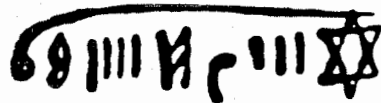


BAHÁ'Í STUDIES BULLETIN

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NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
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BAHÁ'Í STUDIES BULLETIN

This Bulletin is primarily designed to facilitate communication between those among us engaged in the academic study of the Bábí and Bahá'í religions: particularly between Bahá'ís approaching this field from such scholarly perspectives as Religious Studies/History of Religions; Islámic/Iranian Studies; Oriental/Middle Eastern Studies. It is hoped, at some stage in the near future, that the Bulletin will be befittingly published rather than photostatically reproduced.

Articles and notes published in the BSB are solely the perspective of their authors-not necessarily those of the editors. Content is obviously not infallible but will hopefully be intellectually and spiritually stimulating. Established Bahá'í doctrine and the authoritative guidance of Bahá'í administrative institutions is respected though creative scholarly individuality is neither inhibited nor censored. When printed here, original scriptural texts in Persian and/or Arabic may or may not be textually sound. Unauthenticated translations are merely provisional.

A steady and sustained flow of appropriate scholarly contributions is vital to the success of the Bulletin. Academic qualifications from western institutions of higher learning are not required of prospective contributors. The nature and scope of contributions that would be welcomed includes-:

- a) Scriptural texts or Tablets of the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh with English translation and commentary.
- b) Commentaries upon letters of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' and/or Shoghi Effendi.
- c) Copies of letters of the Universal House of Justice/ Haifa Research Dept. relating to Bahá'í scholarship or clarifying points of Bahá'í doctrine and/or history, etc.
- d) Essays or short notes upon an aspect(s) of Bábí or Bahá'í doctrine or history.
- e) Methodological essays or notes.
- f) Notices of books/papers/reviews of direct or indirect interest to students of Bahá'í studies.
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- h) Reports of work in progress from persons working within the field of Bábí-Bahá'í studies.
- i) Reports of Bahá'í Studies Conferences or seminars.

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THE EDITORS, BAHÁ'Í STUDIES BULLETIN, 30 VICTORIA SQUARE,
JESMOND, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE2 4DE. ENGLAND. U.K.

EDITORIAL NOTE

A new editorial board and an overseas group of sub-editors has recently been formed for the BSB. From henceforth Dr Moojan Momen and Stephen Lambden will jointly act as main editors for the U.K. production (address overleaf). The overseas sub-editors, primarily responsible for American and Canadian contributions, are:- Dr. Juan Cole, Department of History, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1045.; Dr. Todd Lawson, Department of Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1A1. It is planned that both the U.K. and the overseas editorial/sub-editorial boards will in future be further expanded.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

It is hoped that issues of this Bulletin will come out quarterly. The price of each issue will vary according to size and postage costs but will not normally be less than £ 3 + postage rate (add 50p. UK & Europe; add £ 3 rest of world): thus approximately £6 per issue outside Europe. At present persons resident in the U.S.A or Canada should enquire about and send their subscriptions to -:

Robert Stauffer
P.O.Box 4643
Seattle, WA 98104
U.S.A.

Christopher Buck
Religious Studies
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4
CANADA.

From time to time issues forming part of a BAHÁ'Í STUDIES BULLETIN MONOGRAPH series will come out: including, for example, oriental Bábí/Bahá'í MSS and specialized articles of such length as would not normally be suitable (e.g. in excess of 25 pages) for the BSB.

Selected articles from past issues of the BSB may be available on request from the editors (U.K. address). COPIES OF THE BSB should not be made or distributed without the prior permission of the editors.

Suggestions for the improvement of the BSB will always be greatly appreciated.

Baha'u'llah's "Commentary on the Súrah of the Sun"

Introduction and Translation

by

Juan R.I. Cole

Qur'án commentary proved an important literary genre in Shaykhism, Bábism, and the primitive Bahá'í Faith, the three religious traditions that formed the matrix for the emergence of the modern Bahá'í community. One perspicacious observer has already drawn attention to the paradox implicit in Bábi scripture consisting in part of commentary on previous scripture.¹ Although such commentary played a considerably less important role in Bahá'u'lláh's writings, some Qur'án commentary (*tafsír*) does occur in them. Here I would like to bring attention to a central text for this issue, Bahá'u'lláh's commentary on Súrah 91 of the Qur'án, "The Sun" (*ash-Shams*). Obviously, where Bahá'u'lláh himself says something about how one should go about interpreting scripture, the Bahá'í commentator must take it extremely seriously. Yet this

1. Todd Lawson, "Interpretation as Revelation: The Qur'án Commentary of Sayyid `Alí Muhammad Shirázi, the Báb (1819-1850), in Andrew Rippin, ed., *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'án* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 223-53.

Arabic Tablet, most probably written during the `Akká period, has not to my knowledge been discussed in Bahá'í literature. Muhyi'd-Dín Sabrí, the Kurdish-Egyptian intellectual who undertook an important compilation of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets and published them in Cairo in 1920, thought the commentary so important that he placed it first in the book.² In this work, Bahá'u'lláh sets out some general guidelines for commenting on scripture, and I offer a translation of it in Appendix II below, with some brief comments here.

Before turning to the hermeneutical and exegetical principles elaborated by Bahá'u'lláh in his brief commentary on the Súrah of the Sun, written at the request of one of the Ottoman ulama, some of this tablet's general features should be mentioned. First, the reader will be struck by the eloquence of Bahá'u'lláh's Arabic. Unlike his Baghdad and Edirne works, this piece completely conforms to the conventions of standard nineteenth-century Arabic, showing neither the Persian grammatical influences we find elsewhere nor the Dadaist, Bábí disdain for conventional grammar apparent in some earlier works. Some of its passages display a fine literary flair, such as Bahá'u'lláh's satirical description of how the sciences cultivated in Muslim polite society had caused him so much grief.

My main interest in this tablet, however, derives from the manner in which Bahá'u'lláh expresses himself on how he thinks scripture commentary should be carried out. He shows himself altogether opposed to literalism and fundamentalism. "Know thou," Bahá'u'lláh writes in this Tablet, "that whoso clingeth to the outward sense of the words, leaving aside their esoteric significance, is simply ignorant."³ One has only to examine classical Qur'án

². Bahá'u'lláh, *Majmú'ih-yi alvâh-i mubârakih-yi ḥadrat-i Bahá'u'lláh*, ed. Muhyi'd-Dín Sabrí (Cairo: Sa`adat Press, 1920; repr. Wilmette, Il.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978), pp. 2-17.

³. "Tafsír Súrat 'Wa'sh-Shams,'" in Bahá'u'lláh, *Majmú'ih*, Sabrí ed., p. 11.

commentaries such as that of al-Baydāwī, to see such an exoteric approach at work. For al-Baydāwī, the sun is the sun is the sun.⁴ On the other hand, Bahá'u'lláh has equally little patience with those mystics or sectarians who wholly neglect the plain, commonsense meaning of scripture in favor of wild, unanchored flights of speculation. "Only the one," he concludes, "who interpreteth the verses esoterically while harmonizing this reading with their literal meaning can be said to be a complete scholar." The Muslim civilization had developed an elaborate apparatus for understanding the literal or outward (*az-záhir*) meaning of a verse of scripture. It included the study of Arabic grammar, lexicology, and rhetoric so that the commentator could be sure he understood the structural place of the various elements in the verse. That is, the scholar had to take into account syntax and morphology, as well as seeking the meaning of obscure words in parallel usages in pre-Islamic poetry. The commentator also attempted to put the chapters of the Qur'án in chronological order and studied their context in the biographies of the Prophet and in a literature known as "occasions of revelation" (*asbáb an-nuzúl*). Bahá'u'lláh clearly requires that commentators attain such linguistic and historical competency, all of which is required for an understanding of the verse's outward meaning.

The outward sense of the verse must not be disregarded in Bahá'u'lláh's view. In his *Most Holy Book*, he castigated those who performed an esoteric exegesis (*ta'wíl*) on revealed verses, accusing them of corrupting the word of God.⁵ An entire disregard for the literal,

4. Naṣíru'd-Dín Abú Sa'íd `Abdu'lláh ash-Shírání al-Baydāwī, *Anwár at-tanzíl wa asrár at-ta'wíl* (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, n.d.), pp. 800-801 for a literalist, or at least highly concrete, exegesis of the Súrah of the Sun.

5. Bahá'u'lláh, *al-Kitáb al-aqdas* (Bombay, n.d.), p. 107:

"Inna'lladhí yu'awwílu má nuzzila min samá'i'l-wahy wa yukhrijuhu `an az-záhiri, innahu ḥarrafa kalimata'lláhi."

commonsense meaning of scripture would open the door, after all, for antinomianism.

Bahá'u'lláh, weary of the endless parade of Bábi manifestations of God, at one point in the Most Holy Book declares himself the last prophet who will arise for at least 1,000 years. Yet Bábis were nothing if not clever in matters of numerology, and he felt it necessary specifically to forbid believers to interpret this verse in anything but a literal manner, excluding esoteric exegesis or *ta'wíl*.⁶ He feared that too subjective an approach to hermeneutics could harm his religion, especially if applied to matters of law and authority.

On the other hand, an exegesis concerned wholly with details of grammar and items of lexicology could only deaden the soul. In his commentary on the Súrah of the Sun, Bahá'u'lláh goes beyond such dry exercises in pedantry advising exegetes to set up a tension between the outward and the manifold subjective meanings of scriptural verses, and let them play off one another. Here, it seems to me, the cultural tradition in which Bahá'u'lláh stood, of Persian mysticism and gnosticism, resonates rather nicely with aspects of contemporary postmodernism. Bahá'u'lláh completely rejected the primacy of common-sense or positivist approaches to meaning. A proposition, in his view, had many potential meanings, tens of them, not just a single literal one. One reason for the semantic ambiguity or instability of statements and texts lies in the multiple nature of reality itself. Reality is not exhausted by what can be experienced by sense-perception, as a positivist would maintain. Rather, reality consists of a series of graded "planes" or "stations" (*rutbah, maqám*), which run the spectrum between pure Being and pure nothingness. At the pole of pure Being is the plane of absolute unity, which is the domain of God's preexistent essence. Below this domain is the plane of God's Word or Command, the domain of the Logos. Then come various lesser stations or planes of the created, contingent world. Some of these planes have to do with human psychology and the attainment of certain mystical states, and they are often metaphorically

⁶. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

called by Bahá'u'lláh "cities" or "valleys," in Persian mystical style. Thus, we have the city or plane of *ridà*, wherein the believer radiantly acquiesces in whatever God wills for him or her. All this is well-known, of course. But the point I want to make here is that Bahá'u'lláh envisions these various planes or stations of reality, whether they be metaphysical or psychological, as sites of discourse. A person speaks from some plane and understands the discourse of others within the subjective context of that particular plane or station which he or she inhabits at that moment. A verse of scripture, in short, will carry a different meaning to different believers, depending on what plane they inhabit, or even depending upon what plane they are meditating on when considering the verse.

Any verse of scripture, then, carries an obvious literal sense, along with a myriad of metaphorical or subjective significations which will differ from believer to believer, and from station to station. A proper exegesis would take account of these several semantic dimensions. Thus, when the Qur'án represents God as taking an oath by the sun and "by the moon when it followeth it!" one may say on the prosaic plane that the Qur'án is appealing to the grandeur of nature in order to exalt its Creator. But according to Bahá'u'lláh, such terms as sun and moon also carry a great many subjective or metaphorical meanings for the believer who meditates upon them. In the station of absolute divine unity, the sun refers to the emanations of the Self or the Primal Will upon creation, a reference to Neoplatonic conceptions of metaphysics and theology wherein a demiurge emanates from God, from whom in turn emanates the contingent world. In other stations, on other planes, the sun can refer to prophets, or to imams and saints. The potential numbers of referents for the word sun are infinite, depending upon the station in which the word is considered. Unlike the case in postmodernism, these contending significations appear to war with one another only if one neglects to take account their various semantic levels, which exist in a hierarchical arrangement. Disputes among believers about

the metaphorical sense of a particular passage might arise if the two believers were speaking from, or in the context of, different metaphysical or psychological planes.

This semantic ambiguity and multiplicity is what makes it impossible for any believer to promulgate an authoritative interpretation of scripture. Any individual's interpretation would be bounded by his or her stage of spiritual development, and readers dwelling on other planes would interpret in a wholly different manner the proof-texts of which the exegete made use. The ability of `Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi to interpret scripture authoritatively for the community appears primarily to have concerned the legal or doctrinal implications of the verses' outward meanings; neither suggested that he had exhausted the verses' esoteric meanings. Even this central teaching authority is now absent in the Bahá'í Faith, leaving even greater scope for a decentralization of theology. With the passing of the guardianship, the new leadership of the Bahá'í Faith, the Universal House of Justice (elected in 1963), has the prerogative only of legislating on matters not covered by scripture. The authority to interpret scripture was confined solely to the Guardian, and the Universal House of Justice, Shoghi Effendi wrote, would never "infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain" of interpretation.⁷

The ambiguity and semantic instability of texts, then, requires that Bahá'ís tolerate a wide variety of theologies within their faith, recognizing the subjective element in exegesis. I do not myself find this prospect at all problematic. All world-religions have in fact been very diverse, but their ecclesiastical representatives have often attempted to deny that diversity and to play upon the community's anxieties about ambiguity in order to gain more power by persecuting those they branded heretics. Islam, for instance, encompasses persons in West Africa who have essentially the same mindset and basic beliefs as their neighbors who follow

⁷. Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah* (Wilmette, Il: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1969), p. 150.

indigenous African religions, as well as encompassing Indian Muslim villagers who, in their illiterate ecumenism, often call upon Hindu deities for help. Admittedly, modern literacy, printing, and mass media are making inroads against this kind of localism and popular syncretism. But for most of history, the world-religions have been little more than umbrellas under which all sorts of folk and local practices were pursued. The Qur'án clearly meant something different to the Gambian Muslims than it did to those in South India. A fundamentalist might argue that these mostly illiterate believers misunderstood their own religion. But that would require the absurd conclusion that the vast majority of Muslims have been daily misunderstanding Islam for 1400 years. The alternative explanation, that a world-religion necessarily involves the subsuming under a few broad symbols of millions of localistic subjectivities, is hateful to fundamentalists because it challenges their conviction that there is only one, literalist way to read scripture.

In matters of theology, Bahá'ís have the magnificent opportunity to let a thousand flowers bloom. Many of the otherwise admirable saintly figures in human history, from St. Augustine to Sir Thomas More, have been guilty of having heretics burned to death. This hypocrisy was forced upon them by the vain belief that it was possible and necessary to achieve an absolute creedal consensus within their religious community. Bahá'u'lláh himself made this sort of ugly Inquisition wholly unnecessary by recognizing the ambiguity and semantic instability of texts, even revealed ones. His theory of exegesis deserves a more rigorous investigation than I can offer here. I think the idea of plane-specific semantic universes offers a fascinating area for the interplay of Bahá'í ideas with those of modern philosophers of language such as Wittgenstein, Eco, and Derrida. But the most important and lasting contribution of Bahá'u'lláh's exegetical principles may be the creation, at last, of a self-consciously diverse world religion, which achieves unity, not by Inquisition, but by tolerance.

Appendix I

Qur'án 91, The Súrah of the Sun

By the sun and its noonday brightness!
By the moon when it followeth it!
By the day when it revealeth its glory!
By the night when it enshroudeth it!
By the heaven and that which built it!
By the earth and that which spread it forth!
By a soul and Him who fashioned it!
And informed it of its wickedness and its piety;
Blessed now is he who hath kept it pure,
and undone is he who hath corrupted it!
Thamúd in their insolence rejected their prophet,
When the greatest wretch among them rushed up:
Said the Apostle of God to them, "The Camel of God! Let her drink."
But they treated him as an impostor and hamstrung her.
So their Lord destroyed them for their crime, and visited all alike:
Nor feared He the issue thereof.

[Translation based on Rodwell, but modified by Cole, sometimes with reference to Arberry.]

