with the "gnat" mentioned in Qur'an 2:26. 3.

VII.a. Here Bahā'u'llāh states that he, in his "sorrow and anguish" continually complains to God. This since God alone is aware of his troubled state of mind and difficult circumstances. Swearing by God he represents himself as more dejected than any of his contemporaries. All things "possessed of spirit" weep over his plight to the degree that eschatological catastrophies are all but precipitated—in the Qur'an it is predicted that the heavens will be cleft asunder, the earth split open and the mountains levelled on the "Day" of resurrection. His plight is such that the "Eye of Time" has never witnessed its like.

Despite his intense spiritual anguish Bahā'u'llāh is patient and forbearing. He commits all his affairs to God Who might see fit to protect him from his wayward contemporaries.

VII.b. Having bemoaned his plight Bahā'u'llāh yet informs Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn that he is capable of revealing countless explanations of Qur'an 3:87. 4. He states that he could, through God's grace and bounty, expound this verse from his own day (the early 1850's) until the future eschatological consu-

1. Surat al-Kifāya (in INBA.Priv.Pub.Vol. 36), p. 278. On the Surat al-Kifāya see above.
2. Qur'an 27:15ff narrates a story of Solomon and contains the only Qur'anic use of the word ant (nimlat / namlat). Note also the role of the hoopoe. I wonder if Bahā'u'llāh expressed his role within the Babi community during the early Iraq period by means of motifs derived from an allegorical interpretation of Qur'an 27:15ff.
3. See Tafsīr Surat al-Baqara, p.92.
4. In line with many traditions (ahadith) attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and the Imams Bahā'u'llāh, throughout his ministry, expressed the conviction that Qur'anic verses have many levels of meaning. See for example, Letter to Jawād Tabrizī in INBA.Priv.Pub. Vol. 73.p.183.

summation. The expression al-mustaghāth (lit. 'the One [God] Who is invoked [for help]') is found in the writings of the Bāb and appears to be a gematric cipher indicative of the terminus ad quem or latest point in time at which man yuzhiruhu'llāh will appear. It has a numerical value of 2001 (م = 40 + س = 60 + ت = 400 + ع = 1000 + ا = 1 + ث = 500 = [total] 2001) and led some Bābīs to suppose that the "greater resurrection" or eschatological consummation would be in the distant future (1844 + 2001 = 3845 AD) 1. In several of his writings of the Baghdad period (1853—1863) Bahā'u'llāh refers to the future advent of man yuzhiruhu'llāh (without identifying himself as this Bābī messiah) and uses the expression al-mustaghāth in this connection. 2. From the early 1860's however, he came to claim to be the "return" (raj'a) of the Bāb and the appearance of man yuzhiruhu'llāh. He associated the term al-mustaghāth with his own day. 3.

In the second half of paragraph VII.b. Bahā'u'llāh appears to state that it is in the light of God's continuing to inspire leading Bābīs that he could provide countless explanations of Qur'an 3:87. The power of revelation, mediated from on high is still operative. The "Sun of Manifestation" (shams al-zuhūr; = Divine Guidance) still shines upon the people of the Bayān.

Allusion may be made to the following persons —sources of divine guidance—in the following expressions -: "Mystery of the Divine Oneness (sirr al-ahadiyya; n.b. ahad) = the Bāb; " Ocean of Endless Duration"

1. See for example, Persian Bayān II.16; II.17; III.15; VII.10. The word mustaghāth, it should be noted, is used by the Bāb along with aghvath (= 'the Most Succouring'; abjad = ا = 1 + ح = 1,000 + و = 10 + ث = 500 [total] = 1511) and ghiyāth (also abjad 1511) to express the eschatological terminus ad quem. Elsewhere in his writings the Bāb intimates the imminent appearance of man yuzhiruhu'llāh or states that the time of the ultimate eschatological "Hour" is known only to God. Azalī writers have tended to stress the distantly future aspects of the Bāb's predictions— which are not consistent—and Bahā'īs (in the light of Bahā'u'llāh's claim, during the 1860's to be man yuzhiruhu'llāh) their imminent dimension.
2. See for example, Shoghi Effendi, trans. The Kitāb-i-Iqān, pp. 147, 158. cf. Jawāhir al-Asrār (in AQA.Vol.III), pp.43, 66, 83.
3. In for example, a letter to Āqā Mīrzā Assad Allāh Nūrī, Bahā'u'llāh at one point writes: "...I, verily, am the one promised in al-mustaghāth with the name of man yuzhiruhu'llāh..." (unpublished, uncatalogued MS). cf. also 'Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh on the Mission of Moses' in Ishraq Khavari (Ed) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol.4. (n.p. [Tehran] 129 Badīc), p.41.

(bahr al-samadiyya; n.b. ṣamad) = Quddūs; "Countenance of Light" (Ṭal^cat al-nūr; n.b. nūr) = Mīrzā Yahyā. That the "Countenance of Light hath beamed forth from the right-side of the Tree of the Command (shajarat al-amr; n.b. al-amr) in these days.." is very likely a reference to the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā who stands below, in the hierarchy of sources of guidance, the Bāb and Quddūs (see above).

Such alleged 'correspondences' may seem speculative but a close study of the use of Arabic terms indicative of divine attributes in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām leads to the conclusion that leading Bābīs are alluded to. A pattern emerges which may be seen in paragraphs III (c—g see the chart below) VI.a (cf. VI.b) and VII.b. The Bābī hierarchy, it may be deduced, is indicated as follows—: The Bāb (n.b. the uses of ahadiyya), Quddūs (n.b. the uses of ṣamad[an] ḥayya), Mīrzā Yahyā (n.b. the uses of wahidiyya + nūr + azal + amr), and Bahā'u'llāh (n.b. the uses of ad[ā]l + cubūdiyya [abd] + bahā'/ abhā, etc.). Furthermore, at certain points in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām, it is suggested that Bahā'u'llāh and Yahyā occupy the roles once played by the Bāb and Quddūs (see for example on I.a). The application of these 'correspondences' to, it may be noted here, the Sūrat al-Kifāya, tends to confirm this level of interpretation.

VII.c. Having, apparently, in the last part of paragraph VII.b. underlined the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā, Bahā'u'llāh here laments the fact that the people do not recognise his half-brother's position; which also involves acceptance of his own status. Yahyā is alluded to through the use of the word hujja — a term indicative of an individual with a leadership role. On the other hand it might be possible to understand the reference to the hujja as an allusion to the Bāb himself or his cause which the people have failed to truly understand. Whatever the case it is clear that Bahā'u'llāh laments the people's (probably Bābīs) inability to recognise the true source of guidance.

VII.d. Here Bahā'u'llāh calls upon Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn to give heed to his words referring to himself as "this lowly, this forsaken ant" (see above). He expresses his desire to withdraw from the company of his fellow Bābīs; anticipating his imminent departure for Iraqi Kurdistan in view of the actions of those around him.

Bahā'u'llāh did not withdraw to Iraqi Kurdistan simply because he had failed to regenerate the Bābī community. Though he largely concealed his own leadership claims by outwardly supporting his half-brother his rise to

prominence— partly precipitated by Yahyā's persistent concealment— excited opposition from leading Iraqi Bābīs. Opposition became so fierce that his death was plotted (see on XII. above and cf. on IV.b. below). Several sections of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām bear eloquent testimony to the depth of Bahā'u'llāh's disillusionment with his fellow Bābīs. In order to avoid creating a premature breach within the community he felt compelled to withdraw. Such was his anguish that he "contemplated no return" and "hoped for no reunion"¹— the reasons for his eventual return to Baghdad after two years in Iraqi Kurdistan cannot be discussed here.

VII.e. Having expressed his desire to abandon his fellow Bābīs Bahā'u'llāh here laments the fact that Quddūs is no longer alive to comfort him or weep over his sorry plight. Were he present, Bahā'u'llāh continues, he would implore him to intercede on his behalf. This brief lament is paralleled by that at paragraph IVa (see below) and is followed by a prayer for patience and victory over opponents.

Bahā'u'llāh's referring to Quddūs as the "Countenance of My Love" (Ṭal^cat hubbī) hints at the great respect he had for this leading Bābī—alluded to, as we have seen, elsewhere in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām (see further on VIII.b. below). Though the last of the 'Letters of the Living' to come to faith in the Bāb he came to be seen as foremost among them. As the "Last Point" (nuqtat al-ukhrā) he most fully reflected the light of the "First Point" (nuqtat al-ūlā; i.e. the Bāb). Towards the end of the Bāb's ministry leading Bābīs saw the Bāb and Quddūs as the "Alpha" and "Omega" of the dispensation of the Bayān. In his writings the Bāb gave Quddūs the most exalted of titles and attributes. In his Kitāb-i Panj Sha'm and other late writings he referred to him as "the Last Name of God" (ism Allāh al-akhir; hence nuqtat al-ukhrā in paragraph VII.e.) and accorded him divine status.

Several of the writings of Bahā'u'llāh of the Iraq period contain references to the exalted status of Quddūs. Towards the end of the Ṣahīfa-yi Shatt-iyya (c. 1857—8?) for example, we have the following Bābī 'confession of faith':

"..He verily, no god is there except Him. ^cAlī before Muḥammad [= the Bāb] is the essence of God (ḡhat Allāh) and His All-Enduring Being. Muḥammad before ^cAlī [= Quddūs = Mīrzā Muḥammad ^cAlī Barfurushī] is the Mine of the Cause of God (or source/treasure-house of the Cause of God; ma^cdan amr Allāh) and His Perpetual Essence. The Countenance of the Living One (ṭal^cat al-hayy = Mīrzā Yahyā? [or man yuzhiruhu'llāh or Bahā'u'llāh himself?]) is the Hidden retreat of the decree of God

1. See Bahā'u'llāh Kitāb-i Iqān (trans. Shoghi Effendi), p. 160.

(makman hukm Allāh) and his upright bounty. The Letters of the Living (hurūf al-hayy = the Bāb's first disciples) are the first to believe in God and His signs (or verses) and we, one and all, hold fast unto them." ¹.

VIII.a. In this paragraph the key terms in Qur'ān 3:87 are interpreted in terms of the Islāmic dispensation. By those who "dwell in the Snow-White Forest" and "Isle of al-Furqān" the Muslims are intended. al-Furqān is synonymous with and a title of the Qur'ān meaning (roughly) "the Criterion" "the Distinguisher" (among other things). "Food" (ta^cām) is equated with the Islamic "Guardianship" (wilayat) or principle of continuing divine guidance; hence "Israel" signifies the Prophet Muhammad (= the "Point of al-Furqān") and the "children of Israel" the Imāms who came after him. (= God's "trustees," ausiyyā)

VIII.b. Having expounded Qur'ān 3:87 in terms of the Islāmic dispensation Bahā'u'llāh now explains, on similar lines, its meaning relative to the religion of the Bāb. The Bābīs are evidently intended by those who dwell in the "Crimson Isle" or "Orchard of the Bayān" (Bayān [lit. 'Exposition'] meaning, as in certain writings of the Bāb, the Bābī Cause or the totality of Bābī scripture). They abandon the "food" (ta^cām) of the Islāmic dispensation, its sources of authority and guidance, and partake instead of the "food" (guidance) vouchsafed by the Bāb; the "Pure Wine of the Divine Oneness" (sirf al-ahadiyya; n.b. ahadiyya), guidance from the "Primal Point" (nuqtat al-ūlā = the Bāb). The Islāmic dispensation has, in other words, been abrogated. We have (see below) clear allusion to Qudūs by the use of the expressions "Last Countenance" (wiḡhat al-ukhrā; lit. 'Last/Ultimate Objective') and "Mystery of Endless Duration" (sirr al-samadāniyya n.b. samadāniyya). Once again it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Mīrzā Yahyā is intended by the "Countenance of Light" (ta^cat al-nūr; n.b. nūr), the "Isolated Manifestation" (mujarrad al-zuhūr — an allusion to Yahyā's marked dissimulation?) and the "Temple of the Divine Unicity"

1. Sahīfa-yi Shattiyya in Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī, Vol. IV. p. 149. Such references to Qudūs are not confined to Bahā'u'llāh's writings of the Iraq period. In a letter/tablet (lawh) probably dating from the ^cAkkā period written in reply to a question about the words "But We strengthened them with a third" (in Qur'ān 36:14 — traditionally thought to be about the missionary preaching of two then three early Christians at Antioch) interesting reference is made to the Bāb and Qudūs (= the "two") whose mission was "strengthened" by the eschatological advent of Bahā'u'llāh. (see *ibid.*, [Vol. IV], p. 77).

(haykal al-ahadiyya; cf. the 5th clause of the Hadīth Kumayl). Yahyā's "imprisonment" and "concealment" in (and around) Baghdad is probably intended by the last lines of paragraph VIII.b.

IX.a. In this paragraph Bahā'u'llāh explains why he desires to set forth a further explanation of Qur'ān 3:87 (in paragraph IX.b.) It seems likely that he refers to himself as "the Dove of Servitude" (hamānat al-^cubūdiyya, n.b. ubūdiyya) "which sings (= reveals verses?) in the "Heaven of Concealed Divinity" (samā' al-^camā'), the "Hoopoe of Light" (huhud al-nūr; cf. Qur'ān 27:27f, Sūrat al-Kifāya cited below) which warbles in the "midst of the atmospheres" (wast al-ajwā', i.e. heavenly realms), the "Siniatic Tree" (shajarat al-tūr) which burns through the Fire (nār) of its own self (c.f. the 'burning bush' which was 'not consumed' in Exodus 3:1) and the "Ant of Servitude" (nimlat al-^cubūdiyya; see above on VII. d.).

