

**BAHÁ'Í STUDIES  
BULLETIN  
VOLUME 3  
NO. 2.**

SEPTEMBER 1984.

CONTENTS

Editorial.....p.2.

Stephen Lambden, An Early Poem of Mīrzā  
Husayn 'Alī Bahā'u'llāh:  
The Sprinkling of the  
Cloud of Unknowing  
(Rashh-i 'Ama')..... p.4.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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 Babī and Bahā'ī Religions (or the like) and be befittingly published rather than photostatically reproduced.

The success of this Bulletin obviously depends on your support and willingness to contribute. A steady and sustained flow of scholarly contributions is vital especially since there are so few of us. The following list is intended only to serve as an indication of the nature and scope of contributions that would be welcomed:-

- a) Articles or short notes whether historical, methodological, sociological, doctrinal or theological, etc.,
- b) Bibliographical essays or notes;
- c) Copies of generally unavailable letters or tablets of the Bab, Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha or Shoghi Effendi whether in the original language(s) or in translation;
- d) Notices of recently published books, articles and reviews, etc.;
- e) Previously unpublished notes or documents;
- f) Reports of work in progress or of seminars and conferences relating directly or indirectly to Babī-Bahā'ī studies.

All contributions to this Bulletin should be sent to:-

Mr. Stephen Lambden, 77 Rothwell Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, England U.K. (Ed).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription rates are as follows:-

Within UK £3.50.p. per issue inc.postage.  
Within Europe £3.75.p. per issue inc.postage.  
Rest of World £5.00.per issue inc.postage.

Subscribers resident in the USA and Canada should send their subscriptions to Mr. Richard Hollinger 1710 S. Barry #3 Los Angeles, CA 90025. USA (at a rate to be announced by him ).

The article which fills this issue of the Bulletin has been very rapidly written with a view to getting up to date with outstanding issues. For the most part it is no more than a set of rough notes that I may revise and polish up at some stage in the future. My apologies to those subscribers who may find the rather lengthy appendix on the use of the term camā' of little interest.

Stephen Lambden (Ed).

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXX

AN EARLY POEM OF MIRZA HUSAYN CALI BAHĀ'U'LLĀH: THE SPRINKLING OF  
THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING ( RASHH-I CĀMĀ' ).

Bahā'u'llāh's Rashh-i CĀmā' is a Persian poem of 19 couplets which takes its name from the opening words of its first hemistich. Widely regarded by Bahā'īs as the earliest extant example of divine revelation (Bahā'ī scripture) it was composed during the time of its author's imprisonment in the Sīyah Chāl dungeon in Tehran; that is, at some time during the latter half of the year 1852 (= early 1269 AH). It was, Bahā'u'llāh in his later writings has stated, during the "year nine" (= 1269 AH = Oct. 15th 1852— October 4th 1853) that he underwent profound mystical experiences and resolved to attempt to regenerate the demoralised Bābī community.

It seems likely, as most Bahā'ī writers have maintained, that the Rashh-i CĀmā' is expressive of Bahā'u'llāh's own assumption of a leading role within the Bābī community. To what extent however, Bahā'u'llāh therein alludes to the epiphanic status he later explicitly claimed (from the early 1860's) is not clear— bearing in mind the extravagant claims made by many leading Bābīs in the 1850's, the poetic nature of this work, and the possibility that he is representing himself as a channel through which the celestial and eschatological Bābī spirit flows. He certainly makes no explicit claim to be man yuzhiruhu'llāh (the expected Bābī messiah) and could be understood to be representing himself as a leading Bābī rather than claiming to be the inaugurator of a new (though essentially secret) religious dispensation.

The well-known Bahā'ī writer Adib Taherzadeh in his The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh (Vol. I. Oxford 1974., p. 45) has expressed the opinion that the Rashh-i CĀmā' "may well prove impossible to translate". Having (see below) attempted the "impossible" I should admit that the task was far from straightforward. The sense of certain lines seemed clear enough though others contain expressions that could be understood in a variety of ways. No attempt has been made to be anything but as literalistic (in the translation) as possible. I may well have completely misunderstood the sense of a number of more abstruse parts of this beautiful poem and would be delighted to receive alternative renderings.

As far as I am aware the text of the Rashh-i CĀmā' is only printed in Ishrāq Khāvarī's Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol. 4. (n.p. [Tehran] 129 Badī<sup>c</sup>, pp. 184-6). It is this text which has been translated below. It is not, however, in complete agreement with the text photostatically reproduced in Iran National Bahā'ī Archives (MS), Vol. 36 ([privately published= INBA MS] pp. 460-1). Actual and probable (INBA MS text is not easy to read) variant readings will be commented on in the Notes (see below).

If in attempting to translate the Rashh-i CĀmā' I have "attempted the impossible" it was certainly with my 'head in the clouds' that the somewhat overlengthy appendix on the use of the term CĀmā' in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture was written. I hope it contains some points of interest for those who do not share my fascination with the byways of Bābī-Bahā'ī doctrine.

Stephen Lambden

THE TEXT OF THE RASHH-I CĀMĀ'

A) From Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī (Vol. 4).

هو الله

رُشِحَ عَمَّا زَجْدِهِ مَا مِيرِيزِد

سَرِّوفا از نغمه ما میریزد

"از باد صبا مشگ خطا گشته پدید

وین نغمه خوش از جمده ما میریزد"

"شمس طراز از طلعت حق کرد طلوع"

"سرحقیقت بین کر وجهه ما میریزد"

" طلعة لا هوتی بین حوری هاموتی بین  
 جلوه ناسوتی بین کز سر عما میریزد  
 " وجهه باقی بین چهره ساقی بین  
 " رق زجاجی بین کز کوبه ما میریزد  
 " آتش موسی بین بیضه بیضا بین  
 " سینه سینا بین کز کف سنا میریزد  
 " ناله مستان بین حالت بستان بین  
 " جذبه ۵ ستان بین کز صحن لقا<sup>میریزد</sup>  
 " غنچه هائی بین طره باقی بین  
 " رتبه نائی بین کز ککک بها میریزد  
 " طغح طهوراست این رشح طهوراست این  
 " فن طهوراست این کز عین فنا میریزد

b) Text from INBA (MS), Vol. 36.

[ My apologies for the fairly illegible nature of the text: it should be noted that line 8 occurs after line 19 ].

بهر کس که درین وقت میزین  
 کف الهی بین کز جذبه ما میریزد  
 طغح طهوراست این رشح طهوراست این  
 کز عین فنا میریزد  
 رتبه نائی بین کز ککک بها میریزد  
 غنچه هائی بین طره باقی بین  
 سینه سینا بین کز کف سنا میریزد  
 ناله مستان بین حالت بستان بین  
 جذبه ۵ ستان بین کز صحن لقا<sup>میریزد</sup>  
 آتش موسی بین بیضه بیضا بین  
 وجهه باقی بین چهره ساقی بین  
 طلعه لا هوتی بین حوری هاموتی بین

تشریح ما ازینجا میریزد  
 سینه سینا بین کز کف سنا میریزد  
 ناله مستان بین حالت بستان بین  
 جذبه ۵ ستان بین کز صحن لقا<sup>میریزد</sup>  
 آتش موسی بین بیضه بیضا بین  
 وجهه باقی بین چهره ساقی بین  
 طلعه لا هوتی بین حوری هاموتی بین  
 جلوه ناسوتی بین کز سر عما میریزد  
 رتبه نائی بین کز ککک بها میریزد  
 غنچه هائی بین طره باقی بین  
 سینه سینا بین کز کف سنا میریزد  
 ناله مستان بین حالت بستان بین  
 جذبه ۵ ستان بین کز صحن لقا<sup>میریزد</sup>  
 آتش موسی بین بیضه بیضا بین  
 وجهه باقی بین چهره ساقی بین  
 طلعه لا هوتی بین حوری هاموتی بین

" بحرصفا از موج لقا کرده خروش  
 " وین طرفه عطا از جذبه ما میریزد  
 " بهجت مل از نظره گل شد ظاهر  
 " این رمز طیح از رتبه را میریزد  
 " نقره ناقوری جذبه لا ۵ و تسی  
 " این ۵ رد و بیک نفخه از جو سما میریزد  
 " دور انا دو از چهره ما کرده بروز  
 " کور ۵ و ۵ و از نفخه ما میریزد  
 " کوشر حق از کاسه دل گشته هویدا  
 " وین ساغر شهید از لعل بها<sup>میریزد</sup>  
 " یوم خدا از جلوه رب شد کامل  
 " این نفز حدیث از غنه طا میریزد  
 " طغح بهائی بین رشح عمائی بین  
 " کاین جطه زیک نغمه از لحن خدا<sup>میریزد</sup>  
 " ماهی سرمد بین طلوع منزه بین  
 " صدر ممرد بین کز عرش علا میریزد  
 " نخله طویب بین رتبه ورقا بین  
 " غنه ابهی بین کز لمع صفا میریزد  
 " آهنگ عراقی بین دف حجازی بین  
 " کف الهی بین کز جذبه لا میریزد

RASHH-I CĀMĀ': THE SPRINKLING OF THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING.Provisional Translation

He is God.

- [1] On account of [ lit. from ] Our Rapture the Sprinkling of the Cloud of Unknowing raineth down;  
The Mystery of Fidelity poureth forth from Our Melody.
- [2] The musk of Cathay hath appeared from the Zephyr;  
This sweet-scented Breeze raineth down from Our Ringlet.
- [3] The Sun of Opulence hath arisen from the Countenance of the True One;  
See thou that the Mystery of Reality raineth down from Our Face!
- \* [4] From a Wave[ of the Ocean]of the Meeting [with God] the Sea of Purity hath cried out;  
On account of [lit. from] Our Rapture this Precious Favour raineth down.
- [5] At the sight of the Rose was the Delight of the Wine apparent;  
This Sweet Cipher raineth down from the joyful song of [the letter] WRĀ'.
- [6] The Stunning Trump; The Celestial Rapture;  
In the Firmament of Heaven they twain rain down as a single blast.
- \* [7] On account of [lit. from] Our Visage the dispensation of "I am He[God]" hath commenced;  
The cycle of "He is He" poureth forth from Our [Trumpet-] Blast [or Breath].
- [8] From the Goblet of the Heart the Kawthar of Reality hath appeared;  
Out of the Vermillion Lips [ or, Ruby (Wine)] of Bahā' this Cup of Honey poureth forth.
- \* [9] The "Day of God" hath been fully realised on account of [lit. from] the Effulgence of the Lord;  
On account of [lit. from] the Lament [ or, Song ] of [ the land of? ] "TĀ'" this New Beauty poureth forth.
- [10] Observe the Glorious (bahā'ī) Overflowing! Behold the Beclouded (cāmā'ī) Sprinkling!  
From the Melody of God all this raineth down as a single Song.
- [11] Observe the Eternal Moon! Behold the Pristine Ascendent[Sun]!  
See thou that the Pure Breast poureth forth from the Elevated Throne!
- [12] Observe the Blessed Palm-Tree! Behold the Melody of the Dove!  
See thou that the All-Glorious (abhā') Lament[or Song] raineth down from the Brilliance of Purity!
- \* [13] Observe the Iraqi Melody! Behold the Hijazi Tambourine!  
See thou that the Rapture of "LĀ" raineth down from the Divine Hand!
- [14] Observe the Deified Countenance! Behold the God-like Maiden!  
See thou that the Terrestrial Effulgence raineth down from the Mystery of the Cloud of Unknowing!

- [15] Observe the All-Enduring Face! Behold the Visage of the Cupbearer!  
See thou that the Sparkling Draught[?] raineth down from Our Goblet!
- [16] Observe the Fire of Moses! Behold the Snow-White Brightness!  
See thou that the Sinaitic Bosom raineth down from the Radiant Palm [Hand]!
- [17] Observe the Intoxicating Lament! Behold the Orchard of Ecstasy!  
See thou that the Rapture of Existence raineth down from the Court of [the ] Meeting[with God]!
- \* [18] Observe the [letter] HĀ'-like Rosebud! Behold the [letter] BĀ'-like Ringlet!  
See thou that the Song of the Flute [-Player] raineth down from the Hollow-Reed of Bahā' !
- \* [19] This is the Overflowing Manifestation! This is the Sprinkling of Manifestation!  
This is the Melody of the[Heavenly] Birds that raineth down from the Fount of Annihilation.

+++++

NOTES

The following notes are not intended to be an extended commentary on the Rashh-i CĀMĀ'. Only a few points of doctrinal and linguistic interest will be noted along with the several important variant readings contained in the INBA.MS (from Vol. 36— reproduced above).<sup>1</sup>

- [1] In this opening line Bahā'u'llāh indicates that it is "from" or "on account of" (āz) his "rapture" (jadhbā—alternatively, 'spiritual ecstasy', 'winning-ways' or possibly 'Enraptured Self') that the "Sprinkling of the Cloud of Unknowing" (rashh-i CĀMĀ') rains down. The implication may be that his mystical experiences whilst imprisoned in the Sīyāh Chāl ('Black Pit') in Tehran

1. In the above provisional translation of the Rashh-i CĀMĀ' an asterisk (\*) alongside a given line calls attention to an actual or probable variant reading in INBA.MS ( See the Notes ).

had precipitated the outpouring of grace from the sphere of the Divine Unknowability. His deep communion with God had actualised the outpouring of spiritual favours from the realm or cloud of the dark mist enveloping his Beloved.

The idāfat or genitive construction rashh-i c<sup>ama</sup> has been translated "Sprinkling of the Cloud of Unknowing". The governing verbal noun rashh ( رشح ) is derived from an Arabic root ( RSHH ) which signifies, 'to sweat', 'to leak', 'to percolate', 'to trickle', 'to distill', 'to exude', 'to drop', 'to moisten' or to 'sprinkle'; hence rashh = "a sprinkling", or alternatively, "a showering", "a dewdrop" or the like. <sup>1</sup> The governed noun c<sup>ama</sup> is derived from the Arabic root عَمِيَ , c<sup>amiya</sup> = 'to become blind', 'to be obscure'. It could thus be translated "blindness", "secrecy" or "obscurity" ( or the like ) though it also bears the sense of "cloud" or "heavy and thick clouds" ( which hide and obscure ). Since in various Sufi and Bābī-Bahā'ī texts c<sup>ama</sup> is indicative of the depths of God's interiority, the hiddenness of His essence, the enwrapped and beclouded locus of Divinity, it has been translated "Cloud of Unknowing". <sup>2</sup>

In the second hemistich of the first line of the Rashh-i c<sup>ama</sup> the genitive construction sirr-i wafā' parallels and rhymes with rashh-i c<sup>ama</sup>. Here translated "Mystery of Fidelity" it might also be rendered "Secret of Faithful-

1. Outside of its use in the Rashh-i c<sup>ama</sup> the verbal noun rashh is occasionally found in Bābī-Bahā'ī texts. It is not found in the Qur'ān though the imperfect verbal form yarshahu occurs in certain versions of the well known Hadith Kumayl ( see D.M. Donaldson, Al-Kumail: A Companion of the Secret in The Moslem World Vol.28 (1938), pp.255-6 ).

2. The phrase 'Cloud of Unknowing' is, of course, the title of an anonymous 14th century English mystical treatise. It is expressive of the Christian mystical and apophatic theology or 'way of negation' found in the works of certain of the Church Fathers and set forth in the writings attributed to Dionysius of Athens ( = St. Denis/ the Pseudo-Areopagite—see Acts 17: 24 ). There may in fact be some connection between the Islāmic notion of c<sup>ama</sup> and patristic expressions of the 'way of negation'. The writings of Gregory of Nyssa ( c.330-395 ) contain important materials in this respect. For him Exodus 24:15ff and 20:21 ( among other texts ) have to do with the sublimity of the experience of God's incomprehensibility—the former text refers to the "thick darkness" or "dark cloud" where "God was" ( Heb. אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרְצָה עֲמִימָה ). On the Bābī-Bahā'ī use of the term c<sup>ama</sup> see below ( Appendix ).

-ness"— or perhaps "Inwardly Loyal [One]" ( or the like ). It is probably expressive of God's absolute faithfulness in connection with the pre-eternal covenant or that aspect of His Being which is indicative of His continuing to guide mankind. That the "Mystery of Fidelity" poureth forth from "Our Melody" may be understood to signify that Bahā'u'llāh's revealing divinely inspired verses ( 'melodies' ) is expressive of or originates in the sphere of the mystery of God's loyal pledge to guide His creatures.

The terms sirr and wafā' are quite common in the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh though the genitive expression sirr-i wafā' ( Per./Arab = sirr al-wafā' ) is not. The expression al-sirr al-wafā' is however, found in Bahā'u'llāh's Lawn-i Kull al-Ta<sup>am</sup> ( 'Tablet of All Food'—early Baghdad period ):

"Since at this moment the Ant of Servitude hideth in the Vale of the Divine Unicity ( wādī al-ahadiyya ) in this Night through the Trusted Secret ( bi'll-sirr al-wafā' ), I desire to (further) expound that verse ( Qur'an 3:87 ) . . . " 1.

The paragraph in which these lines occur is, unfortunately, obscure. It appears that Bahā'u'llāh expresses his desire to explain Qur'ān 3: 87 ( still further— to Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Naraqī ) despite his spiritual withdrawal ( to the celestial realms ) in the light of his being oppressed by his fellow Bābīs. In the Bāb's writings the genitive expression wādī al-ahadiyya is indicative of the Sinaitic heights in which the pre-eternal covenant was made and the celestial sphere which is the mystic retreat of exalted beings ( i.e. the Hidden Imām, the Bāb ) who represent God. As the "Ant of Servitude" Bahā'u'llāh has inwardly withdrawn into this heavenly realm. This during the "Night" (= the period following the Bāb's martyrdom? ) "through" / "in" / or "with" the "Trusted Secret", "Faithful Mystery", "Interior Loyalty", "Inwardly Loyal One" or "Heartfelt Loyalty" [ or the like ] ?. The implication may be that during a period of spiritual darkness (= "Night" ) Bahā'u'llāh's mystic withdrawal is an expression of his inner loyalty to the Bāb ( who exists in the celestial realm ). On the other hand the phrase al-sirr al-wafā' might allude to the person of the Bāb himself or that sphere which is expressive of his ( the Bāb's ) continuing to be the focal centre of inspiration; one mystically faithful with respect to

1. Text in Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī, Vol.4. p. 274.

continuing to guide leading Bābīs.

Only a detailed study of the terms used in the opening line of the Rashh-i 'Amā' as they occur in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture will serve clarify its meaning — though it should be borne in mind that there is always the danger of reading too much into an essentially poetical work.

\* It may be that the expressions rashh-i 'amā' and sirr-i wafā' (in line 1) are indicative of the Bāb as the celestial source of divine inspiration and guidance; the one who, subsequent to his martyrdom (1850) existed in the exalted heavenly realm or 'cloud of unknowing' ( 'amā' ) and is inwardly faithful ( wafā' ) in terms of being a source of guidance. Certain Bābī-Bahā'ī texts— including Mīrzā Yahyā's early writings— associate 'amā' with the person or whereabouts of, for example, the Hidden ( and expected 12th ) Imām, Imām Husayn the Dhikr/ the Bāb and leading Bābīs including Bahā'u'llāh.<sup>1</sup> Wafā' in many such texts is also used in connection with the sphere of transcendent realities, the sphere of the 'Sinaitic mysteries' or that heavenly realm where the primordial divine theophany took place and the pre-eternal covenant was made. Sirr-i wafā', if it is not an allusion to the person of the Bāb, could be indicative of the secret of that sphere in which God or exalted beings are faithful to or mindful of the primordial covenant regarding the truth of Bābism or the person of Bahā'u'llāh.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps then, the second hemistich of the first line of

1. See, for some details, the Appendix below.

2. In his ( Musibāt-i ) Hurūfāt-i 'Allīn ( [ ' The Calamities of ] The Exalted Letters ( mid-late Baghdad period, c. 1857-8 ? ) Bahā'u'llāh speaks of the adverse effect his sufferings had upon "melodies of fidelity" ( naghmat al-wafā' ) uttered by the "Dove of the Command" ( warqā' al-amr ), ( see Ad'iyyih-i Hadrat-i Mahbub [ Germany 1980 ], p. 229 ). At the beginning of his difficult 77th Persian Hidden Word' ( See Shoghi Effendi [ trans. ] The Hidden Words [ London 1975 ], pp. 48-9; text in Ad'iyyih, pp. 470-2 ) there is reference to the "beauty of the immortal Being" ( jamal haykal-i baqa' = Bahā'u'llāh himself ? ) repairing from the "emerald height of fidelity" ( 'aqabih-i zumurradī-yi wafā' ) unto the region of the Sadrat al-Muntaha or Lote-Tree of the Extremity ( which exists in the all-highest Paradise ) where he weeps in the presence of exalted beings. This on account of the fact that he waited expectant on the "hill of faithfulness" ( 'aqabih-i wafā' ) but did not inhale the "fragrance of fidelity" ( ra'ihih-i wafā' ) from them that dwell on earth" ( ahl-i ard ). Written in about 1857 this 'Hidden Word' almost certainly has to do with Bahā'u'llāh's disillusionment with his fellow Bābīs ( and contemporaries in general ) and his claims and role in his attempts to regenerate them. His being on the "emerald height of fidelity" or expectantly waiting on the "hill

the Rashh-i 'Amā' indicates that Bahā'u'llāh's revealing verses is a sign of the truth of the primordial covenant regarding divine guidance.

- [2] In this line Bahā'u'llāh apparently alludes to his inspired verses as a gentle breeze or zephyr ( bād-i sabā ) out of which the fragrance of the "Musk of Cathay" ( mishk-i khata ) had wafted. The English word musk ( derived from the Persian mishk/ mushk ) denotes an odoriferous resin obtained from the male musk-deer or the scent derived therefrom. Cathay ( khata ) describes that region in China from which high quality musk was obtained. In classical Persian poetry the "Divine Beloved" is commonly pictured as a beautiful girl or maiden with musk-scented hair. In his Halih Halih Halih Yā Bishārat Bahā'u'llāh speaks of the "Maid of Eternity" ( hūr-i baqā' ) appearing with "musky tresses" ( gīsū-yi mishk-in ).<sup>1</sup> Here it is from or on account of his "Ringlet" ( ja'cidih ) that a perfumed or sweet-scented breeze is diffused. He, in other words, represents himself as a beautiful divine maiden worthy of spiritual love. Such sensual imagery is not uncommon in Bahā'u'llāh's poetical writings.

of faithfulness" probably indicates his mystically dwelling in that sphere where a pre-eternal covenant was made regarding his person and which his contemporaries had forgotten—they did not turn to him; Bahā'u'llāh did not inhale the "fragrance of fidelity" to his person from those around him. The time however, as the latter half of this abstruse text indicates, had not arrived for the full disclosure of his claims. ( cf. the letters of 'Abdu'l-Bahā' cited in Ishraq Khavari ( Ed ) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol. 1. [ n.p. ( Tehran ) 128 Badī<sup>c</sup> ] pp. 56-7; Vol. 2. [ n.p. ( Tehran ) 129 Badī<sup>c</sup> ] pp. 36-7 — it is explained that the phrase "emerald height of fidelity" in the technical terminology of Shaykh Ahmad and the Bāb indicates the "world of the [ Divine ] Decree" ( 'alām al-qadr ), a station or realm ( maqām ) very difficult to attain [ see Vol. 1. p. 57 — this explanation makes sense inasmuch as emerald is the third of the four colors mentioned in the Bāb's writings ( details cannot be given here ) and qadr the third of the seven 'Causes of Creation' ( see for example Sahīfa-yi 'Adliyya [ n.p. n.d. ], p. 16 ) ]. In the light of the foregoing it should also be noted that the genitive expression "atmosphere of fidelity" ( hawā' al-wafā' ) occurs in the Arabic section of Bahā'u'llāh's 'Tablet of the Holy Mariner' ( Lawh-i Mallāh al-Quds, 1863. [ Text in Ishraq Khavari ( Ed ) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī, Vol. 4 [ n.p. ( Tehran ) 129 Badī<sup>c</sup> ], p. 335f [ See p. 337 ] ).

1. Halih. Yā Bishārat line 4. For the text and my translation of this exquisite poem see Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin Vol. 2. No. 3. p. 105f. cf. also the 2nd line of the poem of Bahā'u'llāh printed in Ishraq Khavari ( Ed ) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī, Vol. 4. p. 176f.

- [3] Here it is on account of or from the "Countenance of the True One" (= Bahā'u'llāh ?) that the "Sun of Opulence" (= the reality of Bahā'u'llāh's self-disclosure ?) has arisen. It is on account of or from "Our Face" (= Bahā'u'llāh) that the "Mystery of Reality" (sirr-i haqiqat) is revealed. The genitive expression sirr-i haqiqat probably derives from the Hadīth Kumayl— the record of a conversation which allegedly took place between Imam 'Alī (d. 661 A.D.) and Kumayl ibn Ziyād about the mystery of al-haqīqa (= "absolute truth" or "essential reality").
- [4] In the first hemistich of this line Bahā'u'llāh probably represents himself as one of the waves (sing. mauj = wave, billow, surging) of the eschatological "meeting" ([with God] liqā' [Allāh]) spoken of in the Qur'ān and interpreted by the Bāb in terms of the "meeting" with himself (see for example Qur'ān 13:2 and Dalā'il-i Sab'ā [Persian n.p. n.d.], p.31ff and 57). In Bābī-Bahā'ī theology the "meeting with God" is understood to mean attaining the presence of his Divine Manifestation. To attain the presence of Bahā'u'llāh is to experience the "meeting with God". In view of this the "Sea of Purity" (bahr-i safā') has cried out (karda khurūsh — or raised a shout in announcement of this means of attaining the "meeting with God" ?). In place of karda khurūsh (so MA.Vol.4) INBA (MS) Vol.36 (see above) has karda zuhūr, "has been made manifest". If this is the correct reading the implication would be that the "Sea of Purity" (bahr-i safā') represents Bahā'u'llāh whose presence is an expression, a "wave" of the "Meeting with God" (mauj-i liqā'): the first hemistich of line 4 might thus be translated;

" Out of [or from] the Wave of the Meeting [with God] the Ocean of Purity [= Bahā'u'llāh ?] hath been manifested"

The second hemistich of line 4 probably indicates that on account of Bahā'u'llāh's rapture (az jabih mā; cf. line 1) the "Precious Favour" (turfa-i 'atā' — of the "meeting with God through him ?) is available.

Though the text is unclear it may be that INBA.MS. has the reading. "On account of [or from] the Rapture of [the one represented by the letter] hā' this Precious Favour raineth down (از جزیرها .....). If this is the case it may be that Bahā'u'llāh is representing himself or the Bāb as the letter hā' (= the first letter of هو ["He is"]

indicative of Divinity) whose rapture is related to the appearance of the "Precious Favour" (see also on lines 5,7,9 and 13).



- [5] In the first hemistich of this line Bahā'u'llāh probably represents himself as the "Rose" (gull) at whose sight delight of the "Wine" (mil) of spiritual intoxication derives its potency. In his Lawh-i Gull-i Ma'ngaw ("Tablet of the Ideal Rose" c. 1865-6) similar imagery is used— Bahā'u'llāh is pictured as the 'Ideal Rose' in the 'Divine Ridwān' to whom the 'nightingales' (= the Bābīs) should turn (see AQA.Vol.4. pp. 336-8).

It is syntactically and metrically extremely unlikely that the } of را is the Persian suffix marking the direct object of the verb سینه زد—used in order to maintain the rhyme. As INBA.MS. indicates (having [= hamza] indicative of the genitive) را is a genitive construction and should be read ranā 'rā' = "Joyful Song [or wailing] of the [letter] Rā'". The question thus arises as to what or whom is meant by the letter Rā'. Several possibilities present themselves:

- 1) Rā', being the first letter of روح, is indicative of the "[Holy] Spirit" (ruh — as an abstract reality) or a leading Bābī with this title.
- 2) Rā', being the first letter of رب (= Rabb = "Lord"), might indicate the person of the Bāb (رب) علی محمد have the same abjad numerical value [202] cf. the Bāb's Letter to Muhammad Shah in INBA [MS] Vol. 64. [pp.103-126], p.110) — it is less likely that another leading Bābī, such as Qaddūs (whose name علی محمد also = 202) is intended though Bahā'u'llāh might be alluding to himself.
- 3) Rā', being the first letter of رئیس (= Ra'īs = "Chief"), is an allusion to Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī's interpretation of the ع (understood to be an inverted letter و [و] with an 'extended tail') element in certain Shī'ī forms of the "greatest name" ('of God; i.e. ☆ ع و // □ م // ☆) as indicative of the "mystery of inversion before the Cipher of the Chief" (sirr al-tankīs li-ramz al-ra'īs).<sup>1</sup>

1. For some details and references see D.MacEoin, Some Bahā'ī and Shaykhī Interpretations of the 'Mystery of Reversal' in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin, Vol.1. No.1. (Newcastle upon Tyne June 1982), p.11ff.) In a number of his writings Bahā'u'llāh has referred to the sirr al-tankīs li-ramz al-ra'īs.



This might at first sight seem a somewhat unlikely suggestion but it must be borne in mind that—: a) Shaykh Ahmad's description of the  in the Shi'ite greatest name diagram as the sirr al-tankis li-ramz al-ra'is was understood by Bahā'u'llāh (in his later writings) to allude to his own advent and was related (by Shaykh Ahmad himself as well as Bahā'ī writers) to the commencement of the dispensation of the Qā'im (the Bāb); b) Bahā'u'llāh apparently represents himself as "this Sweet Cipher" (in ramz-i malih) — the word ramz ("cipher") being in genitive relationship with ra'is (= "chief") in Shaykh Ahmad's statement; c) In line with Shaykh Ahmad's relating the sirr al-tankis li-ramz al-ra'is with successive cycles of divine disclosure and the advent of the Qā'im lines 6-9 (those following line 5) of the Rashh-i Amā are oriented around the theme of the new cycle of fulfillment; d) If جذبہ ہا (= "Rapture of Hā'") is the correct reading in line 4, then زندہ را (= "Joyful Song of Rā'") (cf. the expression رمز ملیح "Sweet Cipher") would parallel each other and might be taken to indicate the letters ه and و ( = و) which together spell هو (c.f. lines 7 & 8).

If the third of the three proposed explanations of ra' is correct— it would seem to me to be likely— then it may be deduced that Bahā'u'llāh is alluding to himself as the "Cipher" (ramz) of the "Chief" (ra'is = the Bāb? or God?) whose divine commission is related to the "mystery of inversion" (sirr al-tankis) understood to be indicative of a new phase in the Bābī dispensation. Alternatively, Bahā'u'llāh may be representing himself as the "Chief" (ra'is > ra') whose "joyful song" (revealing verses?) is expressive of the "sweet cipher" (ramz-i malih) of his secret epiphanic status. 1.

- [6] In the first hemistich of this line Bahā'u'llāh mentions the eschatological Trumpet Blast (naqra' naqūrī) and the anticipated "Celestial Rapture" (jadhba' lahūtī = the rejoicing in the highest heavenly realm as a result of the eschatological disclosure?) which, we learn from the second hemistich, both rain down or are heard (?) as a single blast (nafkha— or breath) from the "firmament of Heaven" (jaww al-samā'). As a result of the arrival of the Bābī dispensation and/or (?) the new claims of Bahā'u'llāh the eschatological consummation is being announced in the heavenly realms.

1. Perhaps worth noting is the fact that the Bāb refers to himself in the XCI st sura of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' as the "Elevated Cipher" (ramz al-rafi').

That "The Stunning Trump", "Trumpet Blast", "Blow on the Trumpet", or the like, is the sense of نقره ناقوری may be deduced from Qur'an 74:8 where we read:

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ

"And when the Trumpet is sounded"

It is only in this Qur'anic verse that naqūr (= Trumpet, Bugle) and the passive verbal form nuqira (= 'to be sounded, blown into'; from the same Arabic root [NQR]) occur. Elsewhere in the Qur'an other Arabic terms are used to indicate the eschatological Trumpet (most often sūr × 11) or 'Trumpet Blasts'— which herald the onset of the last "Hour", the resurrection, assembling, judgement and meeting with God, 1. In the genitive expression نقره ناقوری the governing verbal noun نقره is probably to be read نقرة (naqra) and understood to mean (lit.)

"the blowing (in the Trumpet; naqra' naqūrī).

In certain writings of the Bāb and in a great many of the (later) writings of Bahā'u'llāh there are references to the motif of the eschatological trumpet blast(s)— which is rooted in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. 2. In his Sahifa-yi Adliyya for example, the Bāb, in the course of mentioning various signs indicative of the onset of the 'last days', mentions that, "... the Trumpet hath been sounded in the Land of Manifestation (nuqira al-naqūr fī ard al-zuhūr)". 3. Bahā'u'llāh has interpreted the various Qur'anic texts that mention 'Trumpet Blasts' in the light of the advent of the Bāb and his own person, mission and revelation. In his Surat al-Ahsāb (c. 1864), for example, he writes:

"Say: By God! The greatest Trump (sūr al-akbar) hath been made manifest in this Trumpet (al-naqūr) which, in very truth, hath cried out. It hath been sounded (nuqira) and will cry out between the heavens and the earth with the most elevated shout..." 4.

Bahā'u'llāh, as noted, speaks of the "Stunning Trump" and the "Celestial Rapture" as both being heard as a single "blast" or "breath"

1. See Qur'an 6:73, 18:99, 20:102, 23:103, 27:89, 36:51, 50:19, 69:13, 78:18 and 39:68 (= twin 'trumpet blasts').
2. Refer for example, Isaiah 27:13, Zech 9:14, Targ. Ps. Jon Num 23:21; 1 Thess 4:16, I Cor. 15:52, Rev. 8-11, Matt. 24:31.
3. Sahifa-yi Adliyya (n.p. [Tehran] n.d.), p.4.
4. Surat al-Ahsāb in AQA. Vol. 4. p. 11. Such passages could be greatly multiplied: "There are at least 50-100 passages in Bahā'u'llāh's writings in which the motif of the eschatological Trumpet(s) is utilised.

in the "Firmament of Heaven" ( jaww al-samā' ). The expression jaww al-samā' occurs once in the Qur'an (16:81) as that part of the sky in which birds soar motionless. In Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture jaww (= 'firmament', 'air', 'atmosphere', 'sky' ) is frequently used in connection with the hierarchy of celestial or metaphysical realms. As the governing noun in a variety of genitive expressions it is quite common in the writings of the Bāb.<sup>1</sup>

- [7] In the first hemistich of this line Bahā'u'llāh expresses the thought that on account of his "Visage" ( chahra (Per.)= [alternatively], 'face', 'countenance', 'mein' ) or in view of the existence of the Bābī community a new "dispensation" ( dawr [alternatively], 'time', 'age', 'cycle' 'era' ) of Divine disclosure has commenced; that of "I am He" ( Arab. ana huwa ). The utterance "I am He" is indicative of the claim "I am God" or "I am Divine". In view of the Bābī conviction that the appearance of the Bāb inaugurated the cycle of the eschatological advent of Divinity certain Bābīs, like the Bāb, claimed Divinity — not, it seems, absolute identity with the transcendent and unknowable Godhead but "secondary Divinity". Quddūs, Ṭāhira, Mīrzā Yahyā and other leading Bābīs claimed godhood and lordship and were addressed by the Bāb as if they were the "self" ( nafs ) "essence" ( dhāt ) and "being" ( kaynūniyya ) of the Godhead. That this was the case may, among many other sources, be gathered from Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Sarrā'i (c. 1867 ). In this lengthy Persian treatise Bahā'u'llāh at one point argues that the cycle of prophethood ( nubuwwa ) ended in the "year sixty" (= 1260 AH= 1844 AD ) when the Bābī cycle began. He states that this year marked the "commencement of the epiphany of God" ( awwal zuhūr Allāh ).<sup>2</sup> Countering the leadership role and preeminence claimed by Mīrzā Yahyā he quotes a number of passages from the Bāb's writings in which leading Bābīs are spoken of in highly exalted terms. He states that "Divinity" ( ulūhiyya ) and "Lordship" ( rubūbiyya ), described as the "greatest of stations" ( a'zam-i maqāmāt ), were bestowed by the Bāb "on any individual he desired" ( bi-har nafsīkih iradīh ).<sup>3</sup>

The words "I am He" ( أنا هو ) and "He is He" ( هو هو ) in line 7 of the Rashh-i 'Amā' are derived from certain Shī'ī traditions. ( ahādīth )

1. See for example, Qayyūm al-Asmā' (Browne Coll. MS Or F. II. ); LXXVII. fol. 135a; LXXXIV. fol. 145b; LXXXVI. fol. 150b; XC. fol. 158b; CIX. fol. 195a.
2. Refer Lawh-i Sarrā'i in Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol. 7. p. 69.
3. Refer, *ibid.*, p. 64.

originally expressive of the exalted status or divinity of the Prophet Muhammad and the Imāms. One such tradition, quoted by Bahā'u'llāh in his Jawāhir al-Asrār ( late 1850's ) reads:

أنا هو و هو أنا إلا الله هو و أنا أنا

"I, verily, am He [God] and He [God] is I [Myself] except that He is He [Himself] and I am I [Myself]."<sup>1</sup>

Similar traditions are quoted elsewhere in his writings:

أنا هو و هو أنا

"I am He [God] Himself and He [God] is I Myself"<sup>2</sup>.