Appendix II

Bahá'u'lláh's

Commentary on the Súrah of the Sun

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise be to God, Who hath set the dove of eloquence, perched among the twigs of the tree of explanation, to weaving her divers melodies. Her lyrics tell of how there is no God but God, Who hath brought new beings into existence, and created the contingent world by means of his Primal Will, whereby He hath caused to exist all that was and yet shall be. May God be glorified, Who hath embellished the heavens of reality with the sun of hidden meanings and divine knowledge, as inscribed by the Pen of the Most High. Sovereignty belongeth to God, the Omnipotent, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. He hath brought forth upon the earth the Most Great Ocean, into which flow the waters of the letter H, the second consonant of the Most Ancient Name (Baha), from which the Primal Point had been separated, such that the unifying Word hath become manifest and both spiritual truth and religious law were revealed. The upholders of the divine unity broke through its surface and soared up into the heavens of revelation and divine presence. The sincere ones thus attained the beatific vision of their Lord, the All-Glorious, the Devoted Friend.

Then peace and blessings be upon the Dawning-Place of the Most Beautiful Names and the Most Exalted Attributes, in every letter of Whose appellation is concealed the Divine Names, and whereby have all beings, visible and invisible, been adorned. He was called Muhammad in the realm of names, and Ahmad in the Kingdom of eternity. And peace be upon His House and His Companions, from this day until that upon which the Tongue of Grandeur shall speak forth. Sovereignty belongs to God, the One, the All-Conquering.

Your letter reached Us, and We have perused it, with all its allusions. We beseech God to aid thee in doing that which He loves, that He might bring thee nigh unto the shores of that sea from which rise up the waves of the Name of thy Lord, the Most High. Every drop thereof whispers, "There is no God but God, the Creator of all Names and of the Heavens above."

O questioner, if thou seekest the Sacred Fold and the Sinai of divine proximity, then cleanse thy heart of all else but Him. Remove the sandals of thy suppositions and idle fancies, that thou mightest see with the eye of thine heart the effulgences of God, the Lord of the Throne and of the Earth. For this is the day of unveiling and witnessing. Separation hath

passed away, and union hath arrived. This is from the bounty of thy Lord, the Cherished, the Beloved. Leave posing questions and seeking answers to the people of this earth, and ascend by the wings of abnegation into those skies wherein thou shalt draw nigh to the forbearance of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Say: O people, the Primal Point hath been revealed, the Universal Word hath been brought to fruition, and the kingdom of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, hath been made manifest. Say: O people, ye disport yourselves in a puddle, oblivious to the sweet sea that billoweth before your faces. What aileth ye, that ye comprehend not? Do ye speak forth with the knowledge ye possess when He hath appeared, Who knew the Point of Knowledge that generated all things, and to which they all returned? From this Point did issue God's own words of wisdom, and sciences that yet remain concealed in the treasuries of the purity of thy Lord, the Exalted, the Almighty. Leave allusions to those trapped in them, and set out toward that station wherein ye shall perceive the fragrances of knowledge from His heavens. Thus counseleth ye this Servant, every member, every artery, of whose body testifieth that there is no God save He. He still subsisteth in the exaltation of His might and glory, and in the heights of His honor and radiance. The Ones He sent with truth and guidance are the Dawning-places of His revelation to all creation, and the Daysprings of His Cause among His servants. Through them were the mysteries unveiled, and the divine Laws legislated, and by Them was realized the Cause of God, the All-Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained. No God is there but He, the Omniscient, the All-Knowing.

O questioner, know thou that the people pride themselves upon knowledge, and praise it, whereas this Servant complaineth of it. For without it Baha would not have been imprisoned in Akka with extreme abasement, nor would He have drunk from the cup of woes proffered by His enemies. Eloquence hath banished Me, and rhetoric brought Me low. My mention of union with God hath torn Me limb from limb. My succinctness hath provoked a

long-winded affliction, grammar hath deprived Me of all comfort, and syntax hath disordered the pleasures of My heart. My knowledge of God's mysteries hath become a chain about my neck. Given all this, how can I respond to your question concerning the verses revealed from the heavens of majesty and grandeur, especially since the hearts of the discerning have hitherto failed to comprehend them, and the minds of the sagacious never soared into the heavens of their meanings?

My pinions have been clipped by the shears of envy and rancor. Should this broken bird find wings, He would fly into the sky of meaning and exposition and warble on the twigs of the tree of knowledge a song that would lift up the hearts of the sincere ones into the firmament of longing and attraction. They would then witness the effulgences of their Lord, the Mighty, the Bestower. At this time, however, I am forbidden to uncover what was hidden, release what was repressed or speak openly of what was concealed. We must withhold it rather than revealing it. Were We to speak of what God hath taught Us by His grace, the people would back away from Us and flee, save for those who have imbibed the elixir of life from the chalice of the words of their Lord, the All-Merciful.

For, every word sent down from the heavens of revelation upon the prophets and messengers hath been filled with the sacred waters of meaning, explanation, wisdom and exposition. Blessed are they that drink thereof. Since We have perceived in thee the fragrance of love, We shall reply to thee briefly and with concision. Thus mightest thou sever thyself from those who interpret all scripture metaphorically, who have opposed the truth and its mystery and cling instead to their own conjectures and vain imaginings, even though aforesaid it was revealed that "Conjecture availeth nothing against the truth"⁸ and in another place "Some conjecture is a sin."⁹

⁸. Qur'án 53:28 (53:29, Flügel).

⁹. Qur'án 49:12.

Know that the sun mentioned in this blessed sūrah hath divers meanings. At the level of primacy and unity, and in the city of pre-existent divinity, it is one of God's mysteries, one of his sanctuaries, stored away in His treasurehold, concealed in His knowledge, and sealed by God's own seal. No one is informed thereof save the One, the Unique, the Omniscient. For in this station the sun signifieth the Primal Will and the illumination of divine oneness that by means of its Self sheddeth its effulgence upon the horizons. Whoever approached it was illumined thereby just as, when the sun riseth, its rays encompass the world, all save those bits of land that remain shaded from it. Consider the land unencumbered by trellis or wall: it is irradiated by the sun, whereas walls cast a shadow that prevents the earth from receiving this effulgence. In the same way, behold the sun of reality. It sheddeth the light of meanings and explanation upon beings. Whoso turned toward it was rendered luminous by its rays, and such a one's heart glowed with its light. Whoso turneth away will never have any portion therein, for the veil of self and passion hath intervened, and such a one remaineth far from the emanations of the sun of reality that flashed forth from the horizons of the heaven of heavens.

Then, in another station, it refereth to the prophets and pure ones of God, for they are the suns of His names and attributes amid his creation. Were it not for them, no one would have been illumined by the mystical knowledge of God. As you see, every nation on earth hath been enlightened by one of these brightly shining suns. Whoso denied them remained deprived. For instance, those of God's servants who followed the Christ were irradiated by the sun of his knowledge, until the luminary of all horizons dawned over the Hijaz. Those who denied him [Muḥammad] among the Christians and other communities were thereby deprived of that sun and its rays. Their very repudiation of him became a wall that locked out the light emanating from the horizon of the Cause of their Lord, the Omnipotent, the Succorer.

On yet another level of reality, it refereth to the friends and lovers of God, since they are the suns of guardianship among his creatures. Without them, gloom would have

encompassed the entire earth, save those thy Lord willed to escape it. The word hath many other referents. Were ten scribes to come into Our presence and take down Our utterances for a year, or two years, they would in the end confess their inability to keep pace. Were it not for the denials of some ignoramuses, We would have discoursed at greater length, and the revered Pen of God would have gone beyond the mention of limitations.

Know assuredly that just as thou firmly believest that the Word of God, exalted be His glory, endureth for ever, thou must, likewise, believe with undoubting faith that its meaning can never be exhausted.¹⁰ They who are its appointed interpreters, they whose hearts are the repositories of its secrets are, however, the only ones who can comprehend its manifold wisdom. Whoso, while reading the Sacred Scriptures, is tempted to choose therefrom whatever may suit him with which to challenge the authority of the Representative of God among men, is, indeed, as one dead, thought to outward seeming he may walk and converse with his neighbors, and share with them their food and drink.

Oh, would that the world could believe Me! Were all the things that lie enshrined within the heart of Bahá, and which the Lord, His God, the Lord of all names, hath taught Him, to be unveiled to mankind, every man on earth would be dumbfounded.

How great the multitude of truths which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusion can be made! How manifold are the truths which must remain unuttered until the appointed time is come! Even as it hath been said: "Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything

¹⁰. This and the following three paragraphs were translated by Shoghi Effendi Rabbani in *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette, Il.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2nd edn 1976), LXXXIX.

that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it."

Of these truths some can be disclosed only to the extent of the capacity of the repositories of the light of Our knowledge, and the recipients of Our hidden grace. We beseech God to strengthen thee with His power, and enable thee to recognize Him Who is the Source of all knowledge, that thou mayest detach thyself from all human learning, for "what would it profit any man to strive after learning when he hath already found and recognized Him Who is the object of all knowledge?" Cleave to the Root of knowledge, and to Him Who is the Fountain thereof, that thou mayest find thyself independent of all who claim to be well versed in human learning, and whose claim no clear proof, nor the testimony of any enlightening book, can support.¹¹

In another station, it refereth to the most beautiful names of God, insofar as every one of His names constituteth a sun shining above the horizon. Consider the name of God, "the knowing." This sun dawneth above the horizon of the will of thy Lord, the All-Merciful, its rays bathing the bodies of things in the known universe. Thou wilt find every correct science among those persons of learning who have not given in to their passions and base desires, who have acknowledged the path of the divine decree and held fast to the firm handle of faith. Know that such a one is in the right, and that his knowledge is a ray that emanated from the light of this sun. We have, verily, interpreted the names and elucidated their mysteries, effulgences, and coruscations, their externality and internality, the secrets of their letters and the wisdom of their composition in an epistle that We penned for one of Our friends who had inquired concerning the names and what they contained.

Know that the Word of God, in the primal reality and the first station, compriseth those meanings that most of the people have failed to perceive. We bear witness that His words are

¹¹. Here ends the section translated by Shoghi Effendi.

complete, and in every one of these words lie concealed meanings apprehended by no one but Himself, and He possesseth knowledge of the Book. No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Bestower.

Those who wrote commentaries on the Qur'án fell into two sorts. The first neglected the literal sense in favor of an esoteric exegesis. The other interpreted literally and ignored its metaphorical dimension. Were We to review all their sayings and statements, thou wouldst be overtaken with fatigue and unable to read what We have written for thee. Therefore, We have declined to mention them here. Blessed are they that cling both to the literal and to the esoteric, for those are His servants that have believed in the universal Word.

Know that whoso clingeth to the outward sense of the words, leaving aside their esoteric significance, is simply ignorant. And whoso concentrateth on the metaphorical sense to the exclusion of the prosaic meaning is heedless. Only the one who intepreteth the verses esoterically while harmonizing this reading with the literal meaning can be said to be a complete scholar. This maxim hath dawned from the horizon of knowledge, so know thou its value and cherish its excellence. Verily, we mention Our object allusively in our words and intimations. Blessed is the one who graspeth Our intent and arriveth at the goal.

Say: O people, the nightingale warbleth upon the twigs, the royal cockerel crieth out with wisdom and utterance, and the peacock spreadeth its feathers in paradise. How long will ye sleep upon the couch of heedlessness and transgression? Rise from the bed of selfish passion and advance toward the dawning-place of the compassion of thy Lord, the Sovereign of Eternity, the Revealer of Names. Beware lest ye oppose Him, who calleth you to God and to His precepts. Fear ye God and be not of the negligent.

Then know that God swore to His prophet by the sun of divinity, sovereignty, will, volition, and names; by the lights of these suns, their effulgences, emanations, and influences, and by the sun shining and apparent above the horizon of this exalted firmament.¹²

*"By the moon when it followeth it!"*¹³ The moon signifieth the station of guardianship, which followeth the sun of prophethood, that is, it appeareth afterward, to vindicate the cause of the prophet among God's servants. Were We to elaborate on the stations of the moon, thou wouldst be presented with a hefty tome indeed.

"By the day when it revealeth its glory!" The intent of the word "day" on the level of primal reality is every Day whereon a prophet or messenger of God appeared, to establish His mention among His servants and to implement His laws among His creatures. Thereon, the Manifestation of His Cause emanateth forth upon phenomenal beings. On that Day, the lights of the sun are manifest, and He is the One who sends them forth in the sense that in Him and by Him the sun of prophethood shineth and sheddeth its light.

"By the night when it enshroudeth it!" By the night is meant the veil of oneness behind which was hidden the Point of Reality. After this Point descended from its highest station, it settled into the realm of oneness, the plane of unity. The soft form of the letter *alif* gave way to its upright form, so as to cover the veil itself, and to conceal the Point of Reality that constituted the actuality of the sun of prophethood.

"By Heaven and that which built it!" Heaven possesseth, for the people of truth, divers referents: the heaven of meaning, the heaven of divine knowledge, the heaven of the religions,

¹². In Súrah 91 of the Qur'án, entitled "The Sun," verse 1: *"By the sun and its morning brightness!"*

¹³. Qur'án, 91:2. Subsequent verses quoted are all from the same súrah, and are quoted in order, so further identification of them would seem pedantic.

the heaven of learning, the heaven of wisdom, the heaven of grandeur, the heaven of exaltation, the heaven of glory. The phrase "*that which built it*" signifieth the One Who created all the heavens just mentioned, and all that thou seest in the phenomenal world.

"*By the earth and Him who spread it forth!*" By the earth is intended the hearts. They are, indeed, vaster than the earth and heaven, for the heart is the most great throne upon which descendeth the effulgence of thy Lord, Creator of the nations and Reviver of mouldering bones. This is an earth in which God hath sown the seeds of His knowledge and love, that the sprouts of learning and certitude might shoot forth. Say, O people: Today is the day of sowing. Plant in your hearts with the hands of certitude that which hath been bestowed upon you by your Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. "*And Him who spread it forth*" means the One who unfolded it with the hand of His might and the power of His Cause.

"*By a soul and Him who fashioned it!*" The soul or self hath numerous stations and subsists upon divers planes. Among them is the self of the kingdom, the self of sovereignty, the self of Godhead, the self of divinity, the self of holiness, the self of serenity, the self of contentment, the self of satisfaction, the self of inspiration, the blameworthy self, and the self that is at the command of evil. The soul intended in this verse is the one that God hath rendered capable of all works, including acceptance and opposition, error and guidance, belief and unbelief. "*And Him who fashioned it*" means the One who created it and elevated it.

"*And informed it of its wickedness and its piety.*" This verse signifieth that God informed and instructed the soul concerning its wickedness, that is, the deeds that benefit it not and that take it far from its sovereign Creator. "*Its piety*" referreth to the inspiration that he giveth the soul concerning that which will sanctify it from what hath been forbidden it. That is, He created it and informed it of the path of guidance and error, truth and falsehood, light and darkness. The He commanded it to forsake what was prohibited to it and to perform that which was enjoined upon it.

"Blessed now is he who hath kept it pure." This verse constituteth an answer to the previous one, wherein He swore upon the soul. It signifieth that whoso cleanseth the soul from shortcomings and passions, from all that hath been interdicted in the Book, hath attained the ultimate goal. Consider those who purify their souls in these days. By My Life! They, verily, are blessed. They are persons undeterred by the world and all that is therein from setting out on the clear and straight path. Verily, they exemplify this blessed verse, clothing themselves in piety and clinging to the hem of the loving-kindness of their Lord in these days, wherein most have stumbled. We bear witness to whatever God hath attested, and confess the truth of that which He hath revealed. Verily, He is the Truth, and after the truth there is naught but falsehood.

"And undone is he who hath corrupted it!" That is, whoso causeth the soul to become lost hath gone astray, and hath neglected to forbid it that which was prohibited or to enjoin upon it that which it was commanded to perform.

"The Thamúd tribe in their impiety rejected their prophet." Thamúd, according to what is recorded in the books, was a community to whom God sent the Prophet Sálíh, but they rejected him after he enjoined them to good and forbade them from evil. They did not follow the commands and precepts of God. Finally, they hamstrung Sálíh's camel.

"So their Lord destroyed them for their crime." That is, God visited His wrath upon them and made of them an object lesson to all the peoples on earth. In reality, all those who oppose the truth belong to the tribe of Thamúd, whatever their actual genealogy. They shall be tormented and destroyed, just as were their predecessors. Verily, God is Almighty and Omnipotent. Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds.