The significance of the fact that the "Siniatic Tree" exists above the "Ark of the Testimony" (tābūt al-shahādāt; cf. Qur'ān 2:248 and the Biblical 'Ark of the Covenant') beyond "(Mount) Qaf" (= a mythical mountain believed to surround the world sometimes identified with mount Caucasus — it is occasionally mentioned in the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh) in(?) the "Land of Realization" (ard al-imdā') is not clear. There is probably allusion to Bahā'u'llāh's role within the Bābī community and, at the same time, his isolation in the face of being oppressed or misunderstood. That he, as the "Ant of Servitude", conceals himself in the "Vale of the Divine Oneness" (wādī al-ahadiyya) in "this 'Night' through the mystery of fidelity" (bi'l-sirr al-wafā') may have similar import. The expression wādī al-ahadiyya is an allusion to the Siniatic Vale and its Tree and "this 'Night'" is probably indicative of the troublesome period following the martyrdom of the Bāb. The phrase "through the mystery of fidelity" is obscure (cf. though the beginning of 'Persian Hidden Word' No 77).

To sum up: paragraph IX.a., it appears, expresses Bahā'u'llāh's desire, in the light of his love for Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn, his power of revelation and his soaring up beyond the limitations of oppression, to explain Qur'ān 3:87 further.

IX.b. In the first part of this paragraph Bahā'u'llāh gives his final explanation of key terms in Qur'ān 3:87. "Food" (ta^cām) is identified with the "Ocean of the Unseen" (bahr al-ghayb = the heavenly source of divine revelation?) which is hidden in the "Pages of Light" (sahā'if al-nūr) and treasured up in the "Inscribed Tablets" (alwāh al-mastūr). There is very

probably allusion to the writings of Mīrzā Yahyā. This is suggested by the words "pages of light" (sahā'if al-nūr ; n.b. nūr and cf. "verses of light" [āyat al-nūr] in paragraph III.d.). The early writings of Yahyā were viewed by both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh very highly.¹ Worth noting is the fact that he probably wrote his "Book of Light" (Kitāb al-nūr — an Arabic work in 77 chapters) around the same time that Bahā'u'llāh wrote the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām.² Certain groups of Bābīs during the early 1850's believed that Yahyā revealed divinely inspired verses.

Having, it appears, alluded to Yahyā's writings, Bahā'u'llāh probably refers to his half-brother as the "Manifestation of the command" (mazhar al-amr cf. sahib al-amr in paragraph VI.a.) who is, in one sense, "Israel". The "children of Israel" are the Bābīs (= people of the Bayān), who are permitted to partake of the "food" (ta'ām) of the Bābī revelation as represented by Yahyā and his writings. That this "food" is lawful to "all who desire to ascend unto the Heaven of Bounty (samā' al-'ināyat), to drink the Water of Manifestation (mā' al-zuhūr — probably the correct reading) from this Cup (or Glass, al-za'jaja), the Goblet of Servitude (kūb al-'ubūdiyya) which resembleth naught but a shadow (fai') in the land" is indicative of Bahā'u'llāh's position in the light of Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role; the former being the "Glass" in which the light of Yahyā's authority is reflected and the "Goblet of Servitude" (n.b. the use of 'ubūdiyya) or one occupying an outwardly subordinate role. In the latter part of paragraph IX.b. Bahā'u'llāh underlines his position of "servitude". He speaks of himself as resembling "naught but a shadow (fai') in the land" (Baghdad) and asks God's forgiveness on account of his lowly status.³

X.a. Here Bahā'u'llāh explains, having set forth his final interpretation of Qur'an 3:87, that he could expound this verse in accordance with its celestial levels of meaning. This however, he refrains from doing in the light of

1. See, for example, the letters of the Bāb in Qismati az alwah. p. 10ff and of Bahā'u'llāh in Izziyya Khanum, Tanbih al-Nā'imīn, p. 40ff.
2. On Yahyā's Kitāb al-nūr see E.G. Browne, A Traveller's Narrative. Vol. II. (Cambridge 1891), pp. 340-1 ; idem (Ed), Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion ([Rep.] Cambridge 1961), p. 216. Interesting and almost certainly authentic letters of Bahā'u'llāh expressive of his high regard for the Kitāb al-nūr are contained in Izziyya Khanum's Tanbih al-Nā'imīn (see pp. 36ff [esp. p. 40], 85ff).
3. It may appear that I have read a lot into paragraph IX.b. The reader is referred to the — undoubtedly authentic — letter of Bahā'u'llāh printed in Izziyya Khanum's Tanbih al-Nā'imīn, pp. 85-6 for evidence that this line of interpretation is correct.

the limited capacity of his contemporaries. What he has already set forth in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām must suffice. God is probably meant by "Sovereign of the Realm of Unknowing" (sultan al-'amā') and "King of Glory" (malik al-bahā') and the inhabitants of the spiritual worlds by "spiritual ones" (rūhaniyyin), "sanctified myriads" (ribwāt al-muqaddasīn ; a phrase derived from the 'Prayer of the Signs' [du'a-yi simāt attributed to Imām 'Alī] rooted in Deut 33: 2 and occasionally found in the Bāb's writings) and "enrap-tured ones" (mu'jazzabīn).

X.b. In view of the fact that Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn has turned to him (= "sought and derived warmth from the fire of love") and been honoured and entranced through the revelation of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām (= "found pleasure in the charm of the trace of ink in these opposite Tablets") Bahā'u'llāh asks him to "bear witness and be assured" that he has "claimed naught but servitude to God" (al-'ubūdiyya li-llāhi). God bears witness to this fact in the face of hostile misrepresentations by his fellow Bābīs.

Here then, Bahā'u'llāh clearly underlines the fact that his role was one of servitude — as presupposed at many points in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām (see above) and, in fact, in several other 'tablets' (alwah) of the early period following his withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan. He did not usurp the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā or make any explicit leadership claim for himself. Both before and after his withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan he, to quote Shoghi Effendi, "appeared in the guise of, and continued to labor as, one of the foremost disciples of the Bāb."¹ It is remarkable that Bahā'u'llāh did not challenge his half-brother's leadership role — in explicit terms — before the mid-1860's — especially in view of Yahyā's incapacity and a succession of challenges to his leadership during the 1850's. Though such writings as his Rashh-i 'Amā' ('The Sprinkling of the Cloud of Divinity' early 1269 AH = late 1852 ?) and al-Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya ('The Dove's Ode' c. 1272 AH = 1855 AD) contain allusions to his future assumption of leadership of the Bābī community it was only towards the end of the Iraq period (roughly between 1860 and 1863) that he clearly intimated his claim to leadership (in for example his Halih, Halih, Halih, Ya Bishārat — written late 1862 or early 1863).

1. Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 128.

X.c. In this woe directed against wayward Bābīs who misrepresent his role Bahā'u'llāh draws on Qur'an 9:106b. He indicates that his opponents will, on the resurrection Day, brought before God and questioned as to their deeds.

X.d. Again echoing Qur'anic texts Bahā'u'llāh here addresses the 'People of the Concurrence' (= most likely, his fellow Bābīs). They should not be astonished at the "artistry of God" (sun^c allāh), the mercy of God (rahmat allāh)" or His "blessings" (barakat; or abundance, prosperity) upon them. (cf. the reference to the "artistry of God" sun^c allāh in an eschatological setting in Qur'an 27:88). God, in other words, is in control of affairs and bestows his guidance upon them. This should not be doubted.

Allusion is probably made to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role when it is stated that the "artistry of God" (sun^c allāh — i.e. God's perfectly ordered handiwork) radiates forth in the "image" (or "images"?) of the "Lamp of Eternality" (sirāj al-azaliyya; n.b. azaliyya = Mīrzā Yahyā?) among the "artistry of the people" (sun^c al-nās). Bahā'u'llāh appears to be saying that the concrete guidance of God is available to Bābīs through the hierarchy of their leaders. God has a perfectly ordered purpose and is in control of it through his earthly representatives.

XI.a. Here Bahā'u'llāh laments the fact that his past memories—obviously poetically—have been effaced in view of the wayward deeds of his contemporaries. Once again the depth of his spiritual agony is exposed.

XI.b. In this address to the (loosely) "people of the realm of unknowing" (ahl al-^camā'; probably in this instance the inhabitants of the upper world or the Bābī community at large) Bahā'u'llāh probably calls upon them to appear at Baghdad, the focal centre of Bābī guidance and authority. (cf. below on VI.b). Baghdad, it appears, is referred to as the "sanctum of Light" (haram al-nūr), the "manifest Cloud of Unknowing" (^camā' al-zuhūr, i.e. the place of the epiphany of the all-highest reality) and the "most-great House of God" (bayt allāh al-akbar; i.e. the Bābī centre in Baghdad?).¹ That the celestial beings—sources of guidance and inspiration—should appear at Baghdad has been decreed by God in the "Tablet of the Heart" (lawh al-fū'ād); it is a preordained affair. Bābīs, this para-

1. The house of Sulaymān-i-Ghannām (or 'Mīrzā Mūsā the Bābī') in Baghdad came to be designated bayt allāh al-akbar [al-^cazam] by Bahā'u'llāh and a place of Bahā'ī pilgrimage. It may possibly be intended here.

—graph may be taken to imply, should regard Baghdad as the seat and focal centre of authority and guidance.

Worth noting in this connection is the fact that the Sūrat al-Kifāya contains several passages parallel to paragraph IX.b.—and probably with similar import:

"O people of the Realm of Unknowing! (Yā ahl al-^camā')! This is the paradise of the Divine Oneness (jannat al-ahadiyya), the orchard of eternity (hadīqat al-azaliyya). Then dwell therein with the permission of God... Enter the House of Light (bayt al-nūr), the Snow-White Land (ard al-baydā'), the Crimson Pillar (rukn al-hamrā'), this Abode (al-dār; cf. Qur'an 10:25) which is the Abode of the Hereafter (dar al-ākhirā), the Primal Mystery (sirr al-ūlā) which is assuredly the (source of) Life (al-haywān) written in the Mother Book (umm al-kitāb)..." 1.

"O people of the realms of Being! (Yā ahl al-akwān)! Eat of the succulent fruit (thamarat al-muthmirat) of the Crimson Tree (shajarat al-hamrā') which hath been planted in the Land of Realization (ard al-imdā'), the Point of Origination (nuqtat al-bad'); the Sealed Mystery (sirr al-khatm) and Secret of the Divine Decree (mustasirr al-qadā')... Issue forth from your habitations in order that you might be present in the sanctum of destiny (haram al-gadar), the intimate threshold of the Cloud of Unknowing (^camā' al-uns) as hath, with the permission of God, been decreed in the Tablet of the Heart (lawh al-fū'ād). 2.

XII. In this concluding paragraph Bahā'u'llāh first explains the reason for his bringing the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam (= "this discourse" al-kalām) to a close. He intimates that he had done so inasmuch as Mīrzā Yahyā, as nominal head of the Bābī community and the "Dove of Light" (hamamat al-nūr; cf. below on I.b. II.f.), had been revealing verses ('singing forth') since the time of his arrival in Iraq (= the "Land of Exhilaration", ard al-surūr; cf. below on VI.b.). In line with his adoption of the position of servitude he brings his 'tablet' to an end.

Addressing Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Bahā'u'llāh further mentions that since his patience had run out in the light of his love for the unveiled

1. Sūrat al-Kifāya (in DNBA.Priv.Pub. Vol.36), p. 278 (cf. p.277).
2. Ibid. p. 279. This and the above passage appear to contain allusions to Mīrzā Yahyā's leadership role (cf. Introduction below). n.b. the phrases "orchard of eternity" (hadīqat al-azaliyya), "House of Light" (bayt al-nūr; cf. "sanctum of light" [haram al-nūr] in paragraph IX.b.) and "succulent Fruit" (thamarat al-muthmirat; al-thamara, "the Fruit", is a common Bābī designation of Yahyā).

beauty of God" (jamāl allāh) he desired "authorization" (mu^ctamad^{an}, God's leave to direct Bābī affairs ?). This may indicate that Bahā'u'llāh had become so impatient with the wayward Iraqi Bābī community that he underlined the leadership role he had come to occupy in view of his half-brother's marked dissimulation: without it appears, directly challenging Yahyā's position. It was probably shortly after Bahā'u'llāh began to assert his authority that the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām was written for this work may be viewed as an expression of the hopelessness of his efforts to regenerate the Bābī community, his stressing his role of servitude, his desire to withdraw and the leadership role of his half-brother. In the face of opposition from leading Bābīs — they probably accused him of usurping Yahyā's role — he abandoned his efforts to consolidate the community. Instead of stressing his own leadership role he expressed his desire to withdraw and his position of servitude. In a sense the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām may be viewed as an apologia designed to underline its author's role of servitude and the leadership role of Mirza Yahyā in the face of Bābī factionalism.

Some light is thrown on the nature of Bahā'u'llāh's role within the Bābī community immediately prior to his withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan in the "Sūra of God" (Sūrat Allāh). In this work, probably written shortly before his exile to Constantinople (1863) and addressed to a certain Muhammad ^cAlī, Bahā'u'llāh explains the circumstances that led him abandon his fellow Bābīs. He states that he had found himself to be a "leader in the land" (ra'is^{an} fi al-ard) and a "guardian" (ra'ī^{an} — or protector, shepherd) of the Bābīs. Then he decided to abandon his role to such as might desire it. Then, since the affairs of the Bābī community declined in the light of ineffective leadership, he disclosed something of his God-given perfections and withdrew to Iraqi Kurdistan. ¹

On the basis of statements in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām, the Sūrat Allāh and other historical sources— which cannot be fully discussed here— it may be deduced that during the first year of his residence in Iraq Bahā'u'llāh

- 1) Came to occupy a leading role in the light of his half-brother's position as nominal head of the Bābī community.
- 2) In the light of Bābī factionalism, waywardness and ineffective leadership underlined his own leadership role— without necessarily challenging Yahyā's leadership role. ²

1. Refer, Sūrat Allāh (in Āthār Qalam-i A^clā Vol. IV. pp. 68-72), pp. 71-2.

2. It may be that at this stage Bahā'u'llāh claimed to be the return of Imām Ḥusayn— a claim that could have been understood in various ways and not necessarily as a challenge to Yahyā's position.

- 3) Encountered opposition from leading Bābīs— who may have accused him of usurping Yahyā's authority.
- 4) Underlined his position of servitude in order to prevent a further split within the community.
- 5) Withdrew to Iraqi Kurdistan.