لنا مع الله حالات نحن فيها هو و هو نحن و هو هو نحن نحن

"Manifold are Our relationships with God. At one time We are He Himself, and He is We Ourselves. At another He is He and We are We."<sup>3</sup>

Expressions derived from these traditions are quite common in the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh. In Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am ( 1854 ) the word "food" ( ta'am ) is given a variety of esoteric interpretations relative to the well-known hierarchy of metaphysical realms ( [Hāhūt] Lāhūt, Jabarūt, Malakūt and Nāsūt ). In the realm of Lāhūt, the "Paradise of Endless Duration", "food" is equated with the "station" ( maqām ) of "He is He.. ( هو هو )" which is the sphere of ( the claim of ) identity with God beyond duality. In that of Jabarūt, the "Paradise of the Divine Uniqueness", it is associated with the "station" ( maqām ) of "Thou are He and He is Thou" ( أنت هو و هو أنت ) which is the sphere of ( the claim to ) distinct Divinity. In the light of such texts it may be deduced that the phrases "I am He" and "He is He" in the Rashh-i 'Amā' are indicative of the exalted claims made by leading Bābīs — or Bahā'u'llāh in particular — in the light of the commencement of a new phase in the Bābī cycle of the epiphany

1. Jawāhir al-Asrār in AQA. Vol. 3., p. 35.
2. Hadīth cited, Bahā'u'llāh Kitāb-i Iqān ( NSA of Bahā'īs of Germany 1980 ), p. 75.
3. Utterance attributed to the Prophet Muhammad in Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Shaykh ( n.p. n.d. ), p. 52.
4. Refer, Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am in MA. vol. 4. p. 265ff. For further details and a complete translation of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'am see my article in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin, Vol. 3 No. 1 pp. - .

of Divinity.

In the second hemistich of line 7 the word نفس occurs in connection with the realization of the "cycle" (kawr) of "He is He". Pointed naḥa it means a "breeze", "gust", "breath" or "(perfumed) fragrance" (or the like). If this reading is correct (see below)—naḥka (= "blow", "puff", "breath", "blast"; cf. line 6) would be a possibility—it probably expresses a breathing or blowing into the eschatological Trumpet which heralds the onset of the cycle of "He is He". Hence the translation "On account of Our [Trumpet] Blast.." (for, ما نفض ما). Instead of نفس ما INBA.MS, it is important to note, has ما نفض ما which may be translated, "the Overflowing of [the letter] Bā'". If this is the correct reading, as may well be the case, then the second hemistich of line 7 should be translated:

"On account of the Overflowing of [the letter] Bā' the cycle of "He is He" poureth forth".

In Bābī-Bahā'ī theology the letter Bā' ( ب = the first letter of the basmala ) is given a wide range of meanings. It is often, for example, symbolic of the locus of being from which cosmological realities and prophetic cycles originate. In the above version of line 7 of the Rashh-i 'Amā' it may be indicative of the person of the Bāb from whom spiritual forces emanate or "overflow" such that the cycle of the claim to Divinity beyond duality is extended through Bahā'u'llāh and/or other leading Bābīs.

Also worth noting in connection with 7th line of the Rashh-i 'Amā' (cf. also lines 6 and 9) is the fact that there may be allusion to an Islāmic tradition to the effect that the expected Qā'im would utter a "Word" which would cause those of high rank in the Shī'ī hierarchy to "flee in consternation" (cf. Qur'ān 80:33f; 101:1ff, etc.).<sup>1</sup> In a number of his writings of the 'Akka' period (1868-92 — and possibly earlier) Bahā'u'llāh has identified this "Word" with the declaration "I am He [God]" (أنا هو) uttered by himself in place of "He is God" (هو الله) and a sign of the greatness of the Bābī-Bahā'ī cycle which is the "Day of God".<sup>2</sup>

1. See Nabīl-i Zarandī [Trans. Shoghi Effendi], 'The Dawn-Breakers' (London 1953), pp.10-11. cf. A. Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh, Vol.1. (Oxford 1974), p.46.

2. See the passage from a Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh quoted in English translation in Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh (Bahā'ī World Centre, Haifa 1978), pp.257-9.

[8] Here Bahā'u'llāh first states that from the "Goblet of the Heart" (kāsa' dīl) the "Kawthar of Reality" (kawthar-i haqq) has been made manifest. The meaning is probably that the spring or fount of real truth wells out from the centre of his being. The word Kawthar means "abundance" (see Qur'ān 108:1). In Islāmic literatures it is usually understood to signify a Fountain which gushes forth in Paradise. It occurs quite frequently in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. In his Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar (Commentary on Qur'ān sūra 108) the Bāb, apart from allotting a variety of meaning to the individual letters which make up this word, identifies kawthar with the Prophet Muhammad, Imām 'Alī, Fātima, Hasan, Husayn and the other Shī'ī Imāms, in the light of its signifying the "Water of Life" (mā' al-haiwān) which flows into and sustains inner human realities.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the Rashh-i 'Amā' there are a good many other writings of Bahā'u'llāh in which the word Kawthar is used in the sense of his own person or the Bahā'ī revelation. In for example his 'Tablet to the Pope' (Pius IXth; c.1869) Bahā'u'llāh writes:

"O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He who is the Lord of Lords [Bahā'u'llāh] is come.. On his right hand floweth the Kawthar of grace (kawthar al-fadl) and on his left the Salsabil of justice (salsabil al-'adl).."<sup>2</sup>

As noted, the word Kawthar is in genitive relationship with haqq which could be translated in a variety of ways: "God", "Absolute Truth", or "Reality", etc. It is very frequently used in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture, though it is not always clear how it is best translated. The first section of Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Haqq (c. 1860-63?) provides good examples of the dhiḥr type (repetitive) use of this important term.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the exact sense of Kawthar-i Haqq it is certainly indicative of the 'stream of spiritual reality' that flows out of the heart of Bahā'u'llāh (or the Bābī Cause).

1. Refer, Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar (Brown Coll. MS Or F. 10[7]), fols.16(b)ff; 34(b)ff; 96ff. Full details cannot be given here.

2. Text in Alwah-i nazilah-yi khitab bi Mulūk wa Ra'asa-yi ard (Tehran 124 Bādī<sup>c</sup>), pp.73-4; trans. (adapted) Shoghi Effendi, (in) The Promised Day is Come (Wilmette 1980), p.31.

3. The Lawh-i Haqq is published in Ishrāq Khāvarī's Canī-i Shāyigān (Tehran 123 Bādī<sup>c</sup>), pp.37-40. It should also be noted that both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh claimed to be the manifestation of al-haqq. (See for example, Qayyūm al-Asmā' LVII (fol.97), Lawh-i Az Bāgh-i Ilāhī (MS [where Bahā'u'llāh at one point claims: 'to have appeared with the "Trumpet of 'I am al-Haqq' ( bā sūr-i ānā al-haqq )]).

The exact sense of the second hemistich of line 8 is not clear to me. **لعل بها** may, as indicated in the translation, signify something like the "Vermillion Lips of Bahā'" , the "Ruby[ Redness] of Bahā'" or the " Red Wine of Bahā' ". The translation "Glorious Ruby" (—as a gem, lips or wine) is also possible. In view of the occurrence of **سافر شهد** ( *sāḥar-i shahd/shuhd* = 'cup of honey' ) it seems most likely that **لعل بها** is indicative of Bahā'u'llāh's "Vermillion Lips". This inasmuch as the sweet saliva of prophets and Imāms was believed to be the vehicle for the transmission of divine grace. It appears then, that in the second hemistich of line 8, Bahā'u'llāh pictures himself as a beautiful divine maiden with vermilion lips from which the honey of spiritual grace is transmitted. <sup>1.</sup>

Of interest in the light of the above is the occurrence of **لعل نكین** in the 4th line of Bahā'u'llāh's *Halih Halih Halih Ya Bishārat* (late 1862—early 1863). At the beginning of this Persian poem, which is expressive of Bahā'u'llāh's claim to leadership of the Bābī community and intimate communion with God through a celestial maiden ( *hūr* = his transcendent self ? ), the "Maid of Eternity" ( *hūr-i baqā'* ) is pictured as appearing with "harp and song", "crimson goblet", "amorous glances", "the taste of annihilation", "dance and song" and (line 4) "with musky tresses and beautiful vermilion lips" ( *با گیسوی مکتین بالعل نكین* ). Since **لعل** in the genitive expression **لعل نكین** ( *la<sup>c</sup>l-i namakīn* ) probably means 'beautiful' (lit. 'salty' ) it is likely that it is descriptive of the lips of the divine maiden. <sup>2.</sup>

1. Worth noting in connection with the imagery alluded to in the 8th line of the *Rashh-i Amā'* is the following extract from a Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh to his daughter Bahiyya Khānūm (late Akkā period ?): "She hath..tasted the sweet savours of My holy, My wondrous pleasure [lit. My holy, My wondrous saliva ( *rudabī* )?]. At one time We gave her to drink from My honeyed Mouth, at another caused her to partake of My mighty, My luminous Kawthar." (text and trans. in *Bahiyyih Khānūm* [Haifa 1982], p.v and [text facing] p.93). cf. also, L.Veccia Vaglieri, *Husayn*, in *Enc. Islam* Vol. III, p. 612 ; M.Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam* (The Hague 1978), p.75f.

2. On the *Halih Halih. Ya Bishārat* see my article (text included) in *Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin*, Vol.2. No. 3 (Dec. 1983), pp.105-110.

In the first hemistich of the 7th line of another poetical work of Bahā'u'llāh (untitled and printed in MA.Vol.4, pp.188-192—see p.188) of the Baghdad period (?) the (apparently) "beautiful vermilion lips" ( *la<sup>c</sup>l-i namakīnish* ) are compared to choice red rubies obtained from Central Asia ( *yaqūt-i badakhshan* ).

[ <sup>1</sup> insert: of the Divine Maiden ( *hūr* ) ].

[9] The meaning of the first hemistich of this line seems clear enough. It is indicated that the eschatological "Day of God" ( *yaum-i khudā* ) spoken of in the Qur'ān (as well as the Bible) has been "fully realised" ( *shud kāmīl*; alternatively, "perfected", "completed" )—INBA.MS, it should be noted, has **شده ظاهر** = "made manifest", "appeared". This on account of the **جلوه ربّ** which may be translated "the effulgence (or, splendour/ lustre /brilliance) of the Lord" and allude to the eschatological advent of Divinity in terms of the epiphany of the Bāb or (more likely) Bahā'u'llāh himself. It is possible that Bahā'u'llāh, in view of his mystical experiences and leading role within the Bābī community, represents himself as the locus of the perfection of the "Day of God" inaugurated by the Bāb.

Frequent reference to the realization of the "Day of God" is made in the later writings of Bahā'u'llāh. It is identified with the Bābī-Bahā'ī cycle or dispensation in the light of his manifestation (and that of the Bāb) in the station of "Divinity" and "Lordship". In, for example, a letter addressed to Āqā Mīrzā Assad Allāh Nūrī (late Akkā period) Bahā'u'llāh writes:

"After the announcement of this blessed "Word" [= "I, verily, am God, no god is there except Me."] the temples of blasphemy ( *hayakīl-i shirk* ) were distinguished from the temples of the people of the Divine Unity ( *hayakīl ahl-i taḥīd* ). The Day of the manifestation of this blessed "Word" hath been named the "Day of God". <sup>1.</sup>

The "Day of God" is the "Day" when Bahā'u'llāh appeared uttering the "blessed "Word" ", "I, verily am God.." which served to distinguish those who truly acknowledged his Divinity and those who rejected him.

The second hemistich of line 9 could be understood in a variety of ways. What exactly the phrase **از غنّه طا** means is not clear.

**غنّه**, read as *ghunna* ( *غنّ* = 'to speak through the nose'), probably means 'sound/ cry (of regret? hence the translation 'lament'). "**ت**" could signify Tehran ( *t* being its first letter ) as in a good many later writings of Bahā'u'llāh, the person of Bahā'u'llāh himself ( *t* = *abad* 9 like *ت* [ *t* = *i* ] ) or even the Bābī poetess *Tāhira* ( *t* = the first letter of this title )—to mention the most likely poss-

1. The text of this interesting medium length Persian tablet of Bahā'u'llāh is contained in an unpublished uncatalogued MS (photocopy in my possession).

-bilities.

Since it was in the Siyāh Chāl in Tehran that the Rashh-i 'Amā' was composed it would seem likely that عَنْدَ طَا signifies the "lament of Tehran". This could indicate: a) the lament of Tehran personified, b) the lament of those Bābīs imprisoned with Bahā'u'llāh in Tehran or c) the lament of Bahā'u'llāh himself as one imprisoned in Tehran. The latter possibility (c) may well be the right one. If so the second hemistich of line 9 might be understood to signify that Bahā'u'llāh 's crying out in the Siyāh Chāl dungeon in Tehran is an expression of the "New Beauty" (naghz-i hadīth) of his person or power to reveal verses; such might also be the meaning if "Tā" is used as a cipher for Bahā'. Less likely would be the suggestion that Bahā'u'llāh is representing himself as the "New Beauty" or leader of the Bābīs (of Tehran) in view of Tāhira's (= "Tā") recent execution (in Tehran c. late 1852?).

- [10] At this point it may be noted that the first hemistich of lines 10-18 of the Rashh-i 'Amā' consist of genitive expressions followed by the Persian imperative bīn = "Observe!", "Behold!", "See thou!". While in lines 1-9 Bahā'u'llāh relates his status to the realization of eschatological realities and events in lines 10-18 (to generalize) he announces his high rank. It could be argued that the major theme of the Rashh-i 'Amā' is that of God's continuing to guide the Bābī community through the person of Bahā'u'llāh. Expected eschatological events have come to pass such that divine guidance continues to flow down from the heavenly realm.

"Observe the Glorious Overflowing" (طَفْحِ بَهَائِي بَيْنَ, tafh-i bahā'i bīn)

This phrase probably alludes to the person of Bahā'u'llāh as the one from whom spiritual grace flows forth in abundance. An alternative translation might be, "Observe what overfloweth from Bahā'!"

"Observe the Beclouded Sprinkling!" (رَشْحِ صَائِي بَيْنَ, rashh-i 'amā'i bīn).<sup>1</sup> cf. on lines 1 and 19.

The use of the verbal nouns tafh (= "Overflowing") and rashh (= "Sprinkling") here and in line 19 is doubtless rooted in their occurrence in the Hadīth Kumayl (cf. above). At one point in certain versions of this tradition Kumayl ibn Ziyad asks Imām 'Alī what constitutes al-haqīqa (= "absolute reality"). In response to his question the Imām initially asks Kumayl what he has got to do with al-haqīqat that he should

<sup>1</sup> i.e. 'Observe what sprinkleth down from the Cloud of Unknowing'.

be so bold as to pose such a question. Kumayl then asserts that he is a companion of 'Alī's secret and is told by the latter that this is true but that "...that which overflows from me [Imām 'Alī] only sprinkles down upon you [Kumayl]..." (بِزَشْحِ عَلِيٍّ مَا يَنْفَحُ مِنِّي).<sup>1</sup> In saying this Imām 'Alī apparently indicates that his own capacity for mystic knowledge is great while Kumayl's is limited: divine knowledge spills over from his being while it only sprinkles down upon that of Kumayl.

Thus, in the light of what is said in the Hadīth Kumayl, the 10th line of the Rashh-i 'Amā', may be said to represent Bahā'u'llāh as the one from whom the fullness of divine knowledge rains down. On account of his revealing verses (= the "Melody of God" lahn-i khudā) the "Glorious Overflowing" and "Beclouded Sprinkling" both find simultaneous realization.<sup>2</sup>

- [11] طَلَحِ سَمَرَةٍ is here translated "Eternal Moon" and طَلَحِ سَمَرَةٍ "Pristine Ascendent[Sun]". If this translation of these genitive expressions is correct Bahā'u'llāh probably indicates that both the "Sun" of prophethood and the "Moon" of guardianship shine forth from his interior being. He is the "Pure Breast" (صدرِ سَمَرَةٍ, sadr-i mumarrad; alternatively, the 'Purified/Clear/Translucent/Lustrous/Pellucid Breast/Heart or Bosom' cf. Qur'an 27:44 [the only occurrence of the passive participle mumarrad]) which pours forth spiritual grace from (his seat on — or the one seated on) the "Elevated Throne" ('arsh-i 'alā')<sup>3</sup>.

- [12] I have translated نَضَلَةَ طُورِي "Blessed Palm-Tree" and رَتِدِ وَرَقَا "Melody of the Dove". In describing himself as a "Palm-Tree" Bahā'u'llāh is probably alluding to Qur'an 19:23ff (cf. Qur'an 13:28) where it is narrated that the Virgin Mary retired to a distant place and gave birth to Jesus near a palm-tree (nakhla) which subsequently (miraculously) provided her with ripe dates (cf. Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew XX.1ff). The "Blessed Palm-Tree"

1. Text cited from the Bab's Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara (Tehran Bahā'i Archives MS 6014 C), p. 74 (b).

2. cf. Bahā'u'llāh's Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya line 109 (in MA.Vol.4, p. 207).

3. cf. Bahā'u'llāh's Lawn-i Nasīr (in Ma'nuca-yi Alwāh-i Mubāraka [Cairo 1920], pp. 165-202), p. 196, "He [Bahā'u'llāh] crieth out according to that which the Greatest Spirit (rūh al-a'zam) uttereth in his purified, most-pristine breast (fī sadrahu al-mumarrad al-asfā')"; Sūrat al-Haykal in AQA.Vol.4 (pp. 268-300), pp. 286, 287, 288.

may be thought of as a symbol of prophethood; the tree of reality which proffers the 'fruit' of spiritual nourishment.

In certain Shi'i traditions ( ahadīth ) and in the writings of such Sufi thinkers as Ibn al-<sup>C</sup>Arabi (d. 638/1240) the palm-tree ( nakhla ) is given a variety of esoteric meanings. Created from the surplus clay from which Man/Adam was made and being feminine in Arabic the nakhla is, for the Great Shaykh, symbolic of the Celestial Earth, the Divine Feminine, "Adam's Sister", the Mystic Eve. In the VIIIth book of his "Meccan Revelations" ( Kitāb al-Futūhāt al-Makkiya ) he writes:

"Know that when God created Adam who was the first human organism to be constituted, and when he had established him as the origin and archetype of all human bodies, there remained a surplus of the leaven of the clay. From this surplus God created the palm tree, so that this plant [ nakhla, palm tree being feminine, ] is Adam's sister; for us therefore it is like an aunt on our father's side. In theology it is so described and is compared to the faithful believer. No other plant bears within it such extraordinary secrets as are hidden in this one." 1.

Both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh frequently refer to themselves as a "Dove" ( wargā'; or [female] pigeon ); that is, an heavenly bird that coos on the branches of the celestial Tree ( i.e. reveals heavenly verses ). The invitation to "Behold the Melody of the Dove!" is an invitation to experience the verses revealed by Bahā'u'llāh.

The second hemistich of line 12 indicates that the revelation of Bahā'u'llāh, the عَمْدُ أَبِي, ghumna-yi abhā', the "All-Glorious Lament [ Song ]", rains down from the "لَمْعُ صَفَا", lam<sup>C</sup>-jsafā', the "Brilliance of Purity" ( alternatively, 'Glittering/Flashing/ Splendour/ Shining of the Limpidity/Clearness/ Felicity/ Serenity —it is unlikely that صفا is here indicative of the mountain near Mecca ). As the (Arabic) relative of bahā' (= "glory/glorious" ) abhā' indicates the person of Bahā'u'llāh or the nature of the "Lament[Song]" which derives from him ( عَمْدُ أَبِي could be translated "Lament[Song] of the All-Glorious" ). The عَمْدُ أَبِي flows down from that (heavenly) sphere which radiates the "Brilliance of Purity" (?).

1. Trans. H. Corbin in Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdaean Iran to Shi'ite Iran [ trans. > English N. Pearson ] (Princeton Univ. Press 1977 ), p. 136. For further details on the significance of the palm-tree mentioned in Qur'an 19:23ff see p. 309. fn's 4-5. It should also be noted that the Divine Beloved is pictured as the marvellous palm-tree in Sufi poetry (cf. A. Schimmel, The Triumphal Sun, [London & the Hague 1980 ], p. 88 ).

[13] Bahā'u'llāh here represents himself as communicating the "Iraqi Melody" ( āhang-i Ciraqī ) and the "Hijazi Tambourine" (or Drum-beat daff-i hijazī ); the heavenly melody and rhythm the like of which was produced in, belongs to, or is expressive of Iraq and the Hijaz (= Ottoman Iraq [ Ciraq-i aḡam + Ciraq-i Carab ] and Mecca Medina and the adjacent territories ). His person and revelation communicate the highest good symbolized by the most blessed Islāmic regions. 1.

In several of his later writings Bahā'u'llāh, in various ways, describes himself as 'Hijazi' and 'Iraqi'. With his exile to Iraq (Baghdad) such ways of referring to himself took on a concrete dimension. In his Lawh-i Madinat al-Tawhīd ( late Baghdad period ) he, at one point writes:

"Hearken [on this] Day [in which] the [eschatological] Caller ( al-munād ) crieth out in the midst of the immortal realm and the Dove of Hijaz [= Bahā'u'llāh] warbleth in the region of Iraq ( fi shatr al-Ciraq ) summoning all unto concord..." 2.

In the 17th line of his Halih Halih Halih Yā Bishārat (1862-3), possibly alluding to his exile from Iran to Iraq, Bahā'u'llāh states:

"This Hijazi Falcon came with Ciraqi accents from the forearm of the Shāh (or King)." 3.

In the Persian section of his Lawh-i Bulbul al-Firaq ('Tablet of the Nightingale of Separation'; mid 1863 — written at the time of the departure from Baghdad to Constantinople), it may be noted that this point, Bahā'u'llāh reminds his devotees that he had, in his earlier Tablets ( alwāh ), anticipated that the "Iraqi Bird" ( tair-i Ciraqī ) = Bahā'u'llāh ) which sings with the "Melody of Hijaz" ( āhang-i hijāz ) would hasten on elsewhere or sing out in another accent. (i.e. leave Iraq). 4.

1. The Hijaz was, of course, the scene of the mission of the Prophet Muhammad. Iraq harbours the shrines of Imām <sup>C</sup>Alī (Najaf), Imām Husayn (Karbala), Imām Mūsā and Imām Muhammad Taqī (Kazimayn) and Imām <sup>C</sup>Alī Naqī and Imām Hasan Askarī ( Samarra ).

2. Text in Ishraq Khavārī (Ed) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī, Vol. 4, pp. 326-7.

3. Text in Ishraq Khavārī, Ganj-i Shayḡān, p. 34.

4. Text in *ibid.*, p. 44. cf. also Bahā'u'llāh, Lawh-i Gull-i Ma'navī in AQA, Vol. 4, pp. 326-8.

In place of دَفَّ حِجَازِي "Behold the Hijazi Tambourine (Drum-beat)" INBA.MS appears to read دَفِّي نَوَاصِي بَيْنَ, "Behold the Rhythmic Drumbeat!" (reading: daff-i nawā'i; alternatively 'Melodious Tambourine [or the like ]).

The second hemistich of the 13th line of the Rashh-i 'Amā' literally indicates that the جَزْبِدْ, jadhba' lā (loosely) "Rapture of Lā" flows down "from" the "Divine Hand" (كَفِّ الْمِي, kaff-i illāhī [lit. "Divine Palm(of the Hand) ] ). What exactly is here meant by the جَزْبِدْ is not clear. If the لَا is a cipher for لَاهُوت Lāhūt (cf. line 6) the rapture of heavenly beings might be intended ("Lā" being the first two letters of Lāhūt = the celestial realm of the Divine epiphany). It is more likely however, that لَا "Lā" is the Arabic particle of negation which stands at the beginning of the Kalimat al-Tawhīd, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, Lā ilāha illa'l-lāh = "There is no god but God" and is indicative of it in rewritten form as the oft-uttered Bābī proclamation of Divinity, .. Lā ilāha illa' anā = "No god is there except Me" — a claim made countless times by the Bāb (frequently in the Qayyūm al-Asmā' for example) as well as Bahā'u'llāh (and indeed other leading Bābīs). That some such claim to Divinity is alluded to here might be said to be confirmed by the use of the phrase كَفِّ الْمِي "Divine Hand[Palm]" for كَفِّ, kaff, is used in Bahā'u'llāh's writings (as doubtless in the Rashh-i 'Amā' here) in order to indicate the "Snow-White Hand" of Moses who, on Sinai, heard the declaration of Divinity (cf. line 16 and the note). The motif of the miraculous 'snow-white' palm or hand is Sinaitic as is that of God's voicing his absolute Divinity which is indicated by "Lā". Bahā'u'llāh apparently conflates the white brightness of Moses' "palm" with the Sinaitic Fire from which the declaration of Divinity was heard—mystically speaking the interior being or "heart" of Moses himself, the locus of "Divinity" in exalted Prophets. There is a connection between the 'snow-white' palm motif and the declaration of Divinity.<sup>1</sup>

As far as I am aware the only other use of the particle Lā (= "No") in Bahā'u'llāh's writings comparable to its occurrence in line 13 of the

1. See further below on line 16. cf. Bahā'u'llāh, Bās Ay Bidih Jāmī' (in MA, Vol. 4, pp. 186-7) line 10 (p. 187); Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya (in ibid., pp. 197-209) line 43 (p. 201); Qur'ān 20:14.

of the Rashh-i 'Amā' is in the 11th line of the Halih..Yā Bishārat:

این نغمه جان در تزد جانان از بلبل لا امر

"This Song of the Spirit came to the lovers from the Nightingale of "Lā". 1.

Bahā'u'llāh apparently speaks of his coming with the "Song of the Spirit" from the "Nightingale of "Lā". It may be that he is to be thought of as the "Nightingale of "Lā" which utters the "Song of the Spirit" in order to attract the "lovers" (= the Bābīs) to himself. Since Sinaitic imagery clusters around line 11 (see lines 10 and 12) his song may be "No god is there except Me" (or the like) indicated by the use of "Lā".

Lying behind Bahā'u'llāh's use of لَا "Lā" in the Rashh-i 'Amā' stand a variety of complex qabbalistic passages in the writings of the Bāb. He associated "Lā" with (for example) the kalimat al-tawhīd<sup>2</sup> — which lies at the heart of his qabbalistic system and enshrines the alphabetic potencies which are the locus of prophethood—the letter Alif<sup>3</sup>, the period Moses spent on Mount Sinai<sup>4</sup>, the Christian derivation of the symbol of the cross (seen as an heretical image of God as "the third of three")<sup>5</sup> and a host of arcane mysteries surrounding the gematric significances of the letter Lām. Details cannot be gone into here.<sup>6</sup>

It is of considerable interest that INBA.MS. reads جَزْبِدْ تَا, jadhba' thā', "the Rapture of thā'" and not جَزْبِدْ لَا "the Rapture of Lā".

1. Text from Ishraq Khāvarī, Ganj-i Shāyigān, p. 34.

2. The kalimat al-tawhīd, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, contains three different letters — alif, lām and hā', the lām following the alif (= the source of all the letters) and being followed by hā' (= the temple of prophethood) — and also begins with "Lā" (= "No").

3. Alif, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, is the gematric primo-genitor (its value is one) of all the other letters. Lām is its primary manifestation in the all-highest realm; cf. the Qur'anic disconnected letters Alif.Lam.Mim (أَلَمْ).

4. See Qur'an 7:142 and for example, the Bāb, Tafsīr Sūrat al-Asr (in INBA.MS, Vol. 69), p. 41; Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar (Browne Coll. MS. Or. F. 10[7]), fol. 19(b).

5. For details see my The Bāb on the derivation of the Christian symbol of the Cross (forthcoming).

6. The reader is referred to the Bāb's comments on the letter Lām (ل) of لِرَبِّكَ, li-rabbika (= "to thy Lord", Qur'an 108:2) and its association with "Lā" (لَا) in the Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar.

If this is the correct reading or that of an early (alternative) version of line 13 (second hemistich) of the Rashh-i 'Amā' it is most likely an allusion to the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā (c.1830-1912) Bahā'u'llāh's half-brother — he was generally considered to be the (nominal) leader of the Bābī community after the Bāb's martyrdom in 1850 and was initially supported by Bahā'u'llāh. Yahyā was referred to by the Bāb as al-thamara = "the Fruit [of the Dispensation of the Bayān]". Since the first letter of thamara is thā' ( ث ) Yahyā used this letter as a means of self-identification. In his early Kitāb al-Wahid ( early 1850's ? ) he very frequently refers to himself as al-thā'.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming that ث is an early reading and does allude to the person of Mīrzā Yahyā the second hemistich of line 13 — which could be translated, " See thou that the Rapture of thā' raineth down from the Divine Hand [Palm] " — might mean:-

- Bahā'u'llāh acknowledges the leadership role of Yahyā whose revealed verses originate in the Sinaitic heights, the "Divine Hand[Palm]".
- As the half-brother and (outwardly—in the early 1850's) mouthpiece of Yahyā Bahā'u'llāh alludes to himself as the ث whose revealed verses originate in the Sinaitic heights, the "Divine Hand [Palm]".
- Bahā'u'llāh expresses his superiority to Yahyā by alluding to himself as the real "Fruit" of the Bayān or the "Divine Hand[Palm]" which is the Sinaitic source of Yahyā's inspiration.

Only further research will suggest which of these possibilities might be correct— assuming of course that ث is not a late (post-1850's) Azalī interpolation, unlikely though this is, and that ث is not used in the general sense of thamara without there being allusion to Yahyā's person.<sup>2</sup>

[14] The first two imperative expressions in this line picture Bahā'u'llāh— so it seems— as the "Deified Countenance" ( tal'at-lāhūtī ) and the "God-like Maiden" ( hūrī-yi hāhūtī ). The terms lāhūtī and hāhūtī imply that he possesses an exalted status for, in the hierarchy of meta-physical realms, lāhūt (= the sphere of the Divine theophany ) and

- On the Kitāb al-Wahid and the use of thā' see Appendix.
- Important in this respect would be the examination of more MSS of the Rashh-i 'Amā': bearing in mind possible scribal errors, divergent readings originating in oral transmission and/or the existence of several recensions of the Rashh-i 'Amā' originating with Bahā'u'llāh himself.

Hāhūt (= the sphere of the Divine Ipseity; cf. هو, huwa, "He is [God]" and huwiyya = the Divine Ipseity ) are uppermost. In Bābī-Bahā'ī literature tal'at frequently has the sense of "countenance" (i.e. face [reflecting the Divine Light]). The tal'at-lāhūtī, "Deified Countenance" indicates a celestial visage which reflects the Divine theophany and the hūrī-yi hāhūtī, "God-like Maiden", a feminine being who represents the Divine Ipseity.

References in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture to the "Divine Maiden" are rooted in the Qur'ānic mention of the houris (Arabic, hūr), heavenly maidens who are the companions of the blessed. That such feminine beings are present in paradise originally expressed the fact that the celestial abode is that wherein the most intimate human desires are fulfilled. The houris mentioned in the Qur'ān are "... spotless virgins, amorous, like of age, resembling hidden pearls or ruby and coral, with swelling breasts, untouched by men or jinn, who modestly keep their eyes cast down and are enclosed in pavilions..."<sup>1</sup>

In the writings of Bahā'u'llāh divine feminine beings are not infrequently mentioned. Therein they are usually symbolic of spiritual states and perfections. In certain texts a celestial maiden of the houri type personifies the Divine Beloved, the locus of Prophethood or the Holy Spirit as the link between God and His Messengers. Bahā'u'llāh also describes his own spiritual Self as a Divine Maiden.<sup>2</sup>

Having, in line 14 of the Rashh-i 'Amā' called upon the Bābīs to observe himself as the "Deified Countenance" and the "God-like Maiden", Bahā'u'llāh announces that the Terrestrial Effulgence" ( جلوه, jilwah-i nāsūtī ) rains down from the "Mystery [or Interiority] of the Cloud of Unknowing" ( سِرِّ حَمَاءَ, sirr-i 'amā' cf. lines 1 and 10 ). While in the first hemistich he associates himself with the realms of lāhūt and hāhūt he, in the second, speaks of his manifestation in the sphere of nāsūt, the human realm. This in terms of an epiphany

- I quote here from Bell and Watt, Introduction to the Qur'ān (Edinburgh Univ. Press 1977), p. 162. See Qur'ān 44:54; 52:20; 55:72; 56:23. cf., 37:48; 38:52; 55:56-8; 56:35f; 78:33; 2:25; 3:15; 4:57.
- Refer, for example, Bahā'u'llāh, Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya, Lawn-i Hūriyya, Hūr-i 'Ujab, Halih.. Ya Bisharāt, Lawn-i Mallāh al-Quds. cf. also the Bāb, Qayyum al-Asmā' XLIV where there is reference to a vision of a divine maiden (hūriyya).



precipitation from the interiority of the 'Cloud of Unknowing'.

- [15] In the first hemistich of this line Bahā'u'llāh pictures himself as the "All-Enduring Face" ( وَجْهٌ بَاقِي wi.jha[t]-i bāqī ) and the "Visage of the Cupbearer" ( چِهْرِهِ سَاقِي chihra-yi sāqī ). The words wi.jha[t] (lit. 'side', 'part' 'objective: in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture it has the sense of wajh = 'visage', 'face', 'countenance' etc.,) and chihra have the same meaning: 'face', 'countenance', 'visage' or the like. The use of these terms might be taken to suggest that Bahā'u'llāh is alluding to Qur'an 55:26-7:

كُلُّ مَنِّ عَلَيْهَا فَإِنَّ وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ  
 "All that is upon it [the earth] shall pass away  
 but the Face of thy Lord ( wajh rabbika ) will  
 ever endure full of majesty and honour."