We have forborne to mention what the commentators have said in interpreting this blessed chapter, for such commentaries are freely available among the people and whoso desireth may consult them. They have interpreted the sun as the outward sun, and likewise the

moon, and so forth throughout the sūrah. They trod down the path of fundamentalism and satisfied themselves with what they possessed. We have, on the other hand, interpreted it in a way not mentioned in such books. We beseech God to render every letter of what was mentioned a chalice brimming with meanings and knowledge, and to give thee to drink therefrom what will enable thee to detach thyself from all that runneth contrary to His good-pleasure. May it bring thee nigh unto the station He hath preordained for His pure ones, for He is, verily, the Forgiving, the Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

Praise be to thee, O Lord, My God! I beseech thee by Thy name, whereby all things glorify Thee, to open the eyes of thy creatures, that they may see the evidences of Thy splendor, and the effulgences of the sun of thy loving-kindness. O Lord, leave them not to themselves, for they are thy servants and creatures. Attract them by the exalted Word unto the Dayspring of Thy most beautiful names and the treasury of Thy highest attributes. Thou art, verily, potent to do whatsoever Thou desirest. No God is there but thee, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

THE ARABIC TEXT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S TAFSÍR ŞÚRAT 'WA'ŞH-SHAMS' AS PRINTED IN MUHYÍD-DÍN SABRÍ [ED], MAJMÚ'IH-YI ALWÁH-I MUBÁRAKIH-YI HADRAT-I BAHÁ'U'LLÁH (CAIRO SA'ÁDAT PRESS 1920). ¹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله الذى أنطق ورقاء البيان على أفنان دوحه
التبيان بفنون الألمان * على أنه لا إله إلا هو * قد
أبدع الأكوان واخترع الامكان بمشيبته الأولية التي
بها خلق ما كان وما يكون * والحمد لله الذى زين
سماء الحقيقة بشمس المعاني والعرفان التي رُقم تليها من
القلم الأعلى * الملك لله المقتدر المهيمن القيوم * الذى
أظهر البحر الأعظم المجتمع من الماء الجارى من عين
الماء المنهية الى الاسم الأقدم الذى منه فصلت
النقطة الأولية وظهرت الكلمة الجامعة وبرزت
الحقيقة والشريعة * ومنه طار الموحدون الى هواء

1. The Arabic text has been appended to the foregoing translation by the Eds.

المكشفة والحضوره والمخلصون المنظر ربهم العزيز
الودود • والصلاة والسلام على مطلع الأسماء الحسنى
والصفات العليا الذي في كل حرف من اسمه كُنُزٌ
الأسماء وبه زين الوجود من الغيب والشهود • وسُمِّيَ
بمحمد في ملكوت الأسماء • وبأحمد في جبروت
البقاء • وعلى آله وصحبه من هذا اليوم إلى يوم فيه
ينطق لسان العظمة • الملك لله الواحد القهار • قد
حضر بين يدينا كتابك وأطلنا على ما فيه من
إشاراتك • نسأل الله أن يؤيدك على ما يجب ويرضى
ويقربك إلى ساحل البحر الذي يروج باسم ربك
الأعلى • وتنطق كل فطرة منه أنه لا إله إلا هو
وأنه خالق الأسماء وظاهر السماء •

يا أيها السائل إذا قصدت حظيرة القدس وسبناه
القرب طوِّق قلبك عن كل ماسواه • ثم اخلع قلبك
الظنون والأوهام ترى بين قلبك تجليات اقرب
العرش والثرى لأن هذا اليوم يوم المكشفة والشهود
قد مضى الفصل وأتى الوصل • وهذا من فضل ربك

3.

العزيز الهيب • دم السؤال والجواب لأهل القرب
اصد بمنحني الانتطاع إلى هواء قرب رحمة ربك
الرحمن الرحيم • قل يقوم قد فصلت النقطة الأولية
وقمت الكلمة الجامعة وظهرت ولاية الله المبين
القيوم • قل يقوم • استخلم بالتدبير والبحر العذب
يتوج أمام وجوهكم فلحم لا تقهون • أنتظون بما
عندكم من العلوم بمد ما ظهر من كان واقفا على
قطعة العلم التي منها ظهرت الأشياء واليها رجعت
وعادت ومنها ظهرت حكم الله والمعلوم التي كانت
لم تزل مكنونة في خزائن عصمة ربكم العلي العظيم •
دعوا الاشارات لأهلها واقصدوا المقام الذي تجدون
روائح الدم من هوائه كذلك يمظكم هذا العبد الذي
يشهد كل جارحة من جوارحه وكل عرقه من عرقه
أنه لا إله إلا هو • لم يزل كان في علو العظمة والجلال
وسمو الرفة والاجلال • والذين أرسلهم بلحق
والهدى أولئك مشلق وحيه بين خلقه ومطالع
أمره بين عباده وما باط الهامة في برته • وبهم ظهرت

4.

الأمر والشرع والشرائع وحقق أمر الله المقدر
العزيز المختار • لا إله إلا هو الدير الجبير •
يا أيها السائل ظلم بأن الناس يفتخرون بالمسلم
ويعدونه ولكن العبد أشكو منه لولاه ما حبس
البهاء في جن عكاه بالذلة الكبرى • وما شرب كأس
البلاء من يد الأعداء • أن البيان أبدي • وهلم ألماني
أزوني • ويذكر الوصل انفصلت أركان • والايحاز
صار سبب الاطباب في ضري وبلائي • والقرف
صرفني عن الراحة • والتحرر عما عن القلب سروري
وهجتي • وعطى بأسرار الله صار سلاسل عتق مع
ذلك كيف أقدر أن أذكر ما سألت في الآيات التي
نزلت من جبروت العزة والعظمة ويجزت عن ادراكها
أقنعة أولى النبي • وما طارت إلى هواء معانيها طيور
قلوب أولى الحمى • قد قرض جناحي بمقراض
الحسد والبغضاء • لو وجد هذا الطير المقطوعة للقولدم
وانلواني جناحا ليطيروا في هواء المعاني والبيان ونرد
على أفنان دوحه العلم والبيان بما تظير بأقنعة الخالصين

5.

إلى سماء الشوق والانجذاب بحيث يرون تجليات ربهم
العزيز الوهاب ولكن الآن أكون ممنوعا من اظهار
ما خزّن وسط ما قبض واجار ما خفي • بل ينبغي
لنا الاضمار دون الاظهار • ولو تكلم بما طمنا الله عنه
وجوده لينفض الناس عن حولى ويهربون ويفرون
الأمن شرب كوثر الحيوان من كؤوس كلمات ربه
الرحمن • لأن كل كلمة نزلت من سماء الوحي على
النبيين والمرسلين أنها ملئت من سلسيل المعاني
والبيان والحكمة والبيان طوبى للشاربين • ولكن
لما وجدنا منك رائحة الحب نذكر لك ما سألت
بالاختصار والايحاز لتقطع من أهل الجواز الذين
أعرضوا عن الحقيقة وسرها وتمسكوا بما عندهم من
الظنون والأوهام • بمد ما نزل من قبل • إن الظن
لا يفتنى من الحق شيئا • وفي مقام آخر إن بعض
الظن أم •

ثم أعلم بأن الشمس التي نزلت في السورة المباركة
المحلاقت شتي • وأنها في الرتبة الأولية والطرز

6.

ما استضاء أحدُ بأَنوارِ الرِّفانِ كما ترى إنَّ كلَّ مَلَقَةٍ من
مِللِ الأَرْضِ استضاءت بِشَمْسٍ من هَذِهِ الشُّمُوسِ
المُشرِقَتِ والذي أنكرَ أَنه صارَ مَرُومًا مِنها • مغلًا
عبادَ اتبعوا المَسيحَ هم استضاءوا من عَينِ عِرفانِهِ
إلى أَن أُشرِقَ نَيرُ الأَفاقِ من أَفقِ الحِجازِ • الَّذين
أنكروهُ من النصارى ومِللِ أُخرى جُمِعوا مَرُومينَ
عن تِلْكَ الشَّمْسِ وَأَنوارِها • ونفسُ أنكارِهِم صارَ
جدارًا لَهم ومنهَم عن النورِ المُشرقِ عن أَفقِ أَمْرِ
رَبِّكَ المَزيزِ المُستمانِ •
وفي مَقامِ • تَطلُعُ على أوليائِهِ اللهُ وَأودانِهِ لِأنَّهم
شَمُوسُ الوِلايَةِ بينَ البَرِيَّةِ لولِامٍ لا خَفتِ الظُّلْمَةُ
مِنَ عَلى الأَرْضِ كَأنها بِإِمانِ شَهِيدِكَ • ولها اِطلاقاتُ
شَتَّى لَوِيقومُ عَشرَةُ كِتابٍ تَلقاهُ الوِجْهَ وتَلقَى عَليهِم
سَنةً أو سَنتينَ ليرِونَ عَجزَ أَنفُسِهِم • ولولا أنكارُ
بعضِ الجُهلاءِ لَأمددنا المَدَّةَ وجاوزَ قَلمُ اللهُ الجُهودَ
من ذِكرِ الحدوهِ •
فاعلم بِأنَّكَ كما أيقنتَ بِنِ لا تَقادُ لِكِتابِهِ تَعالَى

7.

الواحدية والقصة الأهرتية القديمة سر من سر الله
وحرز من حرز الله مخزون في خزان الله مكنون في
علم الله محتوم بختام الله ما اطلع عليها أحد إلا الواحد
الفرد الخبير • لأن في ذلك المقام أنها هي نفس المشية
الأولية واشراق الأهدية • تجلت بنفسها على الآفاق
واستضاء منها من أقبل إليها كما كان الشمس إذا طلعت
يحيط اشراقها على العالم إلا الأراضى التي احتجبت بمانع •
فانظر في الأراضى التي ليست لها عروض وجدار أنها
تستضيء منها والتي لها جدار تمنع من اشراقها كذلك
فانظر في شمس الحقيقة أنها تتجلى بأنوار المعاني
والبيان على الأكران • والذي أقبل إليها يستضيء من
أنوارها ويستنير قلبه من ضيائها واشراقها • والذي
أعرض لن يمدد لنفسه نصيبًا منها لأنه حال بينه وبينها
حجاب النفس والهوى لذا بمدد عن تجلي شمس الحقيقة
التي أشرقت عن أفق سماء الأسماء •
ثم في مقام • تطلق على أنبياء الله وصفونه
لأنهم شمس أسمائه وصفاته بين خلقه لولاهم

8.

أيقن بأن لمانيها لا تقاد أيضًا ولكن عند مبيتها
وخزنة أسرارها • والذين ينظرون الكتب ويتخذون
منها ما يمترضون به على مطلع الولاية أنهم أموات
غير أحياء ولو يمشون ويشكمون ويأكلون ويشربون
فأه آه لو يظهر ما كُتِبَ في قلب البهاء عما علمه ربه
مالك الأسماء لينصق الذين تراهم على الأرض • كم
من معان لا تحويها قص الألفاظ • وكمنها ليست
لها عبارة ولم تُعطِ بيانًا ولا إشارة • وكمنها لا يمكن
بيانه لعدم حضور أوانها كما قيل "لا كل ما يُسَلَمُ
يُقالُ • ولا كل ما يُقالُ حان وقته • ولا كل ما حان
وقته حضر أهله) ومنها ما يتوقف ذكره على عرفان
المشارك التي فيها فصلنا العلوم وأناورنا المكتوم •
نسأل الله أن يوفقك ويؤيدك على عرفان المعلوم لتقطع
عن العلوم لأن طلب العلم بعد حصول المعلوم مذموم •
تمسك بأصل العلم ومعدنه لترى نفسك غنياً عن
الذين يذهون العلم من دون بينة ولا كتاب منير •
وفي مقام أنها تطلق على الأسماء الحسنى بحيث

9.

كل اسم من أسمائه تعالى يكون شمسًا مشرقة على
الآفاق • انظر في اسم الله العظيم أنه شمس أشرقت عن
أفق ارادة ربك الرحمن • ويلوح على هياكل للعلوم
أنوارها وأطلوها واشراقها • كل علم حق تراه عند
العلاء للذين ما اتبعوا النفس والهوى واعتزوا بركن
التفضله وتمسكوا بالعروة الوثقى فاعلم بأنه حق
وعلمه اشراق من اشراقت هذه الشمس • أنا فسرنا
الأسماء وبينا أسرارها واشراقها وأنوارها وظواهرها
وبواطنها وأسرار حروفها وحكمة تراكيبها في
الكتاب الذي كتبه لأحد من أحيائي الذي سأل
عن الأسماء وما فيها •
فاعلم بأن كلمة الله تبارك وتعالى في الحقيقة
الأولية والرؤية الأولى تكون جامعة للمعان التي
استجب عن ادراكها أكثر الناس تشهد بأن كتابه
تألمات • وفي كل كلمة منها سترت معاني ما اطلع بها
أحد إلا نفسه ومن عنده علم الكتاب • لا إله إلا
هو المقتر للمزير للوهاب •

10.

البقاء ومنزل الاسماء • إننا كم أن فنرضوا على
الذي يدعوكم إلى الله وسنته • اشقوا الله ولا تكونوا
من النافلين •

ثم اعلم بأنه تبارك وتعالى أقسم لبيته بشمس
الألوهية • وشمس الولاية • وشمس المشية • وشمس
الارادة • وشمس الاسماء وأنوار هذه الشمس
واشراقها • ونجليتهن وظهورتهن وتأثيرتهن •
وبالشمس الظاهرة المشرقة عن أفق هذه السماطرقة
والقمر اذا تلاها • والقمر رتبة الولاية الذي تلا
شمس النبوة أي يظهر بعده ليقوم على أمر النبي
بين البلاد • وأنلودكر مقامات القدر لدى الكتاب
ذا حجم عظيم • والتبار اذا جلاها • والمقصود من
التبار في الحقيقة الأولية كل يوم ظهر فيه نبي من
أنبياء الله ورسوله لاقامة ذكره بين عباده واجراء
حدوده بين ربه وفيه تجلي مظهر الامر على مظاهر
الاشياء • وفي ذلك اليوم تظهر أنوار الشمس وأنه
يجليها بهذا المعنى أي فيه وبه أضاعت ولاحت شمس

12.

ثم اعلم بان المفسرين الذين فسروا القرآن كانوا
صنفين صنف غفلوا عن الظاهر وفسروه على الباطن •
وصنف فسروه على الظاهر وغفلوا عن الباطن ولو
نذكر مقالهم وياناتهم لتأخذك الكسالة بحيث تمنك
عن قراءة ما كتبناه لك لقا تركنا أذكارهم في هذا
المقام • طوبى للذين أخذوا الظاهر والباطن أولئك
جهاد آمنوا بالكلمة الجامعة •

فاعلم من أخذ الظاهر وترك الباطن انه جاهل •
ومن أخذ الباطن وترك الظاهر انه غافل • ومن أخذ
الباطن بإيقاع الظاهر عليه فهو عالم كامل • هذه كلمة
أشرقت من أفق العلم فأعرف قدرها وأغل مهرها •
أنا نذكر المقصود بقرينة في اشاراتنا وكلماتنا طوبى لمن
أطلع عليه انه من الفائزين • قل يا قوم تالله قد غنيت
للورقة على الأفنان ودلع ديك العرش بالحكمة
والبيان • وانتشرت أجنحة الطائوس في الرضوان •
إلام ترقدون على فراش النغلة والنوى • قوموا عن
مرائد الهوى • وأقبلوا إلى مشرق رحمة ربكم مالك

11.