The reference to the "son of adultery" (ibn zina') who willfully desired or plotted Bahā'u'llāh's death is obscure. It is known that secret plans were made to have Bahā'u'llāh killed— perhaps around the beginning 1854—¹ though the identity of his enemies is not clear. Bahā'ī sources indicate that Siyyid Muhammad Isfahānī (d. 1872), a leading Bābī resident in Karbala in the early 1850's and a staunch supporter of Mirzā Yahyā, secretly opposed Bahā'u'llāh (in the early 1850's) and encouraged Mirzā Yahyā to check his growing prestige. It is unlikely however, in the light of Bahā'u'llāh's initial support of Yahyā, that the assassination plot originated with Yahyā and Siyyid Muhammad. The words "I do not pledge allegiance (?) to him either in secret or publicly" indicate that Bahā'u'llāh's chief adversary was other than his half-brother whom he supported. I wonder if the "son of adultery" (ibn zina') was a claimant to leadership of the Bābī community whom Bahā'u'llāh repudiated and who thus conspired to have him killed. ² Alternatively another leading Bābī may have claimed to more fully represent Mirzā Yahyā's interests and for this reason opposed Bahā'u'llāh— Siyyid Muhammad Isfahani may have attempted this(?).

At the end of paragraph XII Bahā'u'llāh, having reminded Mirzā Kamāl al-Dīn of his efforts to regenerate the Bābī community and an attempt on his life, informs him that God alone is in control of his destiny. Though the attempt to have him removed from the scene did not materialise he, in view of his spiritual agony, ardently desires death.

It seems to me then, to sum up, that the final paragraph of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cām is expressive of Bahā'u'llāh's role of servitude and anticipates, in view of the opposition he had encountered, his imminent withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan.

1. See below on Paragraph IV.b. esp. the quotation from God Passes By.

2. It is possible that rival claimants to leadership of the Bābī community were encouraged by the arrival of the years "69-70" (= 1269-70 AH = 15 October 1852—24 Sept 1854 — this period being of eschatological import in certain writings of the Bāb). It was probably during the year 1270 AH (4 Oct 1853— 24 Sept 1854 — more specifically early in this year) that Bahā'u'llāh's life was endangered. Perhaps he was not alone in claiming or underlining his leadership role at this time.

APPENDIX : Some corrections and further notes.

Since completing my article on the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam (in great haste) a few further points and corrections have occurred to me:

- 1) The harf al-ⁱūd addressed in the Sūrat al-Kifāya could be Hajji Siyyid Jawād Karbalā'ī (on whom see, for example, Sulaymani (Ed) Masabih Hidayat Vol.2 [Tehran n.d.], p.471ff).*
- 2) The expression "Incomparable Point of the Realm of Unknowing" (.. al-nuqtat al-^camā'iyya al-firdaniyya..) might be better translated, "Beclouded and Incomparable Point" (see trans. I.a).
- 3) A more accurate translation of ".. and present yourselves in the sanctum of light.." (for, li'l-hudūr fī haram al-nūr) might be "[..Issue forth from your habitations] before the Presence in the sanctum of light [= Mirzā Yahyā ?] — i.e. attain Y ahyā's presence in Baghdad (?— see the following lines) (see trans. XI.b).

- 4) In the course of my researches I have noticed that there is in fact a work of the late Baghdad period in which Bahā'u'llāh refers to himself as an "ant" (namlat/nimlat). In the Persian section of the Lawh-i Bulbul al-Firāq (probably written in May 1863) he calls himself an "annihilated ant" (namlat-i fāniyya ; see text in Ishrāq Khāvarī, Ganj-i Shayḡān [Tehran 123 Badī^c], p. 43) (see Comm. on VI.b.).

- 5) The expression ard al-surūr, "Land of Exhilaration" is found in the writings of the Bāb (see trans. VI.b. XII). At one point, for example, in the XCIIIrd sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā (Browne Coll. MS. fol. 164b) the Bāb claims:

" I, verily, am the Fire in the Light..the Light of the [Sinaitic] Mount (al-tūr) in the Land of Exhilaration (ard al-surūr).."

Here ard al-surūr is indicative of the region where the Sinaitic theophany took place— not that this necessarily contradicts its being used by Bahā'u'llāh of Iraq/Baghdad (? , as the centre of Bābī guidance, the 'New Sinai').

- 6) In paragraph IXa. I have translated bi'l-sirr al-wafā' "through the Mystery of Fidelity". (cf. the opening line of Bahā'u'llāh's Rashh-i ^cAmā') Though it is still not clear to me exactly what this expression might mean a more accurate translation may well be "with interior[heart-felt] Fidelity [or Faithfulness — to the Bābī Covenant ?] " or, perhaps "through/in/ with the Trusted Secret/Faithful Mystery" (?).

- 7) In paragraph VI.b. reference is made to the "All-Beauteous Joseph" (yusuf al-jamāl). As indicated in the Commentary (see above) this might be a reference to the Bāb, Yahyā, Bahā'u'llāh himself or even man yuzhiruhu'llāh. Possibly supportive of its being a reference to Yahyā or man yuzhiruhu'llāh is the following passage from what is almost certainly an early writing of Mirzā Yahyā, the Kitāb al-Wāhid (early-mid-Baghdad period ?):

" I, [Yahyā] verily, am the garment (al-qamīs) of the All-Beauteous Joseph (yusuf al-jamāl).."¹

- 8) A fair number of references to the "Ark of the Testimony" (tabūt al-shahādat) occur, for example, in the Bāb's Qayyūm al-Asmā' (see above, trans., para., IX.a). The "Ark" (al-tabūt) is the source of a celestial fire (the Sinaitic Fire ?) or an heavenly region in which eschatological punishment will come upon the ungodly (see, for example, QA. XLI fol. 66a; LII. fol. 87a; LIII. fol. 90a; LXI. fol. 104a; LXX. fol. 122a; LXXII. fol. 125b; LXXIX. fol. 137a; LXXX. fol. 139a; LXXXII. fol. 143b; XCII. fol. 162b). The Sinaitic Fire and that of the celestial "Ark" are related. Also worth noting is the fact that in Bābī-Bahā'ī cosmogony the heavenly " throne" (al-^carsh) exists 'beyond Mt. Qāf' (cf. Qayyūm al-Asmā' CVIII. fol. 193b; LXXXVI. fol. 150b, etc.),²

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I should like, at this point to express my thanks to Dr. Denis MacEoin for reading over my provisional translation of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta^cam and to Dr. Peter Smith for a few useful remarks on the commentary.

1. Refer, INBA. MS. Vol. 80., p. 198 — on the Kitāb al-Wāhid (wrongly attributed to the Bāb) see my An Early Poem of Mirza Husayn ^cAlī Bahā'u'llāh: The Rashh-i ^cAmā' (in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin— forthcoming issue), Appendix.
2. On the significance of Mt. Qāf in mystic theosophy see for example, H. Corbin, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth (trans. N. Pearson., Princeton Univ. Press 1977), p. 73ff.

* Another possibility would be Mirzā Wahhāb-i Khurāsānī who was known as Mirzā Jawād (See Muhammad ^cAlī Fayḏī, Kitāb-i La'ālī-yi Dirakshān [Tehran 123 Badī^c], pp. 302-3).

ESSLEMONT'S SURVEY OF THE BAHAI COMMUNITY IN 1919-20:

Part VI: Egypt by Shaykh Faraju'llah and ~~Japan~~ by (?) Alexander

Moojan Momen (Ed.)

The sixth section of Esslemont's proposed chapter surveying the Baha'i community in 1919-1920 was to have been on Egypt. Among these papers there is an account of the Baha'i Faith in Egypt by Shaykh Faraju'llah az-Zaki al-Kurdi. He was an Egyptian who had been converted by Mirza Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygani. The document is in the hand-writing of Esslemont and was probably the translation of an oral account given by Shaykh Faraju'llah while both he and Esslemont were in Haifa in 1919-20. Unfortunately the document is incomplete; indeed it breaks off in mid-sentence. Also unfortunately, Shaykh Faraju'llah has only dealt with events in Egypt for the previous 15 years and has omitted the history of the Faith in Egypt since Baha'is first arrived there in about 1867.* Shaykh Faraju'llah's most notable achievements were in the field of the publication of Baha'i books in Egypt.

There is also an account of the Baha'i Faith in Japan among Esslemont's papers. This was evidently sent to him from Japan. Although there is no name on the manuscript, it is difficult to see who the author could be other than Agnes Alexander.** She had arrived in Japan shortly after Dr. G.J. Augur and was the person chiefly responsible for the building up of the Japanese Baha'i community.

** See A.B. Alexander, History of the Baha'i Faith in Japan, 1914-1938, Japan, 1977, especially pp. 4-32.

*See Momen (ed.), The Babi and Baha'i Religions (1844-1944), Oxford 1981, pp. 257-264. J.R. Cole, "Rashid Rida on the Baha'i Faith in Egypt: 1897-1921", unpublished paper. R. Mibrakhani, "Sharh Ahwal Jinab Mirza Abu'l-Fada'il Gulpaygani, Tihiran 131/1974, pp. 247-263, 298-311.

67.

Progress of Cause in Egypt:

16.1.20

Sheikh Farajullah

In olden times the B.B. had forbidden teaching in Egypt, Syria and Turkey for that reason little teaching was done. About 15 years ago, I met Mirza Abul Fazl. Sheikh Badruddin, Sheikh Ameen and I were his first students. While we were studying with him we came to know about the teachings and became believers. After a few years Abul Fazl went to America. We begged the Master to allow Abul Fazl to remain in Cairo and teach us instead of going to America. The Master wrote a tablet to me saying: "If you knew the wisdom of Abul Fazl's going to America, you would be very happy. Mirza A.F. will return with the utmost joy and happiness." Later on he returned and we met him again at Cairo. He was at Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said and sometimes Beyrouth until he passed away, but he would not teach the Cause because that was forbidden. Although forbidden to teach we talked about the movement to a few friends and a good number became believers - among them several Kurds. Mirza A.F.'s work was mostly writing. He had a special time for people to visit him - from about 3 p.m. till sunset. If asked questions he would answer them. Through the 3 Sheiks mentioned a few learned Egyptians from Alexandria and Cairo became Bahais. Later the Master himself came and spent a few weeks in Cairo. He was twice at Alexandria - on one occasion for several months at Ramleh. The visit of the Master aroused fresh interest in the Cause in Egypt. Last year - 5 or 6 mos. ago - Sheikh Mohyeddin and I received a Tablet from the Master in which he said "Now is the time for you to give the teachings you received from M.A.F. to those who are in need of them." We had just begun to teach when the Nationalist agitators became troublesome and the Master said we had better keep quiet. The friends in Egypt are very enlightened, enkindled and eager to serve. In Cairo there are about 200 friends and they are increasing day by day. In Port Said, Alexandria and Ismailieh together there are about 100.

Recently one of the friends in Egypt wrote to the Master suggesting that now was the time for Bahai Propaganda in Egypt. The Master replied: "No, the people's minds are full of politics at present. Later on the excitement over politics will subside. They will get tired of politics and listen more to us." The Master gave good tidings about the future of the Cause in Egypt: Mr. Tudor Pole published a book....

* B.B. - Blessed Beauty i.e. Baha'u'llah

+ Sheikh Badruddin - Shaykh Badru'd-Din al-Ghazzi, one of the eminent 'ulama of al-Azhar and later Qadi of Baylan, near Alexandria.

Sheikh Ameen - Shaykh Amin Halabi, later a qadi in Palestine

o Shaykh Mohyeddin - Shaykh Muhiyu'd-Din as-Sanandaji al-Kanmishkani al-Kurdi, one of the 'ulama of al-Azhar.

Sketch of the History and the Present Position of
the Bahai Movement in Japan

The history of the Bahai movement among the Japanese begins with Mr. Yamamoto, a young Japanese who in 1902 journeyed to Honolulu where he heard Abdul Baha and became confirmed in the Cause. Later going to Oakland, California, he served in the home of Mrs. Helen Goodall. Through his efforts in spreading the Teachings among his countrymen in Oakland, Mr. Fugeta, a young student, also became confirmed, and these two brothers were the first Japanese to receive Tablets from the Pen of Abdul Baha. Mr. Fugeta is now serving in the Holy Household in Haifa.

At different times Bahai pilgrims have passed through Japan, sowing seeds as they went. Among these were Messrs. Remy and Struven, who spent a week in Tokyo in the winter of 1910, Mme A. Bethlin, Mons. and Mme Dreyfus-Barney, and in the summer of 1915, Miss Martha Root, who served devotedly for two weeks, also Mr. Kenzo Torikai of Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., who visited his native land during the winter of 1916 and 1917 and helped in spreading the Fragrances, and last Mr. Yamamoto, who in 1919 wafted a fragrance over the land. It seemed, though, that Honolulu, which had become the melting pot of the orient and occident, was destined to prepare the souls who were to be the first permanent teachers in Japan. Dr. George J. Augur was the first to be sent by Abdul Baha to "Lay the foundation of the Cause", arriving in Japan in the summer of 1914. Six months later he was reinforced by Miss Agnes B. Alexander of Honolulu, whom Abdul Baha summoned from Europe to travel to Japan, "for the sake of spreading the fragrances of God." From the day of her arrival in Japan, the Divine confirmations descended uninterruptedly. The first Friday in Tokyo, November, 1914, a Bahai meeting was established and has continued since with few interruptions. To this meeting came young students eagerly seeking truth and knowledge. Soon after, Mr. Fukuta, a student of 19 years, became confirmed and sent a beautiful supplication to Abdul Baha. Later he had the honor of being the first in his land to receive a Tablet.

On March 21st., 1915, the first Bahai New Year feast was celebrated in Tokyo, and on May 23rd., of the same year, it seemed the Divine Spirit of this New Age came to repose eternally in Japan.

Dr Augur returned in the spring of 1915 to Honolulu, but since accompanied by Mrs. Augur has made two visits to Japan to help in the work of the Cause.

In 1916 two wonderful souls found the New Light in that land. One, a Buddhist priest Abbot, and the other a blind young man. Later a young girl, the first of her sex to be confirmed in Japan, was added to the number. She and the blind brother were blessed with Tablets when the doors to Palestine opened in 1918.