Though details cannot be gone into allusions to this verse are not uncommon in the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh. On one level it is interpreted in connection with cyclic prophethood and the realization of the Divine Epiphany. Because the Bābī-Bahā'ī dispensation is that of the eschatological manifestation of God and the final consummation it is the cycle of the "Face of thy Lord" (the Divine Epiphany) when (mystically speaking) "all things" (human limitations) are annihilated. In this kind of context the Bāb, Bahā'u'llāh and other leading Bābīs claimed to be manifestations of the "Face" ( wajh ).<sup>1</sup>

In a multitude of Sufī texts the state of fanā' (= annihilation of 'self' or the passing away of human limitations) is followed by that of baqā' (= permanent abiding 'in God').<sup>2</sup> In the genitive expression وَجْهٌ بَاقِي, wi.jha[t] bāqī, Bahā'u'llāh probably identifies himself as the "Face of God" that endures after the eschatological passing away of human limitations. (cf. line 19). He is the چِهْرِهِ سَاقِي chihra-yi sāqī, the "Visage of the Cupbearer", who proffers the wine of spiritual beatitude.

1. See for example, Bahā'u'llāh, Halih..Ya Bishārat lines 16 and 18 (in Ganj..pp.34-5— وَجْهٌ بَاقِي occurs in line 16), Haft Wādī (in AQA.Vol.III.)p. 130; trans. The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys [Wilmette 1968],p.37; Untitled Letter in AQA.Vol.6.p.295f.

2. In Bahā'u'llāh's Jawāhir al-Asrār (mid-late 1850's) reference is made to the "City of Permanency[in God]" ( madinat al-baqā' ) after that of the "City of Annihilation" ( madinat al-fanā' ).

What, in the second hemistich of line 15 is meant by رِقِّ زَجَاجِي is not entirely clear. رِقِّ زَجَاجِي ruqqa-i zajājī undoubtedly means something like 'made of glass/glassy', 'translucent', 'crystal' 'vitreous'. In Qur'an 24: 35, the "Light Verse", suja'iat is used for the "glass" which is like a "brilliant star" ( kawkab durri ) when the "light" ( nūr ) which symbolizes God shines out from the "lamp" ( miḡbāh ) in which it is contained. رِقِّ, pointed riqq (> raqqa i ) may express a condition of servitude, slavery or bondage or, among other things, indicate something 'fine', 'delicate', 'outstretched'; for example, 'tortoise'; 'tambourine/drum' or 'parchment', 'vellum', 'book', 'scroll' 'heavenly register', etc. Pointed raqq it often has the same range of meanings though, in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture, most commonly, "[revealed]book, parchment, scripture or volume" ( cf. Qur'an 52:3 — the only Qur'anic occurrence of raqq, fī raqq in manshūr, "... in a scroll unfolded..").<sup>1</sup> In context [ "See thou that the رِقِّ زَجَاجِي raineth down from Our Goblet" ] one would expect رِقِّ زَجَاجِي to signify some kind of clear, limpid, or glasslike liquid. This especially if رِقِّ = 'delicate' or 'thin' in the sense of the beverage (i.e. wine) in the "Goblet" ( kubā ). As raqq/ruqq can mean 'shallow water' رِقِّ زَجَاجِي has been translated "Sparkling Draught". Such a translation however, presupposes that the imagery is consistent. An alternative rendering (among others) might be: " See thou that the Crystal Servitude raineth down from Our Goblet ". This in the light of the Bābī-Bahā'ī interpretation of the 'Light Verse' ( which cannot be gone into here ) and, for example, the following words from Bahā'u'llāh's Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām:

" And that "food" was allowed for them [the Bābīs].. for all who desire to ascend unto the Heaven of Bounty and to drink of the Water of Manifestation from that[or, this] Cup ( suja'iat, or Glass), the Goblet of Servitude ( kub al-ḡubūdīyya ) which resembleth naught but a shadow in the land. [ = Bahā'u'llāh? ]. "

As in the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta'ām it may be there there are allusions in the Rashh-i 'Amā' to Bahā'u'llāh's initial support of the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā. The translation "crystal servitude" might suggest this as indeed a number of other expressions in this cryptic poem.<sup>3</sup>

1. Text in Mā'idā-yi 'Asmā'i, Vol.4.p.274.

2. Unlikely though it is رِقِّ زَجَاجِي could be translated 'Translucent Scroll' (or the like).

3. It could, for example, be argued that the first hemistich of lines 10-17 (in particular) contain reference to the leadership roles of both Yahyā ( first imperative expression ) and Bahā'u'llāh ( second imperative expression ) though this would very likely be to go too far.

[16] In this line Bahā'u'llāh expresses his role in the light of motifs rooted in the Biblical and Qur'ānic accounts of the mission of Moses. Sinaitic imagery is much utilised in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture and given a wide range of allegorical and mystical interpretations.<sup>1</sup>

The آتیش مومس atish-i mūsā, "Fire of Moses" indicates the Sinaitic Fire which, mystically speaking is the fire of Divine Love in the heart of Moses; the locus of the being of Moses in which all earthly limitations are consumed; the fire of the love of God which radiates from the Divine Messengers. In various writings both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh claimed to be the reality or radiance of the Sinaitic Fire.<sup>2</sup>

The genitive expression بیضا bayda(t)-i baydā' (loosely) "Snow-White Brightness" (less probably 'Snow White-Maiden' or 'White Sun', etc.<sup>3</sup>) is doubtless an allusion to the motif of Moses' 'Snow-White Hand' (see Exodus 4:6-7, cf. 9:22, 10:12; 22; 14:16, 27; 17:11., Qur'ān 7:105, 20:23; 26:32; 27:12; 28:32)—or, more precisely the radiance emitted by it. As with the Sinaitic Fire the motif of the 'snow-white' (baydā') brightness of Moses' hand — one of the signs of his Prophethood — is frequently mentioned in Bahā'u'llāh's writings. Therein it is often symbolic of the power and light of his divinity drawn forth from the depths of his celestial being. The following few select quotations must suffice to illustrate Bahā'u'llāh's use of this imagery—:

"The Maid of Eternity came from the Exalted Paradise... With snow-white hand (bā kaff-i baydā'), with raven locks, like the dragon[or staff] of Moses she came.. This eternal countenance came with snow-white hand (bā yad-i baydā') from the Divine Command."<sup>4</sup>

"..This is the Day in which all things cry out, 'Dominion belongeth to God, the Peerless, the Unique'. Burn away the

1. For details see my, 'The Sinaitic Mysteries in Bābī-Bahā'ī Scripture..', (forthcoming in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin).
2. See for example, the Bāb, Qayyūm al-Asmā' (Browne Coll. MS., Or. F. 11) XXXI, fol. 34a; XXXVII fol. 135b; XXXIV fol. 147b; Bahā'u'llāh, Lawn-i Burhān in Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh revealed after the Kitāb-i Aqdās [texts] (Hofheim-Langenhaim 1980), p. 129.
3. In the light of the use of baydā' in Qur'ān 35:45-7 for "[crystal-] white [beverage]" it is not impossible—though unlikely— that بیضا should be translated (something like) "Snow-White/Crystal Draught".
4. Bahā'u'llāh, Halh.. Ya Bishārat (from lines 1, 7 & 16), text in Ganj.. p. 33f.

veils of idle fancies through this Snow-White Hand (al-yad al-baydā') which hath been manifested from the bosom of power and might.."<sup>1</sup>

As indicated above the second hemistich of line 16 is informed by Sinaitic imagery; more specifically a mystic interpretation of the sign of Moses' white-hand. According to the Qur'ānic narratives God commanded Moses to put his hand "close to thy side" (ilā janāhika) or "into thy bosom" (fi jaybika); see Q. 20:23; 27:12; 28:32) such that when drawn forth it would be (miraculously) "white" (baydā')— this would be a sign for Pharaoh.

The genitive expression سینا سینا, sīna' saynā' has been translated "Sinaitic Bosom"—for, lit., "Bosom of Sinai". This inasmuch as the governing noun sīna (= 'bosom', 'breast', 'heart') corresponds with the jayb (= 'bosom', 'breast', 'heart', 'pocket', 'cavity') into which Moses put his hand (see Q. 27:12, 28:32, etc.), and is allegorically expressive of heart of Mt. Sinai (also سینا in Qur'ān 23:20)—which is esoterically the interiority of the Prophets. The کف سینا, kaff-i sanā', translated "Radiant Palm [or Hand]", corresponds with the "Snow-White Hand" of Moses (who is an archetype of all the Prophets—including Bahā'u'llāh—in certain Bahā'ī texts; cf. line 13). The meaning then, of the second hemistich of line 16, is that the power symbolised by the "Bosom of Sinai", (the 'region' where 'Moses' put his 'hand' and which made it 'white',) flows through the person of Bahā'u'llāh who is the "Radiant Palm [Hand]".<sup>2</sup>

Among other places, similar imagery is used by Bahā'u'llāh in the second hemistich of the 43rd line of his "Dove's Ode", al-Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya (c. 1855). Here the 'Maid of Heaven' expresses her exalted status by claiming that;

و عن کفّتی کفّ السناء تضمت

"[It was] from my Palm[Hand] that the Radiant Palm [Hand] was irradiated [lit. 'drawn near']".

In explaining his meaning Bahā'u'llāh refers to Qur'ān 20:22 (+ 27:12; 28:32).<sup>3</sup>

1. Untitled Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh in Alwāh-i Bahā'u'llāh. [Kitāb-Haykal/Mubīn] (n.p. [Bombay] 1308 A.H./1890-91), p. 357.
2. It is unlikely, though not impossible, that سینا سینا should be translated "Summit of Sinai" (sīna can mean the peak or summit of a mountain).
3. Text and Commentary in AQA. Vol. III. p. 204.

- [17] Bahā'u'llāh here refers to himself as one who utters the نالہ مستان , nālā ' mastān, the "Intoxicating Lament" a piercing cry of complaint that renders its hearers spirit-ually 'drunk' or which expresses his own utterance whilst in a state of spiritual intoxication ( نالہ مستان could be translated, "Lament of the [Spiritually] Intoxicated[One]" and indicate Bahā'u'llāh or (perhaps) the denizens of heaven). He is the سالت بستان , hālat-i bustān, "Orchard of Ecstasy"; presumably (?) an orchard the fruit of the tree of which, when eaten, leads to spiritual ecstasy.

If the genitive expressions نالہ مستان and حاله بستان be translated "Lament of the Intoxicated(Ones)" and "Ecstasy of the Orchard (of the believers ?; or the like) Bahā'u'llāh may be alluding, not to his own condition, but to that of heavenly beings or fellow Bābīs. Such a translation might be said to fit in with the reference to the "Rapture of Existence" (jadhba ' hastān) mentioned in the second hemistich (of line 17) which is the result of his status and presence, the صحنی لقا , sahn-i liqā', the "Court of [the Meeting [with God" [= Bahā'u'llāh—see on line 4 ). Line 17 need not however, be understood in this way. As noted, Bahā'u'llāh may be referring to himself as at once the "Intoxicating Lament", the "Orchard of Ecstasy" and the "Court of the Meeting[with God]" from whom a spiritual grace pours forth that enraptures all existing things.

- [18] I have translated the first hemistich of this line as if های and بای , the letters hā' ( ه ) and bā' ( ب ) are symbolically likened to a "rosebud" ( ghuncha : ف ) and a "ringlet" (turra [ of the Divine Beloved]: ب ). It is not certain however, that Bā'i ('[letter] Hā'-like') and bā'i ('[letter] Bā'-like') should be taken in this way though the imaginative interpretation of the shapes of the letters of the Arabic/Persian alphabet is not uncommon in Sufi poetical writings. In Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's celebrated Mathnawī for example, the thought that man may be seduced by the fair forms of existence is expressed in the following couplet:

"Thou hast scribed the [letter] nūn [ن] of [like] the eyebrow, the [letter] sād [ص] of [like] the eye and the [letter] jīm [ج] of [like] the ear as a distraction to our minds and

understandings." <sup>1</sup>.

Whether or not the letters ه and ب are actually compared to the "rosebud" and "ringlet" it is almost certainly the case that they refer to the person of Bahā'u'llāh. They are both contained in the title بهاء , bahā' (= 'glory', 'splendour' the title assumed by Mirzā Husayn 'Alī Nūrī, Bahā'u'llāh). Though بهاء has three ( ب + ه + ا [ or four counting the hamza \* ] ) letters Bahā'u'llāh, in a number of his writings, refers ( in one way or another) to himself as the letter ب and the letter ه . At the end of his Kitāb-i Iqān ( 1858— or 1862 ? ) for example, he writes: " Revealed by the "Bā'" and the "Hā'" ( المنزول من الباء و الهاء .. ) <sup>2</sup>.

That طوره بائی and فنجیه های are allusions to the person of Bahā'u'llāh might be said to be confirmed by the second hemistich of line 18 where his revelation or spiritual grace, the "Song of the Flute[-Player]" رنگ نای , reading, ranna ' nā'i ) is pictured as streaming forth from the "Hollow-Reed" of his person, the "Hollow-Reed of Bahā'" ( کلک بهاء ; reading, kilk-i bahā' ). Here, then, as in other of his poetical writings, Bahā'u'llāh alludes to his authorship of the Rashh-i 'Amā' at the same time representing himself as a vehicle through which prophetic inspiration flows. <sup>3</sup>.

INBA.MS at line 18 appears to read نوت طوره بائی , turra ' bā'i, "Bā'-like ringlet" but طرزی بائی , ti[alra]i ' bā'i, (loosely) "Elegant/ Ornamented Bā'" (most probably a misreading).

- [19] As in the first hemistich of line 10 Bahā'u'llāh here uses the terms طغ , tafḥ = "overflowing" and رشح , rashḥ = "sprinkling" to express the nature of his manifestation ( zuhūr ). It is indicated that the fullness of the divine grace wells forth from his now manifested

1. Mathnawī V. 311 trans. R.A. Nicholson, in Rūmī Poet and Mystic (London 1968), p.136. For further details and examples see A. Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, (University of N. Carolina Press 1968), Appendix I, p.411ff.
2. Text in The Kitāb-i Iqān ( Hofheim-Langenhaim 1980), p. 199. It is unlikely that the fact that the ه precedes the ب alters this line of interpretation. It is not very probable that these letters have some other qabbalistic import or allude to Yahya (or the Bab) and Bahā'u'llāh respectively.
3. As elsewhere in Persian poetry the opening lines of Rūmī's Mathnawī draw on the imagery of the Persian-flute ( nāy ).

Being ( see note on line 10 ).

The image of water pouring forth is further drawn on in the final hemistich of the Rashh-i 'Amā'. It is implied that the غَن طيور ghann-i tuyūr, "Melody of the [Heavenly] Birds", the celestial music of those nigh unto God (?), is echoed in a revelation which has its origin in the عين فنا, 'ayn-i fanā', "The Fount of Annihilation". The genitive expression "Fount of Annihilation" probably signifies an heavenly well or spring which is the source of divine revelation. It may be presupposed that those who drink from it attain the mystic state of the 'annihilation' (fanā') of human limitations— though not essential being. A Sufi technical term fanā' usually indicates a human experience rooted in metaphysical reality beyond duality and the limitations of the ego-consciousness. Beyond this state of 'nullification' (fanā') is that of baqā' a unitative "persistence" or enduring "subsistence" in God.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, Bahā'u'llāh may be alluding to himself as the "Fount of Annihilation" in the sense that his manifestation and revelation lead to the "passing away" (fanā') of all things before the "permanence" (baqā') of the Bahī cycle of the manifestation of the countenance of Divinity ( cf. on line 15 ).

Though once again, the text is unclear, INBA.MS appears not to have ظفر طهر "Overflowing Manifestation" at the beginning of the first hemistich of line 18. but (?) ظفر طهر, ṭaff-i zuhūr. If so and in view of the fact that the verbal noun ṭaff can mean 'full[liquid] measure', the meaning would be essentially the same; that is "Overflowing Manifestation" (or the like ).

1. For details see A.Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, p.142f.

#### Supplementary Notes

[8] The connection between لعل and "lip" ( لَب, Per. lab ) is clear in the 225th line of Bahā'u'llāh's Mathnawī-yi Mubārak (in AQA.Vol. III.p.160ff ) where the expression لَب لعلش, lab-i la'lish occurs.

[13] Also lying behind Bahā'u'llāh's use of ل, "Lā" (= "No") in the Rashh-i 'Amā' and the Halih..Yā Bishārat is the cryptic and mystical use of this Arabic particle in classical Sūfī poetry. In her Mystical Dimensions of Islam A.Schimmel writes:

"..Special importance is attributed [in Sufi poetry] to the connection lām-alif, l-ā, which if read as one word, means lā "no" and is thus the first word of the [Islamic] profession of faith. The lām-alif, though combined of two letters, was often regarded as a single letter and endowed with special mystical meaning. It is most commonly a metaphor for the closely embracing lovers who are two and one at the same time. Because of its shape the letters lām-alif or the word lā ل has often been compared to a sword, particularly the dhū'l-figār, 'Alī's famous two-edged sword, or to scissors: "I made mute the tongue of speaking with the scissors of lā" (B [=Rūzbihān Baqlī, "Sharh-i Shathiyat", Ed. H. Corbin (Tehran & Paris 1966), paragraph 196]). The believer is expected to cut all but God with the sword of lā, i.e., with the sword of the shahāda, "there is no deity but God." Whatever is created should be destroyed by the powerful sword of lā, "no". That is, however, only the first step in the path of the Muslim mystic— he has to go upward ( bā lā ), to reach the illā, "save God" which is achieved, in Arabic writing, by putting an alif before the lā, لا... " (p.419).<sup>1</sup>

The same writer in the course of clarifying an aspect of the theology of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī explains that the,

".. constant tension between negation and affirmation, of being naughted and being quickened, was symbolized by many Sufis, and thus by Rumi, in the words of the profession of faith. The formula lā ilāha illā Allāh 'There is no deity but God' offered itself to the poets and mystics as the best, indeed a Divine, symbol for expressing their spiritual journey. The lā points to the negation of everything besides God, including man's own wishes and ambitions, his own self; it is a fiery word which indeed 'burns the two worlds' [ Diwan 155/1768 ]. The poet [Rumi] therefore calls man to dig out his heart and cast the net of the heart into the ocean of lā [ Mathnawī VI. 1376 ]... Rumi may also speak of the torrent 'lā' which carries away joy and pain, gain and loss, fear and hope, body and soul [ Diwan 152/1743 ]. But this.. is only the preparatory stage:

Who knows God (illāh)? Someone who is saved from the lā.  
And who goes from the lā, say? The lover who has exper-  
ienced affliction, (balā) [Diwan 2406/25415].

Love is the power which annihilates everything in the world.  
This is expressed in rather strong language in the story of  
the Queen of Sheba

Gardens and castles and the water of the river  
became before the eye like an ash-house through love,  
Love in the moment of overpowering and anger makes  
lovely things hideous for the eye.  
The jealousy of love makes every emerald look like a  
leek: that is the inner meaning of lā.  
[Mathnawī IV. 865 ]

The very moment man is captured by Divine love, he sees nothing  
but God, everything is negated, cut off, swept away; only the  
Beloved—illā Allāh— remains. Then the lover will 'cut the head  
of the lā, and reach the illā ', [Diwan 212/2372]. or will ask  
the beloved to consider him to be a lā and to transform him into  
an illā [Diwan 1912/20116] i.e. to see him as nothing and bring  
him to true existence in and through God...

Rumi praises Shamsoddin by saying:

Whoever found help from your hand,  
became an illā'i ( a positive affirmation of God) without  
the vestige of lā; [Diwan 2725/28944]

but in another verse he calls himself 'intoxicated by negation,  
not by positive affirmation' [Diwan 336/3640], which shows, once again,  
his inconsistency in the use of images, which change according to  
his spiritual stage." 1.

Understood in the light of the Sufi use of lā — certainly reflect-  
in the Bāb's qabbalistic interpretations of the kalimat al-tawhīd—  
the second hemistich of line 13 of the Rashh-i 'Amā' could be under-  
stood in a variety of ways:

- The "rapture of lā " is that of Bahā'u'llāh himself; as a lover  
perfectly united with the Beloved or one before whom all else is  
annihilated ( mystically speaking), His spiritual ecstasy derives  
from the "Divine Hand" which is symbolic of the sphere of the  
affirmation of Divinity. ( It is important to note that the جذب  
derives from the كف ; the sphere of 'affirmation', indicated  
by the use of illāhi?).
- The "rapture of lā " is that of the lovers (Bābīs ), those in the  
'sphere of negation' whose spiritual love and mystic nullification  
is sealed by the person of Bahā'u'llāh who is the "Divine Hand"—  
the Divinity before whom all is annihilated.

1. A. Schimmel, The Triumphant Sun..(East-West Publications, London  
and the Hague 1980 ), pp.320-1. See also pp.185,308-9,315,351.

- [16] Images associated with Moses and Sinai are much utilised in  
Bahā'u'llāh's Mathnawī-yi Mubarak (1863; see especially lines  
184-219 in AQA, Vol. III, pp. 178-182 ). Expressing the glories of  
his person and revelation by means of a daring contrast between the  
old 'Moses-Sinai' motifs and those of the new age he at one point  
(lines 214-5 , ibid, p.181) writes:

سینا و بارش زرد است کف و بیضا و قلبش طرر است  
این نه آن بیضا که ز امر آمد پدید این همان بیضا که امر آرد پدید

These lines provide a good illustration of the kind of mystical  
interpretation of the 'Moses-Sinai' motifs presupposed in line 16  
the Rashh-i 'Amā'. Note in particular the association of the سینا  
"bosom" of the Divine Maiden/Bahā'u'llāh, with سینا, Sinai, and the  
motif of the "Snow White Hand/ Palm " ( کف / بیضا ).

S.Lambden.

+++++

I should like at this point to express my thanks to Dr. Denis  
MacEoin for looking over a rough draft of my provisional trans-  
lation of the Rashh-i 'Amā'.

+++++

Appendix : Some Notes on the use of the term <sup>c</sup>ama' in Bābī-Bahā'ī Scripture.

The following notes are not intended to be a comprehensive or systematic analysis of the Bābī-Bahā'ī use of the term <sup>c</sup>ama'. Only a few works of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh have been examined with a view to noting the contexts in which <sup>c</sup>ama' occurs. It will, I hope, be demonstrated that in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture <sup>c</sup>ama' represents exalted realities concepts and persons as well as the locus or mystery enveloping the essence of Divinity.

The Bābī-Bahā'ī use of the term <sup>c</sup>ama' has its roots in a cryptic utterance attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. A certain Abū Razīn al-Uqaylī Laqīt b. 'Amir is said to have enquired of the Prophet, "Where was our Lord before He created the creation [or, the heavens and the earth]?" The Prophet is said to have replied, "He [God] was in <sup>c</sup>ama' above it [or Him] air and below it [or Him] air" (= [ أَنَّ اللَّهَ ] كَانَ فِي عَمَاءَ فَوْقَهُ هَوَاءَ تَحْتَهُ هَوَاءَ ).<sup>1</sup> This reply probably originally expressed the conviction that God was hidden and self-subsisting in His own Being; dependent upon nothing. It perhaps indicated that

1. This hadīth is found in a variety of forms in a large number of Sunni and Shi'ī literatures. In his useful discussion of <sup>c</sup>ama' J.R. Cole notes that it was reported by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (See Bahā'u'llāh and the Naqshbandī Sufis in Iraq. in Studies in Bābī and Bahā'ī History Volume 2 [Los Angeles 1983], p.25, fn.27). One version of it was transmitted by Muhammad Ibn 'Isā Tirmidhī: "Abū Razīn told that he asked God's messenger, "Where was our Lord before He created the creation?" to which he replied, "He was in obscurity (<sup>c</sup>ama') with no air below Him and no air above Him, and He created His Throne on the Water" ( Trans., J. Robson in Mishkat al-Masabih. Vol. II [Lahore 1975], pp. 1227-8— it is here noted that Tirmidhī transmitted this tradition and that Yasīd ibn Harūn al-Wasītī [d. 206] said that "<sup>c</sup>ama' means that there was nothing with Him [God]" ). cf. also E.W.Lans, Arabic-English Lexicon. (London 1874 ), Bk.I, Pt.5, pp. 2161-2 where the following translation is given, " [God]..was in clouds, or lofty clouds &c., beneath which was a vacuity and above which was a vacuity" (p. 2161).

before His work of creation God was in obscurity, enshrouded in the cloud of His own Being, wrapped in a dark mist. For Sufis like 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī ( 1365-1428 ) <sup>c</sup>ama' was believed to be indicative of the absolute hiddenness of the transcendent Godhead, " the highest level of the divine essence which is beyond both absolute reality (al-haqq) and createdness (al-khalq) ".<sup>1</sup> It signifies " Being sunk in itself, bare potentiality", " the eternal and unchangeable ground of Being", the " absolute inwardness (butūn) and occultation ( istitār ) " of the transcendent Divine Essence.<sup>2</sup> The important Muslim theologian Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi ( d. 1762 ) defined <sup>c</sup>ama' as the " world of primal matter" capable of assuming all incorporeal forms.<sup>3</sup>

Such complex theosophical speculations as to the significance of <sup>c</sup>ama' were drawn on by both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh— they both drew on Sufi traditions and utilised Sufi terminology. Though they rejected the monistic ontology that informs and determines certain attempts to locate the mystery of <sup>c</sup>ama' this term is frequently found in the massive corpus of Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Therein it takes on a wide range of meanings; its semantic field embraces key theological, cosmological and prophetic terms. It is not always indicative of the hidden and unknowable essence of God. In line with the late Bābī and Bahā'ī tendency to apply terms expressive of the transcendent Godhead to realities and persons representative of the new cycle of Divine disclosure <sup>c</sup>ama' is sometimes 'de-transcendentalised'; it is sometimes given meanings that lie within the knowable Bābī-Bahā'ī universe of discourse as opposed to being indicative of the absolute essence of the Godhead. The 'classical senses' accorded <sup>c</sup>ama' in Islāmic literatures do not always inform the Bābī-Bahā'ī use of this term.

In one of his early epistles the Bāb has commented in some detail on the tradition quoted above (in the form): " Allāh was in <sup>c</sup>ama' above it Air and below it Air " (the text quoted by the Bāb= لَنْ يَكُنَ اللَّهُ كَانٌ فِي عَمَاءَ )

1. So J.R. Cole, Bahā'u'llāh and the Naqshbandī Sufis. p. 10.  
2. See R.A. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism <sup>2</sup> (Cambridge 1967), pp. 94-6.  
3. Refer, J.M.S. Baljon, Shah Wali Allah's Terminology of Creation in Actes Du 8<sup>me</sup> Congress De L' Union Europeene Des Arabisants et Islamisants Aix-en-Provence—Sept., 1976, p.19.

(فوقه هو) مستم هو).<sup>1</sup> The sublime truth expressed in this hadīth is, he remarks, apparent to those who consider it with the "eye of the divine unity" (bi-<sup>c</sup>ayn al-tawhīd). <sup>c</sup>Amā' is indicative of Allāh inasmuch as He has ever been alone and without relationship to anything. His nafs ('self') is al-azal ('eternity'); His dhāt ('essence') al-<sup>c</sup>amā' and His kaynūniyya ('being') al-qidam ('ancientness') though these terms are inadequate testimonies to God's essential and absolute isolatedness. <sup>c</sup>Amā' and hawā' (= air) really indicate the created nafs of God as opposed to the mystery of His transcendent and uncreated reality. Just as God's resting or settling down upon the Throne (<sup>c</sup>arsh; mentioned in the Qur'an) has to do with the realization of an exalted theophany (tajallī); and not the enthronement of the absolute Godhead)<sup>2</sup>, so God's being in <sup>c</sup>amā' is expressive of the station (maqām) of the manifestation (zuhūr) of the "First Dhikr" (dhikr al-awwāl = the primal divine manifestation and locus of prophethood).<sup>3</sup> Even the perception of <sup>c</sup>amā' is not the vision of the unknowable God. The term <sup>c</sup>amā' indicates God's absolute otherness. It is derived from al-<sup>c</sup>amī (العَمِي, or al-<sup>c</sup>aman = "blindness", "unknowing") for vision is blinded before God's Face and eyes incapable of beholding His Countenance. It is expressive of a reality that is "Unconditioned" (mutlaq), "Absolute" (sirf), "Uncompounded" (baḥt) and "Definitive" (? bātt ?)—though one of the created Names of God (?).

For the Bāb the Hadīth of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' enshrines subtle and bewildering mysteries surrounding the Sinaitic theophany (see Qur'an 7:142). It was not the unknowable essence of God (dhāt al-azal) that appeared in the "Kingdom of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" (malakūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā') and radiated forth from the Divine Light on Mount Sinai\* but an amr (= lit. command; here loosely 'Logos') which God created from nothing. The epiphany on the Mount was not the

1. This letter of the Bāb is contained in Tehran Baha'i Archives MS 6007 C. pp.1-16 (Unpublished). It was apparently written in reply to questions posed by Siyyid Yahyā Darabī, Vahid (a leading disciple of the Bāb; see Fā'il-i Mazandarānī, Asrār al-Āthār, Vol. 4. (n.p. [Tehran] 129 Badīc), p.391 (text also partially quoted here).
2. As with <sup>c</sup>amā' the Bāb equates the heavenly Throne (<sup>c</sup>arsh) with God's Knowledge (<sup>c</sup>ilm) and His Power (qudrat) which express His nafs.
3. The Bāb seems to underline God's absolute otherness to such an extent that the term <sup>c</sup>amā' only indirectly hints at his transcendent unknowability. God's nafs and dhāt are probably to be thought of as created and hypostatic realities indicative of yet ontologically distinguishable from, His uncreated and absolute Ipseity. The manner in which the Bāb expounds the Hadīth of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' outrules those theosophical interpretations that are monistically oriented.

manifestation of <sup>c</sup>amā' as God's absolute essence or a monistic type 'theophany of the Divine Essence' (tajallī al-dhāt) but the disclosure of the Divine Light (nūr) "unto, through and in His[God's] Self [nafs]." In abstruse language the Bāb counters the monistic type interpretation of the relationship between <sup>c</sup>amā' and the 'epiphany of the Divine Essence' (tajallī al-dhāt). found in certain Sufi treatises.<sup>1</sup>

The individual letters of the key terms in the Hadīth al-<sup>c</sup>amā' — <sup>c</sup>amā' and hawā' — are also qabbalistically interpreted by the Bāb. Without going into details it may be noted that <sup>c</sup>amā' is described as an "exteriorization from God" (al-zāhir <sup>c</sup>an Allāh) and a "guide unto Him" (? al-dāll alayhu) and associated with that which rose up between the "two commands" (amrayn) and stood up between the "two gulfs" (tutunjayn)—probably the letter alif indicative of the "Divine Unicity" (ahadiyya) the 12th Imām and Muhammad.<sup>2</sup> It was disclosed in the "realm of interiority" (ghayb al-batūn) not the "exterior plane" (alam al-shuhūd) and appeared at the beginning of a name (ism) which God singled out for His self (nafs).<sup>3</sup> Since like the creative Qur'anic imperative "Be!" (kun) the first letter (ع) of <sup>c</sup>amā' has a gematric value of 70 it is representative of the "First Dhikr" (dhikr al-awwāl) and the creative and primordial reality of the Prophet Muhammad. Such are the mysteries of the "surface level of the inner meaning" (al-zāhir al-bāṭin) of this hadīth. On the innermost level of esoteric exegesis (batīn al-bāṭin) it enshrines the mystery of "the [letter] alif which standeth erect between the two Points" (al-alif al-qā'im bayn al-nuqtatayn).<sup>4</sup> Before turning his attention to the qabbalistic secrets

1. Various modes of the Divine theophany (tajallī) are mentioned in Sufi treatises; i.e. (1) tajallī al-dhāt ('the theophany of the Divine Essence'); (2) tajallī al-sifāt ('the theophany of the Divine Attributes') and (3) tajallī al-af'āl ('the theophany of the Divine Actions'). See for example, Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī, 'Awārif al-Ma'arīf (Per. trans. Mahmūd ibn 'Alī al-Kāshānī) translated into English by H. Wilberforce Clarke (1891; reprint ed. Octagon Press London 1980), p.79ff.
2. The Bāb draws on imagery derived from Imām 'Alī's Khutba-yi Tutūniyya ('Sermon of the Gulf'). The fact that hawā' is said to be both "above and below al-<sup>c</sup>amā' probably led the Bāb to use Arabic dual forms—common also in similarly abstruse pericopes of his Qayyūm al-Asmā'.
3. Probably the name Muhammad as the following lines indicate: or the names al-<sup>c</sup>alī (= the exalted) or al-<sup>c</sup>azīm (= the mighty)—both of which, like <sup>c</sup>amā' begin with the letter ayn.
4. This, probably, inasmuch as it is said in the hadīth that hawā' is both above and below <sup>c</sup>amā'. i.e. <sup>c</sup>amā' = alif between 2X hawā' = the letter bā' (ب) or the point beneath it. cf. باب which has an alif between two letter bā''s (or two 'points') and the fully written out letter waw (و) of qabbalistic and eschatological importance in Shaykhī and Bābī-Bahā'ī teaching.

"air" (hawā') and concluding his epistle the Bāb states that the servant who is desirous of fathoming the mysteries of Divine Unity perceives that the outer sense of the "Hadīth al-<sup>c</sup>amā'" is expressive of the "inner sense of al-<sup>c</sup>amā'" (bātin al-<sup>c</sup>amā'); perhaps that just as the hadīth outwardly states that God was in amā' compassed about by air (hawā') so does amā' inwardly indicate the realities enveloping the Divine Being. <sup>1</sup>.

Partly written before the Bāb claimed to be in communication with the Hidden 12th Imām in May 1844 the Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara (Commentary on the second sūra of the Qur'an) contains a few passages in which the term amā' occurs. <sup>2</sup> In his preface to this major work he, at one point, addresses those who "orient their gaze towards that Luminous Dove of the Sinaitic Tree" (= himself or the hidden Imām) and exhorts them to fear God and keep silent in the light of the imminent fulfilment of catastrophic eschatological events. He would have them beware at a time when "the Rooster sings in the land of amā', the birds cry out in the firmament of the Air (jaww al-hawā') and the Peacock screeches at the rising [place] of [the zodiacal sign] Cancer (inda matla' al-saratān) .. i.e. beware of the imminent advent of the hidden Imām being announced in the heavenly realms (?). <sup>3</sup> Commenting on the meaning of the word "angels" (malā'ika) in Qur'an 2:30 he seems to teach that they exist in the sphere of amā' (and have their own amā'— here "cloud" ?). <sup>4</sup> Explaining the last words of Qur'an 2:41, he writes: "The servant [of God] hath not perfected the degree of his piety (al-taqwā) until he hath risen up in the amā' of Perpetuity (istiqām fi <sup>c</sup>amā' al-samadiyya)" <sup>5</sup>.

1. The Bāb's comments on "Air" (hawā') are abstruse. The theophany (tajallī) on Sinai mentioned in Qur'an 7:142 (which is quoted) is understood to signify the manifestation of God's "image" (sūrat) as the "image of the fifth" (sūrat al-khums) and His "shape" (shakl) as the "form of the sixth" (shakl al-suds); that is, the epiphany of the letters د (= abjad 5) and و (= abjad 6). When joined up these two letters form the third person singular masculine personal pronoun, huwa = "He is", indicative of God. These two letters are also the first two letters of "air" (hawā' = هـ و ا = هـ + و + ا [ + ا ] ). The first letter of hawā' (هـ) is furthermore, the last letter of الله = "[God's] Face". The interpretation of hawā' is thus, as with amā', discussed in the context of the mysteries of the theophany on Sinai. On an esoteric level hawā' is also related by the Bāb to the disclosure of the "greatest name" ("of God; al-ism al-a<sup>c</sup>zam) the "Book of (Imām) Ali and Qur'an 53:24-5.