ازرعوا في قلوبكم بأبلى اليقين ما أوتيتهم به من لدن
ربكم العليم الحكيم • وللأرض معان لا تحصى وأنا
اكتفينا بواحدة منها • وما طحاها • أي والذي
بسطها يدقبرته وسلطان أمره • ونفس وما سواها •
والنفس مراتب كثيرة ومقامات شتى • ومنها نفس
ملكوتية • ونفس جبوتية • ونفس لاهوتية • ونفس
إلهية • ونفس فلسفية • ونفس مطيشة • ونفس راضية •
ونفس مرضية • ونفس ملهية • ونفس لوامية • ونفس
أمارة • والمقصود فيما نزل هي النفس التي جعلها الله
جامعة لكل الأعمال من الأقبال والامراض والضلالة
والهداية والايان والكفر • وما سواها • أي والذي
خلقها وأقامها • فألمها جورها وتقواها • أي عليها
وأخبرها جورها أي الأعمال التي لا تنفها وتبهدا
عن مالها وموجدتها • وتقواها • أي ألمها ما
يقدسها مما نهيت عنه أي خلقها وعرفها سبيل الهداية
والضلالة والحق والباطل والنور والظلمة • ثم أمرها
بتركها ما نهيت عنه وإقبالها إلى ما أمرت به • قد

14.

النبوة • والليل إذا ينشأها • والمقصود من الليل
هو حجاب الأودية الذي كان مستورا خلفه النقطة
الحقيقية وإنما بعد تنزلها عن مقامها استقرت في مقر
الوجدانية رتبة الواحدية وكانت عنها الألف اللبنة
وتحت حجاب الواحدية ظهرت بالألف المتحركة
وهي الألف القائمة والمنشئ الحجاب والمنشئ النقطة
الحقيقية التي كانت حقيقة شمس النبوة • والسما •
وما بناها • وللسماء عند أهل الحقيقة المطلقات شتى •
سما المعاني • وسما الرفان • سما الأديان • سما العز •
سما المحكمة • سما العظمة • سما الرذمة • سما
الاجلال • وما بناها • أي والذي خلق هذه السموات
المذكورة وما تراه في الظاهر • والأرض وما طحاها •
والمقصود من الأرض أرض القلوب • أنها أوسع من
الأرض والسماء لأن القلب العرش الأظم لاستواء
تجلي ربك خالق الأمم ومصور الرمم • وأنه أرض
أودع الله فيها حبوب معرفة وجهه لتثبت منها
سبلات العلم والايقان • قل يا قوم اليوم يوم الزرع

13.

عليهم وجعلهم هبة للعالمين • ولكن في الحقيقة كل
 من أعرض عن الحق فهو من عمود من أي نسل كانه
 فسوف يندم عليهم العذاب كما دُميت على الأحزاب
 من قبلهم إن ربك هو المتقدر القدير • والحمد لله رب
 العالمين • إنا ما ذكرنا ما قاله المفسرون في تفسير
 السورة المباركة لأن الكتب التفسيرية عند القوم
 موجودة من أراد أن يطالع على تفاسيرهم ويأنتهم
 فينظر إلى كتبهم أنهم فتمروا الشمس بالشمس
 الظاهرة وكذلك في القمر إلى آخر السورة ملكوا
 سبيل الظاهر وتموا بما عندهم • ولكن إنا فترنا بما
 لم يذكر في الكتب • ندأل الله أن يجعل كل حرف
 عما ذكر كاس الداني والمارف ويسقيك منها ما تنقطع
 به عما يكرهه رضاء وقرتك إلى المقام الذي قدره
 لأصفيائه أنه هو الغفور الرحيم • والحمد لله رب
 العالمين • سبحانك اللهم يا إلهي أسألك باسمك الذي
 به ينطق كل شيء بثناه فذلك أن تفتح أبصار ربك
 ليروا آثر من أحديتك وتجليات شمس عنايتك •

16.

أطلع من زكاتها • هذا جواب القسم أي ناز من زكاتها
 أي طهرها من التقاصر والهوى وعن كل ما نهي عنه
 في الكتاب • فانظر في الذين زكوا أنفسهم في هذه
 الأيام لعمرى أنهم المفلحون • أنهم رجال ما منتهم
 الدنيا وما فيها عن التوجه إلى السبيل الواضح المستقيم •
 أنهم مصاديق هذه الآية المباركة وجعلوا التقوى
 سراييلهم وتشبثوا بذيل عناية ربهم في هذه الأيام
 التي فيها زلت الأقدام • نشهد بما شهد الله ونترف
 بما نزل من عنده أنه هو الحق • وما بعد الحق إلا
 الضلال • وقد خاب من دسأها • أي وقد خسر من
 دسأها أي من ضيئها وماز كآها وما منها عما نهي عنه
 وما أمرها بما أمر به • كد بت عمود بطنواها • وعمود
 على ما هو المفقور في الكتب طائفة بمث الله عليهم
 صالحا عليه السلام وأنكره بعد ما أمر بالمروف
 ونهاهم عن المنكر وهم ما اتبعوا أمر الله وما أطاعوه
 فيما أمروا به وتركوا أمر الله وسئلته أن عقروا
 الناقة • فندم عليهم ربهم بذنبيهم • أي غضب الله

15.

أي رب لا تدعهم بأنفسهم لأنهم مبادك وخلقك
 فاجنبهم بالكلمة العليا إلى مطلع أسمائك الحسنى
 وعزرن صفاتك العليا • إنك أنت اللقندر على ما تشاء •
 لا إله إلا أنت العزيز الحكيم •

17.

A TABLET OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH COMMENTING ON THAT VERSE OF THE MOST-HOLY BOOK [KITÁB-I-AQDAS] ABOUT THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT.

PROVISIONAL TRANS. BY FARZIN FROUGHI & STEPHEN LAMBDEN

We revealed in the Most Holy Book :

يا اهل المجالس في البلاد اختاروا لغت من اللغات ليتكلم بها
من على الارض و كذلك من الخطوط ان الله يبين لك ما ينفعكم و يغنيكم
عن دونكم انه لهو الفضال العليم الخبير

"O Members of the Parliaments of all countries! Select one of the languages so that such people as are on earth may communicate therewith. Do likewise with respect to the scripts. God, verily, expoundeth for you that which will profit you and render you self-sufficient. He, of a certainty, is the Excellent, the Learned, the Well-Informed." [KITÁB-I-AQDAS]

- [1] This irrevocable decree hath been revealed from the immemorial dominion for the peoples of the world in general, and for those in government [اهل المجالس] in particular, since the execution of the commandments, ordinances and precepts revealed in the Book [Kitáb-i-Aqdas] hath been entrusted to the men of the divine houses of justice [رجال بيوت عدلية الهية]. This ordinance is the greatest means for the accomplishment of unity and the supreme instrument for the establishment of social intercourse and loving fellowship between the peoples of different lands.
- [2] It is evident that most people, on account of the dispersion of the languages [از تشتت لغات] of the inhabitants of the world, are deprived of social intercourse, friendship and the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom from one another. It is thus the case, as a result of the Divine Bounty and Grace, that all have been commanded to select a language-whether newly created or from among the existing languages of the earth-that everyone may converse therein. When this comes to pass the whole earth will be seen as one city [مدينه واحده] on account of the fact that all will comprehend the language of one another and understand their respective intentions. This will be the cause of the promotion and the elevation of the world. Should a person emigrate from his native land and arrive in any other city it would be as if he had arrived back in his own homeland.
- [3] Hold ye fast unto this directive [of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas], O Members of Parliaments [اهل المجالس] and civic authorities [المدن]! Should a person ponder a little [upon this directive] he would readily come to understand that what hath been revealed from the Heaven of the Divine Will is an expression of the Divine Bounty, the benefit of which

encompasses all. Yet, it is the case, that some servants suckle at the breast of negligence and ignorance in such manner that they transgress that which is beneficial, the excellence of which is both rationally and traditionally obvious and clear. Such servants, with the hypocrisy of wayward souls, have and will continue, to veil their eyes from that wisdom which is the basis and the cause of the progress of the world and the elevation of its peoples. Wherefore, verily, are they in manifest loss.

- [4] Every community speaketh its own language; the Turk, for example, in Turkish; the peoples of Iran, in Persian and the Arabs in Arabic. In addition, the people of Europe speak their own diverse languages[به السنه مختلفه خود]. Such multifarious languages are traditional among, and specific to, these aforementioned communities.
- [5] Yet, a further language hath been decreed such that all the people of the world would converse therein; so that all will understand one another's language and be capable of achieving their respective intentions. He, verily, is the Gate to love and kindness and to fellowship and unity. He, verily, is the Most-Great Translator [or Interpreter][ترجمان اعظم], and the very Key to the Ancient Treasury.
- [6] How many the souls who are observed spending all their time in the acquisition of different languages! What a great pity that man should spend a whole lifetime—the most-precious of worldly assets—in this manner. The purpose of such a man in these endeavours is the acquisition of the knowledge of different languages so that he might understand the intention of other peoples and what lies within their domain. Now if mankind would carry out what hath been commanded of him, it would suffice all alike - since they would free themselves from numerous impediments [separating them].
- [7] That proposition which is especially beloved, when presented before the Heavenly Throne, is that all should converse in the Arabic language. This, inasmuch as it is the most comprehensive of all languages[ابسط از كل لغات]. If a person were to become truly aware of the comprehensiveness [بسط] and the broad scope[وسعت] of this most-eloquent language he would assuredly select it [over other languages; as an international language of the distant future ?].
- [8] The Persian language is extremely sweet. The tongue of God in this dispensation hath spoken [revealed] in both Arabic and Persian. However, it [Persian] doth not and will never have the magnitude[بسط] of Arabic. Indeed, relative to it, all languages have been and will remain circumscribed. This is the most-gracious state of affairs[مقام افضل] which hath been mentioned. The purpose however, is that the people of the earth should select a single language [لغتی از لغات] and that all humanity converse therein.

This is that which hath been ordained by God and is that which will benefit all mankind if they did but know.

- [9] Likewise, in place of the particular scripts [*خطوط مخصوصه*] of diverse peoples, a single script should be adopted and all mankind write therein. Thus will all scripts ultimately be seen as a single script [*خط واحد*] and all languages a single language.
- [10] These commandments will jointly be the cause of the oneness of the hearts and the souls of the peoples of the world. He teacheth you that which is best for you. Take ye firm hold thereof, for He assuredly, is the Exhorter, the Counsellor, the Expounder, the Director, the Gracious, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.
- [11] All languages and scripts will ultimately become one and the diverse territories of the earth be seen as a single clime. Otherwise, therein thou shalt see moral obliquity, as opposed to peaceful tranquillity.

THE PRINTED TEXT OF THIS TABLET OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The largely Persian text of the tablet translated above is printed in at least two volumes; namely, [1] *Ishraq Khavarí's Ganj-i-Sháygán* (BPT Tehran 124 Badi^c [= 1967-8]) pp.210-213 and [2] the volume *Nafahát-i-Quds* (New Delhi, n.d.) pp. 5-8.* The text of both these printings are reproduced below. It is obvious that the tablet is to be dated after the time when the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was revealed and before Bahá'u'lláh's passing; that is, between c.1873 and 1892. Judging by the known dates of other tablets which contain similar material, it is most probably to be dated within the last few years of Bahá'u'lláh's mission. As an untitled tablet I am not aware of to whom (if to any single individual- or specific group [of Bahá'ís] ?) it was addressed.

* There are certain (largely minor) textual differences between these two printings of this tablet--see also the partial printing in *Fádíl-i Mazandaraní, Amr va Khalq²* Vol.4 pp.277-280 [Bahá'í-Verlag Hoffheim Langenheim 1986](there are again errors here!). The inferior version in *Ganj..* for example, has the tablet begin: "We revealed in My Most Holy Book (..*kitábí al-aqdas*).." whereas *Nafahát.*, correctly, does not have this possessive adjective.

TEXT AS PRINTED IN GANJ-I-SHAYGÁN

۵۸ - قد نزلنا فی کتابی الاقدس

یا اهل المجالس فی البلدان ان اختاروا لغة من اللغات
 لیتکم بها من علی الارض و كذلك من الخطوط ان الله
 یمین لکم ما ینفمکم و یمضیکم عن دونکم انه لهو الملمم
 الخبیر .

این امر میرم از جبروت قدم از برای اهل عالم عموماً و اهل
 مجالس خصوصاً نازل شده چه که اجرای او امر و احکام

(۲۱۱)

و حدودات منزله در کتاب به رجال بیوت عدلیه الهیه
 تفویض شده و این حکم سبب اعظم است از برای اتحاد
 و علت کبری است از برای مخالطه و و داد من فی
 البلاد . ملاحظه میشود اکثری از امم از تشتت لفاة
 اهل عالم از مخالطه و معاشرت و کسب معارف و حکمت
 یکدیگر محروم اند لذا محض فضل و جود کل مأمور
 شده اند به اینکه لفتی از لغات را اختیار نمایند چه
 جدید اختراع کنند و چه از لغات موجوده ارض و کل
 بآن متکلم شوند در این صورت جمیع ارض مدینه واحد
 ملاحظه میشود زیرا که کل از لسان یکدیگر مطلع میشوند
 و مقصود یکدیگر را ادراک مینمایند اینست سبب ارتقاء
 عالم و ارتفاع آن و اگر نفسی از وطن خود هجرت نماید
 و به هر یک از مدن وارد شود مثل آن است که در محل
 خود وارد شده تصکوا به یا اهل المجالس و المدین
 اگر نفسی فی الجمله تفکر کند ادراک مینماید که آنچه از
 سما مشیت الهیه نازل شده محض فضل بوده و خیر آن
 بکل راجع است و لکن بعضی از عبار از ثدی غفلت و جهل
 میآشامند بشأنی که آنچه خیر است و رجحان آن عقلاً
 و نقلاً ظاهر و مشهود است از آن تجاوز مینمایند و به
 مزخرفات نفوس غافله از حکمت الهیه که سبب و علت ترقی

عالم و ارتفاع اهل آن است چشم پوشیده و میپوشند
 الا انهم فی خسران مبین هر طائفه بلسان خود تکلم
 مینماید مثل ترك به ترکی و اهل ایران به پارسی و عرب
 به عربی و اهل اروپا به السنه^۱ مختلفه خود و این السن
 مختلفه مابین احزاب سداول است و مخصوص است به
 طوایف مذکوره و یک لسان دیگر امر شده که اهل عالم
 عموماً به آن تکلم نمایند تا کل از لسان یکدیگر مطلع
 شوند و مراد خود را بیابند اوست باب محبت و وداد
 و الفت و اتحاد و اوست ترجمان اعظم و مفتاح کل
 قدم چه مقدار از نفوس مشاهده شده که تمام اوقات
 را در تعلیم السن مختلفه صرف نموده بسیار حیف است
 که انسان عمری را که از اعز اشیا^۲ عالم است صرف اینگونه
 امور نماید و مقصودشان از این زحمات آنکه لسان مختلفه
 را بدانند تا مقصود طوایف و ما عندهم را ادراک نمایند
 حال اگر بآنچه امر شده عامل شوند کل را کفایت مینماید
 و از این زحمات لاتحصی فارغ میشوند و آنچه لدی —
 المرش محبوب آن است که جمیع بلفت عربی تکلم
 نمایند چه که ابسط از کل لفات است اگر کسی ببسط
 و وسعت این لفت فصیح مطلع شود البته آنرا اختیار
 نماید لسان پارسی بسیار طلیح است و لسان الله در این

ظهور به لسان عربی و فارسی هر دو تکلم نموده و لکن
 بسط عربی را نداشته و ندارد بلکه جمیع لغات از نسبت
 با و محدود بوده و خواهد بود و این مقام افضل است
 که ذکر شد و لکن مقصود آنکه لغتی از لغات را اهل
 ارض اختیار نمایند و عموم خلق به آن تکلم کنند هذا ما
 حکم به الله و هذا ما ینفع به الناس لوهم یحرفون و هم
 چنین سوای خطوط مخصوصه طوایف مختلفه یک خط
 اختیار نمایند و خلق عموماً به تحریر آن مشغول شوند
 تا جمیع خطوط خط واحد و جمیع السن لسان واحد
 مشاهده شود و این دو سبب اتحاد قلوب و نفوس
 اهل عالم گردد یعلمکن ما هو خیر لکم تمسکوا به انه لیس
 الواعظ الناصح الصبین المدبر المشفق العلیم الحکیم
 و بالاخره جمیع لسان و خطوط به واحد منتهی گردد و قطعات
 مختلفه ارض یک قطعه مشاهده شود الا تری فیها
 عوجا و لا امنا .