In the fall of the same year, a Bahai home was established in Tokyo by Miss Alexander and the work of translating and printing the literature in the Japanese language began. Previous to this, in 1915, Dr. Augur had written a short history of the Movement, which was translated and published in a small booklet.

Among the Japanese publications were two in braille for the blind. By this means the knowledge of the Cause has reached all the blind of Japan. This and the unity and friendliness between the Bahais and Esperantists, who have given great assistance in spreading the Movement, both through publishing translations of the Teachings in their Esperanto journals, and by invitations to speak of the Cause in public meetings, mark a unique phase of the Movement in that far Eastern land.

In 1917, a Japanese Bahai center was established in Tokyo by the blind brother, Mr. T. Torii.

The Teachings have spread rapidly throughout the country, especially so because of the lack of prejudice on the part of the Japanese who eagerly investigate everything new. The principle means of spreading the Cause has been through newspapers and magazine articles, literature and the spoken word. Many of the students on returning to their homes in different parts of the country, carry the Message with them.

In the cities of Osaka and Kobe there are a number of friends of Abdul Baha, though Tokyo is the only center where regular meetings have been held.

After two years spent in the United States, Miss Alexander has again returned to Japan in obedience to the wish of Abdul Baha and now another sister from America, Mrs. Ida Finch, is also engaged in illuminating that land.

Tokyo, Japan
Jan. 26, 1920

Among Esslemont's papers there was also the following:

JAPAN "A blind Japanese girl of twelve has sent this supplication to the Master:-

"I have heard from Miss A, of the spiritual minister to our comfort. She wrote about your works to me, who am an orphan from my early childhood and lost my sight afterwards. Through wonderful provision I was sent to the blind school and I am quite happy here now. We don't feel so sorry when we realise that we have lost our bodily sight, but we deeply pray that our spiritual eyes may be opened. As a rule blind people like myself live in the dark world and never get out into the world of light, but I feel I have now got Light, the Light of the Spirit which can never be put out. Goodbye,

(signed) Akibu Pu.
(Shoghi's Diary, 11:Jan.'19)

A book containing translations of the Holy Teachings has been printed in Japanese Braille and distributed among the blind of that land.

- ① - Daiun Inouye whom Agnes Alexander met in Kobe. He later translated Baha'u'llah and the New Era into Japanese
- ② - Tokujiro Torii. See his article "The Baha'i Movement in Japan", Baha'i World, Vol. IV, pp. 490-93.
- ③ - Yuri Mochizuki (later Mrs. Furukawa).

For further material on the History of the Baha'i Faith in Japan see references in Alexander, History of the Baha'i Faith in Japan, pp. 107-8, where is listed references in Star of the West, Baha'i World, etc.

NOTES, COMMUNICATIONS
&
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY

I

Selections From Baha'i Writings
on
Some Aspects of Health, Healing,
Nutrition and Related Matters.

compiled by
The Research Department of the
Universal House of Justice.

April 1984.

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SELECTIONS FROM BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS ON SOME ASPECTS OF
HEALTH, HEALING, NUTRITION AND RELATED MATTERS

April 1984

Compiled by: The Research Department
of the Universal House of Justice

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*

Whenever ye fall ill, refer to competent physicians. Verily, We have not abolished recourse to material means, rather have We affirmed it through this Pen which God hath made the Dawning Place of His luminous and resplendent Cause.

(Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

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We have granted you permission to study such sciences as will benefit you, not those which lead to idle disputes. Better is this for you, did ye but know.

(Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

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Whatever competent physicians or surgeons prescribe for a patient should be accepted and complied with, provided that they are adorned with the ornament of justice. If they were to be endued with divine understanding, that would certainly be preferable and more desirable.

(From a Tablet)

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Well is it with the physician who cureth ailments in My hallowed and dearly-cherished Name.

(From a Tablet)

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In all circumstances they should conduct themselves with moderation; if the meal be only one course this is more pleasing in the sight of God; however, according to their means, they should seek to have this single dish be of good quality.

(From Kitáb-i-Badí')

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Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body or mind. That a sick person showeth signs of weakness is due to the hindrances that interpose themselves between his soul and his body, for the soul itself remaineth unaffected by any bodily ailments. Consider the light of the lamp. Though an external object may interfere with its radiance, the light itself continueth to shine with undiminished power. In like manner, every malady afflicting the body of man is an impediment that preventeth the soul from manifesting its inherent might and power. When it leaveth the body, however, it will evince such ascendancy, and reveal such influence as no force on earth can equal. Every pure, every refined and sanctified soul will be endowed with tremendous power, and shall rejoice with exceeding gladness.

(GWB, LXXX)

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O BEFRIENDED STRANGER!

The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life.

(From the Persian "Hidden Words", No. 32)

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Do not neglect medical treatment when it is necessary, but leave it off when health has been restored. Treat disease through diet, by preference, refraining from the use of drugs; and if you find what is required in a single herb, do not resort to a compounded medicament....Abstain from drugs when the health is good, but administer them when necessary.

(BNE, p. 106)

*All passages are translated extracts from untranslated Tablets or new translations of texts already published unless reference to source of publication is given.

Verily the most necessary thing is contentment under all circumstances; by this one is preserved from morbid conditions and from lassitude. Yield not to grief and sorrow: they cause the greatest misery. Jealousy consumeth the body and anger doth burn the liver: avoid these two as you would a lion.

(BNE, p. 108)

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS AND UTTERANCES OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*

Thou shouldst endeavour to study the science of medicine. It is extremely useful and serveth as the greatest instrument for the dissemination of the Cause. It is absolutely imperative that thou acquire this bounty. Strive day and night that thou mayest become highly qualified in this science. And when thou wishest to dispense treatment set thy heart toward the Abhá Kingdom, entreating divine confirmations.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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Thou shouldst continue thy profession and at the same time try to serve the Kingdom of God.

(From a Tablet to a physician)

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...thou hast written about thy poor sight. According to the explicit divine text the sick must refer to the doctor. This decree is decisive and everyone is bound to observe it. While thou art there thou shouldst consult the most skilled and the most famed eye specialist.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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One must obey the command of God and submit to medical opinion. Thou hast undertaken this journey to comply with His command and not for the sake of healing, since healing is in the hand of God, not in the hand of doctors.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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That the Most Great Name exerciseth influence over both physical and spiritual matters is sure and certain.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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The child must, from the day of his birth, be provided with whatever is conducive to his health; and know ye this: so far as possible, the mother's milk is best for, more agreeable and better suited to, the child, unless she should fall ill or her milk should run entirely dry.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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...When thou wishest to treat nervous pains turn thy whole being to the realm on high with thine heart detached from aught else besides Him and thy soul enraptured by the love of God. Then seek confirmation of the Holy Spirit from the Abhá Kingdom, while touching the affected part with utmost love, tenderness and attraction to God. When all these things are combined, be assured that healing will take place.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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Regarding the eating of animal flesh and abstinence therefrom, know thou of a certainty that, in the beginning of creation, God determined the food of every living being, and to eat contrary to that determination is not approved. For instance, beasts of prey, such as the wolf, lion and leopard, are endowed with ferocious, tearing instruments, such as hooked talons and claws. From this it is evident that the food of such beasts is meat. If they were to attempt to graze, their teeth would not cut the grass, neither could they chew the cud, for they do not have molars. Likewise, God hath given to the four-footed grazing animals such teeth as reap the grass like a sickle, and from this we understand that the food of these species of animal is vegetable. They cannot chase and hunt down other animals. The falcon hath a hooked beak and sharp talons; the hooked beak preventeth him from grazing, therefore his food also is meat.

*All passages are translated extracts from untranslated Tablets or new translations of texts already published unless reference to source of publication is given.

But now coming to man, we see he hath neither hooked teeth nor sharp nails or claws, nor teeth like iron sickles. From this it becometh evident and manifest that the food of man is cereals and fruit. Some of the teeth of man are like millstones to grind the grain, and some are sharp to cut the fruit. Therefore he is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to eat it. Even without eating meat he would live with the utmost vigour and energy. For example, the community of the Brahmns in India do not eat meat; notwithstanding this they are not inferior to other nations in strength, power, vigour, outward senses or intellectual virtues. Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruit, oil and nuts, such as pistachios, almonds and so on, it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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Thou hast written regarding the four canine teeth in man, saying that these teeth, two in the upper jaw and two in the lower, are for the purpose of eating meat. Know thou that these four teeth are not created for meat-eating, although one can eat meat with them. All the teeth of man are made for eating fruit, cereals and vegetables. These four teeth, however, are designed for breaking hard shells, such as those of almonds. But eating meat is not forbidden or unlawful, nay, the point is this, that it is possible for man to live without eating meat and still be strong. Meat is nourishing and containeth the elements of herbs, seeds and fruits; therefore sometimes it is essential for the sick and for the rehabilitation of health. There is no objection in the Law of God to the eating of meat if it is required. So if thy constitution is rather weak and thou findest meat useful, thou mayest eat it.

(From a Tablet to an individual believer)

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Thy letter was received. I hope that thou mayest be protected and assisted under the providence of the True One, be occupied always in mentioning the Lord and display effort to complete thy profession. Thou must endeavour greatly so that thou mayest become unique in thy profession and famous in those parts, because attaining perfection in one's profession in this merciful period is considered to be worship of God. And whilst thou art occupied with thy profession, thou canst remember the True One.

(SWA, pp. 145-146)

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O ye, God's loved ones! Experience hath shown how greatly the renouncing of smoking, of intoxicating drink, and of opium, conduceth to health and vigour, to the expansion and keenness of the mind and to bodily strength. There is today a people¹ who strictly avoid tobacco, intoxicating liquor and opium. This people is far and away superior to the others, for strength and physical courage, for health, beauty and comeliness. A single one of their men can stand up to ten men of another tribe. This hath proved true of the entire people: that is, member for member, each individual of this community is in every respect superior to the individuals of other communities.

Make ye then a mighty effort, that the purity and sanctity which, above all else, are cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahā, shall distinguish the people of Bahā; that in every kind of excellence the people of God shall surpass all other human beings; that both outwardly and inwardly they shall prove superior to the rest; that for purity, immaculacy, refinement, and the preservation of health, they shall be leaders in the vanguard of those who know. And that by their freedom from enslavement, their knowledge, their self-control, they shall be first among the pure, the free and the wise.

(SWA, p. 150)

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O thou distinguished physician!...Praise be to God that thou hast two powers: one to undertake physical healing and the other spiritual healing. Matters related to man's spirit have a great effect on his bodily condition. For instance, thou shouldst impart gladness to thy patient, give him comfort and joy, and bring him to ecstasy and exultation. How often hath it occurred that this hath caused early recovery. Therefore, treat thou the sick with both powers. Spiritual feelings have a surprising effect on healing nervous ailments.

(SWA, pp. 150-151)

Although ill health is one of the unavoidable conditions of man, truly it is hard to bear. The bounty of good health is the greatest of all gifts.

(SWA, p. 151)

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When giving medical treatment turn to the Blessed Beauty, then follow the dictates of thy heart. Remedy the sick by means of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation, cure the sorely afflicted by imparting to them blissful glad tidings and heal the wounded through His resplendent bestowals. When at the bedside of a patient, cheer and gladden his heart and enrapture his spirit through celestial power. Indeed, such a heavenly breath quickeneth every mouldering bone and reviveth the spirit of every sick and ailing one.

(SWA, p. 151)

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There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the treatment of physicians; the second consisteth in prayers offered by the spiritual ones to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practised.

Illnesses which occur by reason of physical causes should be treated by doctors with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed more effectively by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of treatment should be followed; they are not contradictory. Therefore thou shouldst also accept physical remedies inasmuch as these too have come from the mercy and favour of God, Who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvellous effects.

Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them.

(SWA, pp. 151-152)

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O thou who art attracted to the fragrant breathings of God! I have read thy letter addressed to Mrs. Lua Getsinger. Thou hast indeed examined with great care the reasons for the incursion of disease into the human body. It is certainly the case that sins are a potent cause of physical ailments. If humankind were free from the defilements of sin and waywardness, and lived according to a natural, inborn equilibrium, without following wherever their passions led, it is undeniable that diseases would no longer take the ascendant, nor diversify with such intensity.

But man hath perversely continued to serve his lustful appetites, and he would not content himself with simple foods. Rather, he prepared for himself food that was compounded of many ingredients, of substances differing one from the other. With this, and with the perpetrating of vile and ignoble acts, his attention was engrossed, and he abandoned the temperance and moderation of a natural way of life. The result was the engendering of diseases both violent and diverse.

For the animal, as to its body, is made up of the same constituent elements as man. Since, however, the animal contenteth itself with simple foods and striveth not to indulge its importunate urges to any great degree, and committeth no sins, its ailments relative to man's are few. We see clearly, therefore, how powerful are sin and contumacy as pathogenic factors. And once engendered these diseases become compounded, multiply, and are transmitted to others. Such are the spiritual, inner causes of sickness.

The outer, physical causal factor in disease, however, is a disturbance in the balance, the proportionate equilibrium of all those elements of which the human body is composed. To illustrate: the body of man is a compound of many constituent substances, each component being present in a prescribed amount, contributing to the essential equilibrium of the whole. So long as these constituents remain in their due proportion, according to the natural balance of the whole - that is, no component suffereth a change in its natural proportionate degree and balance, no component being either augmented or decreased - there will be no physical cause for the incursion of disease.

For example, the starch component must be present to a given amount, and the sugar to a given amount. So long as each remaineth in its natural proportion to the whole, there will be no cause for the onset of disease. When, however, these constituents vary as to their natural and due amounts - that is, when they are augmented or diminished - it is certain that this will provide for the inroads of disease.

This question requireth the most careful investigation. The Báb hath said that the people of Bahá must develop the science of medicine to such a high degree that they will heal illnesses by means of foods. The basic reason for this is that if, in some component substance of the human body, an imbalance should occur, altering its correct, relative proportion to the whole, this fact will inevitably result in the onset of disease. If, for example, the starch component should be unduly augmented, or the sugar component decreased, an illness will take control. It is the function of a skilled physician to determine which constituent of his patient's body hath suffered diminution, which hath been augmented. Once he hath discovered this, he must prescribe a food containing the diminished element in considerable amounts, to re-establish the body's essential equilibrium. The patient, once his constitution is again in balance, will be rid of his disease.