2. The MS of this work I have consulted (Tehran Bahā'ī Archives MS 6014 C) goes as far as commenting on 2:131(141)— other MSS (not available to me) go further than this though it is not clear whether or not the whole of this commentary is extant.

3. Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara [TBA MS 6014 C], p.5.

4. *ibid.*, p. 121.

5. *ibid.*, p.170.

A hierarchy of cosmological, theosophical and imamological meanings are given to the "House" (al-bayt) mentioned in Qur'an 2:125 (outwardly the Meccan Ka'ba). On the ninth and highest level of the esoteric senses of this edifice it signifies the "House of the Divine Epiphany" (bayt al-huwiyya) in which the primordial Divine theophany (tajallī) took place while on the eighth level it represents the "House of Divinity" (bayt al-ulūhiyya), the "first House" which was erected in the "absolute amā'" (bi'l-<sup>c</sup>amā' al-mutlaq). <sup>1</sup>.

In the Bāb's lengthy Commentary of the Sura of Joseph (or Qayyūm al-Asmā' mid. 1844) the term amā' occurs about 75 times— in the singular, in a variety of genitive constructions and in dual form (see below). The contexts in which it is found are frequently obscure as the following notes will demonstrate, and, I hope, clarify. <sup>2</sup>.

It is in the Xth chapter of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' that amā' first occurs. The Bāb appears to teach that God will cause "Our servant" (= the Bāb himself or the hidden Imām) to be made manifest (lit.) "in a cloud of light" (? fi <sup>c</sup>amā' min nūr) to his contemporaries who look out for the Dhikr Allah (the hidden 12th Imām) or (perhaps) perform the "remembrance of God" (dhikr allāh) in the morning and in the evening. <sup>3</sup>.

The term amā' occurs in a number of the Bāb's exegetical rewrites of verses in 12th chapter of the Qur'an. <sup>4</sup> He rewrites Qur'an 12:5 in the following manner:

"Then a spokesman among the brothers of Joseph, that is, [Imām] Hasan son of Ali—upon him be peace—one mighty in the Mother Book [and one] about and in the Ancient [Sinaitic] Fire, said, "Do not slay Joseph! Rather, cast him into the depth of the pit of the Divine Unicity (jubb al-ahadiyya) concealed about the [Sinaitic] Fire." God, verily, hath intended by the "pit" (al-jubb) the amā' hidden in the secret and concealed air above the mystery inscribed

1. Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara, p.276.

2. I have consulted the text of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' (henceforth QA) owned by the late E.G. Browne— Cambridge University Library Or. Ms F.11. This work, as is now well known, is not a commentary in the classical sense. It contains a great deal apart from esoteric and exegetical 'rewrites' of verses contained in the 12th sura of the Qur'an. It has, not inappropriately, been dubbed 'the Bābī Qur'an'.

3. It appears that in the pericope of the QA, discussed here amā' has its 'basic sense' of cloud.

4. When, usually briefly and towards the end of most—but by no means all—of 112 chapters of the Qayyūm al-Asmā', the Bāb turns his attention to the Qur'anic story of Joseph, he most often rewrites a specific verse (contained in sura 12) in an abstruse manner. Utilizing a typological and qabbalistic hermeneutic he explains the Qur'anic narrative in the light of the rank and relat-



in the Mother Book about the line ( amā' al-mustasarr fī hawā' al-sirr al-mustasarr alā al-sirr fī umm al-kitāb hawl al-satr mastūr<sup>an</sup> ). " 1.

Here the words of Reuben (Qur'an 12: 5) are rewritten and put into the mouth of Imām Hasan ( the brother of Imām Husayn ). It is not that the earthly Joseph was cast into a pit by his jealous brothers but that Imām Husayn ( so it seems ) was cast into the " depths of the pit of the Divine Unicity" or the mysterious realm of amā'. amā' as well as jubb al-ahadiyya (= elsewhere lujjat al-ahadiyya, " the abyss of the Divine Unicity" ) appear to be symbolic of the locus of the primordial, mysterious, heavenly and Sinaitic heights in which the Imām Husayn exists, was originated, and experienced God. They represent the highest, the unfathomable, beclouded and celestial realm associated in the Bāb's writings with the locus or light of the Prophet Muhammad, the Imām Husayn, the Hidden Imām, the nafs of God and the archetypal letter Alif which, in qabbalistic terms, is the gematric primogenitor of all the other letters of the alphabet.<sup>2</sup>

A few lines later the Bāb's speaks of the creation of Joseph and his brothers in the following manner:

" God, verily, created Joseph and his brothers in sanctified worlds ( awālim al-quds ) from a sprinkling above a name, from an existing droplet of the [Heavenly] Water ( min rashh )

relationship between the Imams, the position of Imām Husayn or the Dhikr and his own status as the "gate" ( bāb ) of the Hidden Imām. On another level the story enshrines qabbalistic mysteries associated with the letters which form the kalimat al-tawhīd (= the twelve letters of الله لا اله الا الله ), "There is no god except God" — which represent Joseph and his brothers and the Prophet Muhammad and the first 11 Imams, see QA. V [on Qur'an 12:4f]).

1. QA. XI. fol. 17a ( the translation is tentative ). The use here of both amā' and hawā' suggests that the Bāb had the hadīth quoted above ( p. 93 ) in mind.
2. These remarks are made in the light of a variety of passages in the QA, and a reading of many of the Bāb's major and minor works—details cannot be given here. Following the lines of QA. XI translated above the Bāb, probably alluding to his role as representative of the Hidden Imām or Dhikr, states that God decreed a "caravan" ( sayyārat ) for travelling from "Gate" ( bāb ) to "Gate" ( bāb ), cf. Qur'an 12:19, 67, for pilgrims who wish to journey to the "secure sanctum" ( al-haram al-amm ) = the celestial shrine of Imām Husayn. Those who so journey are spoken of as having found Husayn above or represented by a letter of the alphabet ( ) or س as his locus ? ) which is concealed in the depths of the "pit" ( the hidden celestial realm ). They are the ones who travel to the "secret of the Dhikr" ( sirr al-dhikr ) in the region of the Sinaitic Fire.

alā ism min qatrat al-ibda' can dhalik al-mā' mawjūd<sup>an</sup> ).

And when We inhaled from Joseph a scent of the greatest Dhikr We, with the permission of God, clothed him in the garment of prophethood.. " 1.

These lines probably have to do with origin of the alphabetic and creative potencies symbolised by Joseph and his brothers who are the letters of the kalimat al-tawhīd ( الله لا اله الا الله ). Allusion is made to the creation of the reality of prophethood and to the origination of the Hidden Imām and his earthly representative ( i.e. the Dhikr and the Bāb—see the following lines of QA. XI ). Worth noting is the fact that the word rashh is used in connection with celestial Water in the context of a difficult pericope in which the terms amā' and hawā' are found.

The term amā' also occurs in the Bāb's explanation of ( his rewrite of ) Qur'an 12:11 in Qayyūm al-Asmā' chapter XII:

" The brothers of Joseph asked their father about the supreme martyr (? alā mashad al-akbar = Husayn, unless this phrase be translated 'upon the greatest spectacle [ or the like ] ): 'Why do you not inform us of the knowledge of Joseph?' We are martyrs ( shuhadā', or witnesses ) of God, the Self-Subsisting.. God created us for Husayn (= Joseph ? ) in the mystery of the Divine Unicity ( bi-sirr al-ahadiyya ) concealed about the [Sinaitic] Fire.<sup>1</sup>

God verily announced in that verse (= Q. 12:11 ) the decree ( hukm ) regarding [Imām] Alī and his sons (= the subsequent Imāms ) in accordance with the decree of the Divine Unicity ( hukm al-ahad-iyya ) veiled in the amā' of the Divine Ipseity ( amā' al-huwiyya ) .. according to the decree of the Divine Perpetuity ( hukm al-samadāniyya ) inscribed about the [celestial] Water." 2.

This 'explanation' is as obscure as the rewrite of Qur'an 12:11 though the following lines of QA. XII suggest that the Bāb believed that it foreshadowed the martyrdom of Imām Husayn and ( according to Shī'ī tradition ) most, if not all, of the other ten or eleven Imams. He may have thought that a judgement or decree ( hukm ) was made in the most elevated heavenly realms that the Imāms—Husayn in particular— would be martyred.<sup>3</sup> In this context the genitive expression amā' al-huwiyya might be indicative of the sphere or realm of the cloud enshrouding the Divine Ipseity or the most celestial region in which the decree of martyrdom was pronounced.

1. QA. XI. fol. 17a.

2. QA. XII. fol. 18b.

3. Alternatively, it is possible that the decree ( hukm ) mentioned in the passage translated above has to do with Joseph's brothers, the Imāms, bowing down or 'witnessing' before Joseph/ Imām Husayn.

The genitive expression "land of <sup>c</sup>amā'" occurs twice in the context of the Bāb's exegetical rewrite of Qur'an 12:17 in Qayyūm al-Asmā' chapter XVIII. Having abandoned Joseph in the "pit" the brothers return from the "land of the Divine Uniqueness" (ard al-wahidiyya—the region around the "pit") and say to their father:

"O our father, We went racing with one another in the land of <sup>c</sup>amā' ( <sup>c</sup>alā ard al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) and we abandoned Joseph (along) with the provisions of the Divine Unicity (<sup>mata</sup><sup>c</sup> al-ahadiyya ) from our Lord..And the onlookers (al-nāzirun) devoured (lit. ate) him by gazing[jealously] upon him (? <sup>bi</sup><sup>l</sup>-ishārat alayhu ) in the abyss of the Divine Innovation (lujāt al-bad)".<sup>1</sup>

Having rewritten Qur'an 12:17a in this manner the Bāb states that these "onlookers" (al-nāzirun) have been accorded the name of "the Wolf" (al-dhi'b) in the "Mother Book". He then rewrites Qur'an 12:17b in the following way:

"And the letters of "There is no god but God" ( the letters of ألله ) which represent the brothers of Joseph) said to 'Alī in the land of <sup>c</sup>amā' ( <sup>c</sup>alā ard al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) : 'Thou wilt never believe us with respect to our prostration [ before Joseph, see Q. 12:4 and QA.V ] even though we have, in very truth, borne witness to Joseph in a praiseworthy manner."<sup>2</sup>

It may be deduced from these difficult passages that the phrase "land of <sup>c</sup>amā'" is esoterically descriptive of the region about the "pit" (al-jubb) into which Joseph was thrown. It represents an exalted realm expressive of Imām Husayn's elevated rank and proximity to God—as contrasted with the rank and role of the other Imāms.

Not infrequent in the Qayyūm al-Asmā' (see further below) the genitive expression "ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā'", which may be translated "people of <sup>c</sup>amā'" or "inhabitants of <sup>c</sup>amā'", first occurs in chapter XX of this work. In the context of a rewrite of Qur'an 12:19. *we read:*

1. QA.XVIII.fol.27b.
2. Ibid. The Bāb's rewrite continues: "This decree (hukm — regarding the prostration) is the truth from God our Master for God, verily, decreed the prostration of the stars [= the Imāms ] before Husayn [= Joseph] above the dust in accordance with the decree of the Gate ( hukm al-bāb ) issued about the [Sinaitic] Fire.." (ibid). He appears to teach that Qur'an 12:17 has to do with the great rank of Imām Husayn. Joseph's abandonment in the "pit" symbolizes the exalted level of proximity to God attained or decreed by God for this Imām. Reuben, the eldest of Joseph's brothers, becomes a type of the first Shī'ī Imām, Imām <sup>c</sup>Alī, who, like Husayn, has a superior rank among the hierarchy of the (12) Imāms.

"And We, with the permission of God, sent the Caravan of Love (siyārat al-hubb) unto this pit (al-jubb—or well). [ They sent their water-carrier for water ] And he let down his bucket [ into the pit or well ] through interior perception(? bi-nazar al-fū'ād) and he said: 'Ah, there! Good news! [ Here is ] This Youth, the like of which eye hath not beheld! O People of <sup>c</sup>Amā'! Conceal him as a piece of [treasured] merchandise isolated from the Divine Unity [= the divine locus of his brothers the other Imāms ? ] perchance you may be remembered by God, the Exalted, about the [Sinaitic] Fire." And We, verily, made remote from this Youth [Joseph= the Hidden Imām/ Imām Husayn ], the Greatest Word (al-kalim-at al-akbar), this Arabian Youth ( fātī Carahī = the Bāb himself ), one righteous in the land of the Heart (ard al-fū'ād).."<sup>1</sup>

If I understand this passage correctly the Bāb represents himself as the one who discovered "Joseph" in the "Pit"—traditionally a Mid-ianite or Arab merchant. Through his interior perception or love he was able to communicate with the celestial Imām Husayn (or the Hidden Imām) while he was living on earth. He communicated his secret to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' who are to conceal the Imām or preserve him in the depths of the "pit" (= the realm of <sup>c</sup>amā')—isolated even from the "Divine Unity" (= Joseph's/ Husayn's brothers/ the Imāms= the letters of the kalimat al-tawhīd ? )

In this context (cf. also below) the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' may be thought of as those who exist in the upper region of the celestial realm where the Hidden Imām or Imām Husayn is in occultation—in <sup>c</sup>amā' (?). More concretely the major Shī'ī Imāms (= in one sense 'Joseph's brothers') may be intended (in certain pericopae of the Qayyūm al-Asmā') by the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā', inhabitants of the Divine realm of Interiority. Certain passages within the Qayyūm al-Asmā' further suggest that they may be thought of as...heavenly beings existing in close proximity to God's throne, the Hidden Imām and/or the Divine Ipseity and possibly (on another level) the Bāb's first disciples subsequently conceived to be the "return" of the Shī'ī Imāms (or their 'earthly counterparts').

The XXth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' contains a great deal more about the mysteries of the story of Joseph which cannot be commented on in detail. It must suffice to note that "Joseph" (= Imām Husayn) is also represented as being thrown "beyond the crimson sea in al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (warā' qulzum al-hamrā' fī al-<sup>c</sup>amā') and hidden in "the midst of the splendour of the Sinaitic Mount" ( fī qutb al-bahā' <sup>c</sup>alā al-tūr al-sīnā' ).<sup>2</sup> He exists, in other words, in the centre of the Divine realm where the Sinaitic theophany took place.<sup>3</sup>

1. QA.XX.fol. 30a

// 2. Ibid. fol.30b.

3. Imagery associated with the Sinai theophany is intimately related in

Some light is thrown on one level of the Bāb's use of the phrase ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā in the XXIVth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā. One referred to as the "Solace of the Eye" ( qurrat al-<sup>c</sup>ayn : here, most probably the Hidden Imām, Imām Husayn or the Bāb ) is exhorted not to be wrathful with the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā in the light of the fact that they are a sign of what is other than the Dhikr from the "Greatest Dhikr" ( al-dhikr al-akbar ). They inhabit the region about amā where the Dhikr or (here) the Hidden Imām (or Imām Husayn) is concealed, and represent him. <sup>1.</sup>

In the same sūra, it is further worth noting, the Bāb uses the expressions "horizon of amā" and "birds of amā". He claims to be both the Sinaitic Mount ( al-tūr ) which was the scene of the Divine theophany and a "Sun" ( al-shams ) which hath risen up from the "horizon of amā" ( ufq al-<sup>c</sup>amā ) about which God bears witness. <sup>2.</sup> The Dhikr Allāh is exhorted to "recite in the Name of your Lord" (cf. Qur'ān 76:1) a verse indicative of God's Oneness, summon the people to the "Path of this Gate" (= the Bābī Cause) and make the Cause ( al-amr ) to appear with the "accents of the birds of amā" on the crimson leaves" ( alā lahn al-tuyūr min al-<sup>c</sup>amā fī al-waraqāt al-hamrāt. ) of the Sinaitic Tree. <sup>3.</sup> Like ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā the expression tuyūr al-<sup>c</sup>amā (or the like) is indicative of the inmates of the highest celestial realm. They, as it were, reside about the region that is the focal centre of the Divine theophany — the heart of the Sinaitic Tree and the 'midst of the 'Cloud of Unknowing'.

the Qayyūm al-Asmā with the notion of al-<sup>c</sup>amā (for further details see below). The expression "crimson sea in al-<sup>c</sup>amā" is probably to be understood as signifying the ethereal radiance that emanates from the region of the divine interiority as the Sinaitic Fire radiated a crimson light that enshrouded the Divine Being who existed therein — as the phrase "the midst of the splendour of the Sinaitic Mount" suggests.

1. QA. XXIV. fol. 35b. It might be possible to understand this pericope to be indicative of the Bāb's own role as a Dhikr subordinate to the Greatest Dhikr (the Hidden Imām) in the light of his own adherents being the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā.
2. QA. XXIV. fol. 36a.
3. Ibid. cf. the passage from the Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara quoted above (on p. 46).

In the XXVIIIth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā are commanded to hearken unto the Bāb who is referred to as the "Arabian Youth" who crieth out from Sinai. <sup>1.</sup> He is an Arab of the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā and a heavenly Bird who, according to sūra XLI, "warbleth melodiously in the firmament of amā" ( jaww al-<sup>c</sup>amā , or 'atmosphere of amā' ). <sup>2.</sup> This "firmament of amā" is the locale of the "world of amā" ( al-alam al-<sup>c</sup>amā ) which, was foremost in assenting to the "Greatest Word of God" ( kalimat Allāh al-akbar = acknowledging the truth of the reality of the Dhikr or prophethood in pre-eternity ) when exhibited to all creation. This "world of amā" and its inhabitants are exalted above the "people of paradise" ( ahl al-firdaws ) and the "people of the garden of Eden" ( ahl jannat al-<sup>c</sup>adn ). They were foremost in responding to the pre-eternal covenant regarding the Dhikr (?). <sup>3.</sup>

The Bāb makes some interesting claims in a pericope of the LIVth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā which is addressed to the "people of the abyss of Paradise" ( lujjat al-firdaws ). He is directed to inform the "inmates of the [celestial] chambers" ( ahl al-hujurat ) that God has inspired him to say, "I, verily, am God, no god is there except Me"; that he is the "two lights in the two mysteries" ( al-nūrayn fī al-sirrayn ), the "two forms in the two Temples" ( al-shaklayn fī al-haykalayn ), and the "two lamps in the two glasses" ( al-sirājayn fī al-zujājayn , cf. Q. 24: 35 ). He is the one who, through the "two letters" ( harfayn ), cried out for "not a single letter was uttered by the two primordial selves ( al-nafsayn al-awwalayn ) and not a single letter was found of the mystery of the two gulfs ( sirr al-tutūn-jayn )" except through the Bāb's own self ( nafs ) which is the "bearer of the two names" ( hāmil al-ismayn ). <sup>4.</sup> On this account the inhabitants of the "celestial abyss" ( lujjat al-lahūt ) glorified God and those in the "land of amā" ( ard al-<sup>c</sup>amā ) uttered praise "in the land of that Gate ( bāb )

1. QA. XXVIII. fol. 43b. cf. QA. XXXIII. fol. 52b-53a (an address to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā).
2. QA. XXVIII. fol. 44b and XLI. fol. 65b (in this latter sūra the Bāb teaches that the Qayyūm al-Asmā should be recited according to his own celestial Arabic accent.).
3. QA. LI. fol. 86a — other heavenly concepts and realities are mentioned in this part of the Qayyūm al-Asmā that subsequently (in primordial times) assented to the "Greatest Word of God".
4. I cannot attempt to comment in detail on these claims which are related to esoteric and talismanic speculations inspired by the Khutba-yi Tutūnjīyya ('Sermon of the Two Gulfs' attributed to Imam ALI) on which both Sayyid Kāzīm Rashtī (d. 1844) and the Bāb himself wrote commentaries. cf. also for example, QA. CIX. fol. 194b, 196b and see below.

which is, in very truth, the greatest".<sup>1</sup> They, the dwellers about the region of the Divine Interiority where the mystery of the Bāb's primordial being is located, give glory and praise inasmuch as the name of the Bāb or his essential nafs is <sup>C</sup>Alī Muhammad ( the bearer of the two names/ realities of Imām <sup>C</sup>Alī and the prophet Muhammad ? ). They acknowledged his occupying the office of "gatehood" (bābiyyat).<sup>2</sup>

The term <sup>C</sup>amā' occurs three times in sūra LVII of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'. Addressing the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' (see above) the Bāb invites them to hearken unto the call of God from the Sinaitic Tree on the leaves of which birds utter the declaration of Divinity. Then, addressing the "concourse of Lights" (malā' al-anwār) he writes:

"We, by God, are the Absolute Truth (al-haqq)! We do not cry out according to base passion; nor hath a single letter of this Book [ the Qayyūm al-Asmā' ] been sent down outside of the permission of God, the True One. Fear God and doubt not the Command of God (amr Allāh). The mystery (sirr) of this Gate (al-bāb) is hidden under the <sup>C</sup>amā' of the line (<sup>C</sup>amā' al-satr) and inscribed above the veil of mystery (hiḡāb al-sirr) by the Hand of God, the Lord of both the mystery (al-sirr) and the line (satr). God, verily, created around this Gate (al-bāb) oceans from the [celestial] Water, tinged crimson with the oil of existence (al-duhn al-wuḡūd) and vitalised through the animating power of the desired fruit (al-thamarat al-maḡsūd). For it God decreed arks of ruby, tender (al-ratb, or [refreshingly] cool), crimson-coloured, wherein none shall ride save the people of splendour (ahl al-bahā').. Therein the angels of <sup>C</sup>amā' (malā'ikat al-<sup>C</sup>amā') bear up the Throne of God (arsh allāh) through the eight logoi (al-anfus, al-thamīn; cf. Qur'an 69 : 17 ) .."<sup>3</sup>

What, in this context is meant by the <sup>C</sup>amā' al-satr is not clear. It may, as Taherzadeh's translation indicates, mean that the mystery of the Bāb is concealed beneath the verses of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'.<sup>4</sup> It seems to me to be more likely however, that the Bāb is teaching that the 'mystery of the Gate' ( his own office ) is ratified by God by being inscribed both

1. QA. LIV. fol. 91.b—92a.
2. The Bāb's not infrequent and cryptic use of the dual in the Qayyūm al-Asmā' may be related to the fact that his name was 'twofold': [Siyyid] <sup>C</sup>Alī [ + ] Muhammad [ Shirazi ]. As noted below, it also appears to be related to the fact that bāb is spelt باب : having two ب's with an alif in the centre. cf. also ذاب ( the fully spelt out letter ذ [ wāw ] ).
3. QA. LVII. fol. 97a. For a less literal translation see Habib Teherzadeh (trans.), Selections from the Writings of the Bāb ( Haifa 1976 ), pp. 55-6.
4. Taherzadeh translates ( somewhat loosely ) .. mastūr taht <sup>C</sup>amā' al-satr, "shrouded in the mystic utterances of his writ" (ibid, p. 57 ).

in the realm of origination—beneath the <sup>C</sup>amā' al-satr—and in the world of Divinity itself—above the hiḡāb al-sirr. The expressions <sup>C</sup>amā' al-satr ( here perhaps, "cloud of the line" ) and hiḡāb al-sirr ( "veil of the mystery" ) are probably rooted in speculations surrounding the orthography of the letter al-bā' ( ب ) seen as symbolic of the levels of Being and the 'veil' or 'cloud' ( the — of — ) separating the 'world of the Godhead' and the 'world of creation': the former being above the — and the latter beneath it and symbolised by the dot or 'point' which, in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture, is the locus of Being.

In the second part of the pericope translated above the Bāb teaches that enlivening and crimson oceans originating in the uppermost celestial Water surround his archetypal being in the exalted heavenly world. On these oceans none save the people of splendour (ahl al-bahā') ride in specially created arks (or 'ships').<sup>1</sup> It is the "angels of <sup>C</sup>amā'", the denizens of the uppermost heavenly realm, that bear up the Throne of God (see Qur'an 69:17) through their eight inner essences (al-nufus).

In the LVIIIth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' the Bāb exhorts the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' to remain steadfast upon "this upright trace between the two traces" ( hadha al-khatt al-qā'im bayn al-khattayn = the Alif [= the 'Straight Path' and centre of guidance] between the two ب of باب ? ) that God might enable them to drink from the "Fountain of Manifestation" (ayn al-zuhūr).<sup>2</sup> Mention is made, in the context of the imminent fulfilment of eschatological events mentioned in the Qur'an, three suras later, of all being dumbfounded at the sight of "the Dhikr in <sup>C</sup>amā'" (al-dhikr fi al-<sup>C</sup>amā').<sup>3</sup>

1. In a fairly large number of Bahā'u'llāh's writings the ahl al-bahā' are understood to mean his followers. References to them in the Qayyūm al-Asmā' and other writings of the Bāb are interpreted in a prophetic and symbolic way. See for example, untitled letter of Khadim Allāh/ Bahā'u'llāh in Athār-i Qalam-i A'la Vol. 6 ( [Tehran] 132 Badī' ), p. 77. cf. the untitled commentary of Bahā'u'llāh on some verses of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' in Ishraq Khavārī (Ed) Mā'ida-yi Asmāni, Vol. 9 [Tehran 129 Badī' ], p. 48ff.
2. QA. LVIII. fol. 98b-99a. cf. the translation of Habib Taherzadeh in Select-ions.. p. 58., (here ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' is translated "people of the Kingdom" ).
3. QA. LX. fol. 100b. The implication appears to be that the Hidden Imām will appear from the realm of <sup>C</sup>amā' or come in/on a "cloud" (<sup>C</sup>amā' ).

An interesting rewrite of Qur'an 7:48f is contained in the LXVIIth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā':

"And We, verily, preserved [certain exalted] men (riḡāl<sup>an</sup>) upon the [heavenly] Heights (al-<sup>c</sup>raḡ) who shall know the [ungodly] people (al-nas) from their marks (bi-simāhum). And We decreed for the [se] men an elevation [such that] the people [of the lower realm—or hell?] did not know them from their [particular] marks (bi-simāhum). And they, upon the couch of amā' (sarīr al-<sup>c</sup>amā') shall observe [or distinguish] the [lower-] people from their marks (bi-simāhum)... And We, when We entered the [region of hell] Fire, its inhabitants said: 'O inhabitants of the Garden [in Paradise]! Pour down a drop of water upon us, a dewdrop (marshhat<sup>an</sup>) sprinkled down (marshuh<sup>an</sup>) from that [Heavenly] Ocean.'" 1.

Here the "men of the Heights" (riḡāl al-<sup>c</sup>raḡ) are understood as heavenly beings who are able to recognise those beneath them on account of their distinguishing "marks". They, it appears (the translation is tentative), sit upon the "couch of amā'" (sarīr al-<sup>c</sup>amā') and are requested to sprinkle down heavenly water by the inhabitants of the Fire of hell. Worth noting in the light of the opening line of Bahā'u'llāh's Rashh-i <sup>c</sup>Amā' (see below) is the use here (as elsewhere in the Bāb's writings) of derivatives of RSHH in the context of the mention of amā'.

While in the verses translated above there is mention of the "couch of amā'" the expression "amā' of the throne" (amā' al-<sup>c</sup>arsh) occurs in the LXXIst sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'. In the course of an exegetical rewrite of Qur'an 9:109 the Bāb states:

"..Thou, verily, art, in the Mother Book (umm al-kitāb) the First Mosque (awwāl masjid) with its foundations in the amā' of the Throne (amā' al-<sup>c</sup>arsh) based on pure piety towards God, the Exalted.." 2.

God is, furthermore, identified as the "Lord of the Throne" and al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ("rabb al-<sup>c</sup>arsh wa'l-<sup>c</sup>amā'") in the LXXVith sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'. 3.

The sūrat al-kahf of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' (LXXVIII) contains, among other things, some extremely interesting expository rewrites of verses within its Qur'anic counterpart (Q. sūra 18). The term amā' occurs within the

1. QA LXVII.fol.117a.
2. QA.LXXI.fol.123b. This may mean that the heavenly reality of the Bāb is situated about the region of the 'Cloud of Unknowing' (amā') surrounding the Throne of God.
3. QA.LXXVI.fol.133a.

Bāb's rewrite of Qur'an 18:17:

"O Companions of the Cave! Did you not gaze toward the Sun when it rose up declining towards the Cave of your hearts toward the right-hand side of the [Sinaitic] Fire with crieth out from God, no God is there save Him?..And when it [the Sun] set in the Word (al-kallām) [did] it [not] attract [ed] you through the mystery of power (bi-sirr al-qudrat) unto the dawning-place of the heart (matla<sup>c</sup> al-fu'ad) [?]. And did it [the Sun] not turn away from you in the direction of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' [ or possibly 'in the essence of amā'; dhāt al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ] while you were, in very truth, established within the spacious chamber of the Point (faqwat al-nuqtat) which sprinkleth down before the Gate (al-bāb).." 1.

This passage is obviously extremely obscure and cannot be commented on in detail. Some light is thrown on the meaning in view of the fact that the Bāb had, in the paragraphs preceding this rewrite, identified himself with the "Cave" (kahf). Its "companions" are the 7 letters of (apparently) his own name. 2. He also taught that the episode of the sleepers in the Cave has to do with the coming to faith (so it seems) of the "forerunners" (sābiqūn = the Bāb's first disciples). The "Sun" may be symbolic of the reality of the Dhikr or the locus of the light of the Bāb himself. Perhaps the rising of the "Sun" represents the disclosure of the Bāb's claims which attracted the persons or "hearts" of his first disciples. Its setting "in the Word" could be understood to signify the Bāb's revealing verses which also attracted the first disciples to him. That this "Sun" turned away from the companions of the Cave "in the direction of amā'" (?) may be indicative of the Bāb's intimate relationship with the Hidden Imām who (cf. below) exists in the region of amā' (?). 3.

Two addresses to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' are contained in the LXXVth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'. In the first of them the Bāb calls upon them to hearken unto the proclamation from the "point of [the letter] al-bā'" (nuqtat al-bā' = the 'dot' beneath the ب) to the effect that God

1. QA.LXXIII.fol.128a.
2. See *ibid.* fol.127b. The name Alī Muhammad contains (in Arabic) 7 letters ([1] ع [2] ج [3] س [4] م [5] ه [6] ل [7] ا ). Throughout his ministry the Bāb referred to himself as the "master" or "essence" of the 7 letters ( many times for example in the Kitāb -i Panj Sha'n, cf. QA. LXXVI.fol.135a, LXXXIX.fol.156a ).
3. These speculations are extremely tentative.

inspired him to announce his Divinity and that he is the one who sent down the Book (al-kitāb) upon the "the greatest Dhikr" or "Arabian Youth" (fatī 'arabī).<sup>1</sup> In the second he announces to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' that;

"This Sun circlet around the two [Sinaitic] Mounts (al-tūravn). And this Moon riseth up from the (loosely) two <sup>c</sup>amā's' (Calā al-<sup>c</sup>amā'avn). And this Star circlet around the two heavens (al-samā'avn)..."<sup>2</sup>

This use of the (oblique) dual of <sup>c</sup>amā' is fairly rare in the Bāb's writings. In the above context it might be translated "two clouds" (= the twin loci of the Bāb's reality?) and be indicative of the mystic locale from which the "Moon" of the reality of the Bāb (or Dhikr) derives (i.e. the twin nafs of Muhammad and 'Alī conjoined in the essence of the Bāb?).

Another occurrence of the (oblique) dual of <sup>c</sup>amā', it may be noted here, occurs, towards the beginning of the Bāb's Sahīfa bayn al-Haramayn (late 1844—early 1845):

"O people of the heavens and the earth! Harken unto the decree (hukm) of the "Remnant of God" (baqiyyat Allāh = the Hidden Imām) and enquire about the Path of the True One from the Dhikr of the Name of your Lord (= the Bāb), this Arabian Youth (al-fatī al-'arabī)...the 'Doubly Encoded Word' (al-kalimat al-<sup>c</sup>amā'avn sic!) and the Upright Trace between the worlds. (al-khatt al-qā'im bayn al-<sup>c</sup>alam-avn = the 'letter Alif' [symbolic of the link between the Divine and human realms or standing between the [two] worlds of earth and heaven?)"<sup>3</sup>

It is clear from this passage that the Bāb refers to himself as al-kalimat al-<sup>c</sup>amā'avn (loosely 'the Doubly Encoded Word'). He may mean that he is the locus of being symbolized by the letter Alif (= the Word, al-kalimat) between the two (letter) bā's (= the two <sup>c</sup>amā's?) of the word bāb ( باب cf. above).

1. See QA. LXXV. fol. 131b.

2. Ibid.

3. Sahīfa bayn al-Haramayn ('Epistle between the Two Shrines [written between Mecca and Medina]') Browne Coll. MS. Or. F. 7 (9), p. 6. Aside from this occurrence of the dual form of <sup>c</sup>amā' this work contains two addresses to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (section VII, p. 103 and 105).

In the LXXVI sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' certain verses of the Qur'ān which tell the story of Dhū'l-Qarnayn ('The One possessed of Two Horns') are exegetically rewritten.<sup>1</sup> References to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' are read into Qur'ān 18:83ff:

"O Solace of the Eye[s]! The people shall ask thee about Dhū'l-Qarnayn. Say [in reply]: 'Yea! By my Lord! I am the King of the two Originations (malik al-bad'avn) in the two horns (al-qarnayn). I am the elevated Dhū'l-Qarnayn in the two bodies (al-jismayn). I am the [Sinaitic] Fire in the two [celestial] Waters (al-mā'avn). I am the [Celestial] Water (al-mā') in the two [Sinaitic] Fires (al-nārayn). So hearken unto my Call from these two [Sinaitic] Mounts (al-tūravn). We verily, established him [= Dhū'l-Qarnayn = the Bāb] in the land and We, in very truth, bestowed a letter [of the alphabet] from the name of the Dhikr upon this Arabian Youth (al-ghulam al-'arabī = the Bāb) such that the ways and means to all ends became his. Say: I verily, when I followed the Path, journeyed until I reached the [place of the] setting of the Sun. I found it setting in the Fount of Salsal [= a paradisaical well of limpid water]. At that place I gazed upon the people of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (ahl min al-<sup>c</sup>amā'; lit. people from al-<sup>c</sup>amā') [who were gathered] about the Fount. I saw them prostrating before God, the Exalted. They spoke to me about the secret knowledge (al-<sup>c</sup>ilm al-mustasirr), [concerning] a letter [of the alphabet] inscribed above the line (al-satr) and I spoke to them of a cipher (ramz<sup>an</sup>) veiled in mystery (sirr al-muhajjab). Then I followed the command (al-amr) until I reached the dawning-place of the Sun (matla<sup>c</sup> al-shams). I found it [the Sun] rising from the Camphor Fount (avn al-kāfur) upon a company of the people of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (qawm min ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā'). We found that they had no covering [protection from the Sun] save the 'verse' (or sign) of the Divine Unity (ayat al-tawhid = the 'shield of أولئك الذين'), an affair mysteriously concealed. They said: 'God, verily, is, in very truth, your Master, nothing is like unto Him'. I said to them: 'He, God, is the True One, no god is there save Him, One Exalted and Mighty.'..."<sup>2</sup>

In this passage the Bāb identifies himself with Dhū'l-Qarnayn. The dual form of qarn (= 'horn') leads him to give vent to a variety of

1. The story of Dhū'l-Qarnayn is found in the sūrat al-kahf of the Qur'ān (18:83-101). A good many commentators believe that Dhū'l-Qarnayn is Alexander the Great. Bābī-Bahā'ī interpretations tend to be allegorically oriented. In a lengthy and extremely interesting untitled letter of Bahā'u'llāh Dhū'l-Qarnayn is said to signify (on one level) the 'self' or 'person' (nafs) of the Prophet Muhammad who was the possessor of al-nubuwwa ('prophethood') and al-wilāya ('guardianship') and, by virtue of his primordial reality, the Lord of both East and West. (see letter in Iran National Bahā'ī Archives Private Publication Vol. 56 pp. 43-67 [esp. p. 61ff]. cf. also extract from a letter of 'Abdu'l-Bahā in Isrāq Khāvarī (Ed) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol. 2 (n.p. [Tehran] 129 Badī<sup>c</sup>), p. 43).