TEXT AS PRINTED IN NAFAHAT-I-QUDS

دین و ملاحظه میشود زیرا که کل زبان یکدیگر
 مطبق میشود و مقصود یکدیگر را ادراک نمایند این است
 سبب ارتعاشی عالم و ارتفاع آن و اگر فرضی از طرف
 حجت نماید و مجسمه یک از بدن دارد و مثل
 آن است که در محل خود دارد و دست کواچ با اهل الجلس
 و بدن اگر فرضی بی یکدیگر کند ادراک نماید که آنچه از
 سبب مشیت الهیه نازل شده محض فضل بود و چنین است
 بجز راجع است و لکن سبب از عباد الهی غفلت میسر
 میباشند تا اینکه آنچه حس است در همان آن غفلت
 و غفلت ظاهر میشود و است از آن تجاوز میباید
 و بجز غفلت بجز غفلت از حرکت الهیه که سبب
 و علت ترقی عالم و ارتفاع اهل آن است چیزی نمیشود
 و چه میشود الا ترقی در خیر بین لهم طاعتشان
 خود بخاطر نیاید مثل ترک بگی و اهل ایمان بیایستی
 بجهلی و کما حل بود با حسن خلق خود و اهل حسن خلقند

قد نزل فی الکتاب الاندلس
 یا اهل الجلس فی البلدان ان اختاروا لغتهم اللغات
 یتکلم بها علی الارض و کذا کتب الخطوط ان الله
 یمیزکم بکم لیسئلکم فی شئکم من و کذا کتب لغات
 العلم بکم لیسئلکم من و کذا کتب لغات
 از برای اهل عالم عموماً و اهل مجالس خصوصاً نازل شد
 چکه اجرای او امر و احکام و حدود است منزله در کتاب
 برجال است هدایت الهیه قوی میسر شد و این علم
 سبب غفلت است از برای است و علت ترقی
 است از برای اهل عالم و در ارض فی البلدان ملاحظه
 میشود اکثری از اتم از شش لغات اهل عالم از خط
 و مسامحت و کسب اصناف و حکمت یکدیگر که میسر
 لذا محض فضل و جوهر کل امور شده اند اینک لغت
 ما اختارنا نیند چه جدید است شروع و چه از لغات
 موجوده ارض و لکن آن منکر شوند و این صورت است

ع

با این احزاب متداول است و مخصوص است بطوری
 مذکور و بکس لسان دیگر آمدند که اصل عالمی
 بان سخن نماند مگر از زبان یکدیگر ملاحظه شود
 و مراد خود را بیانند اوست باین جهت و در ادوات
 و احتیاج او است ترجمان علم و منافع کفر
 چه مقدار از تکوینش مشاهده شد که نام ادوات
 در تعلیم السن مختلفه صرف نموده بسیار حریف است
 که انسان عسبر را که اعراضا عالم است حرف
 اینگونه امور نماید و مقصودشان از این زحمات که
 لسان مختلفه را بداند آن مقصود طوائف و اعراضا
 او را که نشانند حال را که آنچه امر شده حاصل
 شود کمال را کفایت بیست نماید و از این زحمات
 لا تخفی فارغ میشود و آنچه لای الیه برین محبوب
 است که جمیع لغت عربی و سخن نماند چه که
 ابط از کل لغات است مگر کسی بیاید و دست

این لغت فصیحی مطلق شود البته آنرا اختیار نشود
 لسان پارسی بسیار ملج است و لسان اشد از غیر
 لسان عربی و فارسی مسرود و سخن نموده و لکن لسان
 عربی را ندانسته و ندارد بلکه جمیع لغات از عربی است
 با و محدود بود و خواهد بود و این مقام افضلیت است
 که ذکر شد و لکن مقصود آنکه لغتی از لغات را اعلیٰ از غیر
 اختیار نمایند و همون غلطی بان سخن نموندند با علم
 و بدایه واقع به الناس و هم هم چون و همچنین سواهی
 خطوط مخصوصه طوائف مختلفه بکس خط اختیار نمایند
 و غلطی عموما بجز این مشمول شوند تا جمیع خطوط خط
 و جمیع لسان واحد مشاهده شود و این بسیار است
 قلوب و سخنش اصل عالم کرد و آیتیک که با جمیع مردم
 شکوایا تا لیسوا اعلا انصاح البین المدبر مشعل الیه و حکم
 و بالاخره جمیع لسان خطوط با هم می کرد و طوائف مختلفه
 این بکس خط نشانده شود انفا لای فی صاعوا و اولا

SOME SELECTED NOTES ON THE TABLET

The following notes are only selected attempts to clarify or comment upon some of the points raised by this significant tablet of Bahá'u'lláh. A multitude of related passages exist within the writings of the central figures of the Bábí-Bahá'í religions which directly or indirectly touch upon the key Bahá'í principle of the need for an international auxiliary language and script. They cannot possibly all be referred to here. To date such texts have neither been comprehensively collected nor translated into English or any of the other European languages. It remains for them to be studied in the light of contemporary linguistic knowledge and artificial language schemes. This is without doubt an important and pressing task and it is hoped that the foregoing translation will be of value to those contemplating it.*

* The comments to follow will be numbered according to the paragraphs of the translation printed above (pp. -)- there are not, of course, any paragraph markings in the original tablet of Bahá'u'lláh [such paragraph markings are interpretive].

[1] Having quoted that verse of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* which has to do with the selection of an international language and script¹ --a verse occurs right at the end of His *Most Holy Book* only being followed by two or three lines which have to do with the dual signs of the maturity of mankind and the forbidding of the taking of opium² --Bahá'u'lláh here begins His commentary. He states that the selection of an international language and script is an important divine decree; something that should concern all mankind generally and international governing bodies or assemblies (*ahl al-majális*) in particular. The verse of the *Aqdas* quoted and commented upon is addressed to what appears to be secular governments/ assemblies internationally : this is what would seem to be meant by *ahl al-majális fí al-bilád* (trans.=" Members of the Parliaments [or 'Assemblies'] of all countries ").³ The *Aqdas* phrase is further interpreted by Bahá'u'lláh in terms of it also being the especial concern (directly and/or indirectly) of Bahá'í institutions : if such is what is meant by "the men [persons representative?] of the divine houses of justice" (= *rijál-i buyút-i 'adliyyih-i illáhiyya*).⁴

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1. In the *Nafahát*.. text of the tablet translated above the verse of the *Aqdas* cited at its beginning ends with three divine names: *al-fuḍḍál* (= the Excellent), in other words, occurs at the beginning of the last phrase or before *al-'alím*, *al-kabír*. The *Aqdas* text cited in *Ganj*.. omits this divine name and apparently incorrectly reads(?) *al-buldán* (= countries) instead of *al-bilád* (also=countries [an alternative plural]): dittography - of the last two letters of *buldán* - seems also to have occurred in the *Ganj*..(*Aqdas*) text.
 2. It is verse 468 according to the Tumansky Arabic /Russian edition(St. Petersburg 1899 [last verse = No. 472]) numbering.
 3. The Arabic broken plural *majális* (sing. *majlis*) has quite a wide range of meanings; including, for example, (sing.) *assembly*. The phrase *ahl al-majális* (in verse 468 of the *Aqdas*) could equally correctly have been translated 'Members of Assemblies' (or the like); the latter translation possibly being superior (?) in having the ambiguity of indicating possible reference to governmental as well as to Bahá'í administrative assemblies (= *majális*) as may be implied in the interpretation of Bahá'u'lláh. (See the footnote below and the paragraphs to follow)
 4. The Arabic plural *rijál* = men used here calls to mind the male international legislative and governing Bahá'í body, the ' [Universal] House of Justice' (*bayt al-'adl [al-'azam / al-illáhiyya*] first elected in 1963). This body, it is worth noting, is referred to in the thirteenth *glad-tiding* of the *Glad-Tidings* (*Bishárát*) of Bahá'u'lláh as "The men of God's [the Divine] House of Justice" (*rijál bayt al-'adl al-illáhiyya*) [Text in *Majmú'at min alwáh hadrat Bahá'u'lláh*

In various of Bahá'u'lláh's writings of the 'Akká period the question of those responsible for choosing the future international language and script is addressed. Diverse though apparently complimentary statements are made. In, for example, the Sixth *Ishráq* of the *Tablet of Splendours*, (*Lawh-i-Ishráqát*) it is written:

"..We have enjoined upon the *Trustees of the House of Justice* (*umaná' bayt al-cadl*) either to choose one language from among those existing or to adopt a new one, and in like manner to select a common script, both of which should be taught in all the schools of the world.."5

By "Trustees of the House of Justice" (*umaná' bayt al-cadl*) is most likely meant persons representing the purpose(directly and/or indirectly) of the Universal House of Justice (*bayt al-cadl*). That these persons may be secular[non-Bahá'í] experts working for international governments-perhaps/ideally in consultation with or including Bahá'ís- seems to be indicated in various Bahá'í texts and scriptures. In Bahá'u'lláh's *Lawh-i-Maqsud* we read:

"..It is incumbent upon all nations (*jamí'c al-milal*) to appoint some *men of understanding and erudition* (*ashkhás min dhawí al-fahm wa'l-kamál*) to convene a gathering and through joint consultation choose one language from among the varied and existing languages, or create a new one, to be taught to the children in all the schools of the world."6

...(Maison D'Editiones Bahá'íes, Brussels, Belgium) 1980.p.43 Trans. Habib Taherzadeh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Bahá'í World Centre, Haifa 1978), p.26. (Henceforth = TB & TB.Tr.respectively). The fact, however, that the Arabic plural *buyút* (= houses) is used rules out direct reference to the Universal House of Justice. The use of *rijál*(=men) however, may not be gender specific. It could be argued that by the "men of the divine houses of justice" is meant the members of the now many local 'Houses of Justice' (= LSA's: currently c.20,000 worldwide) or even all Bahá'í administrative bodies with an executive capacity (?)-- National Spiritual Assemblies were not directly mentioned by Baha'u'llah; both the 'Universal House of Justice' and 'Local Houses of Justice'(LSA's) were individually referred to by Him as *bayt al-cadl* = 'House of Justice'. Alternatively, and perhaps more probably, this phrase could indicate persons directly or indirectly representative of Bahá'í ideals and of Bahá'í administrative bodies (see the following paragraphs).

5. Text in TB p.26;TB.Tr.p.127.

6. Text in TB p.145; TB.Tr.pp.165-6

Here it is learned or expert individuals who are to collectively choose or create an international auxiliary language.

In the third glad-tidings of Bahá'u'lláh's *Glad-Tidings (Bishárát)* this is said to be the task of sovereigns or ministers of the world:

" ..This decree hath formerly streamed forth from the Pen of the Most High: It behoveth *the sovereigns of the world...or the ministers of the earth (al-mulúk..aw wuzará' al-cálam)* to take counsel together and to adopt one of the existing languages or a new one to be taught to children in schools throughout the world, and likewise one script." ⁷

No attempt can be made here to harmonize these texts. There exist also various interpretive passages within the tablets or talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters of Shoghi Effendi-:⁸

"..a universal language shall be adopted and be taught by all the schools and institutions of the world. A **committee appointed by national bodies of learning** shall select a suitable language to be used as a medium of international communication. All must acquire it. This is one of the great factors in the unification of man."⁹

"Regarding the whole question of an International Language and its relation to the Faith : We, as Bahá'ís, are very anxious to see a universal auxiliary tongue adopted as soon as possible; we are not the protagonists of any one language to fill this post. If the governments of the world agree on an existing language, or a constructed, new tongue, to be used internationally, we would heartily support it because we desire to see this step in the unification of the human race take place as soon as possible.." ^{9a}.

7. Text in TB p.38;TB.Tr.p.22

8. Such interpretations--when comprehensively and correctly understood-- are authoritative for Bahá'ís.

9. From a talk delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Philadelphia (USA) on 9th June 1912 printed in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace ...Comp. Howard MacNutt [2nd Ed.Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette Illinois] 1982 p.182.*

9a. Directive No.105 in *Directives from the Guardian (Bahá'í Pub.Trust New Delhi 1973) p.39 (= Letter of Shoghi Effendi dated December 1945).*

That the selection of an international auxiliary language and script would greatly facilitate global communication, peace and unity is stated here as in very many of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The verse of the *Aqdas* cited is seen to revolve around and be a directive for attaining global unity. As the achievement of the oneness of mankind lies at the heart of the Bahá'í Faith so too must the principle of the auxiliary language and script. While the latter idea has been spoken about in diverse ways for many centuries it has now become a central teaching of an emergent world religion.

[2] In this paragraph it is made clear that the imperative need for an international language and script is dictated by inhibitory language barriers, by "the dispersion of the languages (*tashattut-i lughát*) of the inhabitants of the world." Currently there are something like 4,000 languages worldwide and hundreds of diverse scripts.¹⁰

10. It is possible (though not certain) that Bahá'u'lláh is here alluding to those religious traditions which have it that mankind's original language was one--all human beings spoke the same tongue in primordial times--and that language was diversified ("confused") as human beings spread about 'globally' and became corrupted. In the Hebrew Bible the story of the 'tower of Babel' (Genesis 11:1ff) includes verses which set forth such a scenario:

GENESIS

11 Now the whole earth had one language and few words. ²And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." ⁵And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. ⁶And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Detailed notes on the significances of this part of the Genesis text cannot be gone into here. Reference should be made to the commentaries. See, for example C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11...tr. J. Scullion* (SPCK London 1984) p.531ff. Worth noting in this connection is the fact that certain biblical texts indicate a connection between primordial and eschatological times. Among other things the original oneness of language is to be reestablished in the millennial age. This is predicted in Zephaniah 3:5-11 :

" Yea, at that time I will change the speech of all peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord."

Bahá'u'lláh refers to the story of the 'tower of Babel' in his *Tablet on Pre-Adamic times (Lawh-i qabl-i Adam)* also known as *Lawh-i 'Abd al-Razzáq*. It is largely translated by Shoghi Effendi in the volume *Gleanings from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London 1949) Sect. LXXXVII (= pp.171-4). It is planned to write a commentary upon this significant tablet in a subsequent issue of the BSB.

In the expression "the dispersion of the languages" the word *dispersion* (as indicated) translates *tashattut*. This Arabic word is a verbal noun of the 5th form of the root *shatta* (= to be scattered, dispersed...) and doubtless indicates the widespread dissemination of the thousands of existing languages. The very multiplicity of contemporary human languages is a major barrier to international understanding and the companionship of persons of different parts of the world . Language barriers constrain the advance of the arts and sciences. They inhibit mutual understanding and loving fellowship. It is in order to overcome such limitations that Bahá'u'lláh advocated the adoption of either an existing natural language or a newly created artificial one in order to function as an international auxiliary language.

In his book *The Artificial Language Movement* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd 1985) Andrew Large gives an excellent appraisal of the artificial language movement. Among other things he points out that "... constructed languages can avoid the irregularities of syntax, morphology and phonology which so often plague their natural cousins, and which so handicap second-language learning" (p. 182). Many attempts have been made to reverse the 'curse of Babel'. Since the early 17th century--and to some extent earlier also--several hundred artificial/constructed languages (as well as adapted naturalistic languages) have been created for the purpose of universal or multi-national communication . Among the best known today are Esperanto, Ido, Volapük, Interlingua, Novial and the hybrid Glosa. In 1924 the *International Auxiliary Language Association* (IALA) was established in New York: its aims seem to have been somewhat circumscribed by western cultural/lexicographical ('Anglo-Romanic') bias. Western political and demographic factors to a considerable extent restrain true internationalism in the selection, emergence and implementation of a truly global auxiliary language and script.

[3] At the beginning of this paragraph it is both the *ahl al-majális* (tr. Members of Parliaments [= Members of Assemblies]) and the members of "civic authorities" (*al-mudun* [pl.sing. *madínah*]) who are called to hold fast to the directive of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (verse 468). As *al-mudun* signifies cities and here most probably refers to persons who administer them it has been translated "civic [=of the city/municipal] authorities".

[5] Having mentioned the existence of various middle eastern (Turkish, Persian and Arabic) and European languages and the communities who speak them (in [4]) Bahá'u'lláh now underlines the need for a "further language", an international auxiliary language. It is in the light of God's revealing this directive in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* that He is referred to as " the Gate to love and kindness and to fellowship and unity (*báb-i muḥabbat va vidád wa ulfat va ittihád*)". Furthermore, God is, among other things, described as the "Most-Great Translator [or, Interpreter]"; the *turjumán-i a'zam*. The Arabic word *turjumán* (derived

from the Hebrew/Aramaic/Syriac cognate root¹¹ ; Ar. *tarjama* = to translate [from one language to another], interpret , expound... { *mutarjim* = translator, interpreter }) apparently describes God as the supreme Divinity capable of translating and/or interpreting all languages-into an international auxiliary or global language (see [7])?