The proof of this is that while other animals have never studied medical science, nor carried on researches into diseases or medicines, treatments or cures - even so, when one of them falleth a prey to sickness, nature leadeth it, in fields or desert places, to the very plant which, once eaten, will rid the animal of its disease. The explanation is that if, as an example, the sugar component in the animal's body hath decreased, according to a natural law the animal hankereth after a herb that is rich in sugar. Then, by a natural urge, which is the appetite, among a thousand different varieties of plants across the field, the animal will discover and consume that herb which containeth a sugar component in large amounts. Thus the essential balance of the substances composing its body is re-established, and the animal is rid of its disease.

This question requireth the most careful investigation. When highly-skilled physicians shall fully examine this matter, thoroughly and perseveringly, it will be clearly seen that the incursion of disease is due to a disturbance in the relative amounts of the body's component substances, and that treatment consisteth in adjusting these relative amounts, and that this can be apprehended and made possible by means of foods.

It is certain that in this wonderful new age the development of medical science will lead to the doctors' healing their patients with foods. For the sense of sight, the sense of hearing, of taste, of smell, of touch - all these are discriminative faculties, their purpose being to separate the beneficial from whatever causeth harm. Now, is it possible that man's sense of smell, the sense that differentiates odours, should find some odour repugnant, and that odour be beneficial to the human body? Absurd! Impossible! In the same way, could the human body, through the faculty of sight - the differentiator among things visible - benefit from gazing upon a revolting mass of excrement? Never! Again, if the sense of taste, likewise a faculty that selecteth and rejecteth, be offended by something, that thing is certainly not beneficial; and if, at the outset, it may yield some advantage, in the long run its harmfulness will be established.

And likewise, when the constitution is in a state of equilibrium, there is no doubt that whatever is relished will be beneficial to health. Observe how an animal will graze in a field where there are a hundred thousand kinds of herbs and grasses, and how, with its sense of smell, it snuffeth up the odours of the plants, and tasteth them with its sense of taste; then it consumeth whatever herb is pleasurable to these senses, and benefiteth therefrom. Were it not for this power of selectivity, the animals would all be dead in a single day; for there are a great many poisonous plants, and animals know nothing of the pharmacopoeia. And yet, observe what a reliable set of scales they have, by means of which to differentiate the good from the injurious. Whatever constituent of their body hath decreased, they can rehabilitate by seeking out and consuming some plant that hath an abundant store of that diminished element; and thus the equilibrium of their bodily components is re-established, and they are rid of their disease.

At whatever time highly-skilled physicians shall have developed the healing of illnesses by means of foods, and shall make provision for simple foods, and shall prohibit humankind from living as slaves to their lustful appetites, it is certain that the incidence of chronic and diversified illnesses will abate, and the general health of all mankind will be much improved. This is destined to come about. In the same way, in the character, the conduct and the manners of men, universal modifications will be made.

(SWA, pp. 152-156)

According to the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh one must not turn aside from the advice of a competent doctor. It is imperative to consult one even if the patient himself be a well-known and eminent physician. In short, the point is that you should maintain your health by consulting a highly-skilled physician.

(SWA, p. 156)

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It is incumbent upon everyone to seek medical treatment and to follow the doctor's instructions, for this is in compliance with the divine ordinance, but, in reality, He Who giveth healing is God.

(SWA, p. 156)

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O handmaid of God! The prayers which were revealed to ask for healing apply both to physical and spiritual healing. Recite them, then, to heal both the soul and the body. If healing is right for the patient, it will certainly be granted; but for some ailing persons, healing would only be the cause of other ills, and therefore wisdom doth not permit an affirmative answer to the prayer.

O handmaid of God! The power of the Holy Spirit healeth both physical and spiritual ailments.

(SWA, pp. 161-162)

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...every branch of learning, conjoined with the love of God, is approved and worthy of praise; but bereft of His love, learning is barren - indeed, it bringeth on madness. Every kind of knowledge, every science, is as a tree: if the fruit of it be the love of God, then is it a blessed tree, but if not, that tree is but dried-up wood, and shall only feed the fire.

O thou loyal servant of God and thou spiritual healer of man! Whosoever thou dost attend a patient, turn thy face toward the Lord of the heavenly Kingdom, ask the Holy Spirit to come to thine aid, then heal thou the sickness.

(SWA, p. 181)

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...if a doctor consoles a sick man by saying, "Thank God you are better, and there is hope of your recovery," though these words are contrary to the truth, yet they may become the consolation of the patient and the turning point of the illness. This is not blameworthy.

(SAQ, pp. 215-216)

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If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; and if it be expended to the benefit of the human world in general - even though it be to their material (or bodily) benefit - and be a means of doing good, that is also acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane, and in devilish pursuits - then disease were better than such health; nay, death itself were preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom. I hope that thou mayest attain perfect insight, inflexible resolution, complete health, and spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of divine confirmation.

(From a Tablet to the Bahá'is of Washington, quoted in BNE pp. 114-115, and BWF p. 376)

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I ever pray on her behalf and beg from God His divine remedy and healing. As in this Dispensation consultation with expert doctors is highly advisable and acting in accordance with their prescriptions obligatory, it is well for her to undergo an operation if deemed necessary by such doctors.

(From a Tablet, quoted in SW, Vol. XII, No. 7, p. 134)

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Therefore, it is evident that this spirit is different from the body, and that the bird is different from the cage, and that the power and penetration of the spirit is stronger without the intermediary of the body. Now, if the instrument is abandoned, the possessor of the instrument continues to act. For example, if the pen is abandoned or broken, the writer remains living and present; if a house is ruined, the owner is alive and existing. This is one of the logical evidences for the immortality of the soul.

There is another: this body becomes weak or heavy or sick, or it finds health; it becomes tired or rested; sometimes the hand or leg is amputated, or its physical power is crippled; it becomes blind or deaf or dumb; its limbs may become paralyzed; briefly, the body may have all the imperfections. Nevertheless, the spirit in its original state, in its own spiritual perception, will be eternal and perpetual; it neither finds any imperfection, nor will it become crippled. But when the body is wholly subjected to disease and misfortune, it is deprived of the bounty of the spirit, like a mirror which, when it becomes broken or dirty or dusty, cannot reflect the rays of the sun nor any longer show its bounties.

We have already explained that the spirit of man is not in the body because it is freed and sanctified from entrance and exit, which are bodily conditions. The connection of the spirit with the body is like that of the sun with the mirror. Briefly, the human spirit is in one condition. It neither becomes ill from the diseases of the body nor cured by its health; it does not become sick, nor weak, nor miserable, nor poor, nor light, nor small - that is to say, it will not be injured because of the infirmities of the body, and no effect will be visible even if the body becomes weak, or if the hands and feet and tongue be cut off, or if it loses the power of hearing or sight. Therefore, it is evident and certain that the spirit is different from the body, and that its duration is independent of that of the body; on the contrary, the spirit with the utmost greatness rules in the world of the body; and its power and influence, like the bounty of the sun in the mirror, are apparent and visible. But when the mirror becomes dusty or breaks, it will cease to reflect the rays of the sun.

(SAQ, pp. 228-229)

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Question. - Some people heal the sick by spiritual means - that is to say, without medicine. How is this?

Answer. - Know that there are four kinds of curing and healing without medicine. Two are due to material causes, and two to spiritual causes.

Of the two kinds of material healing, one is due to the fact that in man both health and sickness are contagious. The contagion of disease is violent and rapid, while that of health is extremely weak and slow. If two bodies are brought into contact with each other, it is certain that microbic particles will pass from one to the other. In the same way that disease is transferred from one body to another with rapid and strong contagion, it may be that the strong health of a healthy man will alleviate a very slight malady in a sick person. That is to say, the contagion of disease is violent and has a rapid effect, while that of health is very slow and has a small effect, and it is only in very slight diseases that it has even this small effect. The strong power of a healthy body can overcome a slight weakness of a sick body, and health results. This is one kind of healing.

The other kind of healing without medicine is through the magnetic force which acts from one body on another and becomes the cause of cure. This force also has only a slight effect. Sometimes one can benefit a sick person by placing one's hand upon his head or upon his heart. Why? Because of the effect of the magnetism, and of the mental impression made upon the sick person, which causes the disease to vanish. But this effect is also very slight and weak.

Of the two other kinds of healing which are spiritual - that is to say, where the means of cure is a spiritual power - one results from the entire concentration of the mind of a strong person upon a sick person, when the latter expects with all his concentrated faith that a cure will be effected from the spiritual power of the strong person, to such an extent that there will be a cordial connection between the strong person and the invalid. The strong person makes every effort to cure the sick patient, and the sick patient is then sure of receiving a cure. From the effect of these mental impressions an excitement of the nerves is produced, and this impression and this excitement of the nerves will become the cause of the recovery of the sick person. So when a sick person has a strong desire and intense hope for something and hears suddenly the tidings of its realization, a nervous excitement is produced which will make the malady entirely disappear. In the same way, if a cause of terror suddenly occurs, perhaps an excitement may be produced in the nerves of a strong person which will immediately cause a malady. The cause of the sickness will be no material thing, for that person has not eaten anything, and nothing harmful has touched him; the excitement of the

nerves is then the only cause of the illness. In the same way the sudden realization of a chief desire will give such joy that the nerves will be excited by it, and this excitement may produce health.

To conclude, the complete and perfect connection between the spiritual doctor and the sick person - that is, a connection of such a kind that the spiritual doctor entirely concentrates himself, and all the attention of the sick person is given to the spiritual doctor from whom he expects to realize health - causes an excitement of the nerves, and health is produced. But all this has effect only to a certain extent, and that not always. For if someone is afflicted with a very violent disease, or is wounded, these means will not remove the disease nor close and heal the wound - that is to say, these means have no power in severe maladies, unless the constitution helps, because a strong constitution often overcomes disease. This is the third kind of healing.

But the fourth kind of healing is produced through the power of the Holy Spirit. This does not depend on contact, nor on sight, nor upon presence; it is not dependent upon any condition. Whether the disease be light or severe, whether there be a contact of bodies or not, whether a personal connection be established between the sick person and the healer or not, this healing takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit.

(SAQ, pp. 254-256)

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Yesterday at table we spoke of curative treatment and spiritual healing, which consists in treating maladies through the spiritual powers.

Now let us speak of material healing. The science of medicine is still in a condition of infancy; it has not reached maturity. But when it has reached this point, cures will be performed by things which are not repulsive to the smell and taste of man - that is to say, by ailments, fruits and vegetables which are agreeable to the taste and have an agreeable smell. For the provoking cause of disease - that is to say, the cause of the entrance of disease into the human body - is either a physical one or is the effect of excitement of the nerves.

But the principal causes of disease are physical, for the human body is composed of numerous elements, but in the measure of an especial equilibrium. As long as this equilibrium is maintained, man is preserved from disease; but if this essential balance, which is the pivot of the constitution, is disturbed, the constitution is disordered, and disease will supervene.

For instance, there is a decrease in one of the constituent ingredients of the body of man, and in another there is an increase; so the proportion of the equilibrium is disturbed, and disease occurs. For example, one ingredient must be one thousand grams in weight, and another five grams, in order that the equilibrium be maintained. The part which is one thousand grams diminishes to seven hundred grams, and that which is five grams augments until the measure of the equilibrium is disturbed; then disease occurs. When by remedies and treatments the equilibrium is reestablished, the disease is banished. So if the sugar constituent increases, the health is impaired; and when the doctor forbids sweet and starchy foods, the sugar constituent diminishes, the equilibrium is reestablished, and the disease is driven off. Now the readjustment of these constituents of the human body is obtained by two means - either by medicines or by ailments; and when the constitution has recovered its equilibrium, disease is banished. All the elements that are combined in man exist also in vegetables; therefore, if one of the constituents which compose the body of man diminishes, and he partakes of foods in which there is much of that diminished constituent, then the equilibrium will be established, and a cure will be obtained. So long as the aim is the readjustment of the constituents of the body, it can be effected either by medicine or by foods.

The majority of the diseases which overtake man also overtake the animal, but the animal is not cured by drugs. In the mountains, as in the wilderness, the animal's physician is the power of taste and smell. The sick animal smells the plants that grow in the wilderness; he eats those that are sweet and fragrant to his smell and taste, and is cured. The cause of his healing is this. When the sugar ingredient has become diminished in his constitution, he begins to long for sweet things; therefore, he eats an herb with a sweet taste, for nature urges and guides him; its smell and taste please him, and he eats it. The sugar ingredient in his nature will be increased, and health will be restored.

It is, therefore, evident that it is possible to cure by foods, aliments and fruits; but as today the science of medicine is imperfect, this fact is not yet fully grasped. When the science of medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, aliments, fragrant fruits and vegetables, and by various waters, hot and cold in temperature.

This discourse is brief; but, if God wills, at another time, when the occasion is suitable, this question will be more fully explained.

(SAQ, pp. 257-259)

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We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. In the East it is the custom to call upon the patient often and meet him individually. The people in the East show the utmost kindness and compassion to the sick and suffering. This has greater effect than the remedy itself. You must always have this thought of love and affection when you visit the ailing and afflicted.

(PUP, p. 204)

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All true healing comes from God! There are two causes for sickness, one is material, the other spiritual. If the sickness is of the body, a material remedy is needed, if of the soul, a spiritual remedy.

If the heavenly benediction be upon us while we are being healed then only can we be made whole, for medicine is but the outward and visible means through which we obtain the heavenly healing. Unless the spirit be healed, the cure of the body is worth nothing. All is in the hands of God, and without Him there can be no health in us!

There have been many men who have died at last of the very disease of which they have made a special study. Aristotle, for instance, who made a special study of the digestion, died of a gastronomic malady. Avicenna was a specialist of the heart, but he died of heart disease. God is the great compassionate Physician who alone has the power to give true healing.

(PT, p. 19)

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When an illness is slight a small remedy will suffice to heal it, but when the slight illness becomes a terrible disease, then a very strong remedy must be used by the Divine Healer.