2. QA. LXXVI. fol. 133a-133b. The Bāb's rewrite of Qur'ān 18:83ff is carried further still—details cannot be given here.

of claims connected with his role as Bāb to the Hidden Imām. God bestowed on him a letter of the name of the Dhikr ( a celestial potency ? ) such that he was able to undertake heavenly journeys or travel on the path of celestial initiation. At the setting-place of the celestial Sun where the Fount of limpid water is located he saw the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' and had a conversation with them. Deep qabbalistic mysteries were discussed. Then, at the dawning-place of the celestial Sun where the Camphor Fount is located he also met a company of the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' who had no protection from the Sun of Reality save the 'shield' of an expression of the Divine Unity (al-tawhīd). While they proclaimed God's uniqueness the Bāb testified to His unity.

The ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā', it may be gathered, exist at the extreme orient and extreme occident of the spiritual world; those points where the Sun of Reality rises and sets. They are privy to the secret of the Hidden Imām and converse with the Bāb about deep mysteries. It appears that the journeys of Dhū'l-Qarnayn—transcendentalised by the Bāb—are understood to be expressive of the recognition and heavenly initiation of the Bāb by the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā'. In this context it is likely that the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' correspond with the inhabitants of twin cities of Jārbalqā (in the spiritual orient) and Jābarsā (in the spiritual occident) mentioned in Shi'ite traditions (ahadith).<sup>1</sup> They are the company of purified souls that inhabit the interworld of archetypal realities.

Towards the end of the same sura of the Qayyūm al-Asmā in which the story of Dhū'l-Qarnayn is reinterpreted the Bāb addresses the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' after stating that he was sent by God from the expected Imām:

" ..The polytheists (mushrikūn) shall ask you, 'Who sent you unto us?' ..Say: 'God the cleaver of the heavens and the earth, from the Proof (min 'ind hujiat), the expected Qā'im. He, verily, is the True One and I am one of his servants..' And say unto the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā': ' God created you from clay; He will return you unto it and from it He will bring you forth yet again before this sublime Gate (al-bāb= the Bāb ).'<sup>2</sup>

1. See for example, H. Corbin, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran, translated by N. Pearson (Princeton University Press 1977 ), esp. p. 160ff, 258ff.

2. QA. LXXVI. fol. 134a.

Here the Bāb underlines the essential createdness of the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā'. Fashioned by God they will be subject to the eschatological 'recreation' and appear before the Bāb, the representative of the Hidden or expected Imām.

In a pericope addressed to the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' in Qayyūm al-Asmā LXXVII the Bāb seems to teach that these inhabitants of the unseen realm will have a role to play in the eschatological drama. They are commanded to "implant" themselves in the "land of the hearts" (ard al-qulūb) from "the richly forrested (alfāḥ<sup>an</sup>) breast (reading janān= 'heart', 'breast' not jinān= 'gardens' / 'paradises' ?) [possessed] of patience (al-sabr) and love (al-hubb), i.e. establish a relationship through the Bāb with purified souls in this world (?). This inasmuch as the (eschatological) "Day of the Bāb" (yaum al-bāb) is a thing appointed (miqāt<sup>an</sup>) unto (all) the "worlds" (alā al-alamīn). When the (last) Trumpet is sounded before the Bāb the people will come forth in crowds (afwāq<sup>an</sup>) around him.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, we are led to believe that the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' are, in view of the imminent parousia of the Hidden Imām, to prepare to "return" to earth as helpers of the Bāb.

It appears that the Bāb, in the LXXVIIIth sura of the Qayyūm al-Asmā represents himself as the (eschatological ?) banner or standard (al-liwā' [?] text unclear) (lit.) "in al-<sup>C</sup>amā'" as well as the "Absolute Truth" (al-haqq) manifest about the Sinaitic Fire which will be disclosed to the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' on the "Day of Judgement" (yaum al-dīn). He claims to be the one who proffers the "Cup of Manifestation" (kā'is al-zuhūr) to the "princes of the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā'" (al-umarā'min ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā'). In the following sura he refers to his cause as the "Path of God" (sirāt Allāh) in al-<sup>C</sup>amā' (= the verbal noun of the IVth form of سعى ? = 'blinding' or 'beclouded [reality] ) or "the al-<sup>C</sup>amā' of the mystery inscribed according to the mystery above the lines (al-sutūr)" in the Mother Book (umm al-kitāb).<sup>3</sup>

While in a brief address contained in the LXXXIst sura of the Qayyūm al-Asmā the Bāb calls upon the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' to give ear to his Tafsīr from

1. See QA. LXXVII. fol. 135a. This pericope is based on Qur'an 78:16 (for further details see the next few lines of this part of QA).

2. Refer, *ibid.*, LXXVIII. fol. 136a-136b.

3. Refer, *ibid.*, LXXIX. fol. 136b (the text is unclear and the sense of the passage obscure).

"the Point of Water" (nuqtat al-mā') which flows from the Camphor Fount" (al-cayn al-kāfur) in the LXXXIIIrd sūra he exhorts them to hearken to his Call from the "Point of the [letter] al-bā'" situated in the midst of the Sinaitic Fire and rewrites Qur'an 12:83 in an abstruse fashion. <sup>1</sup> In the LXXXIVth sūra the Shirazi Siyyid refers to himself as the Dove (al-warqā') which warbles in the "firmament of amā'" (jaww al-camā') or utters the Sinaitic declaration of Divinity. <sup>2</sup> He also proclaims that he is the Unique One (al-fard) on account of the "Greatest Word" (al-kalimat al-akbar) and speaks of the effect of the "sprinkling down" (arshaht > RSHH) of a reality of his Name (min ismī) upon a hierarchy of cosmological levels; upon (1) the "archetypes of the heart" (? reading suwar al-tanān [?]), (2) the "Veil" (al-hijāb; concealing the Divine Ipseity? — or the — of the letter al-bā' ?), (3) al-camā', (4) the "Throne" (al-carsh — of Divinity), (5), "Heaven" (al-samā'), (6), the "Earth" (al-ard) and (7) the "Mother Book" (umm al-kitāb). On each of these levels this sprinkling down has a powerful regenerative effect. In the sphere of al-camā' (here, perhaps, the 'Divine Cloud of Unknowing') it results in the obliteration of "الاعمار من اعينها" which may mean that the 'blindness' of (the realm of ?) amā' was 'cured'. <sup>3</sup> The implication may be that as a result of the Bāb's disclosure of the mystery of the Hidden Imām through the revelation of verses the sphere of amā' (here 'below' that of the "Veil" [al-hijāb]) is no longer: (figuratively speaking) the blind or beclouded realm of unknowing'. <sup>4</sup> In another pericope of the same sūra addressed to the "Concourse of Lights" (malā' al-arwār) the Bāb speaks of himself as (lit.) "the mysteries in the concourse of al-camā'" (al-asrār fī malā' al-camā') concealed about the Sinaitic Fire. <sup>5</sup>

1. Refer, QA., LXXXI. fol. 141b, LXXXIII. fol. 145a.
2. Refer, Ibid., LXXXIV. fol. 145b. Taherzadeh translates jaww al-camā' "loftiest heights of heaven" (see Selections from the Writings of the Bab, p. 67).
3. Reading al-aghvār min a'yanahā the literal sense would be "(obliterated) the 'strangers' from its (amā's) eyes".
4. As noted above (p. 10) the word amā' can mean 'to be in a state of blindness'. The Bāb was aware of this sense of amā' though as will, I think, be clear, he does not often use the word in this way.
5. Refer, QA. LXXXIV. fol. 145b, 146a, 147a.

While in the LXXXVth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' the Bāb is apparently referred to as the "Sun" (al-shams) which is rising up from the "Horizon of amā'" (ufq al-camā') <sup>1</sup> there is a further address to the ahl al-camā' in the LXXXVI sūra. <sup>2</sup> Qur'an 14:24 is rewritten in an interesting manner in sūra LXXXVII:

"Do you not see how God likeneth the Dhikr to a Tree which hath its root in the breast of the Dhikr and its branches rising up towards the Heaven of amā'." <sup>3</sup>

Here, it appears, the Sinaitic Tree (al-shajarat) is symbolic of the Dhikr (here = the Bāb ?) in the sense of its representing the locus of communication between the Divine (= the "heaven of amā'") and the human realms (= the "breast of the Dhikr").

That, as previously noted, the ahl al-camā' are in one sense the denizens of the celestial world is further indicated in the LXXXIXth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'. After his death the Bāb is to be numbered amongst them:

"O Solace of the Eyes! Serve thy Lord until death overtake thee. Then wilt thou, above the [Heavenly] Throne, be numbered among the ranks of those of the ahl al-camā' who prostrate themselves before God, the Exalted." <sup>4</sup>

In the IXth sūra the word amā' occurs several times. At one point the Bāb is addressed in the following manner:

"By My Life! Thou, verily, art the Star of the Book (na'im al-kitāb), the Sun of Heaven (shams al-samā') and the Lightning of amā' (barq al-camā') .. inscribed in the Mother Book (umm al-kitāb).. " <sup>5</sup>

Not only is he the "lightning of amā'" but one nurtured through the "essences of the ahl al-camā'" (jawāhir ahl al-camā'). <sup>6</sup> The ahl al-camā' are introduced into the following version of Qur'an 12:90:

1. QA. LXXXV. fol. 148a. cf. Qur'an 81:21f.
2. See QA. LXXXVI. fol. 150a.
3. QA. LXXXVII. fol. 151b.
4. QA. LXXXVIII. fol. 167a. cf. also LXXXIX. fol. 155a-b.
5. QA. XC. fol. 157b.
6. QA. XC. fol. 158b. This appears to be the sense of part of an address to the "people of peace" (ahl al-salām).



" O Solace of the Eye[s]! The ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' will say: 'Art thou indeed the Joseph of the Divine Unicity (yūsuf al-ahadiyya)?' Say: 'Yea! By my Lord! I am the fourfold form (shakl al-rub<sup>c</sup>) in the Joseph of Origination (yūsuf al-bad<sup>c</sup>) and this is my brother the threefold form (shakl al-thulth) in shape of finality (surat al-khatm — or 'image of the seal'). God hath graciously bestowed upon me [= the Bāb] the double mystery (al-sirrayn) in the two [Sinaitic] Mounts (al-turayn) and the dual names (al-ismayn) in the two luminaries (al-nayyirayn). God will not suffer the reward of such righteous ones as believe in the Bāb and are steadfast in the Book to be lost, even, in very truth, to the extent of a speck on a date-stone." 1.

Here the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' are represented as asking the Bāb whether he is the Joseph of the Divine Unicity (yūsuf al-ahadiyya). He is to say that he is indeed the "fourfold form in the Joseph of origination" and that his "brother" is the "threefold form in the shape of finality". This in the light of the fact that his reality is twofold or possessed of two names. In effect that Bāb is to state that he, as the Bāb to the hidden Imām and one named Alī Muhammad, is the locus of the kalimat al-tawhid (= the mystery of the 4 words which make up اللهي [ = one one level, the shakl al-rub<sup>c</sup>] and the secret of its 3 'root letters' ل, م and ح [= one one level the shakl al-thulth] ) in human form (= 'in the shape of finality' or 'image of the seal' = the letter ح = ★ as the talismanic sign of humanity?) or the representative of the potencies enshrined in the principles of nubuwā (= the 4 letters of Muhammad = on one level the shakl al-rub<sup>c</sup>) and wilāya (= the 3 letters of Alī = on one level the shakl al-thulth). 2. In talismanic terms he is to indicate to the ahl-<sup>c</sup>amā' his intimate relationship with the hidden "Joseph" (= Imām Husayn or the expected Imām).

It is in the context of difficult Sinaitic imagery and talismanic terminology that the term <sup>c</sup>amā' occurs in the XCI st sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'. The Bāb is referred to as one who cried out and praised God "in the [Sinaitic] Mount (al-tūr), the Point of the Gate (nuqtat al-bāb) nigh unto the

1. QA.XC.fol. 158b. In Qur'an 12:90, of which this pericope is a rewrite, Joseph's brothers discover his identity. Joseph clearly states his identity and refers to Benjamin as his brother.
2. cf. QA. LXXVII.fol.136a, 140a. Sahifa bayn al-Haramayn (Browne Coll. MS. Or. F.7.[9]), p.27ff. esp. p.35-7; Letter of 'Abdu'l-Bahā in Ishraq Khavari (Ed) Ma'ida-yi Asmānī Vol. 9 (n.p. [Tehran] 129 Badī<sup>c</sup>), pp.45-47. For some details on the use of such expressions as shakl al-rub<sup>c</sup> and shakl al-thulth in the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh see S.Lambden, A Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh on the Mission of Moses (forthcoming in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin).

[Sinaitic] Tree (al-shajarāt) planted in the land of <sup>c</sup>amā'.."<sup>1</sup>. He is instructed by God to make the following claim: "I, verily, am the threefold form (al-shakl al-thulth) awesomely inscribed in the 'Unveiled Sinaitic' (al-quds al-<sup>c</sup>amā')..."<sup>2</sup>. His name Alī (here = the "threefold form"?) or the alphabetic locus of his being (= ل م and ح) as the 'essence' of the kalimat al-tawhid? it may be deduced, is inscribed in the sanctified sphere of <sup>c</sup>amā' or (perhaps?) in the hidden sanctuary within the realm of <sup>c</sup>amā'.<sup>3</sup> On account of the Bāb's crying out as the Bird (al-dīk) perched on a crimson leaf of the blessed Sinaitic Tree "al-<sup>c</sup>amā' and its people" (al-<sup>c</sup>amā' wa ahlihā) utter plaintive sighs."<sup>4</sup> Similar imagery is found in a pericope of Qayyūm al-Asmā' XCII:

" O People of Ridwān! Harken unto my Call from this Bird (al-tair)' which, with the permission of God, flappeth its wings in the Point of the Air of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (fī nuqtat al-hawā' min al-<sup>c</sup>amā').."<sup>5</sup>.

Allusion may be made to the Hadīth of <sup>c</sup>amā' (see below) in view of the fact that the Bāb is represented as a bird that flaps its wings in the "Air" (hawā') surrounding the "Cloud of Unknowing" (al-<sup>c</sup>amā').

Apart from passing reference to the fact that God beareth witness unto the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' and the "mystery of the Dove" (sirral-warqā') the XCIII rd sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' contains a reference to the nafs (= 'self', 'locus', 'logos' = the Bāb?) which stands upright in the "firmament of <sup>c</sup>amā'":

" O People of the Earth! Harken unto this Call [from] the nafs standing in the firmament of <sup>c</sup>amā' (jaww al-<sup>c</sup>amā')."<sup>6</sup>

In Qayyūm al-Asmā' sūra XCV there is an extremely obscure passage in which mention is made of the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' being directed to twice strike the "private apartments" (hujurat) of the people situated around the

1. QA.XCI.fol.159a.
2. Ibid.
3. As indicated above the expression shakl al-thulth is expressive of the three letters of the name Alī (ع + م + ح — the locus of wilāya) and/or the three different letters found in the kalimat al-tawhid.
4. QA. XCI.fol.159a.cf. also fol.159b.
5. QA. XCII. fol.160b.cf. also fol.162b.
6. QA. XCIII.fol.164b. See also. fol.163b.

"two names" (= those living near the Bāb ?).<sup>1</sup> Eight sūras later Qur'an 12:102a is rewritten in a pericope addressed to the "Centre of [the letter] Kāf in the Word of the Command ( kalimat al-amr = the ك of the Qur'anic creative imperative كن ?). The Bāb states that his Qayyūm al-Asmā' or Commentary on the Sūra of Joseph is "one of the tales of al-Camā' ( anbā' al-Camā'— Qur'an 12:102a has anbā' al-ghayb = 'Tales of the unseen' ) written upon the leaf of the heart ( waraqat al-fū'ād ) ..about the [Sinaitic] Fire..<sup>2</sup> This may imply that the esoteric senses given to sura 12 of the Qur'an are intimately related— as indicated above— to the secret of Camā' and the ahl al-Camā'. The Bāb's 'transcendentalisation' of the Joseph story is closely connected with the mystery of the Hidden Imām (or Imām Husayn) and the sphere of the 'Cloud of Unknowing' ( al-Camā' ).<sup>3</sup>

The CVIIIth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' contains a pericope addressed to the ahl al-Camā' and one in which the "people attracted by the Temple of the Divine Unity ( haykal al-tawhīd )" are exhorted to hearken unto the Sinaitic proclamation of the Bāb. The Bāb represents himself as a "Golden Leaf sprung up through the crimson oil of the [Sinaitic] Tree which moveth in the firmament of Camā' ( jaww al-Camā' )." The roots of this Sinaitic Tree reach down to earth though it was planted by the hands of the Dhikr and reaches up into the "air of Camā' " ( al-hawā' min al-Camā' — the "air" about the 'Cloud of Unknowing' cf. the Hadīth of Camā' ). A symbol of the link between the celestial and the terrestrial and the person of the Bāb the Sinaitic Tree ( al-shajarat ) is rooted in the heart of the Shirazi Siyyid who is in communication with the realm about Camā', the sphere of the 'Cloud of Unknowing'.<sup>4</sup>

In the same sūra (CVIII) the Bāb refers to himself as the "most concealed mystery ( al-sirr fī mustasirr al-sirr ) inscribed upon the

1. QA. XCV. fol. 168a. The context is apparently eschatological. cf. also the pericope addressed to the ahl al-Camā' in *ibid.*, fol. 168b.
2. QA. CIII. fol. 184a-b.
3. QA. CV also contains (unless al-Culamā' be the correct reading) the following rewrite of Qur'an 12:106a, "We did not find most of al-Camā' (= the ahl al-Camā' ?) prostrating before God on account of the Word of the Bāb ( kalimat al-bāb ). The meaning is not clear ( see fol. 188a ).
4. See QA. CVIII. fol. 192b, 193a (cf. above [p. 63] on QA. LXXXXVII. fol. 151b and Qur'an 14:24 ).

line beneath al-Camā' beyond the heavenly realm ( al-samā' )" and the "glorious pearl ( al-durr al-jalīlī ) in the shell of the Friend ( sadaf al-khalīlī = the 'shell of Abraham' ) ..preserved in the Ocean of Camā' ( al-bahr al-Camā' ) about [the garden of] Eden ( hawā' al-Cādīn )..<sup>1</sup> He, furthermore, claims to be the "Bird" ( al-tair ) in the "firmament of Camā'" and, among other things, one submerged in an ocean of crimson musk.<sup>2</sup>

Like sura CVIII the CIXth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' contains many interesting statements expressive of the Bāb's earliest claims. In a singularly obscure pericope the Bāb at one point speaks of himself as "an ancient fruit ( thamarat qadīmat ) from the Blessed [Sinaitic] Tree ( al-shajarat al-mubarakat ) dyed crimson in the Fire of the double Camā' ( bi'l-nār al-Camā'ayn — or, 'the *Doubly Beclouded Fire*' )".<sup>3</sup> Here, as in (at least) one other pericope the word Camā' occurs in (oblique) dual form.<sup>4</sup> Three paragraphs of Qayyūm al-Asmā' sūra CIX are addressed to the ahl al-Camā'.<sup>5</sup> The term Camā' occurs in the second of them in which the Bāb refers to his ascending up into the "firmament of heaven" ( jaww al-samā' ) and, high unto the heavenly Throne ( al-carsh ), giving utterance to the "secret of the dust" ( sirr al-turāb ) and "mighty secret of God" ( sirr Allāh al-Cazīm ) among the "concourse of the Air of the elevated Camā'" ( malā' al-hawā' min al-Camā' al-Calīan ).<sup>6</sup> The same word occurs in the context of an address to the "people of the earth" ( ahl al-ard );

"O People of the Earth! ..God verily, hath sent down verses upon the expected Proof [ the 12th Imām ] and I verily, with the permission of God, caused them to descend via the angels of Camā' ( malā' ikāt al-Camā' ) unto the heart of my Greatest Dhikr in or that the people might believe in God and in His Book..."<sup>7</sup>

As the representative of the Hidden Imām the Bāb is able to reveal verses sent down by God to the Hidden Imām and communicated to him by the angels of the realm of Unknowing.<sup>8</sup>

1. QA. CVIII. fol. 193a-193b. cf. above. As a siyyid the Bāb was also a descendent of Abraham ( according to Muslim genealogy ).
2. *Ibid.*, fol. 194a.
3. QA. CIX. fol. 196a.
4. See above p. 58 ( on QA. LXXV. fol. 131b. ).
5. See QA. CIX. fols. 195b-196a, 197a.
6. This may indicate that the Bāb announced his bābhood unto the dwellers of the celestial region around the 'Cloud of Unknowing'.
7. QA. CIX. fol. 196b.
8. The final, CXIth sūra of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' also contains a pericope addressed to the ahl al-Camā' ( see fol. 200b ).

The word <sup>c</sup>amā' occurs about ten times in the Bāb's early Tafsīr Bismillāh. It is associated with the sphere in which the "hidden [letter] alif" (= the ا of اسم not written in بسم) is concealed, i.e. in the "pristine seclusion" (al-hajb al-bahtat) and the "pure <sup>c</sup>amā'" (al-<sup>c</sup>amā' al-sirfat).<sup>1</sup> On another level this same "hidden alif" symbolizes the "first Tree which emerged from the Sinaitic Mount" the taste or fruits of which may be experienced in the "orchards of glory" (hada'iyā al-bahā') though it is hidden in the "seclusion of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (hajb al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>2</sup> When related to the sphere of the Divine Unicity (al-wahidiyya) it exists beneath the <sup>c</sup>amā' of [the Divine] Grandeur" (<sup>c</sup>amā' al-<sup>c</sup>azimat).<sup>3</sup> The letter س of بسم represents the manifest "essence of God" (dhāt Allāh), the Prophet Muhammad, the "abyss of the ocean of the Divine Unicity" (lujāt bahr al-ahadiyya), the "sanctified manifestation of the Divine Ipseity" (sirf zuhūr al-huwiyya) and the "<sup>c</sup>amā' of the pristine divine Perpetuity" ([reading] <sup>c</sup>amā' baht al-<sup>c</sup>amadiyya).<sup>4</sup> The final letter of بسم, the م, is indicative the "glory of God" (majd Allāh) and the wilāya of Imām Alī in the "<sup>c</sup>amā' of [the realm of] Lāhūt" (<sup>c</sup>amā' al-lāhūt).<sup>5</sup>

While the initial alif of Allāh in بسم الله is equated with the "benefits of God" (alā' Allāh) and, in this context, mention is made of the "people of the absolute <sup>c</sup>amā'" (ahl <sup>c</sup>amā' al-mutlaq), its final letter Hā' ( هـ ) is indicative of the Prophet Muhammad whose celestial reality is the source of all the Divine Names and Attributes in all spheres of existence including the spheres of the "clarity[?]" of Jabarūt" (reading[?]" cardat al-jabarūt) and the "<sup>c</sup>amā' (here= veiled realm) of Lāhūt".<sup>6</sup> Towards the end of the Tafsīr Bismillāh the expressions "world of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (<sup>c</sup>alam al-<sup>c</sup>amā') and "horizon of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (ufq al-<sup>c</sup>amā') occur in contexts which need not be examined in detail.<sup>7</sup>

1. Refer, Tafsīr Bismillāh, Tehran Bahā'ī Archives MS 6014 C., p.304. (I have also consulted the text of the Tafsīr Bismillāh in Tehran Bahā'ī Archives MS 6013 C.).

2. Tafsīr Bismillāh, p.327.

3. Ibid., p.328.

4. Ibid., p.329.

5. Ibid., p.334.

6. Ibid., pp. 338, 345.

7. See *ibid.*, pp.371-2.

Written for Siyyid Yahyā Dārābī (Vahid, d.1850) the Bāb's Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar (Commentary on Qur'ān sūra 108, written between July 1845 and Sept. 1846) contains over twenty occurrences of <sup>c</sup>amā'. Towards the beginning of this lengthy Arabic work reference is made to the horizons of the "heaven of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (samā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā') in connection with the realm of Lāhūt (the realm of the Divine theophany), the sphere of the "firmament of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (jaww al-<sup>c</sup>amā') and the "accents of the birds of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (ilhān tuyūr al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>1</sup> The first alif of sūra 108 on one level signifies the "the favours of thy Lord in the heaven of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (alā' rabbuka fī samā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>2</sup> At one point the Bāb swears by He Who (God) made the "Bird of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (tair al-<sup>c</sup>amā') to soar in his breast (sadrī).<sup>3</sup> He, in the course of explaining the meaning of the letter ف of فضل (108:2), mentions the "fissure" (fatq) which God cleft asunder (fataq Allāh) between earth and heaven and the shining forth of the "world of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (<sup>c</sup>alam al-<sup>c</sup>amā') from the "mystery of the Divine Effulgence" (sirr al-ishrāq).<sup>4</sup> The letter ح of انصرح is, on the fourth innermost level, associated with the (loosely) "incarnation" (hall) of the "First Talisman" (tillism al-awwal) which God veiled through His interior Self (nafs al-bātin) and a Bird (tair = the Bāb?) which makes mention of the "First incarnation" (hall al-awwal) in the "essence of the air of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (jawhar hawā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>5</sup> A few pages further on the Bāb asserts that his verses are superior to and independent of the writings of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā'ī and Siyyid Kāzīm Rashtī and refers to himself as a Bird which flaps its wings in the "firmament of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (jaww al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>6</sup> On one level, he further teaches, the letter ك of كائنك is indicative of the "Word" (kalimat) which exists in the "Tablet of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (lawh al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>7</sup> while the هـ of هو is related to the epiphany of the Divine Ipseity (huwiyya), the "light of the morn" (nūr al-subh) and one who (the Prophet Muhammad?) ascended through al-burāq (the 'celestial steed') unto the "heaven of <sup>c</sup>amā'"

1. Refer, Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar (Camb. Univ. Lib. Browne Coll. MS Or F (10) 7.fol.1 (a), 9(a) and 11 (a)).

2. Ibid., fol. 11(b).

3. Ibid., fol. 12(b). The implication may be that the sphere of <sup>c</sup>amā' exists in the depths of the Bāb's inner being.

4. Ibid., fol.18 (b).

5. Ibid., fol., 22(a).

6. Ibid., fol., 23(b).

7. Ibid., fol., 28(b).

(samā' al-camā').<sup>1</sup> The Bāb is not only a "Bird" which exists in the sphere of the "firmament of camā' (jaww al-camā') but one who reveals the "verses of camā' (āyat al-camā')"<sup>2</sup> and associates himself with the leaves of the "Tree of camā' (shajarat al-camā')".<sup>3</sup>

The following comments of the Bāb on the letter ب in الآية are of particular interest:

"The letter al-bā' (ب) signifieth the land of the Divine Unicity (barr al-ahadiyya) for those who journey unto God in the forest of (the realm of) Lāhūt. It signifieth the all-enduring land of camā' (barr al-camā' al-sarmadiyya) for those who journey unto God in the forest of (the realm of) Jabarūt. It signifieth the 'beclouded land[of unknowing]' (barr al-camā'iyya) for those who journey unto God in the forest of (the realm of) Malakūt. It signifieth the 'land of the Divine Grandeur' (barr al-kibriyā'iyya) for those who, with the permission of God, subsist in the land of Jabarūt (ard al-jabarūt). On account of the decree of [the letter] al-bā' the horizons of camā' (afaq al-camā') have been filled through the two archetypal letters (bi'l-harfayn al-mathalayn) and the [letter] alif standing between the two gulfs (al-alif al-qā'im bayn al-tutunjayn).."<sup>4</sup>

Here the 'all-enduring land of camā' is associated with the realm of Jabarūt (the sphere of the Divine Decree). A rare occurrence of the (relative adjectival) abstract notion of camā' occurs in genitive relationship with the word "land" (barr al-camā'iyya — loosely translated, 'beclouded land[of unknowing]') and the reality of the Bāb (= the two archetypal letters [the 2 ب of باب?] and the upright alif [in باب?]) is represented as filling the "horizons" of being (cf. Qur'ān).

On similar lines, it may be noted here, are the opening words of a prayer of the Bāb written in reply to questions of a certain Sayyid Ja'far Shubbar:<sup>5</sup>

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

1. Ibid. fol. 29(a).
2. See fols., 30(b) and 31(a) where there is also reference to the ahl al-camā'. cf. also fol. 95(b) and 101(b).
3. Ibid., fol. 96(a).cf. also fol.32(a).
4. Ibid., fol. 35(b) — a line omitted in the MS Or F (10) 7 has been translated from the MS of the Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kawthar in Iran Nat. Bahā'ī Archives Priv.Pub. Vol. 53 (p.239).
5. Text in Iran Bahā'ī Archives MS 6003C pp.316-318.

O my God! Thou art the One Who revealed Thyself unto the inmates of (the realm of) Lāhūt through the realities of the effulgences of camā' (bi-kaymūniyyat tajaliyyāt al-camā'); unto the inmates of the forest of (the realm of) Jabarūt through the manifestations of praise (bi-zuhurāt al-thana'); unto the inmates of the forest of the Dominion (ajmat al-mulk) through the grades of Glory (bi-shu'ūnat al-bahā')..."

The Divine Epiphany (tajallī) is pictured as being realized in the hierarchy of metaphysical realms through the agency of various transcendent realities. The 'realities of the effulgences of camā' were made manifest in the realm of Lāhūt.

Among the early minor works of the Bāb the term camā' occurs in the Tafsīr Hadīth al-Haqīqat and the Bayān fī ilm al-jawāmid.<sup>1</sup> In the former work the Bāb, commenting of Imām 'Alī's initial cryptic definition of "absolute reality" (al-haqīqat) as the "unveiling of the splendours of the All-Glorious without a sign" (كشف سجات الجلال من غير اشارة), explains that "the sign (al-ishārat) derives from the splendours (subuhāt)" and that the "splendours" (subuhāt [of the All-Glorious]) are related to the "pristine seclusion" (hajb al-baht) and the "pure camā'" (camā' al-sīrf) in terms of the "station of the [Divine] Names and Attributes ..[etc.]"<sup>2</sup>. In the Bayān fī cilm al-jawāmid. the one addressed is told that God had bestowed on him the "sprinklings (rashhāt) of His lights in the reality of the mysteries" and mention is made of the "world of the day-blind" (? reading alam al-ajhār); that is (?) those blinded by crimson-coloured radiance of the "Point of camā'" (nuqtat al-camā'?).<sup>3</sup>

1. See Tehran Bahā'ī Archives MS. 6006C pp. 74-7 (= Tafsīr Hadīth al-Haqīqat = 'Commentary on the Hadīth of Kumayl') and pp.81-3 (= Bayān fī cilm al-jawāmid wa'l-Mushtaqat = 'Exposition on the underived and derived [parts of speech]').
2. Refer Tafsīr Hadīth al-Haqīqat, p.75. cf. the use of the terms hajb al-baht and camā' al-sīrf in the Tafsīr Bismillāh (see above, p. 68).
3. Refer, Bayān fī cilm al-jawāmid. p.82. The meaning is obscure. It appears that reference is made to celestial beings who are blind by day as a result of the crimson light of the Sinaitic Fire that pours forth from the "Point of camā'" — or "Point of Blindness". There are beings close to the Divine who are 'blinded' by the crimson effulgence of Divinity (?).

Apparently the Bāb's first major work in Persian the Sahifa-yi Adliyya contains two occurrences of the word amā'. In the course of underlining the sublimity and transcendence of God mention is made of the fact that the name Muhammad is a "sanctified name" (ism-i muqaddas) in the "Supreme Concurrence" (mala' al-a'la — among the exalted heavenly beings) and the "world of amā'" (alam al-amā').<sup>1</sup> At the end of section I of this work the Bāb exhorts the "concurrence" (al-mala' — of the people [or Bābis]) to purify themselves in the light of the imminent fulfillment of eschatological prophecies. He asserts that "...the peacock of amā' (ta'ūs al-amā' = the hidden 12th Imam?) singeth before the setting[-point] of [the zodiacal sign] Cancer (ind ufūl al-saratān) and the cock (al-dīk) croweth upon a leaf of the branches of the Tree of Blessedness.."<sup>2</sup>

Written around October 1846 for Mīrzā Siyyid Muhammad Sultān al-ulamā' (the then Imām Jum'ā of Isfahan) the Bāb's Tafsīr Sūrat al-Asr (Commentary on Sūra 103 of the Qur'ān) contains four occurrences of amā' — all in the course of quasi-qabbalistic interpretations of the 73 letters of sūra 103. On one level the first letter wāw (of wā'l-asr = 'By the afternoon..') is said to be the manifestation (zuhūr) of the letter hā' (note that ه follows و in هو = "He is [God]" the و being indicative of the Divine Ipseity هووية) and, as far as the "men of amā'" (rijāl al-amā') are concerned, essentially the same (as و).<sup>3</sup> While the 11th letter, alif, of sūra 103 represents (among other things) the "origination of the Divine Will in the world of amā'" (ibdā' al-mashīyat fī alam al-amā') the 20th letter, sin, signifies the "brightness of God" (sanā' Allāh) in the worlds of amā', bahā' (= glory), qadā' (= the divine decree), and imdā' (= realization).<sup>4</sup> In the course of

1. Refer, Sahifa-yi Adliyya (n.p. [Tehran] n.d.), p.3.
2. Ibid., p.4. The Sahifa-yi Adliyya was probably written during the latter part of the Bāb's confinement in Shiraz after his return from pilgrimage (i.e. late 1845). At this time he had not made an explicit claim to be the expected Imam. The pericope from which the above lines are translated is similar to that section of the Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara mentioned above (p.46).
3. Refer, Tafsīr Sūrat al-Asr (in Iran Nat. Bahā'ī Archives Priv. Pub. Vol 69), p. 33.
4. Refer, ibid. pp. 44, 46-7.

commenting on the 34th letter of sūra 108 (an alif) the Bāb mentions that all in the "kingdom of origination and al-amā'" (malakūt al-inshā' wa'l-amā') humbled themselves before the sublimity of the splendour of the wilāya of Imam Alī.<sup>1</sup>

Among the later works of the Bāb the term amā' occurs a few times in the Kitāb-i Panj Sha'n — though not very frequently considering the length and nature of this work.<sup>2</sup> In connection with the realization of the "Day of God" reference is made to the contentment of "the inhabitants of the all-glorious amā'" or "dwellers of the amā' of the All-Glorious" (sukkān amā'al-abhā').<sup>3</sup> Mention is also made of the "inhabitants of the Jabarūt of Lahūt and the amā' of the pure sanctuary of Malakūt" (sukkān jabarūt al-lahūt wa amā' quds al-malakūt).<sup>4</sup> At one point the Bāb refers to the "firmament of amā'"<sup>5</sup> and at another to those who say "He [God] is He [God]" in connection with the (letter) al-hā' (ه) in the "Glorious amā'" (al-hā' bi'l-amā' al-bahā').<sup>6</sup>

Finally, but by no means exhaustively in connection with the writings of the Bāb it should be noted that, for example, the term amā' does not occur in any of the following works: Risāla Nubuwwat Khassih, Dalā'il-i Sab'ā (Persian and Arabic), Khutba-yi Qahrīyya, Bayān-i Farsī (Persian Bayān) Bayān-i Arabī (Arabic Bayān), Kitāb al-Fihrist, Tafsīr Hadīth Man 'Arāfa Nafsah.. Tafsīr Nahm Wajh Allāh; Bayān 'Illatī Tahrīm al-Mah-arīm; Tafsīr Sūrat al-Tawhīd; Tafsīr Laylat al-Qadr; Tafsīr Sūrat al-Hamd; Lah-i Haykal al-Dīn; Bayān Mas'ilat al-Qadr; Tafsīr al-Hā' (I & II) — this is obviously not a complete list of the writings of the Bāb (unmentioned above) or of those I have examined.