[6] Bahá'u'lláh now outlines the time-consuming nature of language learning. Human beings can waste a whole lifetime acquiring different languages.¹² Should mankind adopt an international auxiliary language--as recommended in the Most Holy Book--all mankind would be liberated, save themselves great labours, and derive significant benefits.

[7] Apparently going beyond the immediate need for an international auxiliary language Bahá'u'lláh in this paragraph seems to spell out the greatness of the Arabic language as a possible global language of the distant future. That all mankind should ideally (in future) adopt Arabic would be especially beloved of God;of Bahá'u'lláh.¹³

In the *Eighth Leaf of His Words of Paradise* (*Kalimát-i Firdawsíyyih*) Bahá'u'lláh according to Shoghi Effendi¹⁴ refers to a "far distant time" when He states:

11. It is perhaps worth noting that the Jewish Aramaic interpretive translations or paraphrases of portions of the Hebrew Bible are known as *Targums*. Neither the derived Arabic verb *tarjama* nor the verbal noun *turujam* (or other derivatives) are found in the Arabic Qur'án.
12. In his *Persian Bayán* (IV.10) the Báb had forbidden the learning/study of (dead) foreign languages. Bahá'u'lláh in His *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, on the other hand, specifically abrogates this law and recommends the learning of foreign languages for Bahá'í missionary purposes.
13. I have interpreted this paragraph of the tablet in the light of Shoghi Effendi's explanation of the Eighth Leaf of the *Words of Paradise* (see following).
14. In the volume Helen Hornby, *Lights of Guidance, A Bahá'í Reference File*² (New Delhi, India 1988) p.340 [No.1141] the following letter of Shoghi Effendi is printed:
 "What Bahá'u'lláh is referring to in the Eighth Leaf of the Exalted Paradise is a far distant time , when the world is really one country , and one language would be a sensible possibility.It does not contradict His instruction as to the need immediately for an auxiliary language."

مِنْ قَبْلِ قَلْنَا إِنَّ التَّكَلَّمَ مُقَدَّرٌ بِلِسَانَيْنِ . وَيَجِبُ بَدَلُ
 الْجَهْدِ حَتَّى يَنْتَهِيَ إِلَى لِسَانٍ وَاحِدٍ وَكَذَلِكَ خَطُوطُ الْعَالَمِ
 لِكَيْلَا تَضَيِّعَ حَيَاةَ النَّاسِ فِي تَحْصِيلِ الْأَلْسُنِ الْمُخْتَلِفَةِ بَاطِلًا
 15. حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ جَمِيعُ الْأَرْضِ مَدِينَةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَقْلِيمًا وَاحِدًا .¹⁶

"We have formerly ordained that people should converse in two languages, yet efforts must be made to reduce them to one, likewise the scripts of the world, that men's lives may not be dissipated and wasted in learning diverse languages. Thus the whole earth would come to be regarded as one city and one land."¹⁶

The Arabic language was very highly regarded by Bahá'u'lláh--see further below on [8]. From the time of the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (c.570-622 C.E.) and the rise of the religion of Islám it was the "language of Revelation"¹⁷ Muḥammad spoke Arabic and revealed the Qur'án in that language. [North]Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family being a S.[W.] Semitic branch--it has connections with the N.W. Semitic branch of which Hebrew, the language of {most of} the Old Testament is an example. Aramaic, the language of Jesus (He almost certainly also knew Hebrew [and some Greek?] as well) Ugaritic and Ethiopic, for example, are also Semitic languages, while Persian is grammatically very different being a member of the Indo-European language group.

With the conquests of Islám (7th-8th centuries) Arabic became much more than a language confined to the (bulk of!) the Arabian peninsular. It was adopted and lexically enriched by conquered populations--notably their upper classes--who had been, for example, speakers of Greek, Aramaic, Coptic, Berber and Iranian.¹⁸ Grammatically and lexically, Arabic became an extremely sophisticated medium for the expression of scientific and philosophical as well, of course, as religious concepts.

From early times Muslims developed an extraordinary regard for the Arabic language; the language of the "Word of God"(the Qur'án; 'God's language') and the tongue of the Prophet Muḥammad. The Qur'án was seen by many of the orthodox as "a literal transcript of the Word of God from a safely preserved tablet (*lawh mahfúz*) in heaven revealed to Muḥammad in Arabic"¹⁹ Muslim

15. Arabic text in TB p.37.

16. Translation in TB.Tr.p.68.

17. Refer Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet on the Pre-Adamic period* in *Gleanings*.. p. 173.

18. A considerable number of Pahlavi (Middle Persian) and New Persian loanwords entered into Arabic in the early Islamic centuries. For some details refer the entry *Arabic* in *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vol.1. 229ff.

19. A.Tibawi, *Is the Qur'án Translatable?..* in *Arabic and Islamic Themes*..(London:Luzac and Co. Ltd. 1976)p.72.

expositions of the doctrine of the inimitability (*i^c jāz*) of the Qur'ān often included glorifications of the Arabic language. The 9th century (CE) philologist Ibn Qutaybah by no means stood alone when he asserted that Arabic is unique among languages and superior to them all.²⁰ Within the *Treatises of the Brethren of Purity (Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Safā')* there are passages which are "emphatic in affirming that Arabic represented the perfection of human speech (*tamām al-lughah al-insāniyyah*), and that accordingly God revealed the Qur'ān in it. Therein the victory of Islam over all other religions and existing languages is envisaged in the light of the nobility and untranslatability of Qur'ānic Arabic.²¹ Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the greatness of the sacred Arabic language is fully in line with and to some extent goes beyond time honoured Islamic perspectives. Like many other points of Bahá'í doctrine it is essentially neo-Islamic.

In [7] Bahá'u'lláh explains the importance of Arabic by referring to it as "the most comprehensive of all languages (*absat az kull-i lughát*)" as well as one "most eloquent" (*fushá* = [alternatively] most perspicuous/clear [classical] Arabic language)). It is characteristically *bast* = 'eloquent' [or, alternatively-: extended, extensive, expansive, comprehensive, abundant] and *wus^cat* = 'of broad scope' or 'great amplitude/breadth/width/compass'. As indicated we have read *fushá* (= a feminine superlative?), translated (loosely) "most eloquent". This word has connotations of the superlative flawlessness, correctness, and purity or perspicacity of the (literary, classical) Arabic language or speech. The Bahá'í respect and regard for the Arabic language is thus extremely high.

It is perhaps worth pointing out that, among other things, the Arabic verbal system is particularly remarkable. It permits the formation of derived stems (I-XIV+) from basic trilateral (and other) roots--many not actually used-- with special subtle

20. Refer Tibawi op.cit. p.82.

21. See *ibid* p.82. It is almost certainly the *Ikhwān al-Safā'* or (loosely) *Brethren of Purity* who are referred to (as the 'Society of Friends') by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in (the English record of[-the original text does not seem to exist]) his famous talk delivered at the Friend's [presumably Quakers] Meeting House, (St. Martin's Lane, London on Sunday January 12th 1913 (For the English text see *Paris Talks*. 11th Ed. BPT. London 1969 pp.173ff.)) Both the Bab and Baha'u'llah were almost certainly familiar with the Arabic *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Safā'*: these were certainly studied and discussed in Sufistic and other circles in Shiraz in the early 19th century.

nuances allowing for a vast possible expansion of vocabulary-or innumerable neologisms.^{22.}

Today Arabic is the most important language of the Semitic group being spoken by over 100 million people. Its history and linguistic nature cannot possibly be adequately set forth here.^{23.}

A great many of the revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are in the Arabic language--perhaps most of their major works. The Persian of Bahá'u'lláh is often highly Arabized (with the exception, for example, of certain of the 'Tablets to Zoroastrians').The Báb's first major work, the celebrated *Commentary on the Súra of Joseph/ 'Stature of the Names'* [?] (= *Tafsír Súra Yúsuf/ Qayyúm al-Asmá'*) as well, for example, as all but one of Bahá'u'lláh's 'Tablets to the Kings' and *His Most Holy Book* (*al-Kitáb al-Aqdas*) are in Arabic. The 'twin Manifestations' of the Bahá'í era made frequent reference to and were greatly influenced by the language and style of the Qur'án. They sometimes drew upon Arabic traditions and orations ascribed to the Imáms of the twelver Shi'ites-- note their references to the cosmologically and imamologically [and for Bahá'ís prophetically] significant *Sermon of the Gulf* (*Khutbat al-Tutunjiyya*) ascribed to Imám 'Alí. Their Arabic often exhibits interesting features of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. A good many of Bahá'u'lláh's Arabic tablets contain rhythmic or poetic phrases or passages that are '*dhikr*-like' in the sense of being meant to be 'heard' and experienced spiritually rather than (or as well as) being merely intellectually understood. Such for example, seems to be the 'significance' of the rhythmic dynamism of the following line in His Arabic *Súrat al-Khitáb*:^{24.}

-
- 22 . Certain of the Báb's neologisms operate on this basis: see especially the Arabic of certain parts of his *Kitáb al-Asmá'*.
- 23 . I am not at all qualified to attempt this. See though for example, art. 'Arabiyya' in the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* Vol.1.p.36ff ; art. *Arabic Language* in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York:Ktav 1971>) Vol.3 p.238f; M.Bateson, *Arabic Language Handbook* (1967); A.Beeston, *The Arabic Language Today* (1970); A. Chejne, *The Arabic Language, its Role in History* (1969); J.Haywood & H.Nahmad, *A new Arabic Grammar of the written language* (Lund Humphries, London 1979) J.M.Cowan (Ed), *Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary* (5th Edition, Spoken Languages Services , Inc. 1990 [?])
- 24 . The original text of this tablet has not, as far as I am aware, been published. The passage cited is only a random sample (there are others more abstruse) of rhythmically dynamic passages in Bahá'í scripture. It is virtually, if not completely impossible, to translate such texts so as to convey their rhythmic dynamism . In some of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets content and strict grammar are, at times, subordinate to the poetic or *dhikr* dimension.

ذكر الله على هَيْتِ النارِ في هَيْكَلِ النورِ من سِدْرَةِ الانسانِ
 باذنِ الرحمانِ قد كان في قَطبِ الجنانِ بالحقِّ مشهوراً .

In His revolutionary and often ecstatic/ 'stream of consciousness' (*shath*) type revelations the Báb sometimes ignored or transcended established rules of grammar and syntax--as did Bahá'u'lláh. Oriental enemies of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh as well as certain western orientalists (including E.G.Browne) signally failed to appreciate the ecstatic-Sufistic or revolutionary dimensions to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh's sometimes ungrammatical revelations. They both openly acknowledged the ungrammatical nature of certain of their revelations. Their occasional transcendence of grammar and syntax had little or nothing to do with lack of respect for the Islamic and one of the Bábí-Bahá'í 'languages of revelation'. Bahá'u'lláh sometimes incorporates into His *alwáh* abstruse or esoteric terminology deriving from Persian mystic poets or from Shi'ite Sufis and mystagogues of the school of Ibn 'Arabí (d. 1240). The extensive use of such terminology greatly enriches the poetic beauty and mystic interiority (*báṭin*-dimension) of a significant proportion of His (early) revelations.

[8] Scattered throughout Bahá'u'lláh's writings are further testimonies to the importance or greatness of the Arabic and Persian languages. They indicate that Bahá'ís could thoroughly agree with the saying, "*Persian is the language of Paradise, but*

25. See the compilation. *Questions and Answers (Risála Su'ál va Jawáb)* in INBA Xerox Coll. Vol.63. At one point within this work Bahá'u'lláh responds to a question about why some of the revealed verses are discrepant (pp.25-6).His reply is as follows:

"A great number of tablets were revealed and their original draft sent away without revision; in accordance with Our command, therefore, they were reread in the holy presence and altered to coincide with grammatical usage, so that the hostile may have no pretext for objection. Another reason for this was that since in the new style (*qá'idah[-i] jadíd*) characterizing the Utterance [*bayán*] of His Holiness the Herald [= the Báb]..grammatical rules were found to have been treated loosely, for the sake of convenience and brevity that which conformed to usage was revealed in substitution. (Tr.[unofficial] unpublished ms by Marzieh Carpenter et al.(np [USA] nd.)

Arabic is the language of God".²⁶ Among the questions put to the Persian Prophet Bahá'u'lláh (through Mírzá Abú Fadl Gulpayganí) by the then Zoroastrian agent in 19th cent. Iran, Mánakjí Limji Hataria (=Mánakjí Sáhíb) was one about the wisdom or significance of His revealing large numbers of tablets (*alwáh*) in Arabic.²⁷ Among the points of interest (they cannot all be set out here), it is stated that "*..in reality,[the] Persian [language] is extremely sweet (shirín) and beloved (mahbúb).*" Baha'u'llah underlines the importance of Persian as the language of the Persian Manifestation of God but highlights the supernal greatness and linguistic magnitude of Arabic--using terminology very similar to that in the tablet translated above. There is no doubt about the "sweetness" (*haláwat*) of Persian but it does not have the *bast* or *wus^cat* (see above) of Arabic. Arabic is linguistically incomparable. No other language can be compared to it: it is matchless. As in the tablet translated above, it is made clear that "The tongue of God (*lisán alláh*) in this dispensation hath spoken [revealed] in both Arabic and Persian" (from [8] above). In addition, for example, in the *Lawh-i Amín*, after mentioning the importance of any language which is the vehicle of communication with the Divine or the vehicle of Divine guidance (Persian, Turkish and Arabic are mentioned), Arabic is singled out as being (3 Arabic superlatives are used): *afṣah*, ("most eloquent") *absaṭ*, ("most comprehensive") and *awsa^c* ("of broadest scope/ of greatest width") (cf. above).²⁸ Very similar is the following line from another Persian tablet: "*..the Arabic language is most excellent (aḥsan) while the Persian is supremely sweet (ahlā)*".²⁹

26. This saying(= hadith?) is cited in C.Glasse's entry *Arabic* in his *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (London:Stacey International 1989) p.47.

27. The text of this as yet untranslated tablet is known as the *Lawh-i Mánakjí Sáhíb* published in 'Abd al-Hamíd Ishraq Khavarí (Ed), *Má'ida-yi Asmaní* (Tihran BPT.) Vol.7 pp.148-173 (see esp.pp.170-173).

28. Refer *Payám-i Asmaní az intisharát-i Payám-i Baha'í..*(145 Badí^c) p.108.

29. Cited in *ibid* p.108. See also the tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on p.109. On the importance of Bahá'ís learning Persian Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son wrote: "*Acquire the Persian tongue, so as to learn the meanings of the Divine words and know the Divine mysteries ,to develop an eloquent speech and to translate the blessed Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh.The Persian language shall become noteworthy in this cycle; nay, rather, the people shall study it in all the world*". cited in H.Hornby (Comp.), *Lights of Guidance..*No 1143,p.340.

[9] Here Bahá'u'lláh notes the plurality of scripts (there are probably a few thousand) used to write the diverse languages of the peoples of the world. He directs that efforts be made to ultimately reduce these scripts to one. A proportion of existing scripts were artificially created or were not evolved by the native speakers of specific languages. In the past such languages as Coptic and Turkish were written in scripts (largely the Greek and Arabic scripts) which were not exactly suited to them. Many modern scripts likewise, are far from perfect in terms of their ease of writing or being effective vehicles of language communication. Bahá'u'lláh left open not only the possibility of the creation of an artificial international auxiliary language but also that of a newly invented script in which to write it. Contemporary discussion of the latter possibility is less in evidence than the former amongst both Bahá'ís and others.