(PT, p. 27)

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This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer. A physician ministering to the sick, gently, tenderly, free from prejudice and believing in the solidarity of the human race, he is giving praise.

(PT, p. 177)

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The healing that is by the power of the Holy Spirit needs no special concentration or contact. It is through the wish or desire and the prayer of the holy person. The one who is sick may be in the East and the healer in the West, and they may not have been acquainted with each other, but as soon as that holy person turns his heart to God and begins to pray, the sick one is healed. This is a gift belonging to the Holy Manifestations and those who are in the highest station.

(BNE, p. 104)

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"What will be the food of the future?" "Fruit and grains. The time will come when meat will no longer be eaten. Medical science is only in its infancy, yet it has shown that our natural diet is that which grows out of the ground. The people will gradually develop up to the condition of this natural food."

(TDLA, pp. 8-9)

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

(The following are from letters to individual believers unless otherwise stated)

In regard to the question as to whether people ought to kill animals for food or not, there is no explicit statement in the Bahá'í Sacred Scriptures (as far as I know) in favour or against it. It is certain, however, that if man can live on a purely vegetarian diet and thus avoid killing animals, it would be much preferable. This is, however, a very controversial question and the Bahá'ís are free to express their views on it.

(9 July 1931)

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'Abdu'l-Bahá does often state that the medical science will much improve. With the appearance of every Revelation a new insight is created in man and this in turn expresses itself in the growth of science. This has happened in past dispensations and we find its earliest fruits in our present day. What we see however is only the beginning. With the spiritual awakening of man this force will develop and marvelous results will become manifest.

(14 January 1932)

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Bahá'u'lláh tells us that in case of disease we should pray but at the same time refer to competent physicians, and abide by their considered decision. Shoghi Effendi wishes you therefore to find whether your son has really become ill, and if he is, then follow the directions of the doctor. Being versed in the medical sciences they can treat better than even a loving mother can. You can render your assistance by praying for him and at the same time helping the physicians to treat him.

(9 April 1933)

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In the Book of Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh urges us, that when we obtain any physical ailment we should refer to the doctor and abide by his decision. Physical and spiritual forces have both to be used to secure the speedy recovery of the patients; no partial treatment is sufficient.

(1 June 1933)

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...Healing through purely spiritual forces is undoubtedly as inadequate as that which materialist physicians and thinkers vainly seek to obtain by resorting entirely to mechanical devices and methods. The best result can be obtained by combining the two processes: spiritual and physical.

(12 March 1934)

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With regard to your question concerning spiritual healing. Such a healing constitutes, indeed, one of the most effective methods of relieving a person from either his mental or physical pains and sufferings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has in His "Paris Talks" emphasized its importance by stating that it should be used as an essential means for effecting a complete physical cure. Spiritual healing, however, is not and cannot be a substitute for material healing, but it is a most valuable adjunct to it. Both are, indeed, essential and complementary.

(16 February 1935)

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With reference to your question concerning spiritual healing. Its importance, as you surely know, has been greatly emphasized by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who considered it, indeed, as an essential part of physical processes of healing. Physical healing cannot be complete and lasting unless it is reinforced by spiritual healing. And this last one can be best obtained through obedience to the laws and commandments of God as revealed to us through His Manifestations. Individual believers, however, can also help by imparting healing to others. But the success of their efforts depends entirely on their strict adherence to the Teachings, and also on the manner in which they impart them to others. According to Bahá'u'lláh man cannot obtain full guidance directly from God. He must rather seek it through His Prophets. Provided this principle is clearly understood and explained, the Guardian sees no harm that the friends should try to effect spiritual

healing in others. Any such cure effected, however, should be done in the name of Bahá'u'lláh and in accordance with His teachings. For God, and God alone is the Supreme and Almighty Physician, and all else are but instruments in His hands.

(23 May 1935)

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As to your question concerning the meaning of physical suffering and its relation to mental and spiritual healing. Physical pain is a necessary accompaniment of all human existence, and as such is unavoidable. As long as there will be life on earth, there will be also suffering, in various forms and degrees. But suffering, although an inescapable reality, can nevertheless be utilised as a means for the attainment of happiness. This is the interpretation given to it by all the prophets and saints who, in the midst of severe tests and trials, felt happy and joyous and experienced what is best and holiest in life. Suffering is both a reminder and a guide. It stimulates us to better adapt ourselves to our environmental conditions, and thus leads the way to self-improvement. In every suffering one can find a meaning and a wisdom. But it is not always easy to find the secret of that wisdom. It is sometimes only when all our suffering has passed that we become aware of its usefulness. What man considers to be evil turns often to be a cause of infinite blessings. And this is due to his desire to know more than he can. God's wisdom is, indeed, inscrutable to us all, and it is no use pushing too far trying to discover that which shall always remain a mystery to our mind.

(29 May 1935)

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Regarding your questions concerning the condition of the soul during illness. The passages in the 'Gleanings' make it quite clear that physical ailments, no matter how severe, cannot bring any change in the inherent condition of the soul. As Bahá'u'lláh says: 'The spirit is permanent and steadfast in its station'. The veil or hindrance that interposes between soul and body during physical disease is sickness itself. Sickness reveals a lack of balance in human organism, an absence of equilibrium in the forces essential for the normal functioning of the human body.

(8 March 1936)

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As to your question regarding the possibility of an artificial production of life by means of an incubator; this is essentially a matter that concerns science, and as such should be investigated and studied by scientists.

(31 December 1937)

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...As to the possibility of conception without the presence of a male sperm in the future; this is a question which lies entirely within the province of science, and which future scientists will have to investigate.

(27 February 1938)

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The Teachings bear no reference to the question of telepathy. It is a matter that concerns psychology.

(28 February 1938)

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The eating of pork is not forbidden in the Bahá'í Teachings.

(27 March 1938)

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These investigations you have so painstakingly pursued in the field of medical science, and on a subject which is still puzzling the minds of all the leading scientists in the world, cannot but be of a captivating interest and of a great value to all medical research workers.

It is significant that you as a believer should have undertaken a work of this nature, as we all know that the powers released by the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh in this day are destined, in the course of time, to reveal themselves through the instrumentality of His followers, and in every conceivable field of human endeavour.

That you should increasingly prove, through your confirmed researches in the domain of medicine, to be one of those instruments, is the fervent hope of our beloved Guardian.

(29 November 1938)

...Such hindrances [i.e. illness and outer difficulties], no matter how severe and insuperable they may at first seem, can and should be effectively overcome through the combined and sustained power of prayer and of determined and continued effort.

(6 February 1939)

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The Bahá'í Teachings do not only encourage marital life, considering it the natural and normal way of existence for every sane, healthy and socially-conscious and responsible person, but raise marriage to the status of a divine institution, its chief and sacred purpose being the perpetuation of the human race - which is the very flower of the entire creation - and its elevation to the true station destined for it by God.

That there should be, however, certain individuals, who, by reason of some serious deficiency, physical or mental, would be incapacitated to contract marriage and enjoy the blessings of an enduring and successful marital life, is only too evident, but these constitute only a very small section of humanity, and are therefore merely an exception, and their condition cannot possibly invalidate what an all-wise and loving Providence has decreed to be the normal way to a fruitful and constructive social existence.

The exact conditions and circumstances under which such incapacitated individuals should be advised or even prevented perhaps from entering into any sort of marital existence have not been specified in the Bahá'í Writings, but will have to be defined later on by the Universal House of Justice. In the meantime, those believers who consider themselves as falling into the above category would do well, before taking any final decision themselves, to consult medical experts, who are both conscientious and competent, and to abide by their recommendation.

(15 April 1939)

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Also with regard to the practice of circumcision; the Teachings bear no reference to this matter, and it is therefore not enjoined upon the believers.

(14 December 1940 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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Regarding your question about vaccination: These are technical matters which have not been specifically mentioned in the teachings, and consequently the Guardian cannot make any statement about them. No doubt medical science will progress tremendously as time goes by, and the treatment of disease become more perfect.

(24 December 1943)

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As to your question about healing: although there is no objection to your helping others to regain their health, he does not feel you should associate the name Bahá'í with your work, as it gives a wrong impression; we have no 'Bahá'í healers' as Christian Science and various other sects have. You are a Bahá'í and a healer, and that is quite different.

(13 December 1945)

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The Tablet to a Physician was addressed to a man who was a student of the old type of healing prevalent in the East and familiar with the terminology used in those days, and He addresses him in terms used by the medical men of those days. These terms are quite different from those used by modern medicine, and one would have to have a deep knowledge of this former school of medicine to understand the questions Bahá'u'lláh was elucidating.

The Guardian never goes into technical matters, as this is not his work. Bahá'u'lláh has recommended that people seek the help and advice of experts and doctors; He does not say which school they should belong to.

Likewise there is nothing in the teachings about whether people should eat their food cooked or raw; exercise or not exercise; resort to specific therapies or not; nor is it forbidden to eat meat.

Bahá'u'lláh says teaching is the greatest of all services, but He does not mean one should give up medicine to teach.

(18 December 1945)

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The greatest form of healing which the Bahá'ís can practice is to heal the spiritually sick souls of men by giving this greatest of all Messages to them. We can also try to help them, both physically and spiritually, through prayer.

(25 March 1946)

There is nothing in the teachings which would forbid a Bahá'í to bequeath his eyes to another person or for a Hospital; on the contrary it seems a noble thing to do.

(6 September 1946)

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He feels you should certainly think of your future and earning your living, and if chiropractic is the work you wish to go in for, you should continue your education; when you are finished it would be highly meritorious to enter the pioneer field, as for many years to come Bahá'í teachers will be needed in distant lands.

(31 March 1947)

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...you should not neglect your health, but consider it the means which enables you to serve. It - the body - is like a horse which carries the personality and spirit, and as such should be well cared for so it can do its work! You should certainly safeguard your nerves, and force yourself to take time, and not only for prayer and meditation, but for real rest and relaxation.

(23 November 1947)

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...Very little is as yet known about the mind and its workings. But one thing is certain: Bahá'ís can and do receive a very remarkable help and protection in this world, one which often surprises their doctors very much!

(9 April 1948)

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The Guardian knows nothing about your kind of healing, nor would he care to go into the question in detail, as he has no time for such matters. But he can lay down for your guidance certain broad principles: there is no such thing as Bahá'í healers or a Bahá'í type of healing. In His Most Holy Book (the Aqdas) Bahá'u'lláh says to consult the best physicians, in other words doctors who have studied a scientific system of medicine; He never gave us to believe He Himself would heal us through 'healers', but rather through prayer and the assistance of medicine and approved treatments.

Now, as long as your healing is in no opposition to these principles, as long as you do not try and take the place of a regular doctor in trying to heal others, but only give them your kind of help through constructive suggestion - or whatever it may be - and do not associate this help with being a channel of the direct grace of Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian sees no harm in your continuing your assistance to others. But you must conscientiously decide whether in view of the above you are really justified in continuing. He will pray for your guidance and happiness.

(8 June 1948)

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He does not feel that you should try to do anything special about the capacity you feel to help people when they are ill. This does not mean you should not use it, when the occasion arises, such as it did recently. But he means you should not become a "healer" such as the Christian Scientists have, and we Bahá'ís do not have.

(25 December 1949)

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We have no reason to believe that the healing of the Holy Spirit cannot be attracted by ordinary human beings. But this is rare, a mystery, and a gift of God.

(26 March 1950)

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There is nothing in our teachings about Freud and his method. Psychiatric treatment in general is no doubt an important contribution to medicine, but we must believe it is still a growing rather than a perfected science. As Bahá'u'lláh has urged us to avail ourselves of the help of good physicians Bahá'ís are certainly not only free to turn to psychiatry for assistance but should, when advisable, do so. This does not mean psychiatrists are always wise or always right, it means we are free to avail ourselves of the best medicine has to offer us.

(15 June 1950 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles)

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...as we are a religion and not qualified to pass on scientific matters we cannot sponsor different treatments. We are certainly free to pass on what we have found beneficial to others.

(30 September 1950)

The Guardian sees no reason why you should not continue to help sick people. As he wrote some of the believers regarding this matter previously, as long as you do not say you are healing them as a Bahá'í, or because you are a Bahá'í (because we have no "healers" in the Cause as such) there can be certainly no objection to your doing it. On the contrary, to be able to help another soul who is in suffering is a great bounty from God.

(5 October 1950)

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There is nothing in the Teachings about chiropractic as a method of healing. People are free to turn to it if they please and find help through it.

(10 February 1951)

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Regarding your question: there are very few people who can get along without eight hours sleep. If you are not one of those, you should protect your health by sleeping enough. The Guardian himself finds that it impairs his working capacity if he does not try and get a minimum of seven or eight hours.

(15 September 1951)

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There is nothing in the teachings about Socialized Medicine. All these details are for the House of Justice to decide.

(18 February 1951)

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...Every day medical science is progressing, and it is quite possible that some new form of treatment or some new doctor may be able to get you on your feet. He will certainly pray that this may be so.

(24 February 1952)

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So you see he cannot possibly pronounce on the merits of Dianetics. The believers are free to investigate new things, and use them if they prove of real value and no harm.

(30 August 1952)

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He was sorry to hear you have been ill, and urges you to cooperate fully with your doctors in order to regain your health as soon as possible and be free to serve the Cause.

(19 July 1953)

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The beloved Guardian says that the question of circumcision has nothing to do with the Bahá'í Teachings; and the believers are free to do as they please in the matter.

(27 March 1954)

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He is pleased to see that you are feeling better, and will certainly pray for your full recovery. Before having any serious operation, you should consult more than one qualified physician.

(8 April 1954)

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Regarding various matters raised in your letters: There is nothing in the Teachings to prevent a Bahá'í from willing his body for medical research after death. However, it should be made clear that the remains must be buried eventually and not cremated, as this is according to Bahá'í law.

(26 June 1956 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada)

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There is nothing in the Teachings against leaving our bodies to medical science. The only thing we should stipulate is that we do not wish to be cremated, as it is against our Bahá'í Laws.