1. Refer, Tafsīr Sūrat al-Asr, p. 53.
2. The lengthy Kitāb-i Panj Sha'n was written towards the end of the Bāb's life. I have counted only four occurrences of amā' in the edition published some years ago by the Azālīs (n.p. n.d. — see above).
3. Kitāb-i Panj Sha'n (n.p. n.d.), p.17.
4. Ibid., p. 63.
5. Ibid., p. 281.
6. Ibid., p. 197.

In view of the fact that the early writings of Mīrzā Yahyā were highly regarded by both the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh and widely read by Bābīs it will not be inappropriate to refer to the use of the term C<sup>ama</sup> in one of them. <sup>1</sup> Incorrectly privately published as a work of the Bāb what is almost certainly Yahyā's Kitāb al-Wahid (probably written between 1852 and 1857 at Baghdad [?]) contains a good many interesting occurrences of this term and much that throws light on his early claims and role. <sup>2</sup>

The IVth sūra of the first part of the Kitāb al-Wahid contains much of interest including several occurrences of C<sup>ama</sup>:

"O letter Alif! Harken unto the call of your Lord from the Sinaitic Tree.. 'No god is there save Him' ..Say: O People of the Concourse.. Harken unto my call from the Throne of Hahūt ( arsh al-hahūt ).. the Glorious David ( al-dawūd al-bahā' ) [who crieth out ], ' I, verily, am the Leaf in the double C<sup>ama</sup>' ( ..ana al-warag fi al-C<sup>ama</sup>ayn ).. I am al-thā' (= al-thamara = Yahyā ) in the Glorious C<sup>ama</sup> ( al-C<sup>ama</sup> al-bahā' )... I am al-C<sup>ama</sup> in Mount Sinai ( jabal al-sīna )... I am the C<sup>ama</sup> of the Divine Unicity ( C<sup>ama</sup> al-ahadiyya ) in the seclusion of the Unseen ( fi haḥb al-ghayb ) .. I am al-thā' in the Mount of al-hā' .. I am the Tree of C<sup>ama</sup> ( shajarat al-C<sup>ama</sup> ) through

1. Before his martyrdom the Bāb had appointed Mīrzā Yahyā ( c.1830-1912 ), a younger half-brother of Bahā'u'llāh, the nominal head of the Bābī community. His many writings remain—more or less—completely unstudied.
2. What I feel certain is an early work of Mīrzā Yahyā, the Kitāb al-Wahid constitutes Vol. 80 of the privately published 'Iran National Bahā'ī Archives' series which is entitled, 'Compilation of the Writings of His Holiness the Most Exalted [= the Bāb ]' ( Majmū'a-yi Athār Hadrat-i Aqlī ) and dated 133 Badī<sup>c</sup> ( pp.226 ). The following words occur at the beginning of the photostatically reproduced MS ( the seal is unfortunately illegible ), " This is the Kitāb al-Wahid. It is in 19 sūras. God, verily, caused it to descend for the Letters of the Living ( li-hurūfāt al-hayy )...". Each of the 19 sūras of the first part of this Afabic work are headed "In the Name of God, the All-Bountiful, the Most Holy" ( bism-illāh al-jawād al-aqdas ) and are, in certain instances, followed by disconnected letters or other ciphers derived from the 19 letters which form this version of the basmalla ( see pp. 1-105 ). The 46 sūras which form the second part(?) of the Kitāb al-Wahid ( see pp. 106-226 —also in Arabic and undoubtedly by the same writer ) are also headed with bismillāh al-jawād al-aqdas though there is no clearly discernable pattern to the disconnected letters contained therein— though the letters ف م (VI) obviously stand for thamara ("Fruit"), a title of Yahyā ( cf. XXVII which has هو ثمار = [?] = " He is the Fruit" and XIII which has ازال = Azal, Subh al-Azal (The Morn of Eternity) being a key title ). The Arabic style of the Kitāb al-Wahid is similar to the rhyming prose of the Qayyūm al-Asmā though there are turns of phrase and expressions not

the Sinaitic Mystery ( bi'l-sirr al-sīnā ) in the Mount of al-thā'. " 1.

Many similar lines occur in both the first and second parts of the Kitāb al-Wahid. <sup>2</sup> Only a few of them can be translated here. At various points in sūra IV (A) we read:

"We verily sent down al-hā' [= the Bāb ? ] in the land of C<sup>ama</sup> ( ard al-C<sup>ama</sup> ) for the victory of the Dhikr in the land... We raised up al-wahid [= Yahyā ? ] in the land of Kar [= here the Kaf of Kur= "Ba!" ? ] ..if order that he might give Us victory.. Kill the unbelievers in whatever manner you desire for this is indeed a beautiful decree.. Say: O thou Concourse of the people of the Bayān! Enter the throne of al-thā'..The angels have been lined up in the land of C<sup>ama</sup> ( ard al-C<sup>ama</sup> ).. al-thā' hath descended in the glorious C<sup>ama</sup> ( al-C<sup>ama</sup> al-bahā' ).. " 3.

Reference is also made in this sūra to the verses or signs ( ayāt ) which God created in the "precincts of the C<sup>ama</sup>'s ( atraf al-C<sup>ama</sup>at —note the plural ), the "kingdom of the throne and al-C<sup>ama</sup>" ( malakūt al-C<sup>arsh wa'l-C<sup>ama</sup></sup> ) and the 'Beclouded Land of Unknowing' ( ard al-C<sup>ama</sup>iyva ; see pp.25-26 ).

found ( as far as I am aware ) in the authentic writings of the Bāb. There are many allusions to Yahyā's key titles in this work; most notably al-thamara (= the Fruit[ of the Bayān ]— frequently indicated by al-thā' its initial letter ), al-wahid (= the Unique= abjad 28 like Yahyā ) and al-azal (= the Eternal ). The author's claims are very similar to those made by the Bāb in the Qayyūm al-Asmā and other early writings.

In terms of the date and authorship of the Kitāb al-Wahid the following points are also worth noting. The death of Muhammad Shāh and his "[prime] minister" are alluded to at several points ( see VII(A), p.28 and cf. for example, VI(A), pp.22,24— Muhammad Shāh died on Sept.4th 1848 and Hajji Mīrzā Aqāsī on August 1st 1849 ). Various pericopae seem to reflect the controversy surrounding Yahyā's (illicit) marriage to and subsequent divorce of the Bāb's second wife Fatīma ( around 1854-5? —see I(A), p.41ff; XVI (A), p. 83ff; V(B) p.124f; XII(B), p.145f; XVII(B), p.124f ). What is apparently an address to Bahā'u'llāh is contained in the second part of the Kitāb al-Wahid : "...O brother of Wahid! ( vā akhā wahid ) Weep not and thank your Lord that he hath made you to be numbered among those who attained to His[God's] meeting on the Day of Resurrection.. " ( XL V (B), p.229 ).

1. Kitāb al-Wahid (A), IV, pp.3-17.
2. As in the above footnote the first part of the Kitāb al-Wahid will be indicated by the letter A. B will indicate the second part. The Roman numerals refer to the sūra numbers ( not given in the MS ).
3. Yahyā, it seems, anticipated the imminent eschatological battle. It is known that he encouraged a militant Bābism during the 1850's ( see VI (A) and cf. IV(A), p.16 ). I am not sure that al-wahid raised up in the "land of Kar" is Yahyā since the "land of Kar" normally indicates Kashan or Kirman (?).

At one point in sura VIII(A) the following claim is made:

" I am the Lord of the Worlds and I, verily, created the verses in the Kingdom of the Camā's (malakūt al-Camā'at) in order that you, in your inmost essence, might bear witness that God is the Beloved.." (p. 31).

The IXth sura (A) begins as follows:

" Lām ( ل ) [is] The benevolence of God ( lutf Allāh ) in the Tree of al-hā' which descendeth in the glorious Camā' ( al-Camā'al-bahā' ) .." (p.35).

Later in this sūra we read:

" Render thanks unto your Lord in the mystery of the line ( fi sirr al-satr ) through the manifestation of al-bā' ( bi'l-zuhūr al-bā' ) in the Camā' of glory ( Camā'al-baha ) ... We chose you [ the Bābīs ? ] through the mystery of the command ( bi'l-sirr al-amr = Yahya ? ) a dewdrop ( rashh<sup>an</sup> ) in the ipseity of rapture ( huwiyya al-jadib ) 1. in the Camā' of the seal ( Camā'al-khatm ) .." (pp.38-9).

At various points in the Xth(A) sūra the following lines occur:

" Jim ( ج ) . The revelation of verses ( tanzīl al-ayāt ) through a sprinkling ( rashh<sup>an</sup> ) of the Camā' of al-hā' .. Thus did We ornament the favoured realities of all things ( tafdīl kull shay' ) in the Camā' of Hahūt .. ( Camā'al-hahūt ) .. Wherefore did We cause the verses to send down upon you in order that the mystery of the Divine Ipseity ( sirr al-huwiyya ) in the Camā' of love ( Camā'al-hubb — or Camā'al-jubb = Camā' of the pit ? ) might teach you\* ( or become known ) before the wonderful manifestation .. The mystery of the command ( sirr al-amr = Yahya ? ) was sent down in the night of Camā' ( laylat al-Camā' — see Qur'an 97: 1f ) .. You [ Yahya ] are from the mystery which was disclosed in the Camā' of Hahūt ( fi Camā'al-hahūt ) before the mystery of the Divine Grandeur ( sirr al-azimat ) in order that the people might be informed of the mystery of the Divine Attractiveness ( sirr al-jazzabiyya ) in the countenance of the Divine Unicity ( fi tal'at al-ahadiyya ) .. Thus did God cause the Command ( al-amr = Yahya ) to be sent down in the Camā' ( fi al-Camā' ) , in the mystery of origination ( sirr al-bada' ) .." ( see pp.40-44 ).

The following verses from sūra XI (A) are on similar lines:

- Reference is also made in sūra IX (A) to the Camā's ( al-Camā'at ) being filled with light as a result of the 'spiritual attractions' ( al-jazzabāt ) and the Camā' of origination " ( Camā'al-bad<sup>c</sup> ) (p.37). Yahya, at one point (p.36) is addressed as thā' al-azālī.

" We, verily, have embellished for you the verses through the letters of al-waw. Those who believe in them are not wayward in their deeds. Know that We sprinkled down upon you the verses from the mystery of the line ( sirr al-satr ) in the Ipseity of Rapture ( huwiyya al-jadib ) nigh unto the pristine Camā' ( al-Camā'al-bahā' ) .." (p.46).

While in sūra XII(A) the phrase " decrees of God in the Camā' of al-hā' in the mystery of origination before the mountain of the seal" occurs (p.51) we, at one point read, in sūra XIII(A):

" Say: O thou Concurrence of the assembly of the Bayān! Are you not aware that the angels and the Spirit ( al-rūh ) have been lined up around the thrones of Camā'? Do you not recognise that the Lord hath descended in the Camā' of al-hā'? .." (p.56).

Yahyā in this sūra, it appears, also refers to himself as the one whose glory is praised by all who are in the "heavens and .. in the 'Beclouded Realms'" ( Camā'iyāt ) (p. 57) and as al-thā' who reveals verses that form one of the "tales of al-Camā'" (see Q.12: 102 and QA. ḤIII see above, p. 66 ) (p.60). He further, in sūra XIV (A) represents himself as the "countenance" ( tal'at ) which cries out in the "land of Camā'" (p. 63) and writes:

" This [ the Kitāb al-Wāhid? ] is one of the tales which We ornamented for you [ Yahyā? ] in the land of Camā' before the countenance of al-hā' in al-waw [ و + و = وو ] by al-thā' .." (p.67). 1.

In the last, XIXth sura of the first part (A) of the Kitāb al-Wāhid the following line occurs:

" We caused you [ Yahyā ] to be made manifest in the land of astonishment ( ard al-badī<sup>c</sup> ), originating from the Ipseity of al-bā' in al-Camā' ( min huwiyya al-bā' fi al-Camā' ). Thus beareth witness the command ( al-amr = Yahya ? ) from the mystery of brightness [ or, cloudlessness ; sirr al-sahw ] in the Camā' of effacement ( Camā'al-mahw ) .." (p.105).

Such are among the more interesting uses of the term Camā' in the first part (A) of the Kitāb al-Wāhid. Those in the second (B) part, a few of which may now be noted, are on similar lines.

1. cf. also XIV(A), p.69 where, in a pericope addressed to Yahyā as "The Unique Name" ( ism al-wāhid ) the Bāb seems to be alluded to as the letter al-hā' and Yahyā as the letter al-waw ( of هو ).

While the opening sūra of part II (B) of the Kitāb al-Wāhid contains some abstruse rewrites of passages in the 18th sūra of the Qur'ān including an address to the "angels of amā'" (malā'ikāt al-<sup>c</sup>amā') (p.108) sūra V (B) contains a reference to Yahyā as the one who illumines all things through "the light of al-thā' in the ocean of amā'" (bi-nūr al-thā' fī bahr al-<sup>c</sup>amā') (p.122).

The Vith sūra of the Kitāb al-Wāhid (B) includes a good many references to Mirzā Yahyā and a few uses of the term amā' as the following partial translation will illustrate:

"In the name of God, the Exalted, the All-Bountiful!

Th.M.R ( تَمَر = thamara = Mirzā Yahyā ).

We sent a luminous thā' in the land characterised by the letter al-hā's (ard al-hā'iyvāt) to the end that all may be illumined through his light (nūr).....

I am the Fruit (al-thamara)... I was, through the mystery of al-thā' in Mount Sinai... I am the Eternal Fruit (al-thamara al-azālī)... I am al-thā' in the Mount of Fidelity (jabal al-wafā')... I am al-mīm which, in [the word] al-thamara is between [the letters] al-thā' and al-rā'!...

I am the reality (al-ma'nā) in the 'letter hā'-like mounts' (al-jibāl al-hā'iyvāt) through the mystery of the beclouded realms' (bi'l-sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā'iyvāt)....

O Eternal thā' (thā' al-azālī)... Sing forth with the tongue of the Absolute (min lisān al-haqq), 'I verily am God, no god is there except Me'. I created all things by my Command. Muhammad is My servant and My messenger and the Letters of the Living (huruf al-hayy = the Bāb's first disciples) are My guardians (amliyā'i)... 'Sing forth [and say]... I am al-bā' in Mount Sinai through the mystery of realization (bi-sirr al-imdā')... I am he who dwelleth in the Mount of amā' (jabal al-<sup>c</sup>amā') in the Sinai of Splendour (sīnā' al-bahā') through the crimson [Sinaitic] Fire beneath al-bā' (bi'l-nār al-hamrā' fī taht al-bā')...." (see pp.125-130).

Within the XIVth sūra there are many similar statements:

"In the Name of God, the All-Bountiful, the Most Holy.

We sent down in the heaven characterised by [the letter] al-hā' (amā' al-hā'iyvāt) [the letters] thā', wāw [and] yā [= the thā' of thamara, the wāw of huwa and the yā of Yahyā— all indicating Mirzā Yahyā ?] in order that all levels of existence might be illumined by his light.. We sent down from his tongue the verses on all sides in order that none might assert that they have not heard the melody of al-thā' (lahn al-thā' = Yahyā) from the mystery of amā' (sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā')... We verily cried out through the tongue of the Dhikr (= the Bāb ?) in the beginning of the Cause.... Follow the Dhikr (= the Bāb ?), O people of the Concourse, if you desire to be informed through a precious sprinkling (rashh) from the Mount of amā' (tūr al-<sup>c</sup>amā')..

Follow al-thā' in the land. He, verily, is a servant (al-<sup>c</sup>abd) before the Exalted Dhikr (li'l-dhikr al-<sup>c</sup>alī = the Bāb)... We have heard that some among the people say 'He [Yahyā] is the one whom we were promised by the Dhikr [the Bāb] in the mystery of the Book from the 'Mother amā'' (umm al-<sup>c</sup>amā'), an ornament in the horizon of Manifestation (ufq al-zuhur). 'Nay! By my Lord. He [Yahyā] is but a servant (al-<sup>c</sup>abd) of man yuzhiruhu'llāh [the expected Bābī messiah who, in the station of Godhead will appear at the eschatological consummation].. Be not in doubt as to that which We promised you [the Bābīs]. Bear thou witness unto the command (al-amr = Yahyā's leadership role) before the mystery of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (li'l-sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā')....

...He [Yahyā], verily, is al-thā' in the mystery of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā')... We created the heavens and the earth in six days then we elevated the throne above the waters in the air.. And we completed the number of al-waw (= abjad 6) before the mystery of the Manifestation. And We made him, in the fathomless deep of light (tamatam al-nūr) before the innermost mystery of the [letter] hā' of the Divine Ipeity, the letter thā'... And We, verily, created al-waw from a dewdrop of the effulgence in the pristine amā' (min rashh al-tajallī fī <sup>c</sup>amā' al-sirr) nigh unto the light (al-nūr) through the innermost concealed mystery..

O Eternal thā' (thā' al-azālī)! Say, unto the Concourse of [the realm] of Hāhūt [or of al-hā' ?]... [?, text unclear] to the end that all might be guided by your [Yahyā's] command in the amā' of al-hā'.. Testify within thyself, the mystery of amā' before the Lord [Who is] manifest in the wondrous Tree of Light (shajarat al-nūr = Yahyā)....

I, verily, am the letters (hurūf) which make up the letters (min al-hurūf) before the mystery of amā' (sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā') in the 'Mount of [the letter] al-hā'. I am the letter wāw in the word huwiyya (= the Divine Ipeity; the second letter of هو). And I am al-thā' from which the letters (ahraf) of every manifestation derive.. I am the Point (al-nuqtat) from which the Lordship (al-rubūbiyya) was manifest in the mystery of the line (fī sirr al-satr) before the Attraction of amā' (li'l-jadhbal-<sup>c</sup>amā')... Bear thou witness unto what is in the 'Beclouded Realms' (al-<sup>c</sup>amā'iyvāt) for I, verily, am a servant (al-<sup>c</sup>abd) in the dominion of God... I, verily, am the sprinkling (al-rashh) through the Manifestation (bi'l-zuhūr)... I, verily, am 'one withdrawn[?] in the Temple of amā' (haykal al-<sup>c</sup>amā')...." (see pp.155-164).

Sūra XV(B) includes the following lines:

"The Remembrance of God (Dhikr Allāh = the Bāb) hath been made manifest in the Crimson Tree [= Yahyā ?] before the mystery of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (li'l-sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā')... I am al-bā' in the Mount of al-hā'... I am [the realm of] Hāhūt in the amā' of glory (fī <sup>c</sup>amā' al-bahā')... I am the peacock (al-tā'ūs) in the amā' of Paradise (? amā' al-afriḍus)... I am the reality (al-ma'nā) in the Tree of Blessedness (al-tūba) manifest in the amā' of al-hā'.. (see pp.165-8).



Among a good many further examples of Yahyā's use of C<sub>ama</sub> in what I feel sure is his Kitāb al-Wahid the following lines may be noted:

"He, verily, hath descended in the C<sub>ama</sub> of al-hā'.. (XIX(B), p.180).. We, verily, created you (Yahyā') in the throne of C<sub>ama</sub> ( carsh al-C<sub>ama</sub> ) and we provided for you in the land of glory (ard al-bahā') (XX (B), p.184).. I, verily, was in the paradise of C<sub>ama</sub> ( jannat al-C<sub>ama</sub> ) ( ibid., p.187 ).. Bear thou witness unto the mystery of the Lord (sirr al-rabb) in the C<sub>ama</sub> of the Divine Unicity ( C<sub>ama</sub> al-shadiyya ) (ibid., p.189).. I, verily am the Dove which warbleth and was made manifest in the C<sub>ama</sub> of glory ( C<sub>ama</sub> al-bahā' ) upon the throne of splendour. I am al-bā' in al-C<sub>ama</sub>... (XXIII(B), p.196).. I am al-hā' in al-bahā' (= glory; h being its second letter) in the Mount of C<sub>ama</sub> ( jabal al-C<sub>ama</sub> ) (ibid., p.197).. I am the manifestation in the horizon of al-C<sub>ama</sub> ( ufq al-C<sub>ama</sub> ) (ibid., p.200).. Enter into my land and enter into my C<sub>ama</sub>.. ( XLIII. (B), p.225 ).."

It will be evident from the foregoing notes that Yahyā made, at least in the Kitāb al-Wahid, a very considerable use of the term C<sub>ama</sub>. He was evidently much influenced by its use in the Bāb's Qayyūm al-Asmā' (in particular) though he, in the light of his own particular (early) claims, added further dimensions of meaning to it. Bearing in mind that he claimed to reveal verses and to speak with the voice of God it is not surprising that he explicitly (see above) represents himself as the 'Cloud of Unknowing', al-C<sub>ama</sub>. Various lines translated above make it clear that the term C<sub>ama</sub> was used of the Divine Reality as manifest on various transcendent levels of being. The absolute and unknowable Godhead may be "in C<sub>ama</sub>" but those who represent him may also be said to be "in C<sub>ama</sub>" (see further below).

The use of the term C<sub>ama</sub> in select writings of Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī Bahā'u'llāh (1817-1892).

As with the writings of the Bāb a fairly large number of occurrences of C<sub>ama</sub> are to be found in the massive and largely unstudied corpus of Bahā'u'llāh's writings— especially mystically oriented writings dating from the earlier part of his forty year ministry (1852-1892). Once again only a select amount of largely titled writings (alwah) will be referred to in the pages which follow.

The Rashh-i C<sub>ama</sub> is, as stated below, the only scriptural writing of Bahā'u'llāh dating from before the Iraq period. As will have been observed the term C<sub>ama</sub> occurs three times in this 19 line poem. In the opening line rashh-i C<sub>ama</sub> is probably indicative of God, the Bāb or Bahā'u'llāh's own celestial self as the source of divine revelation. The imperative expression in line 10 "Behold the sprinkling of the Cloud of Unknowing" ( rashh-i C<sub>ama</sub>'i b'In ) doubtless has similar import: divine revelation is being vouchsafed through Bahā'u'llāh (?). In line 14 the genitive expression 'Mystery of the Cloud of Unknowing' ( sirr-i C<sub>ama</sub> ) may also be taken to refer to Bahā'u'llāh ( as one hidden in C<sub>ama</sub> ? )

Writings of the Iraq (Baghdad) Period (1853-1863).

The Tablet of all Good (Lawh-i Kull al-Ta<sub>am</sub>)

This important work of Bahā'u'llāh is essentially an esoteric commentary on Qur'an 3:87 written for Hajji Mīrzā Kamāl al-Dīn Naraqī around 1270 AH (= late 1853 or early 1854).<sup>1</sup> In its opening paragraph allusion is probably made to the Bāb as the locus of divine guidance when it is mentioned that God "excited the Letters of Manifestation" (ahraf al-zuhūr = the archetypal realities?) in the "Incomparable Point of the Realm of Unknowing" (bi'l-nuqtat al-C<sub>ama</sub>'iyya al-firdāniyya; or perhaps, 'in the Beclouded Incomparable Point' = the Bāb?)<sup>2</sup>. A few paragraphs later reference to the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā (then nominal head of the Bābī community) who appears to be "the Light-filled Dove" (warqā' al-nūrā') which warbles beyond the "veils of C<sub>ama</sub>" (hajbat al-C<sub>ama</sub>) is made (MA, Vol. 4, p. 268). At one point Bahā'u'llāh swears by the "Lord of C<sub>ama</sub>" (lā fawa rabbi'l-C<sub>ama</sub>) cf. for example Qur'an 51:23; MA, Vol. 4, p. 271) and at another refers to (most probably) Yahyā as the "Countenance of Light in the Heavens of C<sub>ama</sub>" (tal'at al-nūr fī samawāt al-C<sub>ama</sub>) (ibid., p. 273). Towards the end of the Lawh-i Kull al-Ta<sub>am</sub> he characterises himself as the "Dove of Servitude" (hamāmat al-ubūdiyya) which warbles in the "heaven of C<sub>ama</sub>" (samā' al-C<sub>ama</sub>) (ibid., p. 274), refers to God (?) as the "Sovereign of C<sub>ama</sub>" (sultān al-C<sub>ama</sub>) and addresses the ahl al-C<sub>ama</sub> (refer, ibid, pp. 274-5):

1. For details and full translation see A Tablet of Mirza Husayn 'Alī of the Early Iraq Period.. in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 1. pp.
2. Reference may be made to the text in Ishraq Khāvarī (Ed) Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol. 4 ( n.p. [Tehran] 129 Badīc ), p. 265f (Henceforth MA, Vol. 4).

"Say: 'O People of <sup>C</sup>Amā' (ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' ) ! Issue forth from your habitations and present yourselves in the sanctum of Light (li'l-hudūr fi haram al-nūr; or 'before the Eminent One in the..), the manifest <sup>C</sup>amā' ( <sup>C</sup>amā al-zuhūr ), the Most-Great House of God, as hath been decreed, with the permission of God..in the Tablet of the Heart.'" (ibid., pp.275-6 )

Here the ahl al-<sup>C</sup>amā' are probably to be thought of as the denizens of the unseen world or, more concretely, the Bābīs (?) who are commanded to present themselves in Baghdad (?) and acknowledge Yahyā's leadership role (?). The expression "manifest <sup>C</sup>amā' " could refer to Yahyā, Bahā'u'llāh or Baghdad as the source or centre of the Bābī world.

#### The Dove's Ode ( al-qasīda al-warqā'iyva )

Written during the course of his two year withdrawal in Iraqi Kurdistan ( around 1272.AH= 1855 AD ) the term <sup>C</sup>amā' occurs a few times in Bahā'u'llāh's "Dove's Ode".<sup>1</sup>

In the first hemistich of line 3 Bahā'u'llāh refers to the fact that " the musk of <sup>C</sup>amā' " ( misk al-<sup>C</sup>amā' ) has been diffused on account of the the delight of the divine female beloved or celestial Hourī lauded in lines 1-16 of the qasīda. She, we are led to believe in the second hemistich of line 10, resides or treads upon the "earth" ( arḍ ) or region about the " throne of <sup>C</sup>amā' " ( <sup>C</sup>arsh al-<sup>C</sup>amā' ). It may be that this celestial maiden, symbolic of the vehicle of communication between God and Bahā'u'llāh, is to be thought of as inhabiting the heavenly region of the 'Cloud of Unknowing' ( <sup>C</sup>amā' ) wherein the throne of Divinity exists.<sup>2</sup>

The first hemistich of the 24th line leads us to believe— the thought is obviously poetic— that Bahā'u'llāh's love and desire for complete union with the divine Beloved was such that the "ocean of <sup>C</sup>amā' " ( bahr al-<sup>C</sup>amā' ) was dried up on account of his intense thirst ( for 'reunion' ). The mystic cosmology of the Bāb's Qayyūm al-Asmā' ( and other writings ), it may be noted ( see above ), pictures the celestial scene of God's Sinaitic disclosure from the realm of <sup>C</sup>amā' as being surrounded by an ocean of heavenly water.<sup>3</sup>

1. On this work see J.R.Cole, *Bahā'u'llāh and the Naqshbandī Sufis in Iraq, 1854-6* [in *From Iran East and West, Studies in Bābī and Bahā'ī History* Vol.2 ( Ed. J.R.Cole & M.Momen ) pp.1-28; D.MacEoin, *A Provisional Translation of the Qasīda al-Warqā'iyva.. in Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin* Vol.2. No. pp.

2. See, for example, the text in MA.Vol.4. p.197 (line 3 ) and p.198 (line 10).

3. Refer, ibid., p.199 (line 24 ).

Perhaps addressing the Divine Maiden (as his own celestial self?) in the 95th line of his Arabic *Qasīda* Bahā'u'llāh writes ( the translation is tentative):

" O Spirit of <sup>C</sup>Amā'! Descend from the Throne ( al-<sup>C</sup>arsh ) that there be not for thee the least portion of my abasement " ( 1st hemistich ).<sup>1</sup>

The throne mentioned in this line is probably the heavenly throne which, according to various Bābī-Bahā'ī texts, exists in the realm of <sup>C</sup>amā'. If the Divine Maiden as Bahā'u'llāh's celestial self is intended by the "Spirit of <sup>C</sup>Amā'" ( ruh al-<sup>C</sup>amā' ) the meaning may be that his apparent abasement would cease if he disclosed his true epiphanic status. The implication may be that Bahā'u'llāh or the Divine Maiden sits, as the spirit (ruh) in the 'Cloud of Unknowing' ( <sup>C</sup>amā' ), on the " throne " ( al-<sup>C</sup>arsh ) which exists in that realm.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Sūra of the Sufficiency ( Sūrat al-Kifāya )

This interesting Arabic work of Bahā'u'llāh very probably dates from the early-mid Baghdad period of his ministry. It contains a pericope addressed to the 'letter of jūd' ( possibly Siyyid Jawād Karbalā'ī ? ) and passages that could be interpreted in the light of its author's upholding the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā.<sup>3</sup> It begins;

" O People of al-Hā'! Hearken unto the melodies of the Crimson Leaf ( waraqat al-hamrā' ) in the paradise of <sup>C</sup>amā' ( jannat al-<sup>C</sup>amā' ) for he, verily, is the Light ( al-nūr ), the Sinaitic Temple ( haykal al-sīnā; or 'the Resplendent Temple' reading haykal al-sana' ) who acteth, on behalf of God, as a manifest light unto the worlds."<sup>4</sup>

1. For the text of *Qasīda* line 95 see MA.Vol.4.p.206.

2. In his commentary on (select words and phrases in) the *Qasīda*.. (see *Āthār Qalam-i Aql* Vol.3 [ n.p. 121 Badī' ], pp.196-215) the term <sup>C</sup>amā' occurs in the course of an explanation of the 117th line (see MA.Vol.4.p.212 and AQA.Vol.3.p.212 ). Without going into details the expression "Light of the Unseen" ( nūr al-ghayb ) is equated with an "effulgence" ( tajallī ) from the "lights of the morn of <sup>C</sup>amā' ( anwar subh-i <sup>C</sup>amā' ) by which Mīrzā Yahyā may be intended—it may be that Bahā'u'llāh interprets line 117 in the light of his abandonment of his half-brother.

3. The *Sūrat al-Kifāya* is contained in Iran Nat.Bahā'ī Archives Priv. Pub. Vol.36., pp.277-80.

4. *Sūrat al-Kifāya*, p. 277.

It seems quite likely, especially in view of the rest of the Sūrat al-Kifāya, that Bahā'u'llāh is here exhorting the Bābīs (= the ahl al-hā' [ al-hā' ( of huwa ) being the Bāb ] to acknowledge the leadership role of Mīrzā Yahyā who is referred to as the " crimson leaf in the paradise of <sup>c</sup>amā' ". Yahyā certainly, as the Kitāb al-Wāhid makes clear, used this kind of language of himself ( see above ).

Towards the beginning of the Sūrat al-Kifāya the following words are addressed to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (= in this instance the Bābīs ?):

" O people of <sup>c</sup>amā'! This is the Paradise of the Divine Unicity ( jannat al-ahadiyya ), the Orchard of Eternality ( hadīqat al-azaliyya ): Then dwell therein with the permission of God ..Hearken unto the captivating melodies of the Countenance ( tal<sup>c</sup>at ) sitting upon the couch of proximity ( sarīr al-īqtirāb ), the Point of Manifestation ( nuqtat al-zuhūr ), the mystery of Interiority ( sirr al-butūn ), the inner reality of the Book ( mustasirr al-kitāb ): Thus doth God turn you ( the Bābīs ) by means of the two stationary [letter] alifs ( bi'l-alifayn al-raqidayn = Yahyā and Bahā'u'llāh ? ) in order that you might know that God is powerful over all things.." 1.

This partially translated pericope indicates that the Bābīs should acknowledge Yahyā's leadership role and accept the mediatory role of Bahā'u'llāh. 2. Such may also be the meaning of the following paragraph in which the expression " <sup>c</sup>amā' of intimacy " (= Yahyā?) occurs:

" O people of the realms of Being! Eat of the succulent fruit of the Crimson Tree which hath been planted in the land of realization, the Point of Origination, the Sealed Mystery, the Secret of the Divine Decree.. Issue forth from your habitations before the Presence ( li'l-hudūr ) in the sanctum of the Divine Decree ( fi haram al-qadr ), the <sup>c</sup>amā' of intimacy ( <sup>c</sup>amā' al-uns ), as hath, with the permission of God the Exalted, been laid down in the Tablet of the Heart ( lawh al-fū'ād ).." 3.

It appears then, to sum up, that Bahā'u'llāh during the (mid?) Baghdad period associated the term <sup>c</sup>amā' with Yahyā or himself and referred to the Bābīs as the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā'. The Sūrat al-Kifāya certainly suggests

1. Ibid., p. 278. In a further address to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' Bahā'u'llāh exhorts them ( among other things— the text is unclear ) to purify themselves ( see *ibid.*, p. 278 )
2. Ibid., pp. 278-9. cf. p. 279 where the phrase "incomparable <sup>c</sup>amā'" ( <sup>c</sup>amā' al-tafrīd ) occurs in a difficult context ( text also unclear ).

this was the case though only further research will serve to confirm or outrule this hypothesis— relatively few of the writings of Bahā'u'llāh dating from the Iraq period ( 1853— 1863 ) and currently available.

#### Tafsīr Hurūfāt al-Muqatta<sup>c</sup>a/Lawh-i ayat al-nūr

Written for Mīrzā Aqā-yi Rikāb Sāz Shīrāzī this variously titled Arabic tablet ( lawh ) which contains explanations of the disconnected letters prefixed to certain sūras of the Qur'ān and ( among other things ) an allegorical commentary on the celebrated 'Light Verse' ( Qur'ān 24:35 ) begins as follows:

"In the Name of God, the Splendid, the All-Glorious.

Praise be to God Who created the [archetypal] letters [of the alphabet] in the worlds of <sup>c</sup>amā' ( fi <sup>c</sup>awālim al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) beyond the pavilions of holiness in the lofty heights of the elevated realm then gave them to drink from the goblet of eternity as ordained in the tablets of the decree such that He might bring life to the hearts of those who are nigh unto God in the Jabarūt of realization.." 1.

Here we have an interesting use of the expression "worlds of <sup>c</sup>amā'" as the celestial locale in which God created the archetypal letters of the alphabet.