During the lifetimes of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh a considerable amount of debate took place in the middle east about oriental scripts and related linguistic issues. It seems very likely that Bahá'u'lláh was influenced by such contemporary discussions as took place on the need for reform of language and/or script.³⁰

In his last major work, the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (*Lawḥ-i Ibn-i Dhi'b* c.1891), Bahá'u'lláh makes the following remarkable statement about a new language and script--addressing the "Son of the Wolf" Shaykh Muḥammad Taqí Najafí (d.1914). He writes :

"At present a new language and a new script(*khatt-i badí'í wa lisán-i jadídí*) have been devised. If thou desirest, We will communicate them to thee. Our purpose is that men may cleave unto that which will reduce

30. See Bahá'u'lláh's ' *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*' (tr. Shoghi Effendi, pp.137-139) where it is reported that in Constantinople (in 1863) its Author recommended to Kamal Páshá (and indirectly to other [Ottoman] Government officials) the adoption and universal propagation of an international auxiliary language and script. The matter was not taken up by the mid-19th century Ottoman government (there were discussions about linguistic reform however) and Bahá'u'lláh expressed the hope that "the Persian Government" would adopt and carry out His proposition. Such again was not to be the case. Hence His counsels in the Most Holy Book and other Tablets referred to below. For further details regarding 19th century Iranian and middle eastern discussions about attempts to reform the Arabic alphabet see, for example, the important article by Hamid Algar, *Malkum Khān, Ākhūndzāda and the Proposed Reform of the Arabic Alphabet* in *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.5 (1969) pp.116-130.

unnecessary labour and exertion, so that their days may be befittingly spent and ended.." ³¹

The above passage has occasionally been understood by Bahá'ís as a reference to Esperanto which was created by Ludwig Zamenhof in 1887-8 -- about four years prior to the revelation of the text cited above. This opinion is not an authoritative Bahá'í viewpoint and for various reasons must be regarded as erroneous.³² Bahá'u'lláh did not communicate the nature of the newly created language and script to Najaff or anyone else. There are however, authoritative Bahá'í texts about the "new script" (*khatt-i badí'c*) (see below) as well as some curious statements about a script[s] invented by Bahá'u'lláh's (later excommunicated or 'covenant breaker') son Mírzá Muḥammad 'Alí (around 1890-91) --it is said to have been 'approved' by Bahá'u'lláh.³³

31. Text in *Lawh-i Mubárák Khitáb bih Shaykh Muḥammad Taqí Mujtahid Isfáhání..* (np. nd.) pp.162-3. tr. Shoghi Effendi, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Bahá'í Pub. Trust Wilmette, Illinois 1971) pp.138-9.

32. Both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi viewed Esperanto very favourably but did not state that it would become the international auxiliary language of the future. See for example, *Directives of the Guardian*, No. 105 pp.39-40.

33. Mírzá Muḥammad 'Alí certainly, during the last few years of His Father's life (and before he was excommunicated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá), devised a *khatt-i badí'c* (or in fact several of them) for the writing of the Arabic script. It has been reckoned that it is this *khatt-i badí'c* spoken about in the *Aqdas* and alluded to in the lines quoted above-- and which is now more or less forgotten. It can hardly be argued however, that Bahá'u'lláh--if He did speak favourably of Mírzá Muḥammad 'Alí's project--regarded it as the final or perfect form of the future *khatt-i badí'c*. He certainly envisaged a "new script" chosen by international bodies and not invented by His own son whose script hardly, in fact, resembles anything like an international and globally useful script. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi (as will be seen) taught that the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith did not divulge what the "new language and script" were to be.

Quite a large number of examples of Mírzá Muḥammad 'Alí's *khatt-i badí'c* are extant: including a letter explaining the nature of such scripts which he used for secret ['heretical'] correspondance after he had been excommunicated in the 1890's. I hope to write up the materials I have collected on this subject in a future issue of the BSB. Cf. for example though, E.G.Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (Cambridge University Press 1961) p.190; William McElwee Miller, *The Baha'i Faith: Its History and Teachings* (William Carey Library 1974) pp.163,172 [+Refs].

The following selected letters of Shoghi Effendi express the authoritative Bahá'í interpretation of the passage of the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* cited above and of the meaning or significance of the *khatt-i badí'*:

۲- خط بدیم و لسان جدید که در لوح شیخ مذکور کیفیت آن مجهول و در علم جمال قدم مکتون و مخزون چون طالبی یالت نشد اظهار فرمودند

(۱۹۲۲، ۷، ۲۷)

"The nature of "the new language and script" (*khatt-i badí' wa lisán-i jadíd*) which is mentioned in the Tablet to the Shaykh [= Lawh-i Shaykh Muhammad Taqí Najafí = 'Epistle to the Son of the Wolf'] is unknown , hidden and treasured up in the knowledge of the Ancient Beauty. In view of the fact that a seeker was not found He did not divulge it." (27.7.1933)

۱- خط و لسان بدیم کیفیتش مستور و مکتون ماند چون طالبی یالت نشد و استعمار نگشت لهذا از طرف مبارک اظهار و اعلان نگردید
(۱۲ ژانویه ۱۹۲۹)

"The nature of the new script and language (*khatt va lisán-i badí'*) remained concealed and hidden since the seeker was not found and enquiry was not made. Thus, on the part of the Blessed One [Bahá'u'lláh], it was neither divulged nor announced."
(12 January 1929)

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34. The Persian text of these letters (the English translation is my own [with some assistance from Navid Jaberi and Farzin Froughi]) was communicated to my wife and I in connection with a letter dated 15 January 1990 from the Universal House of Justice/Research Department in reply to various questions touching upon 'Bahá'í Languages of Revelation and Related Linguistic Issues'.

۲- در الواح مقدسه صريح است كه اگر نفسى سوال نمايد لسان و خط
 بهيچ مردو معلوم و مكشوف گردد ولى احدى طالب نگشت و از ساحت
 اقدس استفسار ننمود لذا تعيين آن محول بديگران گشت..
 (۲۷ ص ۱۹۴۰)

"In the sacred Tablets it is clearly mentioned that 'if someone were to enquire about the new language and script (*lisán va khatt-i badí^c*) both would become known and unveiled'; but, not a single person sought and no-one enquired of the Most Holy Court [Baha'u'llah]. It is thus the case that the specification of their nature (*ta^cyín*) was left to posterity (*dígarán*).."

(27 May 1940)

Stephen Lambden

THE INTEGRATION INTO THE BRITISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF RECENT
IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í MIGRANTS.

Moojan Moomen

With any group of exiles there are the alternatives of integration with the host community or isolation. Which path is followed seems to depend on a number of factors. The existence of a community of co-religionists in the host country is not in itself necessarily an assistance towards integration. The large number of Iranian Shi'is that have come to Great Britain since the Iranian Revolution have not integrated to any extent with the Indian, Pakistani, Iraqi or East African Shi'is that also live there. Each has tended to form a separate grouping, interacting with each other but not integrated. Political differences have also tended to divide the Iranian Shi'is more than religion has tended to unite them.

A conceptual framework for analysing exiles has been provided by Scudder and Colson [1]. They classify the stresses of relocation into three categories: (1) physiological (increased morbidity and mortality); (2) psychological (guilt feelings about having escaped when others suffered, bereavement reaction, depression); and (3) socio-cultural (economic disadvantage, loss of community supports, crisis of cultural identity). The responses to these stresses often result, at least in the early stages, in the following phenomena: (a) a feeling among the exiles that their situation is transitory and unreal leading to (b) failure to adapt to or identify with the host country; (c) increasing social isolation and failure to take any initiatives to improve their position [2].

The following statements are a preliminary attempt to apply such a conceptual framework to the Iranian Baha'is in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is a useful country to take as an example because it falls between the two extremes mentioned above among the countries of Europe and North America in that about 33% of its Baha'i community are Iranians [3].

There is insufficient information to perform a complete analysis of the above factors on the Iranian Baha'is in the United Kingdom. But the Iranian Baha'i exiles appear to have considerably fewer problems than comparable exile groups studied - the only comparable forced relocations over such a great distance and cultural difference that have been studied in any detail are the Vietnamese and Laotian refugees in the West [4]. There are no morbidity or mortality figures available but certainly the Iranian Baha'i exiles in general have not suffered the psychological and socio-cultural disturbances to such a great degree as is described for other groups. However, it should be stated that those Baha'i refugees arriving during and after the 1979 Iranian Revolution were showing adverse psychological and sociological features (they were more socially isolated and tended to seek out and form enclaves of others in their position particularly relatives; they tried to re-establish social and cultural patterns from the society that they had left behind; they took fewer initiatives to alter their situation or to improve their financial position) to a greater degree than those Baha'is whose relocation had occurred before the Revolution. Since the former group's departure was more sudden and traumatic, this difference is predicted by Scudder and Colson's model. However, even this group of post-Revolution refugees are already showing signs that many of them are passing out of the "transition phase" described by Scudder and Colson and entering the "stage of potential development" [5].

Without more extensive comparative work between those Iranian exiles who are Baha'is and those who are not, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions. Two reasons can readily be identified for the successful integration of the Iranian Baha'is, one of which they share with other Iranian exiles and one of which is particular to the Baha'is. The first, predicted by Scudder and Colson's model, is that they were a well-educated urban section of the Iranian population (there are of course also rural Baha'is in Iran but in general these have not managed to flee the country); the second is the emphasis on internationalism and community unity in the Baha'i teachings which encourages the host Baha'i community to assist with their integration into their new environment.

Much easier to demonstrate is the extent to which the Iranian Baha'is have integrated into the British Baha'i community. They are taking a full role in the administration of the community. Although no Iranian Baha'is are on the National Spiritual Assembly (the national administrative body), the delegates to the National Convention which elects the National Spiritual Assembly had 27.4% Iranians among their number in 1986 (see Table One). Since these delegates are voted for by all of the Baha'is in each community, this shows that the Iranian Baha'is were participating fully in the workings of the community.

**TABLE ONE: ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF DELEGATES TO BAHA'I NATIONAL COVENTION
IN THE BRITISH ISLES IN 1986**

	No.	%age
British	62	65.3
Iranian	26	27.4
Indian	4	4.2
Arab	2	2.1
Unknown	1	1.1
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Total	95	100.1

Source: List of Delegates to National Convention, distributed at British National Convention, Harrogate, April, 1987. Ethnicity has been assumed from the name of the delegate. In a few doubtful cases, oral enquiries were made. Included among the number counted as British are a small number of Americans, but these could not be distinguished by their names. They do not number more than two as far as could be ascertained from oral enquiries. Also included among the number counted as British was one person who is half-British, half-Iranian.

However, participation in administrative affairs may only signify a superficial level of integration. A more meaningful indication of the level of integration is the level of inter-marriage between Iranian and British Baha'is. It can be seen from Table Two that there were approximately twice as many marriages between British and Iranian Baha'is as between two Iranians. It is of course very difficult to be

TABLE TWO: INTER-MARRIAGE IN THE BRITISH BAHAI COMMUNITY

	Jun 73 - Apr 79		Mar 84 - Dec 86		Total	
		%age		%age		%age
European -European	45	56.3	72	45.6	117	49.2
European -Iranian	23	28.8	53	33.5	76	31.9
Iranian -Iranian	10	12.5	26	16.5	36	15.1
Miscellaneous and Unknown	2	2.5	7	4.4	9	3.8
Total	80	100.1	158	100.0	238	100.0

Source: The source for these statistics is an analysis of the names of marriages announced in the Baha'i Journal. Marriages were not announced in it prior to June 1973 (No. 217). During 1979, it ceased publication and a new journal appeared named Baha'i Monthly News Service which did not publish wedding announcements for several years. Then in March 1984, the Baha'i Journal reappeared. Hence the two time intervals in the above table. European is used in the table to indicate all those whose name indicates a European ethnic origin. The vast majority of these were of course British but a small number of Americans and continental Europeans would be included. The miscellaneous category includes a small number of Indians, Chinese and Japanese as well as some four or five whose ethnic origin could not be determined. Of course in a proportion of these marriages only one party is a Baha'i. This information unfortunately ceased to be recorded after June 1974 (No. 223). Up to that time, 5 out of 13 European-European and 1 out of 8 European-Iranian marriages included one party who was not a Baha'i.

certain of the exact significance of such figures without some comparison with similar figures for Iranians who are not Baha'is but they would appear to indicate a very high degree of integration into the British Baha'i community.

a conceptual framework for the analysis of dislocated people" in Art Hansen and Anthony Oliver-Smith, Involuntary Migration and Resettlement, Boulder, Co., 1982, pp. 267-87.

- 2) On psychological aspects see Mental Health and Exile, London, 1981; in particular Lilliana Munoz, "Exile as bereavement: socio-psychological manifestations of Chilean exiles in Great Britain", pp. 6-9; and Ana Vasquez, "Adolescents from the southern cone of Latin America in exile: some psychological problems", pp. 22-34.
- 3) Oral communication from a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom.
- 4) See James Pisarowicz and Vicki Tosher, "Vietnamese Refugee resettlement: Denver, Colorado, 1975-77", in Hansen and Oliver-Smith, op cit, pp. 69-81; Nicholas Tapp, "The re-creation of culture: Hmong refugees from Laos", Refugee Issues, vol. 1 no. 5 (1985), pp. 1-21.
- 5) Scudder and Colson, op cit, p. 274-5.

- 6) Fazel Mazandarani, Tarikh-e Zohur al-Hagg, vol. 6, undated manuscript, pp. 5-8; vol. 8, pt 1, Tehran, 131 badi'/1974, pp. 5, 74-6.
- 7) H. M. Balyuzi, The Bab, Oxford, 1980, p. 108n.
- 8) Mazandarani, op cit, vol. 6, pp. 65, 78; vol. 8 pt 1, 204, 230.
- 9) For further information regarding the Ashkabad exiles, see M.Momen, "The Baha'is of Ashkabad", paper presented to the conference "Central Asia: Tradition and Change", School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 7-10 April 1987.
- 10) The Baha'i World, vol.13, 1954-63, Haifa, 1970, pp. 449-457. There were in fact probably a greater number of Iranians than this since the names of a number of persons who moved to sensitive areas were not disclosed.
- 11) Numerous examples of this are mentioned in various texts; see, for example, references to Mirza 'Ali Mohammad ebn-e Asdaq, Molla Mohammad Taqi Boshru'i, and Molla 'Ali Bajestani, in Fazel Mazandarani, Tarikh Zohur al-Hagg, vol. 6, pp. 34, 63, 95; Hajji Mirza Haydar 'Ali in Stories from the Delight of Hearts (trans. and abridged A.Q. Faizi), Los Angeles, 1980, p. 12.
- 12) Among those who performed this function were Molla Mohammad Nabil Zarandi and Mirza Aqa Monir Kashani; see H.M. Balyuzi, Baha'u'llah, the King of Glory, Oxford, 1980, p. 131, 479.
- 13) Hajji Mirza Haydar 'Ali, op cit, p. 8.
- 14) Browne, Year..., pp. 522-3; Momen, Selections..., pp. 115-6.
- 15) The Baha'i World Centre in Haifa recently announced that their collection of these letters of Baha'ullah numbered some 15,000; and of 'Abd al-Baha some 27,000; The Seven Year Plan, Haifa, 1983, p. 22.
- 16) In 1873, for example, when there were difficulties in Akka for the Baha'is, permission for pilgrims to proceed was cancelled; see Balyuzi, Baha'u'llah, the King of Glory, p. 347.
- 17) E.G. Browne, A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Bab, Cambridge, 1891, vol. 2, pp. xxvii-xxix.
- 18) See Fazel Mazandarani, Tarikh Zohur al-Hagg, vol. 6, p. 9, 20, 22; vol. 8, pt 2, p. 73, 91.
- 19) E.G. Browne met this man in Shirazi see A Year among the Persians, p. 527-8; also M. Momen, Selections ..., pp. 118-9.
- 20) Mazandarani, Tarikh..., vol. 6, pp. 9, 21; vol. 8 pt 1, p. 120.
- 21) Ibid, vol. 6, p. 468.
- 1) Thayer Scudder and Elizabeth Colson, "From Welfare to Development:

ADDENDUM

Since completing the above survey, I have become aware of a paper by Chantal Saint-Blancat of the University of Padua which in fact represents the results of the research for a doctorate in sociology. She surveyed 115 Iranians in Venice. Of these 46% were practising Shi'is, 22% were non-practising Shi'is and 32% were Baha'is. Saint-Blancat finds that the Iranian Baha'is are more successful in integrating into Italian society. This broadly agrees with my findings above for Iranian Baha'is in the United Kingdom. I append the title and English summary of the paper.