As many people make arrangements to leave their bodies to medical science for investigation, he suggests that you inquire, either through some lawyer friend or through some hospital, how you could do this, and then make the necessary provision in your Will, stipulating that you wish your body to be of service to mankind in death, and that, being a Bahá'í, you request that your remains not be cremated and not be taken more than an hour's journey from the place you die.

The spirit has no more connection with the body after it departs, but, as the body was once the temple of the spirit, we Bahá'ís are taught that it must be treated with respect.

(22 March 1957)

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

(The following are from letters to individual believers unless otherwise stated)

One of the friends of Persia wrote to Shoghi Effendi and asked this question: "Is it true that 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said that biochemical homeopathy, which is a form of food medicine, is in conformity with the Bahá'í medical concept?" The beloved Guardian's reply to this question in a letter dated 25th November, 1944 was as follows: "This statement is true, and the truth thereof will be revealed in the future." (The question and answer are translated from the Persian.)

The Universal House of Justice has also asked us to inform you that it does not wish the above statement to be circulated in isolation from the many and varied other texts in the Writings on medicine. However, you may share it with any of your friends who are interested.

(12 November 1975)

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No specific school of nutrition or medicine has been associated with the Bahá'í teachings. What we have are certain guidelines, indications and principles which will be carefully studied by experts and will, in the years ahead, undoubtedly prove to be invaluable sources of guidance and inspiration in the development of these medical sciences. Moreover, in this connection the Guardian's secretary has stated on his behalf that "It is premature to try and elaborate on the few general references to health and medicine made in our Holy Scriptures." The believers must guard against seizing upon any particular text which may appeal to them and which they may only partially or even incorrectly understand....

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh has stated: "Whenever ye fall ill, refer to competent physicians. Verily, We have not abolished recourse to material means, rather have We affirmed it through this Pen which God hath made the Dawning Place of His luminous and resplendent Cause." The secretaries of the Guardian have conveyed his guidance on this point in many letters to individual believers in passages such as these: "...refer to competent physicians, and abide by their considered decisions"; "...invariably consult and follow the treatment of competent and conscientious physicians..." and "...consult the best physicians...doctors who have studied a scientific system of medicine." Thus the obligation to consult physicians and to distinguish between doctors who are well trained in medical sciences and those who are not is clear, but the Faith should not be associated with any particular school of medical theory or practice. It is left to each believer to decide for himself which doctors he should consult, bearing in mind the principles enunciated above.

In matters of diet, as in medicine, the Universal House of Justice feels that the believers should be aware that a huge body of scientific knowledge has been accumulated as a guide to our habits and practices. Here too, as in all other things, the believers should be conscious of the two principles of moderation and courtesy in the way they express their opinions and in deciding whether they should refuse food offered to them or request special foods.

There are, of course, instances where a believer would be fully justified in abstaining from or eating only certain foods for some medical reason, but this is a different matter and would be understood by any reasonable person.

(24 January 1977)

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In matters of health, particularly regarding diet and nutrition, the House of Justice advises the friends to seek the help and advice of experts and doctors. This is what Bahá'u'lláh has recommended and He does not indicate which school of thought or practice they should belong to. However, as you particularly ask about references in the Old Testament as they relate to meat and fish, the House of Justice has asked us to quote for you the following excerpt taken from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary to an individual believer:

...there is nothing in the teachings about whether people should eat their food cooked or raw; exercise or not exercise; resort to specific therapies or not; nor is it forbidden to eat meat.

(19 June 1977)

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 19th January 1978 enquiring the Bahá'í point of view on the vivisection of animals. The beloved Guardian was asked a similar question to which his secretary replied on his behalf, on 29 November 1955: "As there is no definite and conclusive statement on Vivisection in the Bahá'í Teachings, this is a matter which the International House of Justice will have to pass upon in the future."

The House of Justice does not wish to legislate upon this matter at the present time. It is left to the consciences of the individual friends, who should make their decisions in light of the teachings concerning animals and their treatment.

In this connection the House of Justice instructs us to say that in a Tablet in which He stresses the need for kindness to animals, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that it would be permissible to perform an operation on a living animal for the purposes of research even if the animal were killed thereby, but that the animal must be well anaesthetized and that the utmost care must be exercised that it does not suffer.

(9 March 1978 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy)

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In matters of diet, as in medicine, the Universal House of Justice feels that the believers should be aware that a huge body of scientific knowledge has been accumulated as a guide to our habits and practices. But it must be clearly understood that no specific school of nutrition or medicine has been associated with the Bahá'í teachings. What we have are certain guidelines, indications and principles which will be carefully studied by experts and will, in the years ahead, undoubtedly prove to be invaluable sources of guidance and inspiration in the development of these medical sciences. Moreover, in this connection the Guardian's secretary has stated on his behalf that "It is premature to try and elaborate on the few general references to health and medicine made in our Holy Scriptures." The believers must guard against seizing upon any particular text which may appeal to them and which they may only partially or even incorrectly understand.

(11 July 1978)

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- BNE J. E. Esslemont. Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980).
 GWB Bahá'u'lláh. Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982).
 PT 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Paris Talks. (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1972).
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 SAQ 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some Answered Questions. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982).
 SWA 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978).
 TDLA Julia M. Grundy. Ten Days in the Light of 'Akká. (rev. ed. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979).

A RECENT ANTI-BAHA'I PUBLICATION

Ayatollah Allama Yahya Noori, Finality of Prophethood and a critical analysis of Babism, Bahaism and Qadiyanism (Maidane Shohada, Madresa-e-Shohada Tehran, November 1981--Aban 1360 --Moharram 1402) 61pp. [English]+ 110pp [Persian].

This bilingual (English and Persian) basically anti-Baha'i and extremely ill-informed volume consists of a preface (pp.i-vii; Persian unpaginated) and four unequal sections--: Pt.1 'Finality of Prophethood' (= Chapters I & II., pp.1-11 [Eng.] & pp.16-34 [Per.]) Pt.2 Babism (= Chapter III., pp.12-34 [Eng.] & pp.35-59 [Per.]); Pt. 3., Bahaism (= Chapter IV., pp.35-54 [Eng.] & pp.60-75 [Per.]); Pt.4. Ahmadies or Qadianis (pp.55-60 [Eng] & pp.76-95 [Per.]). The English translation does not always accurately represent the Persian original.

The author, Yahyā Noori [Nūrī], is a leading Shī'ci cleric who was imprisoned under the Shah for politically subversive activities and who played a leading role in the Islamic revolution in Iran. He is a prolific writer (see the list of his output in the Persian preface). Among his works is a critical examination of Shaykhism entitled, Pizhūhishī dar maktab-i Shaykhiyya (' An Examination of the Shaykhī School '); printed in India with an Urdu translation [date ?] see below, p. 93). His Finality of Prophethood, typical in its highly prejudiced treatment of the Bābī-Bahā'ī movements deserves a fullscale refutation or critical scholarly analysis. It contains much that is misleading to the general reader and little of interest to the scholar save some notes and photographs which throw light on the history of the town of Nūr in Mazandaran (see below).

A Brief Note on the Baha'i Studies Seminar held in Borwick,
31 March--2 April 1984.

As several would-be participants were unable to attend, it was a small group that gathered for the Borwick Seminar. Nevertheless, a constructive meeting was held. Todd Lawson read from his annotated translation of the Báb's Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara and two papers were presented. The first, Richard Hollinger's Ibrahim George Kheiralla and the Bahá'í Movement in America (which was read on the author's behalf), utilized family archives, to provide a detailed account of Kheiralla's life and Baha'i activities. The contrast between Kheiralla's successful missionary endeavour prior to 1900 and his lack of success after the American schism was remarked upon and accounted for by a combination of factors, to wit: Kheiralla's loss of access to the original social networks by which his teachings had been promulgated; the greater charismatic appeal of 'Abdu'l-Baha as a religious leader; and the ideological inflexibility of Kheiralla's post-1900 missionary activity. Hollinger's paper will be appearing in a forthcoming volume of Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History (Kalimat Press).

The second paper, Peter Smith's The Pattern of Baha'i Expansion and Distribution in Europe (which represented part of a larger work in progress) sought to explain the variations in European Baha'i distribution; primarily by means of the quotient of Local Assembly numbers per million population. Although at present necessarily speculative, some attempt was also made to identify such major factors as might account for the variations in distribution. In the smaller national communities endogenous factors-- the movement of pioneers; the presence of consensus or initiative within the Baha'i community-- were held likely to predominate, whilst in the larger communities, exogenous factors--religions and ethnic divisions; the influence of "cultural" secularization--were held to be increasingly important.

There was also some discussion of the desirability of greater contact between academic Baha'i scholars and the British Baha'i Community, and it was resolved to suggest to the British Baha'i National Assembly that they might wish to arrange for annual conferences to encourage academic scholarship within the Baha'i community.

--Peter Smith--

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Ayatollah Allama Yahya Noori, Finality of Prophethood and a critical analysis of Babism, Baháism and Qadiyanism (Maidane Shohada, Madresa-e-Shohada Tehran, November 1981--Aban 1360 --Moharram 1402) 61pp. [English]+ 110pp [Persian].

This bilingual (English and Persian) basically anti-Baha'i and extremely ill-informed volume consists of a preface (pp.i-vii; Persian unpaginated) and four unequal sections--: Pt.1 'Finality of Prophethood' (= Chapters I & II., pp.1-11 [Eng.] & pp.16-34 [Per.]); Pt.2 Babism (= Chapter III., pp.12-34 [Eng.] & pp.35-59 [Per.]); Pt.3., Baháism (= Chapter IV., pp.35-54 [Eng.] & pp.60-75 [Per.]); Pt.4. Ahmadies or Qadianis (pp.55-60 [Eng.] & pp.76-95 [Per.]). The English translation does not always accurately represent the Persian original. The author, Yahyā Noori [Nūrī], is a leading Shī'ī cleric who was imprisoned under the Shah for politically subversive activities and who played a leading role in the Islamic revolution in Iran. He is a prolific writer (see the list of his output in the Persian preface). Among his works is a critical examination of Shaykhism entitled, Pizhūhishī dar maktab-i Shaykhiyya (' An Examination of the Shaykhī School '); printed in India with an Urdu translation [date ?] see below, p. 93). His Finality of Prophethood, typical in its highly prejudiced treatment of the Bābī-Bahā'ī movements deserves a fullscale refutation or critical scholarly analysis. It contains much that is misleading to the general reader and little of interest to the scholar save some notes and photographs which throw light on the history of the town of Nūr in Mazandaran (see below).



حضرت آیت اله علامه نوری که از چهره‌های ممتاز و معروف دنیای اسلام و از پیشگامان انقلاب و نهضت اسلامی ایران و یادآور مبارزات و حماسه ۱۷ شهریور است در جنب کارهای علمی مداوم و تالیفات به ساختن و اداره نمودن بیمارستان و درمانگاههای مذهبی غیر انتفاعی و مؤسسات عام المنفعه و مدارس و مراکز آموزشی و مساجد و تشکیل مجامع علمی و اسلامی و نیز خدمات علمی و اسلامی در سطح دنیای اسلام و بین‌المللی توجه تام دارند. . . . (شرح مبسوط این مسائل در کتاب مصاحبهها و بیانیها و اقدامات و مقالات آیت‌الله علامه نوری و نیز در کتاب ۱۷ شهریور که وسیله این مؤسسه و بنیاد در دست انتشار است منعکس می‌باشد). در اینجا ندسته از آثار علمی و نوشته‌های حضرت آیت‌اله نوری را که برای عموم سودمند است برای استحضار طالبان ذکر مینماید. (وآندسته از تالیفات معظمه را که جنبه علمی خاص دارند و برای متخصصات و حوزه‌های علمیه مفیدند همچون کتابهای الفقه علی المذاهب الخیسة والاحادیث الموضوعه - المدخل للتفسیر التطبيق - و را در این فهرست نیاوردیم)

لازم بذکر است که بعضی از این کتابها و رسالهها قبلاً به چاپ رسیده و بتدریج در حال تجدید چاپ است - و قسمتی نیز اخیراً آماده چاپ گردید و بعضی از این کتابها در اینجا و در هندوستان و پاکستان و کانادا و کره و کشورهای دیگر به چند زبان ترجمه شده است.

نام بخشی از کتابها و رسالهها
و تالیفات آیت‌اله علامه نوری:

- * اسلام و عقائد و 'زاء بشری - چاپ نهم آن در دست انتشار است.
 - * حکومت اسلامی و تحلیلی از نهضت حاضر (با ترجمه انگلیسی آن چاپ شده)
 - * حقوق زن در اسلام و جهان (چاپ ششم آن در دست انتشار است)
 - * تحقیقی کوتاه در باره شیعه (چاپ شده با ترجمه اردوی آن .
 - * شیعه - امامت - مهدویت (با ترجمه، انگلیسی و عربی در دست انتشار است)
 - * پژوهشی در مکتب شیخیه (با اردو ترجمه و در هند چاپ شده است)
 - * اسلام دین برتر (بزبانهای انگلیسی - آلمانی - فرانسه - کره‌ای و ترجمه شده و در دست انتشار است)
 - *+ مارکسیسم و کمونیسم از دیدگاه علم و اسلام (در دست انتشار است)
 - * آئین بهود و مسیحیت (چاپ سوم)
 - * فلسفه توره الحسین - بحرینی با ترجمه آن بنام فلسفه انقلاب حسین با اضافاتی در چاپ دوم در دست انتشار است .
 - * سیستم حکومت اسلامی (چاپ سوم با اضافات و با ترجمه انگلیسی آن در دست انتشار است)
 - * امتیازات و ویژگیهای اسلام (با ترجمه انگلیسی آن در دست انتشار است)
 - * ضرورت مذهب و بیان عوامل الحاد و لامذهبی (با ترجمه انگلیسی در دست انتشار است)
 - * و ده کتاب دیگر در زمینه اسلام شناسی و ۳۲ جلد تفسیر ۳۲ سوره از قرآن به ترتیب نزول سوره‌ها و کتابهای دیگر . . .
- بنیاد علمی و اسلامی مدرسه الشهدا

Yahya Nuri's note on the history and naming of the "Nur" district in Mazandaran and reproduction of documents relating thereto.