#### The Hidden Words ( Kalimāt al-Maknūna )

Originally entitled the 'Scroll of Fātima' ( Sahīfa-yi Fātimīyya ) the Persian and Arabic 'Hidden Words' consist for the most part of brief ethical pericopae composed by Bahā'u'llāh around 1857-8 A.D. While two of the Arabic Hidden Words ( Nos. 23 & 32 ) are addressed to the "Son of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' [ Ya ibn al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ]— translated by Shoghi Effendi as " O Son of the Supreme! " and indicative of a member of the human race)<sup>2</sup>. one of them ( No. 40 ) contains an interesting use of the term <sup>c</sup>amā':

يا ابن الانسان أركض في بئر العماء ثم اسرع في ميدان السماء  
لن تجد الراحة إلا بالخصوع لامرنا و التواضع لوجهنا .

1. Text in MA. Vol. 4. p. 49

2. Refer Alwāh Mubāraka Hadrat-i Bahā'u'llāh ( n.p. n.d. ) pp. 22 ( No. 23 ), 24 ( No. 32 ); trans. Shoghi Effendi, The Hidden Words ( Bahā'ī Pub. Trust London 1975 ), pp. 10-11 ( No. 23 ), 12 ( No. 32 ).

Shoghi Effendi's translation is as follows:

" O Son of Man!

Wert thou to speed through the immensity of space and traverse the expanse of heaven, yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face." 1.

A more literalistic translation would be:

O Son of Man!

Speed through the land of amā'! Then hasten through the plain of heaven! Yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face.

It should be noted that Shoghi Effendi has translated barr al-amā', literally, "land of amā'", as "immensity of space" in line with the celestial locale of the 'Cloud of Unknowing' ( amā' ). In this 'Hidden Word' Bahā'u'llāh informs mankind that even if they should speed through the most elevated celestial realms—mystically speaking—no purpose would be served in the light of the need to identify with the Bābī Cause which is the true haven of rest. 2.

The [Calamities of the] Exalted Letters ([Musibāt-i] Hurūfāt-i 'Allīn

The term amā' occurs at one point in this eight-part tablet (Lawh) written in memory of a cousin of Bahā'u'llāh named Mīrzā Muḥammad-i Vazīr-i Nūrī— it does not occur in Bahā'u'llāh's own Persian translation (or, more accurately, rewrite) of this part of the original Arabic. 3.

In the course of what is apparently a meditation on the origins, plight, ennoblement and death of man Bahā'u'llāh describes his coming to spiritual maturity. At one point reference is made to God's enabling man to ascend unto the "plains of al-hā', the throne of immortality" (miyādīn al-hā' carsh al-baqā') and at another it is said that God came to ennoble man by giving him to drink of the "cup of piety" such that he was able to hear the "melody of the Dove in midst of al-amā'" (nagmat al-warqā' fī markiz al-amā'). 4.

1. Text in *ibid.*, p.25; trans. Shoghi Effendi in *ibid.*, p.14 (see fn. above).
2. It should be noted that the genitive phrase barr al-amā' occurs in the writings of the Bāb (see above).
3. The text of the Arabic original and the Persian version is printed in Ad'iyih-i Hadrat-i Maḥbūb/ Prayers of Bahā'u'llāh ([reprint] NSA of the Bahā'īs of Germany, Bahā'ī-Verlag, Hofheim-Langenhain 1980—136 [Badī' ]), pp.217-285.
4. See Ad'iyih. pp.235-6.

The Tablet of the Test (Lawh-i Fitna)

Probably written during the Iraq period of Bahā'u'llāh's life this Arabic work comments on the catastrophic nature of the eschatological consummation. Among the many apocalyptic calamities that must take place at the year of mustaghāth when the hidden essence of God will be made manifest (presumably through the advent of man yuzhīruhu'llāh) are the darkening of the "suns of radiance" (shumūs al-diyā'), the decrease in intensity of of the (light of the ?) "moons of al-amā'" (aqmār al-amā') and the falling of the "stars of knowledge" (anjum al-culūm) in the "heavens of the command" (samawāt al-amr). In mentioning these particular 'signs' Bahā'u'llāh probably alludes to the future eclipse of the status of the human luminaries of the dispensation of the Bayān. By the "moons of al-amā'" leading Bābīs are very likely intended. 1.

The Gems of the Mysteries (Jawāhir al-Asrār)

Towards the end of the first part of this lengthy Arabic epistle Bahā'u'llāh addresses its recipient Hajji Siyyid Muḥammad-i Isfahānī telling him to purify himself in order that he might find "the fragrance of immortality from the Joseph of Fidelity (yūsuf al-wafā')" and enter into "the Egypt of amā'" (fī misr al-amā'). 2. The place in which the Divine Joseph resides is identified as the "Egypt of amā'". 2.

In the course of expounding the mysteries of them "City of the Divine Unity" (madīnat al-tawhīd; here the third of the mystic stages) Bahā'u'llāh comments on the outer and inner senses of the occultation of the 12th Imām. He explains that all the Prophets (al-anbiyā') are essentially the manifestations of one reality. All the Manifestations of God (zuhūrāt) are the bearers of the name Muhammad (the name of the 12th Imām); all have fathers named Hasan (the name of the 11th Imām); they all appeared from the "Jābulqā of the power of God" (jābulqā qudrat Allāh) and will all appear from the "Jābalsā of the mercy of God" (jābalsā rahmat

1. See Lawh-i Fitna in MA. Vol.4 (pp.261-5), p.261.
2. See AQA. Vol.3. p.27.

Allāh ). Having made these points Bahā'u'llāh writes:

"Jābulqā signifieth naught but the treasuries of the Immortal Realm ( khazā'in al-baqā' ) in the Jabarūt of Amā' and the cities of the Unseen ( madā'in al-ghayb ) in the Lahūt of Loftiness ( lahūt al-<sup>c</sup>alā ). Bear thou witness that Muhammad the son of Hasan (= the 12th Imām = the Bāb ) was in Jābulqā and hath appeared from it and that man yuzhiruhu'llāh resideth therein until such time as God will cause him to appear with the station of His Sovereignty.." <sup>1</sup>.

In this way Bahā'u'llāh demythologises the literalistic Shi'ci eschatological expectations. He identifies Jābulqā, the mysterious celestial city in the spiritual orient of the interworld, with the Jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>Amā' and the Lahūt al-<sup>c</sup>Alā which are indicative of elevated heavenly realms. The Bāb, as the expected hidden Imām has appeared from these elevated spheres and man yuzhiruhu'llāh will do so in the future. <sup>2</sup>.

Also worth noting is the fact that, in the course of narrating the opposition encountered by the Bāb, Bahā'u'llāh mentions that the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā'— here the inmates of the celestial realm (?)—wept over his plight <sup>3</sup>. Hajji Siyyid Muhammad is, furthermore, exhorted to call to mind "that which the Dove sang out in the axis of Amā' ( fī qutb al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) with respect to the meaning of [the terms] "life" and "death"..." <sup>4</sup>.

The Sūra of Patience/ The Tablet of Job ( Sūrat al-Sabr/ Lawh-i Ayyūb )

In this medium length Arabic tablet (Lawh) of the late Iraq period the expression Jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>Amā' occurs twice. On account of opposition to the Bāb "the pillars of the cities of the Immortal Realm ( al-baqā' ) in the Jabarūt of Amā' " were made to quake and

1. See Jawāhir al-Asrār (in AQA. Vol.3 ), pp.42-43.
2. At the time when the Jawāhir al-Asrār was written ( most probably between 1857 and 1860 ) Bahā'u'llāh had not yet claimed to be man yuzhiruhu'llāh himself.
3. Jawāhir al-Asrār, p.45.
4. Ibid., p.53. This latter expression is a reference to Bahā'u'llāh himself.

one referred to as the "essence of reality" ( jawhar al-haqīqat = Bahā'u'llāh ? ) is said to be the "possessor of a mighty bounty in the Jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>Amā' ". <sup>1</sup>.

The Tablet of the Maiden ( Lawh-i Hūriyya )

This abstruse writing of this mid-late Baghdad period begins with a prayer in which the word Amā' occurs:

"Praise be unto Thee, O our God! O my God! I make mention of Thee at this moment in which the Sun of Thy Divinity hath shone forth from the horizon of the radiance of the Sinai of the Lahūt of Thy Oneness and the lights of Thy Lordship have burst forth from the morn of the Amā' of the meeting of the immortal realm of the Jabarūt of Thy Perpetuity ( min subh amā' liqā' baqā' jabarūt samadiyyatuka )..." <sup>2</sup>.

Later in this tablet there is reference to the lamentation of the "purified essences in al-<sup>c</sup>amā'" ( al-jawhariyyāt al-mutahharāt fī al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ). <sup>3</sup>.

The Tablet of the Letter of Immortality ( Lawh-i Harf-i Baqā' )

Written in honour of Hajji Mīrzā Mūsā-yi Jawāhirī and also known as Subhān Abbī al-<sup>c</sup>Alā ('Praised be my Lord the Most High', the refrain) this rhythmic Arabic work is largely in praise of the "Maid of Eternity" ( hūr al-baqā' ) who represents Bahā'u'llāh's celestial self. Towards its end she is represented as saying:

"You, O Companions of Piety, shall be sorely troubled. And you will be withheld from the sanctum of the All-Beauteous in the Ka<sup>c</sup>ba of Amā' ( haram al-jamāl fī ka<sup>c</sup>bat al-<sup>c</sup>amā' )..." <sup>4</sup>.

These lines might be taken to be indicative of the fact that the followers of the Bāb will be troubled and perplexed with Bahā'u'llāh's claim to Prophethood and leadership of the Bābī community. By the "sanctum of the All-Beauteous in the Ka<sup>c</sup>ba of Amā' " the Cause of Bahā'u'llāh is probably intended.

1. Refer, Sūrat al-Sabr (in MA. Vol.4. pp. 282-323), pp.297 and 309.
2. Text in AQA. Vol.4. (pp.342-50), p.342.
3. See *ibid.*, p.349. The context cannot be set down here.
4. Text in Ishrāq Khavārī, Ganj-i Shāyigān ( Tehran 123 Badī<sup>c</sup> ), p.64. and INBA. Priv. Pub. Vol.36. pp.462-3.

From the Divine Garden.. ( Āz Bāgh-i Illāhī..)

This interesting poetic work of the late Baghdad period is expressive of Bahā'u'llāh's claim to leadership of the Bābī community. In the following line Bahā'u'llāh represents himself as the return of the Bāb who has come from the "Egypt of Amā', the "Beclouded Egypt" :

"Hasten! Hasten! This is the Divine Sweetness ( ṣaḥb subhānī ), the Merciful Benevolence ( lutf rahmānī ), the Becoming Elegance ( tarz ṣaḥbānī ), from the Egypt of Amā' ( misr-i ṣamā'ī ) that Shirazi Joseph [= the Bāb] come in the dark cloak of the [new?] Name [? reading bā ṣaḥwat-i nām = ' with the darkness of the name' ]." <sup>1</sup>.

The Tablet of the Youth of Paradise ( Lawh-i Ghulām al-Khuld )

Written during the late Baghdad this partly Arabic partly Persian proclamatory composition was written in celebration of the initial declaration of the Bāb (in May 1844). At one point in the Arabic section Bahā'u'llāh apparently refers to the imminent disclosure of his mission by mentioning that the "melody of Eternity" ( saut al-baqā' ) has been disclosed from beyond the "veils of Amā'" ( ḥajbat al-ṣamā' ) through a "sweet, captivating call" ( bi-nidā' jaḥb malīh ). <sup>2</sup> The Persian section begins by referring to the Bāb (?) as the "Herald of Eternity" ( munādī-yi baqā' ) who announces the advent of Bahā'u'llāh(?) from the "Throne of Amā'" ( ṣarsh-i ṣamā' ) <sup>3</sup>. It ends with the following Arabic statement:

"God it is who guideth whom he will, unto an elevated and mighty path. Wherefore do We at this moment sprinkle upon the people of Amā' ( ahl al-ṣamā' ) that which orienteth them in the direction of the right-side of Eternity and enableth them to enter an elevated realm in the Heaven of Holiness." <sup>4</sup>.

The Bābīs or the inhabitants of the celestial realm are probably intended by this reference to the ahl al-ṣamā' ( cf. above ).

The Tablet of the Nightingale of Separation ( Lawh-i Bulbul al-Firāq )

Also a partly Arabic partly Persian composition oriented around the theme of Bahā'u'llāh's imminent departure from Iraq ( to Constantinople

1. Text in INBA.Priv.Pub.Vol.36. (pp.457-60), p.457.
2. Text in Ishrāq Khāvarī, Risāla Ayyām-i Tis'a ( rep. Kalimat Press 1981 [pp.92-9]), p.96.
3. Refer, *ibid.*, p.97.
4. *Ibid.*, p.99.

in May 1863 ) this rhythmic writing contains a reference to the fact that the weeping in the Jabarūt al-ṣamā' ( over Bahā'u'llāh's exile ) is greater than that of Bahā'u'llāh's earthly devotees. <sup>1</sup>.

The Tablet of the Holy Mariner ( Lawh-i Mallāh al-Quds )

The term Amā' occurs in the Arabic section of this well-known though somewhat abstruse Tablet composed in late May 1863 and oriented around the theme of the disclosure of Bahā'u'llāh's epiphanic status in the face of an unreceptive Bābī community. At one point Bahā'u'llāh, referred to as the "Holy Mariner", is commanded by God teach the "People of the Ark" ( ahl al-safīnat = the Bābīs ? ) that which he had been taught " beyond the veils of al-ṣamā'" ( khalf ḥajbat al-ṣamā' ) to the end that they might forsake the "Vale of the Snow-White Sandhill" ( wadī al-kathīb al-bayḍā' = Bābism ? ) and attain a supremely exalted "realm" or "station" ( maqām = identify with Bahā'u'llāh ). <sup>2</sup> Later in this Tablet a "favoured damsel" ( ḥuriyyat al-qurb ) is represented as having descended from her celestial chambers in order to assess the extent of Bābī receptivity to the divine reality of the person of Bahā'u'llāh. As her findings were negative she, having returned to her celestial abode, fell upon the dust and died as if she had been called by "her summoner in the Lāhūt of ṣamā'" ( or " he that summoned her unto the Lāhūt of ṣamā' ? ) <sup>3</sup>.

The Sūra of the Abandonment ( Sūrat al-Hijr )

Written for a certain Husayn at the time of Bahā'u'llāh's quitting Baghdad ( May 1863 ) this Tablet contains a pericope in which Bahā'u'llāh mentions that he would have preferred to leave Baghdad by himself. Were this the case, he meditates, he would not be alone in the sense that he would be accompanied by celestial companions including the " people of the Jabarūt of Eternity and the Malakūt of ṣamā' ( ahl jabarūt al-baqā' wa malakūt al-ṣamā' )". <sup>4</sup>.

1. Refer (text in) Ishrāq Khāvarī, Ganj-i Shāyigān, p.43.
2. See text in MA.Vol.4.p.336.
3. See text in *ibid.*, p.338. It should be noted that the many times printed English translation of the Tablet of the Holy Mariner is, at certain points, highly paraphrastic.
4. The text of the Sūrat al-Hajr is partly quoted in Ishrāq Khāvarī's Ganj-i Shāyigān, pp.188-190. It may well be that it is to be dated during the Adrianople period and not around May 1863.

Finally in connection with the occurrences of <sup>c</sup>amā in the writings of the Iraq period of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry mention should be made of the letter to Mullā (Mīrzā) Muhammad Hādī Qazvīnī (the 15th of the Bāb's 'Letters of the Living'). It contains an explanation of the significance of the hadīth "The [true] believer liveth in both worlds" ( al-mu'min hayy fī al-dārayn ) the truth of which Bahā'u'llāh likens to "... the Sun which hath beamed forth in this atmosphere which hath been manifested in this heaven which is in this <sup>c</sup>amā'..". The use of al-<sup>c</sup>amā' in this context may be an allusion to the person of the Bāb or possibly Bahā'u'llāh himself.<sup>1</sup>

Writings of the Adrianople Period (1863-1868).<sup>2</sup>

The Sūra of the Companions ( Sūrat al-Ashāb )

Also known as the Lawh-i Habīb ( Tablet in honour of Mīrzā Habīb [Allāh]-i Marāghī'i ) and written around 1864 this fairly lengthy Arabic Tablet contains several occurrences of <sup>c</sup>amā'. Towards its beginning Mīrzā Habīb is exhorted to sing out melodiously and beat rhythmically "in the Jabarūt of Eternity and the Malakūt of <sup>c</sup>Amā' " ( fī jabarūt al-baqā' thumma malakūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ).. " ( presumably in announcement of Bahā'u'llāh's advent ).<sup>3</sup>

Several paragraphs later the Bābīs are addressed in the following manner:

" Say: O People of the Bayān! By God! <sup>c</sup>Alī [Muhammad= the Bāb] hath assuredly appeared in a new garment. He, verily [Bahā'u'llāh] is he who hath been named Husayn in the Kingdom of Names ( malakūt

1. Refer, Lawh-i Mullā Muhammad Hādī Qazvīnī ( in Majmū'a-yi Alwāh-i Mubāraka [Cairo 1920] pp.346-62 ), p.355.

It may be noted here that the term <sup>c</sup>amā' does not occur in any of the following writings of the Baghdad period - : Lawh-i Madinat al-Tawhīd; Lawh-i Madinat al-Ridā'; Lawh-i Haqq; Sūrat al-Qadīr; Haft Wādī; Shahar Wādī ( excerpt in a quotation [see AQA.Vol.3.p.145]); Sahifa-yi Shattīya; Kitāb-i Igān; Sūrat al-Nush; Sūrat Allāh; Shikkar Shikkar; Shavand; Hūr-i Uṣṣ; Halih Halih Hālih Yā Bisharat; Sāqī Az Ghayb-i Baqā' ( assuming the texts I have examined are complete and that I have not missed any occurrences ).

2. None of the extant writings of the "Constantinople Period" (mid-1863) which I have been able to examine contain the term <sup>c</sup>amā'. It does not occur in the Lawh-i Hawdaj, Lawh-i Nāqūc, Mathnawī-yi Mubārak.

3. Refer, Sūrat al-Ashāb in Āthār-i Qalam-i A'īlā Vol.4. (pp.1-22), p.6.

al-asma') and al-Bahā' in the Jabarūt of Eternity ( jabarūt al-baqā' ). In the Lahūt of <sup>c</sup>Amā' he beareth this name which hath been made manifest in the form of the Youth. So blessed be God, the best of Creators!.."<sup>1</sup>

In another paragraph Bahā'u'llāh laments the suffering he has experienced, refers to a vision he has had which the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' could not bear to hear and, possibly alluding to the story of Joseph as interpreted in the Qayyum al-Asmā' ( see above ), speaks of his being cast into the "pit" ( al-jubb ):

" Say: When We communicated but a letter of the vision unto the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' they were unable to bear it. They cast Us into the pit ( al-jubb ) encompassed by darkness.."<sup>2</sup>

A further reference to the Jabarūt of <sup>c</sup>Amā' occurs towards the end of the Sūrat al-Ashāb :

" Say: ..Through him [Bahā'u'llāh] the ensigns of the Cause have been raised up in the Kingdom of Names ( malakūt al-asma' ) and the pavilions of glory ( khiyām al-majd ) have been erected in the Jabarūt of <sup>c</sup>Amā' )."<sup>3</sup>

Sūrat al-<sup>c</sup>Ibād

Addressed to Siyyid Mīhdī-yi Dahājī during the early to mid Adrianople period this Arabic Tablet contains one occurrence of <sup>c</sup>amā'. Responding to a question about the "Great Announcement" ( nabā' al-<sup>c</sup>azīm ) mentioned in Qur'an 77:2 Bahā'u'llāh writes:

" Say: By God! This is the Announcement ( al-nabā' ) which ( or Who ) was great ( cazīm<sup>an</sup> ) in the Height of <sup>c</sup>Amā' ( culā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) and mighty ( kabīr<sup>an</sup> ) among the concourse of Eternity ( malā' al-baqā' ).."<sup>4</sup>

He here either represents himself as the "announcement" which was "great" and "mighty" in the "Height of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" and the heavenly realm of the "concourse of Eternity" or one "great" and "mighty" who, as the "announcement", resides in these celestial spheres.

1. Sūrat al-Ashāb, text in *ibid.*, pp.9-10.
2. Sūrat al-Ashāb, text in *ibid.*, p.16.
3. Sūrat al-Ashāb, text in *ibid.*, p.19.
4. Sūrat al-<sup>c</sup>Ibād, text in *ibid.*, p.30.

The Tablet of Bahā' (Lawh-i Bahā')

Probably written towards the middle of the Adrianople period (c. 1865-6 ?) this two part (Arabic +Persian) Tablet was apparently (in part) addressed to Khātun Jān Qazvīnī a daughter of Haji Assād-allāh Farhādī. In it the term <sup>c</sup>amā' occurs several times. It begins:

"This is the Tablet of Bahā'! It, verily, hath been sent down from the Kingdom of Eternity (jabarūt al-baqā'). Recite (it), O Concourse of <sup>c</sup>Amā' (malā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā'), perchance you might ascend unto the heaven of the Command (samā' al-amr) in this atmosphere and be steadfast in the Cause of your Lord, the All-Merciful." <sup>1</sup>.

A few lines later, in the course of dwelling upon his sufferings, Bahā'u'llāh likens his fate to that of Joseph. Echoing certain pericopes of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' (see above) he speaks of "the Beauty of Bahā' (jamāl al-bahā' = himself) being cast into the "bottom of the pit" (ghayābat al-jubb; see Qur'ān 12:15, QA.XI.fol.17). He then, mystically speaking, advises Khātun Jān (?) to the effect that she should send the "Caravan of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" (sayyārat al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = the company of those travelling towards the realm of <sup>c</sup>amā', the "pit" see Qur'ān 12:19) perchance he might be rescued from the "pit" by means of the lowering down of the "bucket of fidelity" (dalw al-wafā') and shine resplendent unto all the worlds. The Bāb's esoteric interpretation of the story of Joseph is applied by Bahā'u'llāh to himself. <sup>2</sup>

The Sūra of the Pen (Sūrat al-Qalam)

Most likely dating early in the Adrianople period this Arabic Tablet contains two occurrences of <sup>c</sup>amā'. Towards its beginning Bahā'u'llāh speaks of himself as the "Beauty of God" (jamāl allāh) which has shone forth from the "horizon of the unseen" (ufq al-ghayb). From an "effulgence" (tajalī) originating with him the "Sun of Might and Grandeur" beamed forth and the "hearts of the people of the Concurrence of Eternity" as well as "the sanctified realities beyond the veils of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (haqāyiq

1. Arabic text cited in Ishrāq Khāvarī, Ganj., p.40.

2. Refer, *ibid.*, p.41. The full text of the Lawh-i Bahā' has not, as far as I am aware, been published.

al-quds khalf hajbat al-<sup>c</sup>amā')" were created. <sup>1</sup>. Later in this largely proclamatory composition the "Pen" (qalam = Bahā'u'llāh as the divine mouthpiece) is, among other things, exhorted to address itself to "the manifestations of Names in the veils of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" (mazāhir al-asmā' fī hajbat al-<sup>c</sup>amā'). <sup>2</sup>. They, along with other celestial beings, are commanded to celebrate the "greatest feast" (al-<sup>c</sup>id al-akbar = Ridwān 186?) in which God, through His own Self, proffers the purest of wines (rahīq al-athar) unto those who stand humbly before the "Face [of God]" (al-wajh = Bahā'u'llāh?).

The Tablet of the Spirit (Lawh al-Rūh)

In this fairly lengthy Arabic addressed to an as yet unidentified <sup>c</sup>Alī the word <sup>c</sup>amā' occurs in the course of a reply to a question about the divine and creative power. Mention is made of the Bāb (as "<sup>c</sup>Alī before Nabīl") and of the effects of his manifestation(?) including the fact that the "veil of the coverings of <sup>c</sup>amā' in the celestial realm of Eternity (sitr al-hajbat al-<sup>c</sup>amā' fī lāhūt al-baqā')" were rent asunder. <sup>3</sup>. There is also a reference to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' who are assumed to be inmates of a celestial realm who might be privy to secret knowledge. <sup>4</sup>.

The Sūra of the Robe (Sūrat al-Qamīs)

Probably dating from the early-mid Adrianople period this fairly lengthy Arabic Tablet contains several occurrences of the term <sup>c</sup>amā'. Towards its beginning in a pericope addressed to the people of the earth Bahā'u'llāh apparently refers to himself as "this Golden Thread" [or "Yellow Cord"] (al-khait al-safrā') in this atmosphere (al-hawā'), which hath beamed forth in this heaven (al-samā') which was disclosed above (or, by virtue of?) this <sup>c</sup>amā' which taketh on a crimson hue in the midst of this Eternity (al-baqā')" and which has not been understood or perceived by the radiant inhabitants of the celestial world. <sup>5</sup>. It is not clear whether <sup>c</sup>amā' in this context

1. Refer, Sūrat al-Qalam in AQA.Vol.4. p.259.

2. *Ibid.*, p.261.

3. Refer, Lawh al-Rūh in AQA.Vol.4., p.142.

4. Refer, *ibid.*, p.150.

5. See Sūrat al-Qamīs in AQA.Vol.4.p.37. The translation is tentative.



has the general sense of "cloud" or whether it is indicative of the beclouded divinity of Bahā'u'llāh's person —both senses may underlie this difficult passage. In another hardly less obscure paragraph one is mentioned (= Bahā'u'llāh himself ?) who is the possessor of a mighty bounty in the "celestial realm of Amā'" (lāhūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>1</sup>

Around the middle of the Sūrat al-Qamīs Bahā'u'llāh is exhorted to reveal verses in the light of the fact that the "people of the unseen[world] (ahl al-ghayb) from the worlds of Amā'" (min <sup>c</sup>awālim al-<sup>c</sup>amā') desire to hearken unto his captivating melodies."<sup>2</sup>

At one point mention is made of those who have failed to recognise the divine mission of Bahā'u'llāh. Bābī opposition to his claims was such that, among other things, the "Dove of Amā'" (ḥamāmat al-<sup>c</sup>amā') was affected.<sup>3</sup>

Among those mentioned in this work is one whose name is eternal in the "jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā'" and the "malakūt al-baqā'"; probably a Bābī, like Bahā'u'llāh, named Husayn.<sup>4</sup>

Referring to the stunning results of his eschatological self-disclosure Bahā'u'llāh also mentions the Amā'iyūn, loosely, 'inmates of the beclouded realm'— probably equivalent to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā':

"Say: 'By God! The mount-dwellers (al-tūriyyūn) of the Sinai of Command (sinā' al-amr) were thunderstruck and the inmates of the beclouded realm (al-<sup>c</sup>amā'iyūn) were made to flee on account of this Divine Power."<sup>5</sup>

#### Ridwān al-Iqrār ( The Paradise of Assurance )

The term Amā' occurs once at the beginning of this Arabic Tablet addressed to Mullā Muhammad <sup>c</sup>Alī, Nabīl-i Zarandī, ( as well as one referred to as Radī al-Rūh ). God is referred to as the "Sovereign in the Jabarūt of Amā'" ( sultān fī jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ).<sup>6</sup>

1. Refer, Sūrat al-Qamīs in AQA.Vol.4.p.38.

2. Refer, ibid., p.47.

3. Refer, ibid., p.52.

4. Refer, ibid., p.53.

5. Ibid., p.56.

6. Refer, Ridwān al-Iqrār in AQA.Vol.4.p.180.

#### The Sūra of the Pilgrimage ( Sūrat al-Hajj=Lah-i Hajj I )

Addressed to Nabīl-i Zarandī this lengthy Arabic epistle consists, in large measure, of detailed regulations surrounding pilgrimage to the house of the Bāb in Shīrāz. Within it the term Amā' occurs four times.

In the course of proclaiming his mission Bahā'u'llāh associates the "breezes of God" (nasā'im allāh) with the "Ridwan of Eternity" (ridwān al-baqā') and the "Sun of Amā'" with the "Plains of Splendour" (miwādīn al-sanā').<sup>1</sup> On account of opposition to his claims it is stated that Jesus weeps in the "Jabarūt of Amā'" (jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>2</sup>

At one point the pilgrim to the house of the Bāb (Nabīl) is directed to pray:

"With my tongue and my self, my spirit and my body I testify that this is the place at which the inmates of the Jabarūt of Amā'" (ahl jabarūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā') prostrate themselves as also the inmates of the Kingdom of Origination (ahl malakūt al-badā') and those who dwell in the heights of Eternity beyond the abyss of grandeur."<sup>3</sup>

Later, the pilgrim, having circumambulated the Bāb's house seven times, is to testify to the exalted Prophethood of the Bāb:

"I bear witness that the Primal Point and our Lord, the Exalted, the Most-High [= the Bāb] is assuredly His [God's] Manifestation in the Celestial Realm of Amā'" (lāhūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā')..."<sup>4</sup>

#### The Sūra of Bounty ( Sūrat al-Fadl )

Probably dating from the mid-late Adrianople period this Arabic Tablet is addressed to a Bābī who had rejected the claims of Bahā'u'llāh. Within it Bahā'u'llāh swears by the "Lord of Amā'" (= God or the Bāb ?) and at one point poses a series of questions designed to underline the truth of his mission. It is indicated that his revelation originates in the "midst of Amā'" (qutb al-<sup>c</sup>amā').<sup>5</sup>

1. Refer, Sūrat al-Hajj in AQA.Vol.4. p.76.

2. Refer, ibid., p.77.

3. Sūrat al-Hajj in ibid., p.92.

4. Sūrat al-Hajj in ibid., p.95.

5. Text in an unpublished and uncatalogued MS (photocopy in author's possession).

Sūrat al-Qahīr

This medium length Arabic Tablet was addressed to a Bābī entitled Qahīr ('Wrathful', by the Bāb) during the late Adrianople period—not apparently, unless it dates from the Iraq period, Mullā Rajab 'Alī Qahīr, the brother of the Bāb's second wife Fātima. Within it Bahā'u'llāh comments on a pericope of sūra XXVIII of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' in the light of the Bāb's claims and the gradual disclosure of his prophetic mission. As in the Sūrat al-Qamīs (see above) mention is made of the amā'iyyūn, the inmates of the beclouded and Sinaitic heights (exalted celestial beings /leading Bābīs?).

"We, verily, [in QA. sūra XXVIII] announced unto the servants [Bābīs] Our latter manifestation [= Bahā'u'llāh]. And We manifested the Mystery (al-sirr) to an infinitesimal degree such that the mount-dwellers (al-tūriyyūn) were made to expire [through the Bābī revelation]. Then We manifested Our Self once again with the name of al-abhā' [= Bahā'u'llāh]. And We desired that the Mystery (al-sirr) be fully disclosed. Before We manifested it, however, [i.e. before Bahā'u'llāh openly proclaimed his mission] the mount-dwellers (al-tūriyyūn = the Bābīs), were, just as you have heard, thunderstruck, for you [Qahīr] are one possessed of a hearing ear.."<sup>1</sup>

Having interpreted Qayyūm al-Asmā' XXVIII in this way Bahā'u'llāh dwells upon Bābī opposition to the gradual disclosure of his claims and explains how he kept them secret. He then addresses negligent (Azālī) Bābīs in the following manner:

"Say: O Concourse of Headlessness!  
By God! This Bird is capable of innumerable melodies; accent upon accent and song upon song. Should . . . but one of them be disclosed even to an infinitesimal degree the spiritual ones (al-rūhiyyūn), the mount-dwellers (al-tūriyyūn), the illumined ones (al-nuriyyūn) and also the inmates of the beclouded realm (al-amā'iyyūn) would assuredly swoon away upon the dust of headlessness and annihilation; save, that is, those whom God, by the hand of Divine Favour, safeguarded through this Youth made manifest with the name of al-abhā' in the Kingdom of Names.."<sup>2</sup>

Later in this same Tablet there is a difficult pericope addressed to the "Concourse of Waywardness" ([Azālī] Bābīs?). Bahā'u'llāh appears to admonish his opponents by referring to their attachment to Mīrzā

1. Translated from an unpublished and uncatalogued MS (photocopy in the present writer's possession). For an English translation of the pericope of the Qayyūm al-Asmā' cited and commented on by Bahā'u'llāh in the Sūrat al-Qahīr (and elsewhere—see Gleanings.. Sect. CXXXIX) refer, Selections From the Writings of the Bāb, p.53.

2. Sūrat al-Qahīr (MS).

Yahyā (or possibly the Bāb—this is less likely) whose melodies (i.e. verses) were simply those that might have been uttered by any one of the "fowls of amā'" (dīk min duyūk[ sic ] al-amā') or "bees of (the ([Sinaitic] realm of) splendour" (nahī min nuhūl al-sanā' [sic.?) i.e. leading Bābīs?). Such negligent ones have, on the other hand, rejected he (Bahā'u'llāh) around whom amā' in its being (kaynūnat), essence (dhāt), interiority (sirr), exteriority (jahr), outwardness (zāhir) and inwardness (bātin), along with its attendant fowls (duyūk), bees (nuhūl) and birds (tuyūr), circumambulate. If, I have understood this paragraph correctly Bahā'u'llāh makes the remarkable claim that even the Divine 'Cloud of Unknowing', amā', and all the realities associated with its celestial locale, revolve around the exalted mystery of his transcendent being. If Bahā'u'llāh is not referring to himself but to the Bāb the statement is still obviously remarkable. Amā' refers to that exalted sphere which is the Sinaitic realm of the Divine theophany. It is presupposed that the celestial domain of the disclosure of Divinity revolves around the Manifestation of God.

The Sūra of the Interdiction (Sūrat al-Man<sup>c</sup>)

Perhaps dating from the late Adrianople period this Arabic Tablet contains one occurrence of the term amā'. Those who have journeyed to Bahā'u'llāh and met him are referred to as the ones who have attained to all good. They are blessed by the "angels of Eternity" (malā'ikat al-baqā') in the Supreme Concourse, the "Hosts of Unseen beyond the Pavilion of amā'" (junūd al-ghayb khalf surādiq al-amā') and the "Temples of Names in the Kingdom of Origination" (hayākil al-asmā' fī malakūt al-'inshā').<sup>1</sup>

The Sūra of Blood (Sūrat al-Damm)

Written for Mullā Muhammad Nabīl-i Zarandī around 1867 this epistle contains a section in which Bahā'u'llāh associates his person and sufferings with those of Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, Imām Husayn and the Bāb. In identifying himself with Joseph he, as in the Sūrat al-Ashāb (see above, p.93) makes mention of the ahl al-amā' and alludes to the Qur'ānic account of Joseph's vision as interpreted in the Qayyūm

1. Sūrat al-Man<sup>c</sup> (MS).

Asmā' ( see above ):

" Again Thou didst cast me into the prison-cell of the ungodly for no reason except that I [Bahā'u'llāh= Joseph] was moved to whisper into the ears of the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' an intimation of the vision ( al-ruyā'; cf. Joseph's dream ) with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired Me, and revealed to Me its meaning through the potency of Thy Might." 1.

Here Bahā'u'llāh typologically equates Joseph's dream with a vision that was related to the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā', the celestial archetypes of Joseph's brothers, and which led to his/Joseph's being imprisoned with the ungodly (cf. Qur'an 12: 4-5, 32f ).

#### The Sūra of Afflictions ( Sūrat al-Ahzān )

Apparently addressed to Mīrzā <sup>c</sup>Alī Maraghā'i, Sayyāh and largely dealing with the opposition of Azalīs this Arabic Tablet contains one occurrence of <sup>c</sup>amā':

" O Thou Swimmer of the Divine Unicity ( sabbāh al-ahadiyya )! Swim in the fathomless deep of Grandeur which hath been made manifest through My All-Glorious Name and on which the arks of Eternity hath sailed! Upon it travelleth those servants who have detached themselves from this world and who have soared up on the wings of holiness unto the vast expanse of this atmosphere which hath been made manifest in this heaven which hath been raised up in this <sup>c</sup>Amā'." 2.

The celestial reality of Bahā'u'llāh's revelation is referred to as a heaven ( al-samā' ) which has been established in the 'Cloud of Unknowing' ( al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) and unto which selfless Bābī-Bahā'īs have ascended.

#### Lawh-i Sayyāh

Also dating from the late Adrianople period and addressed to Mīrzā <sup>c</sup>Alī Sayyāh this somewhat abstruse Arabic Tablet opens as follows:

" O <sup>c</sup>Alī ! Bear thou witness that I, verily, am the manifestation of God ( zuhūr allāh ) in the Jabarūt of Eternity ( jabarūt al-baqā' ) and His (God's) Interiority ( batun ) in the heart

1. Sūrat al-Damm in AQA.Vol.4.p.63., trans., Shoghi Effendi, Cleanings.. (XXXIX), p.88. I have transliterated ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' which, it is of interest to note, Shoghi Effendi translated, " well-favoured denizens of Thy Kingdom"— indicative of (?) celestial beings.
2. Sūrat al-Ahzān in AQA.Vol.4.p. 221. It may well be that the opening line of the passage translated above should be rendered: " O Sayyāh [Traveller] of the Divine Unicity ( sayyāh al-ahadiyya )! Render Praise [to God] in the fathomless deep of Grandeur.." (cf. Isrāq Khāvarī, Canj. p.114-5 ).

of <sup>c</sup>amā' ( fi ghayb al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ), the Ancient Beauty ( jamāl al-qidam ) in the Kingdom of Glory ( malakūt al-Bahā' )..." 1.

Bahā'u'llāh makes extremely exalted claims (see also the lines which follow those translated ). He claims to be the interiority of God in the midst of the 'Cloud of Unknowing' ( al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) though this does not indicate his identifying himself with the absolute and transcendent Godhead. In line with the Bāb's interpretation of the Hadīth of <sup>c</sup>Amā' (see above, p. 44 ) he is most likely representing himself as the ( created and hypostatic ) "essence" ( dhāt ) of God in the midst of the Cloud enveloping his celestial being as a manifestation of the Godhead. He is the "God" in <sup>c</sup>Amā' as far as mortal beings are concerned. The Bābī-Bahā'ī 'detranscendentalization' of terms indicative of the being of the Godhead leads to their application to his Divine Manifestations.

The term <sup>c</sup>amā' also occurs at another point in the Lawh-i Sayyāh.

" O Glorious Horseman! Communicate unto the servants [Bābīs] that which you witnessed on your journey at the time when you travelled from the Orient of <sup>c</sup>Amā' ( mashriq al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) unto the Dawning-Place of Eternity ( matla' al-baqā' ) in the Most-Elevated Heights.." 2.

Without going into details Bahā'u'llāh meditates upon a mystic journey he made from the "Orient of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" unto the "Dawning-Place of Eternity". The term mashriq al-<sup>c</sup>amā' is descriptive of the heavenly point from which his journey began.

#### Lawh-i Sarrāj

A lengthy Persian epistle composed around 1867 in reply to questions posed by Mīrzā <sup>c</sup>Alī Muhammad Sarrāj Isfahānī this work contains a few occurrences of the term <sup>c</sup>amā'. In the course of discussing the power of the Manifestation of God to substitute, transform or negate any one of the Divine Names Bahā'u'llāh mentions that even the "Celestial Realm of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" ( lāhūt al-<sup>c</sup>amā' ) is submissive before his powerful presence.<sup>3</sup>

1. Lawh-i Sayyāh in INBA (MS), Vol.36 (pp. 52-59), p.52.
2. Lawh-i Sayyāh in *ibid.*, p.55.
3. Refer, Lawh-i Sarrāj in MA.Vol.7 (pp.4-118), o.50.

Mention is also made of the fact that Mullā Muhammad <sup>Alī</sup> Quddūs revealed a few "Tablets" ( alwāh ) at the time of the Bābī conference of Badāshūt ( summer 1848 ). One such Tablet predicts the advent of Bahā'u'llāh and purports to be "Our Command unto the ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā'" In underling the explicitness of this prophecy Bahā'u'llāh swears by the "Lord of the Throne and the <sup>c</sup>Amā' ".<sup>1.</sup>

In addition to the titled Tablets of the Adrianople period and among the writings of Bahā'u'llāh translated (in part ) by Shoghi Effendi is the following text: <sup>2.</sup>

« .. قَوْمَ الْأَمْرِ يَقُولُ الْمَلَكُ يُؤْمِنُ بِكَ لسان القدره يقول الساطعه يؤمن بك ذوقه  
والعالم على نفس البقاء تعقن عقله لله الواحد تجار حاشية الأترقن على انفسان الرضوان  
الكرم يؤمن بك الله الواحد القهار ديك العرش في اجمة القدس يدلع بان العقبه يؤمن بك  
الفرد المقدر القهار قسب كل شي في كل شي بيادي الضوى يؤمن بك الأحد الفرد البصير  
اشارة روح البصائر فوق الرأس مقام الذي من شيار باشارة الكائنات نطق تامة بغيره  
ساذج اهدم ذواخله والاقطار لا اله الا هو العزيز المقدر المتعالي السليم المحيط البصير  
المبين النوار .. »<sup>3.</sup>

Shoghi Effendi's and a more literalistic translation of the opening lines of this Arabic text are as follows:

"The Pen of Revelation exclaimeth:  
"On this Day the Kingdom is God's!"  
The Tongue of Power is calling:  
"On this Day all sovereignty is, in  
very deed, with God!" The Phoenix  
of the realms above crieth out from  
the immortal Branch: "The glory of  
all greatness belongeth to God, the  
Incomparable, the All-Compelling.." <sup>4.</sup>

"The Pen of the Command exclaimeth:  
"On this Day the Kingdom is God's!"  
The Tongue of Power is calling:  
"On this Day the Sovereignty belong-  
-eth to God!" The Dove of <sup>c</sup>Amā'  
warbleth upon the Branch of Eternity:  
"The Majesty belongeth to God, the  
Incomparable, the All-Compelling.."

1. Refer, Lawn-i Sarrāj, in *ibid.*, pp. 86-87. *cf. below p. 56, 81.*
2. Text from Muntakhabātī Āz Āthār-i Hadrat-i Bahā'u'llāh (= Gleanings.. [Original Texts] Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahā'ī-Verlag 1984 ), p. 31.
3. I am not certain that the (untitled?) Tablet from which this pericope is taken is to be dated to the Adrianople period
4. Shoghi Effendi, Gleanings. ( XV ), p. 35.

In these lines Bahā'u'llāh represents various realities as announcing the advent of the eschatological fulness of the Kingdom of God. Such a declaration, it is stated, was made by the warqā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (lit.), the "Dove of <sup>c</sup>Amā'" which Shoghi Effendi, it is of interest to note, has translated, "The Phoenix of the realms above" — warqā' being translated "Phoenix" and <sup>c</sup>amā' paraphrastically rendered, "realms above" (in line with the celestial locale of the sphere of <sup>c</sup>amā' ).<sup>1.</sup>

#### Writings of the <sup>c</sup>Akkā' Period (1868—1892).

The term <sup>c</sup>amā' does not occur in very many, if any, of the usually listed major and titled writings of the <sup>c</sup>Akkā' period of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry. The following few notes must suffice as examples of its occurrence in certain of the many thousands of the lesser known alwāh of this 24-year period.<sup>2.</sup>

1. The term <sup>c</sup>amā' does not occur in any of the following titled writings of the Adrianople period: Lawn-i Amr; Sūrat al-Dhīkr; Lawn-i Ahmad (Persian); Sūrat al-Dhī'b; Lawn-i Salmān I; Lawn-i Laylat al-Quds (I); Lawn-i Mubāhilla; Lawn-i Gull-i Ma'awā'; Lawn-i Hajj (II); Lawn-i Ashraf; Lawn-i Nasir; Lawn-i Tuqā'; Sūrat al-Hifz; Sūrat al-Qada'; Sūrat al-Khitāb; Sūrat al-Jawāb; Sūrat al-Zuhūr; Sūrat al-Ma'ani; Sūrat al-Man; Sūrat al-Ghusn; Sūrat al-Muluk; Sūrat al-Zubur; Sūrat al-Ra'is.
2. As far as the commonly listed major titled alwāh of Bahā'u'llāh are concerned the term <sup>c</sup>amā' becomes less frequent. This probably reflects a gradual shift away from the abstruse and mystical concerns of the Baghdad period: though highly mystical writings date from all periods of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry. The following Tablets of the <sup>c</sup>Akkā' period do not contain the term <sup>c</sup>amā': — Lawn-i Fū'ād, Lawn-i Ra'is, 'Tablet to the Czar'; 'Tablet to the Pope'; 'Tablet to Queen Victoria', 'Tablet to Napoleon (II)', Lawn-i Salmān (II); Lawn-i Qina'; Lawn-i Pisār-Amm; Sūrat al-Sultān; Qad Intaraq al-Mukhlisun ('The Fire Tablet'); Lawn-i Ru'yā; Lawn-i Hirtik; Lawn-i Tibb; Lawn-i Anta al-Kafī ('The Long Healing Prayer'); Kitāb al-Aqdas; Risāla Su'al wa Jawāb; Sūrat al-Haykal; Lawn-i Hikmat; Lawn-i Mawlūd; Lawn-i Basit al-Haqīqa; Lawn-i Ābd al-Wahhāb Qucharī; Lawn-i Siyyid ibn Muhammad ibn Wāhid; Lawn-i Haft Pursish (Shir-Mard); Lawn-i Ittihad; Lawn-i Āshiq wa Ma'ashūq; Lawn-i Amā'i; Lawn-i Maryam; Lawn-i Samandar (II); Lawn-i Karīm (II); Lawn al-Quds; Lawn-i Jamāl-i Burujirdī (I); Lawn-i Amīn; Lawn-i Manakchi;

Commentary on Select Verses of the Qayyūm al-Asmā'

Printed in Ishrāq Khāvarī's Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī Vol.9 (pp.47-69) is an extremely interesting commentary by Bahā'u'llāh on a pericope of the Bāb's Qayyūm al-Asmā'. It probably dates from the 'Akkā' period and is written in Arabic. At one point within it reference is made to various eschatological signs and their fulfilment.

Bahā'u'llāh's advent is spoken about in the following manner:

"The Kingdom of existence was irradiated on account of the shining and beaming forth of the Most-Exalted and All-Glorious Beauty of God from the Dawning-Place of 'Amā' (matla' al-'ama')." 1.

He, it may be gathered, appeared from the "Dawning-Place of 'Amā'", a celestial region which is the source of spiritual light.

The Tablet of the Interrogation ( Lawh-i Istintāq )

This medium length Arabic and Persian Tablet of the (mid-late?) 'Akkā' period contains important theological and historical information. The genitive expression "Celestial Realm of 'Amā'" (al-lāhūt al-'amā') occurs in the Arabic prolegomenon as the abode of heavenly beings. 2.

'Tablet on the Mission of Moses' (= Lawh-i Jināb-i Khalīl ) 3.

The opening, largely Arabic part of this interesting esoteric account of the 'Call of Moses' (to be vague) is partly based on the Van Dyke Arabic translation of Exodus 3. Without going into

Lawh-i [Siyid] Yūsuf [Isfanānī]; Lawh-i Baqā'; Lawh-i Bismillāh; Sūrat al-Ismāllāh al-Mursil; Ridwān al-'Adl; Sūrat al-'Arab; Sūrat al-Amīn [Effendi Baghdadī]; Sūrat al-Wafā'; Lawh-i Ittihad; Tafsir Sūrat al-Shams; Lawh-i 'Andalib, [I+II]; Lawh-i Aqdas; Lawh-i Ashraf; Kitāb al-Fajr; Lawh-i Mīrzā Abū al-Fadl [I]; Lawh-i Burhān; Āl-i Kull al-Khayr; Lawh-i Tajalliyāt; Lawh-i Maqsūd; Kalimat al-Firdawsīyya; Lawh-i Tarazat; Lawh-i 'Ard Bā; Lawh-i Ishraqāt; Lawh-i Dunyā; Lawh-i Bisharāt; Lawh-i Karmil; Lawh-i Shaykh ['Epistle to the Son of the Wolf']; Kitāb al-'Ahdī.

1. Refer, Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī, Vol.9 ( [Tehran] 129 Badī' ), p.67. There are other Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh in which sometimes extended interpretations of passages in the Qayyūm al-Asmā' are set down.
2. Refer, Lawh-i Istintāq in MA.Vol.4 (pp.220-260), p.220.
3. The first part of this untitled Tablet is printed in MA.Vol.4, pp.38-41. (The printed text is not wholly reliable). In an untitled, uncatalogued MS., contained in the Iran National Bahā'ī Archives (photocopy in my possession) it is identified as a Tablet to a certain Jināb-i Khalīl. A Persian section supplements and completes the Arabic. For details see S.Lambden, A Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh on the Mission of Moses (forthcoming).

details it may be noted that Bahā'u'llāh mentions God's initial Call to Moses from the midst of the Sinaitic Fire (in 'pre-eternity') and then states that he was addressed from the Supreme Horizon once again:

"Moses, Moses! Go in My peace and [with] the fragrance of My Garment unto the retreats of My Holiness and the regions of My Intimacy; then unto the Cities of 'Amā' (mada'in al-'amā'), the Kingdoms of My Spirit, the Worlds of Exaltedness, the Plains of Flashing Light, the Most-Sublime Heights and the Gardens of Eternity. It is permitted that you [Moses] ascend every Heaven, enter every Ocean, and ride in every Ark but beware, beware, lest you cross over the gulf of the Ocean of Grandeur, approach the Crimson Arks or draw nigh unto the Sacred Snow-White Land for therein is a region (maqām; or spiritual station) in which the realities of Names are consumed."

In this difficult paragraph Moses is commanded to frequent all manner of heavenly spheres including the "Cities of [the realm of] 'Amā'" but forbidden to approach realities symbolic of the Cause and person of Bahā'u'llāh (= the "God" Moses could not look upon? or this episode transcendentalised? cf. 'Tablet of the Holy Mariner' [Pt.I Arabic], line 8f., and note the fact that Moses died before entering the 'Holy Land' )

Following a paragraph based on Exodus 3: 13f (Arabic version) in which the name YHVH (יהוה = 'Jehovah') is communicated to Moses (he is made aware of Bahā'u'llāh's future advent) the Call of God is heard (by Moses) yet again. Moses is commanded to say to his people;

"YHVH (יהוה = 'Jehovah') it is Who, from the depth of 'Amā' (min ghayb al-'amā') hath enabled me to hearken unto His Voice and be attentive to his Call but I have neither seen Him nor gazed upon Him."

This esoteric expansion of Exodus 3:13b could be taken to imply that Bahā'u'llāh is the tetragrammaton (YHVH, 'Jehovah' יהוה, hidden (in pre-eternity) in the 'depth of the Realm of Unknowing' (ghayb al-'amā') — Bahā'u'llāh certainly, in several of his Tablets of the 'Akkā' period claimed to be the eschatological advent of YHVH ('Jehovah'). Either God or Bahā'u'llāh are located in the ghayb al-'amā'.

In yet another paragraph of the Lawh-i Jināb-i Khalīl, which likewise cannot be commented on in detail, there is reference to "the inhabitants of My [God's] concealed pavilion (ahl surādīq ghaybī) and the concourse

of My [God's] Amā' ( malā' al-Amā'ī ); that is, to celestial beings who are not informed about specially initiated servants of God whom God did not command to prostrate themselves when He created Adam (cf. Qur'an 2:30ff; 7:11ff; 15:26ff; 17:61ff; 18:50ff; 20:116ff). Allusion is probably made to the pre-eternal and celestial realities of those who came to believe in Bahā'u'llāh as the eschatological advent of YHVH about whom the most elevated celestial beings were not informed. <sup>1</sup>.

### Concluding Notes

We have illustrated below that certain categories of the writings of the Bāb contain a good many occurrences of the term Amā'. In the commentary on the Hadīth of Amā' (see above, pp.43 — 46 ) it is identified with the Divine Essence ( al-dhāt ) and indicative of the absolute and unconditioned Godhead—though expressive of the created locus of Prophethood. <sup>2</sup>. Though Amā' is indicative of the Divine Interiority it is to be disassociated from monistic type expressions of the theophany of the absolute and unknowable Godhead. In the Qayyūm al-Asmā' and other writings of the Bāb Amā' is not infrequently related to or symbolic of the celestial locale of the Divine Theophany, the Sinaitic heights of the disclosure of the manifestation of the Godhead. It is associated with the sphere of the archetypal realities of the Imāms and the realm of the occultation of the Hidden Imām / Imām Husayn. It —————> indicates a beclouded and particularly transcendent celestial realm in which the mystery of the Godhead is hidden.

The following are among the genitive expressions found in the writings of the Bāb in which Amā' is the 'governing noun':

- Amā' al-huwiyya = 'the Amā' of the Divine Ipseity' / 'Ipseditic Amā''  
Amā' al-mutlaq = 'the Amā' of the Absolute' / 'Absolute Amā''  
Amā' al-ʿazimat = 'the Amā' of the Divine Grandeur' / 'Grandiose Amā''

1. Refer, 'Tablet on the Mission of Moses' / Lawn-i Jināb-i Khalfī in MA.Vol.4. pp.38-41.

2. The term dhāt, as well as nafs ('self') and kaynūniyya ('Being'), though indicative of the ipseity of the Godhead are, in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture 'detranscendentalised' or applied to the created locus of being, prophethood and the manifestation of God. Leading Bābīs claimed to be the dhāt "essence" of the Godhead and were so addressed by the Bāb. In Bahā'u'llāh's Sahīfa-yi Shattīyya (c.1858 ?) for example, the Bāb is referred to as the dhāt allāh, the "essence of God" ( see MA.Vol.4.p.149 ).

- Amā' al-lāhūt = 'the Amā' of Lāhūt [ 'the sphere of the Divine theophany' ] / (loosely) 'the Celestial Amā';  
Amā' al-sirf = 'the Amā' of the [Divine] Purity' / 'the Pure Amā'  
Amā' al-samadiyya = 'the Amā' of the [Divine] Perpetuity' / the Perpetual [All-Enduring] Amā' ; cf. Amā' baht al-samadiyya = (loosely), 'the Amā' of the pristine [Divine] Eternality '  
Amā' al-satr = 'the Amā' of the line'  
Amā' al-arsh = 'the Amā' of the [Divine] Throne'  
Amā' al-bahā' = 'the Amā' of the [Divine] Glory' / 'the Glorious Amā''

In this list it is difficult to decide how Amā' might be rendered—the matter is complicated by the fluidity of the Bāb's grammar and the fact that in Bābī-Bahā'ī Arabic genitive constructions frequently are such that the 'governed term' has adjectival force ( as in the Persian genitive [idāfat] or construct state ). It would be misleading, in the light of the theology of Amā', the religious ideas suggested by it, to simply translate "cloud" ( or the like ). To translate 'Divine Essence' would also be misleading since Amā', though indicative of the 'Divine Essence', obviously cannot in all instances signify the absolute and unknowable Godhead. The context and nature of the genitive construction must determine the nature of the translation in the light of an understanding of the semantic field and theology of Amā'.

Amā' occurs as the 'governed noun' in the writings of the Bāb in, among others, the following genitive constructions:-

- nuqtat al-Amā' = 'the Point of Amā''  
alam al-Amā' = 'the world of Amā''  
samā' al-Amā' = 'the heaven of Amā''  
jaww al-Amā' = 'the firmament of Amā''  
hawā' al-Amā' = 'the atmosphere of Amā''  
ard al-Amā' = 'the land of Amā''  
barr al-Amā' = 'the earth of Amā''  
ufq al-Amā' = 'the horizon of Amā''  
afaq al-Amā' = 'the horizons of Amā''  
bahr al-Amā' = 'the ocean of Amā''  
barq al-Amā' = 'the lightning of Amā''

- { tair al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the bird of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
 { tuyur al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the birds of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
tā'ūs al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the peacock of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
shajarat al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the Tree of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
sarīr al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the couch of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
lawh al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the tablet of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
āyāt al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the verses of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
hajb al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the seclusion of <sup>c</sup>amā' ' 1.

These expressions cannot be discussed in detail. It may simply be noted that they indicate that <sup>c</sup>amā' is expressive of a celestial realm peopled by heavenly beings and realities; a transcendent sphere indicative of the locale of the enshrouded Divinity but not necessarily the absolute and unknowable Godhead. The following expressions seem more likely to suggest that <sup>c</sup>amā' is an inhabited heavenly sphere—in certain instances—than an abstract term denoting the transcendent Creator—:

- ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the people of <sup>c</sup>amā' cf. ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' al-mutlag  
rijāl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the men of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
malā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the concourse of <sup>c</sup>amā' '  
malā'ikāt al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = 'the angels of <sup>c</sup>amā' ' 2.

Certain texts in the Bāb's writings (see above) suggest that <sup>c</sup>amā' is the mystic interworld or (pre-eternal) Sinaitic world populated by lofty divine beings.

The dual form of <sup>c</sup>amā' is not very common in the Bāb's writings. How it might be best translated and why exactly it is used is not entirely clear. In certain contexts it might be translated and signify something like, "Doubly Beclouded" [Realm]", "Twofold Hiddenness", "Dual[Beclouded] Divinity" or the like. 3.

1. cf. p.71 (above)— kaynūniyya tajalliyat al-<sup>c</sup>amā'
2. cf. p.73 (above)— sukkan <sup>c</sup>amā' al-abhā'.
3. See further below.

In what, as noted, I believe to be Mīrzā Yahyā's Kitāb al-Wāhid a good many of the occurrences of <sup>c</sup>amā' are derived from expressions found in the Bāb's writings—: i.e. shajarat al-<sup>c</sup>amā', arsh al-<sup>c</sup>amā', malā'ikat al-<sup>c</sup>amā', bahr al-<sup>c</sup>amā', ard al-<sup>c</sup>amā', <sup>c</sup>amā' al-bahā' etc. Others, such as the following, are not, as far as I am aware, found therein—:

- laylat al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "Night of <sup>c</sup>amā'" (cf Qur'ān sūra 97 )  
sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "the Mystery of <sup>c</sup>amā'"  
tūr al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "the [Sinaitic] Mount of <sup>c</sup>amā' "  
jabal al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "the Mountain of <sup>c</sup>amā' "  
umm al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "the Mother [Foundation] of <sup>c</sup>amā'"  
haykal al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "the Temple of <sup>c</sup>amā'"

- <sup>c</sup>amā' al-ahadiyya = "the <sup>c</sup>amā' of the Divine Unicity"/ "Unique <sup>c</sup>amā'"  
<sup>c</sup>amā' al-hā' = "The <sup>c</sup>amā' of the [letter] Hā'"  
<sup>c</sup>amā' al-hāhūt = "the <sup>c</sup>amā' of [the sphere of] the Divine Ipseity".

Rare in the Bāb's writings Yahyā makes greater use of the relative adjectival form of <sup>c</sup>amā', <sup>c</sup>amā'iyya (also the plural, <sup>c</sup>amā'iyyāt—perhaps meaning something like 'beclouded realm(s) ), i.e. sirr al-<sup>c</sup>amā'iyya (loosely), 'the mystery of the beclouded realm'. He also explicitly, in one way or another, claims to be the Divine Reality hidden in <sup>c</sup>amā'. As far as I am aware this claim was not explicitly made by the Bāb.

As in the writings of the Bāb the occurrences of <sup>c</sup>amā' in Bahā'u'llāh's al-wāh are largely found in abstruse theological contexts. The expression ahl al-<sup>c</sup>amā' (common in the Bāb's Qayyūm al-Asmā' ) frequently denotes lofty celestial beings or leading Bābīs of greek rank while ibn al-<sup>c</sup>amā' — of similar import— only occurs in the 'Hidden Words' (x2). The term <sup>c</sup>amā'iyyūn (loosely), 'inmates of the beclouded realm', occurs in contexts at once suggestive of mystic inhabitants of the Sinaitic interworld and also leading Bābīs. A whole host of genitive expressions with <sup>c</sup>amā' as the 'govern-ed noun' appear to be unique to Bahā'u'llāh's writings; for example—<sup>1</sup>.

ruh al-<sup>c</sup>amā' = "the Spirit[ual Being in/] of <sup>c</sup>amā'"

1. A good many of the genitive expressions having <sup>c</sup>amā' as the governed noun are common to the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh (see above), e.g., samā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā'; arsh al-<sup>c</sup>amā'; bahr al-<sup>c</sup>amā'; barr al-<sup>c</sup>amā'; malā' al-<sup>c</sup>amā'; hajbat al-<sup>c</sup>amā'.

sultān al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Sovereign of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
ghayb al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the depth of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
qutb al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the midst of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
markiz al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the centre of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
surādiq al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the pavilion of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
ka<sup>ḥ</sup>bat al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Kaaba of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
miṣr al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Egypt of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
sayyārat al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Caravan/ Travellers of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
mashriq al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the dawning-place/ orient of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
shams al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Sun of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
hamāmat al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Dove of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
mishk al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' = "the Musk of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"

Less common in Bahā'u'llāh's writings are genitive expressions with <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' as the governing noun. The following instances are known to me:-

<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' al-zuhūr = "the <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' of manifestation"/ "manifest <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' al-uns = "the <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' of intimacy" / "the intimate[sphere] of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"  
<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' al-tafrīd = "the <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' of [the Divine] Singleness"/ "the

I am not aware of any occurrences of the dual or plural form of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' in the writings of Bahā'u'llāh. Quite common however, are genitive expressions with one of the three hierachical metaphysical terms—lāhūt, Jabarūt and Malakūt—(not significantly Hāhūt, the sphere of the Godhead or Nāsūt the human realm)—as the governing noun and <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' as the term governed, i.e. lāhūt al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā', Jabarūt al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' and Malakūt al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā'. These constructions might indicate that the Divine Reality which is (hidden in) <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' is manifest in the celestial worlds; the 'Cloud of Unknowing' can be spoken of as existing in a hierarchy of metaphysical realms. In this light it is also worth noting that Bahā'u'llāh uses the terms samawāt al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' ("heavens of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'"), ʿālam al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' ("worlds of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'") and madā'in al-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā' ("plains of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'") though <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' in such cosmological genitive expressions might indicate God as Creator or the beclouded nature of the celestial spheres.

At this point it will be convenient to sum up <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Bahā's interesting and important note on the linguistic and theological significance of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā', quoted in Fāḍil-i Māzandarānī's Āsrār al-Athar (Vol. 4. [Tehran 129 Badī<sup>ḥ</sup>], p. 394).<sup>1</sup>

1. Māzandarānī quotes a few brief passages from the writings of the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh in which the term <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' occurs (most of them referred to or translated above)—under the heading <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' (see pp. 391-4). He,

In reply to a letter he had received <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Bahā, at one point during his leadership of the Bahā'ī community (1892-1921), wrote what he underlined was a very brief explanation of the significance of the term <sup>ḥ</sup>amā'. To one addressed as Habīb ('O Thou Beloved One') he stated that in linguistic terms <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' denotes "very light and delicate clouds" (al-sahāb al-khaff al-latīf jiddan); the kind that are at one point visible and then invisible depending on the stance of the observer. Theologically speaking, or as far as the opinion of the mystic knowers or philosophers (muhāqqiqīn—the Bahā'īs?) who contemplate <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' goes, this term signifies "the Universal Reality [Godhead] beyond designations" (al-haqīqat al-kulliyat bi-lā ta<sup>ḥ</sup>īnāt), the "Universal Reality" which, being uncompounded and absolutely One, is such that its apparent "designations" (ta<sup>ḥ</sup>īnāt) are not distinct from its "essence" (al-dhāt). It is indicative of a level of being (maqām) in which possibly contemplated "designations" are subsumed in the "Divine Unicity and the <sup>ḥ</sup>Amā'" (al-ahadiyya wa'l-<sup>ḥ</sup>amā'). This inasmuch as, "this level of being (maqām) is that of the "Hidden Treasure" (al-kanz al-makhfi) mentioned in the [well-known] hadīth<sup>1</sup> since attributes (al-sifāt) are designations (ta<sup>ḥ</sup>īnāt) subsisting in the Essence (al-dhāt) and [theologically speaking] inseparable from it."

In this brief explanation of <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Bahā first gives a concrete definition to this term and then bases his theological explanation upon it. Just as <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' can signify light clouds which come and go so, theologically speaking, are the perceptible Divine Attributes constantly subsumed in the Divine Essence. Indicative of the Divinity <sup>ḥ</sup>amā' is expressive of the fluctuating hiddenness of the Universal Reality. It symbolizes the essential oneness of the Divine Essence (dhāt) and its privative Attributes (sifāt[-i salbiyya])<sup>2</sup>.

It is worth noting, cites a Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh (oriented around the theme of the need for spiritual unity and loving forgiveness) in which the expressions "Blind Alexander" (? iskandar-i <sup>ḥ</sup>amā') and "Passionate Gog and Blind Magog" (ya<sup>ḥ</sup>ūd-i hawa' wa mā<sup>ḥ</sup>ūd-i <sup>ḥ</sup>amā') occur (p. 393).

1. The hadīth mentioned reads, "I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known...". It is sometimes stated that these words were God's reply (it is an hadīth qudsī) to the (Biblical) prophet David who asked Him why he had created the creation.\*
2. This explanation of <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Bahā is in line with the mainstream Shi<sup>ḥ</sup>ī theological conviction that God's absolute Oneness demands that his essential or privative attributes are identical with His Essence—the dogma of the "Unity of the Divine Essence" (tawhīd-i dhātī).

\* Add to fn. 1. For a detailed commentary on this tradition written by <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Bahā for <sup>ḥ</sup>Alī Shawkat Pashā (early 1860's?) refer, Makātib <sup>ḥ</sup>Abd al-Bahā.. Vol II (Cairo n.d.), pp. 2 — 55



In the preceding pages a few examples of Shoghi Effendi's translation of ḥamā' have been noted. They may be summed up as follows:-

- [1] ibn al-ḥamā' ("Son of ḥamā') = "Son of the Supreme" (see p.85);
- [2] barr al-ḥamā' ("land of ḥamā') = "immensity of space" (see p.86);
- [3] ahl al-ḥamā' ("people of ḥamā') = "well-favoured denizens of Thy [God's] Kingdom" (see p.100).
- [4] warqā' al-ḥamā' ("dove of ḥamā') = "Phoenix of the realms above" (see p. 102 ).

Little can be deduced from these few examples save that Shoghi Effendi's translations of ḥamā' were non-literal and rooted in the theological senses of this term in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. In translating ḥamā' as "Supreme" [1] the Godhead or realm of Divinity may be intended. Examples [2] (ḥamā' = [celestial] space [?]), [3] (ḥamā' = "Thy [God's] Kingdom") and [4] (ḥamā' = "realms above") all indicate that he, on one level, understood ḥamā' to be indicative of a transcendent heavenly realm.

In their debate over the meaning and translation of Bahā'u'llāh's al-Qasīda al-Warqā'iyya ('The Dove's Ode') J.R.Cole and D.MacEoin have made a few remarks as to their understanding of the term ḥamā'.<sup>1</sup> Cole has criticised MacEoin for translating ḥamā' (in line 24 of the Qasīda— and elsewhere) by "unknowing" and asserted that "al-ḥamā' means not, "unknowing", but the unknown essence of God"<sup>2</sup>. MacEoin himself, in assessing this criticism, is unsure whether "unknowing" is an inappropriate rendering; though he agrees with Cole's definition (al-ḥamā' = 'the unknown essence of God') he claims that his translation is "a less explicit expression" (for ḥamā') and refers (in this connection) to Siyyid Kazim Rashtī's Sharh al-Khutba al-Futunīyya.<sup>3</sup>

In the light of the above it should be clear that Cole is too categorical in asserting that ḥamā' "means.. the unknown essence of God". While, in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture ḥamā' can indicate the unknown essence of God it has a wide range of secondary senses that make such a translation—in certain theological contexts—inappropriate (if not misleading). Though ḥamā' often literally means "cloud" and is theologically indicative of the

1. Refer Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin Vol.2.No.4. (March 1984), p.44ff.
2. Refer, *ibid.*, p.
3. Refer, *ibid.*, p. I have not, unfortunately, been able to attempt a study of the Shaykhī understanding of ḥamā' or consult Rashtī's Sharh al-Khutba al-Futunīyya.

unknown essence of God it has a wide range of other theological implications that invite a variety of paraphrastic translations (including MacEoin's "[Cloud of]Unknowing", see below).

The Bāb's commentary on the Hadīth of ḥamā' (see p.43f) disassociates ḥamā' from the absolute unknown essence and associates its sublimity with the locus of being and prophethood. The Bāb's use of ḥamā' in the dual form (cf. Yahyā's use of the dual and plural forms) in theological contexts raises problems if the meaning of ḥamā' is alone indicative of God's unknown essence—as do a whole host of other uses of this term in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Both Yahyā and Bahā'u'llāh claimed to be the Divine Reality located in ḥamā' without intending to identify themselves with the absolute and unknown essence of God ('dhāt al-dhāt') see below, pp.74f., 100, etc). ḥamā' al-Bahā'ī's explanation of the significance of ḥamā' is not simply centered on the notion of God's absolute and essential unknowability (see p. III).

In brief, Cole's definition of ḥamā' (= 'the unknown essence of God') is appropriate as an indication of its sense in certain theological contexts, in for example, a wide range of pre-Bābī Sufi writings, but fails to account for the variety and richness of its theological and often 'de-transcendentalised' levels of meaning in Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture. Though it is often very difficult to decide how this term might be best translated it is not always to be equated with the "unknown essence of God". It would seem to me that the theologically pregnant use of ḥamā' in a plethora of abstruse Bābī-Bahā'ī texts might lead, for example, to its being translated:- "the Unknowable", "the Cloud of Unknowing", "the Unfathomable", "the Hidden Realm", "the Divine Cloud", "the Beclouded Divinity", "the Enwrapped Essence", "the Absolute", "the Unconditioned", "Shrouded Reality", "the Hidden Essence", "Interiority", "Divine Unknowability", "Dark Mist", "Locus of Divinity", "Cloud", "Hidden Sphere" and "Beclouded Realm" (etc).<sup>1</sup> As previously indicated, only the context in which ḥamā' occurs in the light of the semantic field and theology of its use in a doctrinally evolving Bābī-Bahā'ī scripture will serve to suggest the most appropriate translation.

1. Possible translations of the dual form of ḥamā' might be:- "Doubly Beclouded [Divinity/Realm]", "Beclouded Duality", "Twin Cloud(s)", etc.

Finally, I should like to point out that all the above speculations are extremely tentative. Many more texts will need to be studied and more adequately linguistically analysed before the theology surrounding the Bābī-Bahā'ī use of the term <sup>c</sup>amā' is befittingly clarified. The foregoing paragraphs are no more than rough notes. <sup>c</sup>Amā' is likely to remain something of a 'Cloud of Unknowing' until some brave soul determines to fathom its mysteries in a more adequate manner than I have been able.

Stephen Lambden

xx

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

xxxxxx