A. English fn.1.pp.35-37 (The Finality..)

1.

The region which is called "Noor" today stretches from the Shemiranat range upto river bank of souldeh. It includes some parts of Mazandran also. The mountain range and area of this region was called Royan and Rastamdar during the first Islamic centuries Balad-e-Noor was the centre of this region (Authentic sources of history and geography as Futuh al-Baldan, al-Masalik wa-al-Mamalik, of Istakhri, Mujam-al Buldan of Yaqut, Mrasid-al-Ittela, Taqweem-al Buldan of Abol-Fida, Tarikhe Tabaristan wa Royan wa Mazindran of Zahiruddin Marashi etc have referred to this fact).

When and Why this region was named as Noor¹ There is no doubt, it was in connection with Sheikh Ahmed Noori, it is said he was a representative of Imam Hasan Askari or some of his disciples for guiding the people of Tabaristan His Shrine is still in Balade. Islam spread in this region of Tabaristan and Mazindran in the 2nd century inspite of the opposition of the local rulers.

In the year 141 A.H. the time of Imam Sadiq and reign of mansoor the Abbasid Caliph named a person called al-Ala, as the governor of Mazindran. After him, others, as Khalid Ibn Barmak, Said Ibn Abu Saleh, Yahya Ibn Daud, Qadid, Solaiman Ibn Mansoor etc succeeded him as the governor. After the emergence of the Alawite movement in the Abbasid empire, Mazindran fell in the hands of Hasan Ibn Zaid, The Alawite dynasty (in the line of Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain) ruled Mazindran till the end of Fifth century A.H. Through the efforts of Hasan Ibn Zaid, the family of Padoosban (who were rulers of Rustumdar and Royan from 40 A.H onwards) embraced Islam. Hasan first appointed Abdullah Ibn Wendad, and then Padoosban Ibn Faridoon as the ruler of this

region. It is during these years that Imam Hasan Askari visited Mazindran and Gorgan. This visit was related with the supremacy of Alawites in this region. However this visit is not widely reported in the sources of history due to the tyrannical regime of Abbasids. Many representatives and deputies of Imam remained unknown in history due to the same factor. It is not known exactly whether the Scholar Saint-Sheikh Ahmed was sent to Royan and Rustamdar area by Imam Askari in this time or in some later period. However, authentic sources of history show that during the reign of Kyumars Ibn Bistoon (807) the shiism had spread in the entire region. From this date onwards the documents with the sign and seal of all rulers of bani Kawoos dynasty are extant in my library which have reached to me through my ancestors. (In the book 'History of Noor' all these documents will be published) In these documents the Scholar Saint Sheikh Ahmad Noori, his Shrine, and connected with, the name of trustees and the trusts are mentioned. In one document which is four hundred year old, it is mentioned that Royan was named "Noor" because:

Sometime a light (Noor) was seen when Sheikh Ahmed used to speak, the scholar-saint. Therefore, this city was named 'Noor' Sheikh Ahmed is buried in the fort in Bandak.

Even today the remains of Sheikh Ahmed's tomb could be seen in Bandak area of the Balade (Noor) Sheikh was one after whom the city was called as "Noor". For the first time the name 'Noor' is applied for the Balade in documents dated about 7 centuries back in connection with the name of Sheikh Ahmed and some other ancestors of mine, till that time the Noories used to call themselves 'Royani' and Rustamdaries.

Because of Sheikh Ahmed who was venerated in that region and the honourofic title of Sheikh was bestowed on Sheikh Ahmed and our family was called the "Mashaikh Family".

An interesting point is that during the reign of Safavi dynasty Sheikh Ahmed was named as Sultan Ahmed. This was a period of Sufi influence and some Muslim Scholars were introduced as Sufis. But before that period Sheikh Ahmed was never called "Sultan".

Some of our ancestor built a big central mosque by the side of the tomb of Sheikh Ahmed. We got it completed and reconstructed.

As it is referred already, in this region we have also founded several hospitals, schools and mosques. Here we are producing some pictures of those constructions.

۱ - منطقه‌ای که امروز "نور" خوانده میشود (واز پشت کوههای شمیرانات و لواسان آغاز - تا منطقه دشت و کناره دریاي خزر به سوله "شهرستان نور" و قرا مجاور میانجامد، و قسمتی از استان مازندران است بخصوص بخش کوهستانی و بیلاقی آن که "بلده" مرکز آنست) - در قرنهای نخست اسلامی "رویان" و "رستمدر" نام داشت (چنانکه از تواریخ عمومی اسلامی - و فتوح البلدان هاو کتب جغرافیای اسلامی چون: المسالك و الممالک اصطخری، و معجم البلدان یاقوت رومی، و مرادالاطلاع و تقویم البلدان ابوالفداء و تاریخ طبرستان و رویان و مازندران ظهیرالدین مرعشی و امثال آن ... بدست میآید.)

اما از چه زمانی این منطقه "نور" نامیده شد و به چه مناسبت بی شک در رابطه با شخصیت و مزار عالم بزرگوار و هادی جلیل شیخ احمد نوری رضوان اله علیه (که گفته میشود مبعوث از جانب امام حسن عسکری علیه السلام و یا مبعوث از جانب بعضی از مبعوثان امام عسکری از سلسله علویین طبرستان جهت هدایت مردم به اسلام و امامت اهلیت علیهم السلام بوده) مرقد و مزار و بقعه و بارگاه معظم او در کنار مسجد جامع دربده هم اکنون بر سر پا است چنانکه میدانیم از اوائل قرن دوم هجری بتدریج اسلام در منطقه پهناور طبرستان و مازندران با همه مقاومتهای شاهان، گوناگون ولایات منطقه راه یافت.

از سال ۱۴۱ هجری از جانب خلفای بنی عباس (زمان امام جعفر صادق (ع) و خلافت منصور عباسی) شخصی بنام عمرو بن العلاء بعنوان اولین والی بر بخشی از مازندران برای حکومت استقرار یافت و پس از او جمعی دیگر مانند خالد بن برمک و سعید بن ذعلج، و ابوصالح یحیی بن داود، و قدید، و سلیمان بن منصور، و ... بعنوان والی تعیین میشدند. پس از قیام سلسله علویان در بلاد اسلامی و از جمله در ایران از سال ۲۵۰ هجری (در زمان امامت امام حسن عسکری علیه السلام) حکومت بخشی عظیم از مازندران بدست حسن بن زید افتاد، حکومت سلسله علویان (از بنی الحسن و بنی الحسین - علیهم السلام -) در مازندران تا اواسط قرن پنجم، ادامه داشت ... و برای نخستین بار از جانب حسن بن زید، بعضی از افراد خاندان پادوسیان (که از سال ۴۰ هجری بر منطقه رستمدر و رویان حکومت مینمودند و سلطنت داشتند) اسلام اختیار کردند، و برای منطقه رستمدر و رویان بصورت والی مشخص و معین شدند، نخست عبدالله بن و نداد امید، و سپس پادوسیان بن فریدون بعنوان نمایندگان حسن بن زید به حکومت این منطقه منصوب شدند.

... در خلال همین سالهاست که در تاریخ، سفر امام حسن عسکری (ع) به مازندران و گراگان ثبت شده است - این سفر بی شک با تسلط علویان بر خطه مازندران بی رابطه نیست، چنانکه عدم انعکاس وسیع کن در تواریخ نیز با استبداد مطلقه خاندان بنی عباس و در تحقیق بسر بردن ائمه طاهریین مربوط است.

محمی مانند بسیاری از نمایندگان و نواب ائمه طاهریین در تصریح تاریخ و روایات (در ارتباط با همین مولف است) با

احمد قدس سره در همین ازمه و از جانب امام عسکری هدایت سکنه رستمدر و رویان اعزام میشود یا در زمانها دقیق روشن نیست. اما "روایات مزارات" ایشان را مبعوث حسن علیه السلام نام میبرد. بهر صورت اسناد قدیم و دارند که در زمان حکومت کیومرث بن بهستون بر منطقه رستمدر (سال ۸۱۲) سراسر این منطقه به آئین تشیع و امامت است میگرد، از این تاریخ و در تمامی این اسناد که با مهر حکام و سلاطین سلسله بنی کاوس میباشد و از طریق این جانب هم اکنون نزد من موجود است (در کتاب تا

این اسناد بچاپ میرسد) از شخصیت و عظمت عالم و هادی احمد نوری علیه الرحمه و مزار او و موقوفات مراعات و مزارع مرتولیان - و خدمات - و غیره نام برده میشود. در سند چهار صد سال قبل مربوط میشود علت نامیده شدن نور میکنند: "و شیخ احمد نور - قدس سره که در ولایت طبرستان در بندک مدفون است و گاه تکلم اثر نور از دهان مبارک و بسبب آن موضع مذکور به "نور" مشهور گردید. گرامات از تفصیل است ..."

امروز از "قلعه دربندک در بالای کوه در بلده - آثاری موجود" بلده نیز گفته میشود که بوسیله همان بزرگوار نام گذا بار کلمه نورو منطقه نور و نسبت نوری را در این اسناد بزرگوار و نیز در این اسناد در کنار نام اجداد خود از حدود قبل مبینیم و قبل از آن معمولا "این منطقه و اشخاص منطبق تراجم و انساب مانند اللیب - یا انساب سمعانی و معجمها "رویان" و "رویانی" و رستمدر و رستمدری میخواندند قرنهای است که اسلاف و خاندان ما در ارتباط با شیخ احمد نور طائفه مشایخ خوانده میشوند و تصدی رقیات و خدمات قابل ذکر آنکه در بخشی از این اسناد پس از روی کار آمدن به بسیاری از علماء و بزرگان و محدثان را رنگ مشایخ از این بزرگوار نیز سلطان شیخ احمد نوری تعبیر میشود، اسناد فراوان قبل از دوران صفویه کلمه سلطان هرگز بر نرفت. اجداد اینجانب در کنار مزار شیخ احمد نوری قدس مسجد جامع احداث نمودند - که اینجانب آنرا تجدید و در همین بلده بیمارستان ولی عصر و درمانگاه ملحق به آن عصر (ع) و مسجد قائم (ع) و تاسیسات دینی و عمومی ساختیم چنانکه در تا کر نیز درمانگاه وغیره - به شرحی کتاب از آن سخن رفت.

بعضی از عکسها مربوط به اسناد و یا ساختمانها و قلعه و مساجد وغیره در نور در رابطه با این مسائل به این کتاب است.

۲۴

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

شیخ احمد نور علی

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

فتوکھی شماره ۲۵- بعضی از دو سند دیگر مربوط به سالهای ۱۰۵۴ و ۱۰۶۳ هجری که نام شیخ احمد نوری در بالای نامه و در متن آنست

25 Rare documents: The decrees of 'Noor' rulers for Sheikh Ahmad and my forefathers.

۲۴

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

شیخ احمد نور علی

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

... در روز ...

فتوکھی شماره ۲۴- سندی دیگر با مهر بهمن بن بیستون مورخ ۹۱۸ هجری که نام "شیخ احمد نوری در بالا و در متن سند است .

24 Rare documents: The decrees of 'Noor' rulers for Sheikh Ahmad and my forefathers.

SOME EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN ON BEHALF
OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ON THE
BAHA'I DEVOTIONAL ATTITUDE.

[Enclosed in a letter to Mr. R. P. Parry—see
below].

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
BAHA'I WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

25 March 1984

Mr. Robert Parry
2, Blenheim Road
Reading, RG1 5NQ
England

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

In response to the request, contained in your letter dated 27 February 1984, for material to assist you in preparing a short work on devotional techniques, the Universal House of Justice has directed us to send you a copy of a compilation entitled "The Importance of Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude" put out in March 1980. In addition, we are sending you a compilation of extracts from letters written on behalf of the House of Justice which have a bearing on this subject.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

E. Thine Archibald

For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosures

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

You also ask about meditation. The Guardian explained that Bahá'u'lláh has not prescribed any particular method of meditation, and that the friends are free to follow whatever method they find useful. For prayer He has ordained the Obligatory Prayers which have a very special effect. In striving to attain the correct attitude for prayer you should not lose hope if you find you are only partially successful. Human beings are imperfect in all things; what is essential is for us to strive continually to improve. We can be sure that however "perfect" we become there is always greater perfection ahead of us. Only God is absolute.

(to an individual, dated 24 January 1979)

When one is praying in private, one may do what one's heart prompts in such matters. However, when prayers are read at meetings, care should be taken not to develop rigid practices and rituals. It may sometimes be useful for the reader or someone else to call the friends' attention to the purpose for which the prayer is being read.

(to an individual, dated 8 April 1982)

It is striking how private and personal the most fundamental spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation are in the Faith. Bahá'ís do, of course, have meetings for devotions, as in the Maghriq'u'l-Adhkár or at Nineteen Day Feasts, but the daily obligatory prayers are ordained to be said in the privacy of one's chamber, and meditation on the Teachings is, likewise, a private individual activity, not a form of group therapy. In His talks 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes prayer as "conversation with God", and concerning meditation He says that "while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and the reality is revealed."

There are, of course, other things that one can do to increase one's spirituality. For example, Bahá'u'lláh has specified no procedures to be followed in meditation, and individual believers are free to do as they wish in this area, provided that they remain in harmony with the teachings, but such activities are purely personal and should under no circumstances be confused with those actions which Bahá'u'lláh Himself considered to be of fundamental importance for our spiritual growth. Some believers may find that it is beneficial to them to follow a particular method of meditation, and they may certainly do so, but such methods should not be taught at Bahá'í Summer Schools or be carried out during a session of the School because, while they may appeal to some people, they may repel others. They have nothing to do with the Faith and should be kept quite separate so that enquirers will not be confused.

It would seem that there are in . . . many believers who draw particular benefit from meditation. The House of Justice suggests that for their private meditations they may wish to use the repetition of the Greatest Name, Alláh-u-Abhá, ninety-five times a day which, although not yet applied in the west, is among the Laws, Ordinances and Exhortations of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. (See p. 46 of the "Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas".)

(to a National Spiritual Assembly, dated 1 September 1983)