Arch. Sc. soc. des Rel., 1989, 68/1 (juillet-septembre), 27-37
Chantal SAINT-BLANCAT

NATION ET RELIGION CHEZ LES IMMIGRÉS IRANIENS EN ITALIE

This article examines the role of mediation assumed by religion in the structuring of identity among iranian emigrés to Italy and, in particular, the typology of the relationship existing between social, national and religious identities. Also evaluated here is the real impact of identity constructs on the life strategies of the subjects and on their behavior in the host society.

Survey results revealed the following two elements: 1) it is not really religious identity as such which determines life choices, but rather the typology of the relationship existing between this latter and a national identity. The case of the Bahai's successful choice of integration into Italian society thus appears in sharp contrast to that of the Shiites for whom the national reference, in coincidence or in opposition with religion, remains the determining dimension of identity which structures the future of the subjects. 2) The second crucial element in determining life choices is their different conception of the social role of religion.

The bipolarism observed in identity illustrates the non-resolved conflict between two representations of Iranity, two visions of Shiism and its social interpretation, thus raising the issue of an "immigration" deludingly experienced as a parenthesis.

"Today the Speaker on Sinai (*mukallim-i túr*) calleth out in the Kingdom of Utterance (*malakút-i bayán*).."

When, on November 30th 1986, I completed my essay *The Sinaitic Mysteries: Notes on Moses/Sinai Motifs in Bábí and Bahá'í Scripture* - now printed in *Studies in the Bábí & Bahá'í Religions Vol.5. Studies in Honour of the Late Hasan M. Balyuzi* [Kalimat Press 1988 pp.65-183]-it might have been befitting that I quoted or made reference to the passage cited above; the opening words of a Persian Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh to the father of the late Hasan Balyuzi (d.1980), Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad Muvaqqir al-Dawlih.¹ It was the case however, despite the inordinate length of *The Sinaitic Mysteries...*, that a large amount of my notes were not written up and included. In this and a succession of future supplements I plan to set forth some of these unpublished notes and (firstly) to correct certain errors which unfortunately crept into the published text.

CORRECTIONS TO THE PUBLISHED TEXT.²

p.69 l.25 There should be a comma after the word *destroyed* not a full stop ending the sentence: thus, "..but not destroyed, the above mentioned...".

p.71 l.12f. The philologically impossible form *Jehovah* (= Y^e[Je]HoW[V]aH) is largely but not wholly "the result of the combination of the consonants of YHWH with the vowels of the traditional substitute reading 'adonai (Hebrew, "Lord")." It is the case that the first vowel was changed from an 'a' to a *shewa*['e'=':'], an almost indistinct 'vowel sound', in order to prevent a pronunciation possibly too close to the original. Historically, the "impossible form" *Jehovah* derives from Renaissance Christians - perhaps having first been used by a certain Petrus Galatinus in c.1518 ? - who ignored or inaccurately followed Masoretic convention. It has no support whatsoever in antiquity. The form *Jehovah* occurred for example, a few times in the English *King James Version* of the Bible(=

1. For the full text of the Persian Tablet (first line translated above) refer to the frontispiece/ illustration 'Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh' in Hasan Balyuzi's *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith* (George Ronald, London 1970).

2. *Key to abbreviations:* p.= page, l.=line, fn.=footnote.

the *Authorized Version* of 1611) and regularly (among other translations) in the *American Standard Version* of 1901.³

p.75 Qur'án 19:52-3 (Arberry trans.). The word prophet should begin with a capital letter (Prophet) and the word "We" be inserted in the last phrase: thus, "*..and We brought..*".

p.76 Qur'án 20:9-14 (Arberry trans.). The second line should read, "When he saw a fire, (*nár*) and he said...". (add the comma + the and). In line 4 add a comma after the word it (thus: "*..When he came to it, a voice cried, "Moses..."*). Add a comma between Holy Valley and Towa in line 6: thus "*...in the Holy Valley , Towa...*". The word myself in line 7 should begin with a capital letter as also the pronouns me and my in line 9.

p.78 Qur'án 27:7-9 (Arberry trans.). Change the word may into shall in line 3 and add a comma after the word so.

p.81 Qur'án 79:15-19 (Arberry trans.). Line 2 should read, "*..him in [not from] the holy valley...*".

Qur'án 7:143 (Arberry trans.). Place a hyphen in line 5 before the word if.

p.85 1.2-3. The transliteration of the words "*..Him Who conversed with Moses..*" (*mukallam musa* [sic.]) should here (and elsewhere) be that for the active (not passive) participle of of the Arabic verb *kallama* (= form II, to speak, talk..); namely, *mukallim mûsa* (= Per. *mukallim-i mûsa*). This correction needs to be made on the following pages 108,138,139ff(here not *mukallam at-túr* [sic.] but *mukallim at-túr*) 152 (here not *mukallam-i kalím* [sic.] but *mukallim-i kalím*), 153,155, etc.

p.107 The transliteration of "his Lord" rabbahu in the last paragraph should be rabbuhu.

p.174 fn.200. Add after the first sentence of this fn. tr. Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p.21.

Throughout the article a large number of personal pronouns referring to God, the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh or to other Manifestations of God should begin with capital letters. e.g. on page 89 in the tradition from Imám Ja'far al-Šádiq.

3. For an authoritative article on YHWH/"Jehovah" see Freedman - O'Connor, YHWH in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. 5 G. Botterweck & H. Ringgren Eds. tr. D.E. Green (Grand Rapids, Michigan. William B. Eerdmans (1986) pp.500-521. (See Bib.[p.500] and fns. for other key sources).

FOOTNOTES 160 ff.

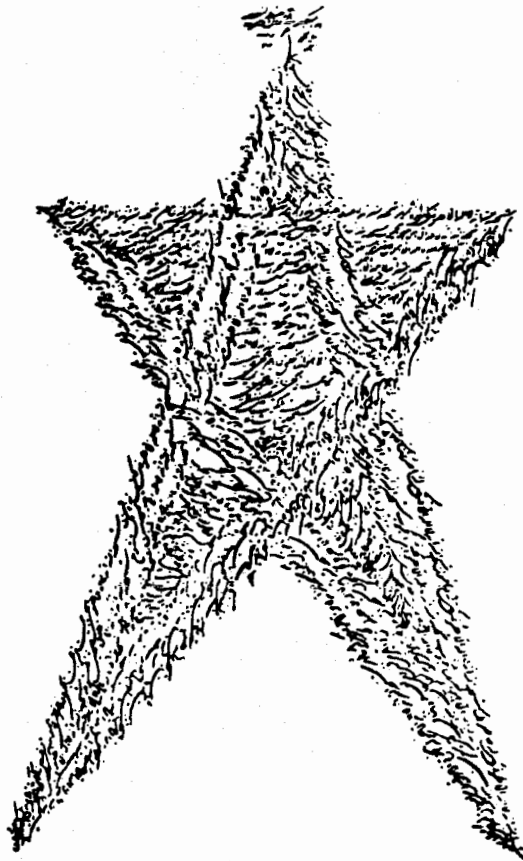
fn.18 The reference to the Freedman- O'Connor YHWH article in the fn. printed below should have appeared here.

fn.34 Add to this footnote: The cherubim (=pl. sing. cherub Heb. *Kerûb / Kerûbîm* ; Ar. *Kar[r]ûb[i] / Ka[r]rûb[íyy]ún* [spellings vary]) appear in various (Semitic) sources as composite, emblematic, mythological figures or (arch)angelic beings with various functions. They are mentioned over 20 times in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Gen.3:24; Exod. 25:18; Ps.18:10; Ezek. Chaps.1& 10) and once in the New Testament (Heb. 9:5), though not directly in the Qur'án. In a good many Jewish, Christian and Islámic writings they are of considerable angeological importance.

fn.61 Add reference before Nwyia (and to bibliography) to: G. C. Anawati & L.Gardet , *Mystique Musulmane Aspects et Tendances - Expériences et Techniques* (= *Études Musulmanes VIII*) Paris: Librairie Philosophique, J. Vrin 1961. pp.261-271 (= Appendix 1 L' expérience intérieure du prophete Mûsâ (Moïse) selon quelques traditions sûfies).

fn.200 Add before 'For examples...' tr. Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come p.21 .

PART TWO



TABLET IN THE FORM OF A STAR
in the hand of the Báb.

LETTERS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE/ RESEARCH DEPT.

TABLET TO A PHYSICIAN

The Universal House of Justice, Department of the Secretariat (letter dated 8 June 1989) has replied to our letter seeking further details regarding the Tablet to the Physician:

"In response to your letter of 9 May 1989 in which you convey the request of one of the believers for information concerning the Tablet to a Physician revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the following is an excerpt from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian on this subject.

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

The translator of this Tablet, therefore, if he is not to make serious errors, would "have to have a deep knowledge of this former school of medicine". Those portions of the Tablet that contain general guidelines for good health have already been translated into English and were published in "Star of the West", vol. XIII, no. 9 (December 1922), p. 252, a copy of which was enclosed with your letter. Another, and slightly different, English translation has been published in "Herald of the South", vol. 2, no. 4 (October-November 1927), p. 1.

Although a copy of the original Tablet is on file at the World Centre, an approved translation is not yet available."

This letter originally appeared in the
Australian Bahá'í Bulletin (September 1989) p.4.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

15 April 1987

Mr. Rob Stauffer
818 N. 30th
Renton, WA 98056
U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Further to our letter of 30 March 1987, it has been noticed that, contrary to what is stated in the first paragraph, the first question you submitted in your letter of 16 December 1986 was not included in the memorandum prepared by the Research Department. We are now instructed to rectify this omission.

In response to your question regarding the recitation of a specifically revealed verse if the Obligatory Prayer is missed on account of danger or insecurity, asking whether this requirement applies to prayers missed on account of forgetfulness, ailment, inability to say the prayer while being in the company of others, and inability to speak, the Universal House of Justice has directed us to share with you a compilation entitled "Notes on Obligatory Prayers and Ablutions" as you will no doubt be interested in the extracts from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the importance of reciting these prayers.

Concerning those who are unable to speak, in a letter dated 31 January 1949 written on behalf of the beloved Guardian in answer to a question about the recital of Obligatory Prayers it is stated: "The daily prayers are to be said by each one for himself, aloud or silent makes no difference."

The House of Justice points out that the law regarding actions to be taken in place of an Obligatory Prayer missed on account of insecure conditions is not binding upon the believers in the West. This is a matter on which the Universal House of Justice will legislate at the appropriate time.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[Signature]
For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure →

See BSB Vol. 4:2 (Jan. 1990) pp.42-3 [+ 44-6] = the letter of the U.H.J to Robert Stauffer dated 30th March 1987.

NOTES ON OBLIGATORY PRAYERS AND ABLUTIONS

From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

On pages 35-37 of "Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" in sub-section A of "Prayer", Section IV, entitled "Laws, Ordinances and Exhortations" are found explicit texts concerning obligatory prayers and ablutions.

From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Know thou that in every word and movement of the obligatory prayer there are allusions, mysteries and a wisdom that man is unable to comprehend, and letters and scrolls cannot contain.

The obligatory prayers are binding inasmuch as they are conducive to humility and submissiveness, to setting one's face towards God and expressing devotion to Him. Through such prayer man holdeth communion with God, seeketh to draw near unto Him, converseth with the true Beloved of one's heart, and attaineth spiritual stations.

O thou spiritual friend! Know thou that prayer* is indispensable and obligatory, and man under no pretext whatever is excused therefrom unless he be mentally unsound or an insurmountable obstacle prevent him.

("Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", 1980 ed. p. 82)

[*In the original text the word translated as "prayer" is used for the obligatory prayers.]

From letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to individual believers unless otherwise stated

Concerning the directions given by Bahá'u'lláh for the recital of certain prayers, Shoghi Effendi wishes me to inform you that these regulations - which by the way are very few and simple - are of a great spiritual help to the individual believer, in that they help him to fully concentrate when praying and meditating. Their significance is thus purely spiritual.

(5 November 1934)

The instructions that accompany these prayers, such as the washing of hands and face, of bowing down and of raising one's hands, have been definitely ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, and as such should be entirely and confidently carried out by the believers, and particularly by the Bahá'í youth on whose shoulders has been laid the chief responsibility of vindicating the truth, and preserving the integrity of the laws and ordinances of the Faith.

The daily obligatory prayers are three in number. The shortest one consists of a single verse which has to be recited once every twenty-four hours and at mid-day. The medium which begins with the words: "The Lord is witness

that there is none other God but He" has to be recited three times a day, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. This prayer is accompanied by certain physical acts and gestures. The long prayer, which is the most elaborate of the three, has to be recited only once in every twenty-four hours, and at any time one feels inclined to do so.

The believer is entirely free to choose any one of these three prayers, but is under the obligation of reciting either one of them, and in accordance with any specific directions with which they may be accompanied.

(To a National Spiritual Assembly, dated 10 January 1936)

Concerning the obligatory prayers; they are three in number, but the believer is free to choose any one of them. The long prayer should be recited once every 24 hours; the middle one three times a day: at morning, mid-day, and evening; while the short one, consisting of only one verse, should be recited once a day at noon. All these three prayers should be read with the believer facing the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, 'Akká, which is also called the Dawning point of Revelation.

(11 November 1936)

With reference to your question regarding the three daily obligatory prayers, the Bahá'í worshipper is not required to recite them all each day, but has to choose one, and should also strictly conform to any instructions revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in connection with its recital, such as the raising of hands, various genuflexions, etc. Those who for some reason or other, specially when physically unable to observe these regulations owing to illness or some bodily defect, cannot conform to these instructions, should preferably choose the short prayer which is exceedingly simple.

(7 December 1939)

He would advise you to only use the short midday Obligatory Prayer. This has no genuflexions and only requires that when saying it the believer turn his face towards 'Akká where Bahá'u'lláh is buried. This is a physical symbol of an inner reality, just as the plant stretches out to the sunlight - from which it receives life and growth - so we turn our hearts to the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh, when we pray; and we turn our faces, during this short prayer, to where His dust lies on this earth as a symbol of the inner act.

Bahá'u'lláh has reduced all ritual and form to an absolute minimum in His Faith. The few forms that there are - like those associated with the two longer obligatory daily prayers, are only symbols of the inner attitude. There is a wisdom in them, and a great blessing, but we cannot force ourselves to understand or feel these things, that is why He gave us also the very short and simple prayer, for those who did not feel the desire to perform the acts associated with the other two.

(24 June 1949)

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 23 September 1986

From: The Research Department

Apparent Contradictions in the Writings of the Guardian

The Research Department has studied the questions raised by Mr. Robert Stauffer in his letter dated 23 May 1986. Mr. Stauffer cited a number of examples of apparent contradictions in the writings of the Guardian and sought clarification. We provide the following comment.

General Principles:

The Universal House of Justice in a letter dated 7 December 1969 to an individual believer (see "Messages from the Universal House of Justice: 1968-1973", Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976, p. 38), enunciates practical guidelines for addressing and resolving apparent contradictions in the Writings. We cite the relevant extract for Mr. Stauffer's information:

Just as the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not in any way contradict the Kitáb-i-Aqdas but, in the Guardian's words, "confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas," so the writings of the Guardian contradict neither the revealed Word nor the interpretations of the Master. In attempting to understand the Writings, therefore, one must first realize that there is and can be no real contradiction in them, and in the light of this we can confidently seek the unity of meaning which they contain.

The beloved Guardian, in letters written on his behalf, sets out means by which the individual can avoid thinking in adversary terms and "confidently seek the unity of meaning" contained in the Writings. For example:

We must take the teachings as a great, balanced whole, not seek out and oppose to each other two strong statements that have different meanings; somewhere in between, there are links uniting the two. That is what makes our Faith so flexible and well balanced.

(19 March 1945 to an individual believer)

Likewise he is constantly urging them [the Bahá'ís] to really study the Bahá'í teachings more deeply. One might liken Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them. We believe in balance in all things; we believe in moderation in all things....

(5 July 1949 to an individual believer)

In applying such guidelines to the specific issues raised by Mr. Stauffer, clearly, the task is to seek an explanation that encompasses and reconciles the apparent contradiction, confident in the knowledge that "there is and can be no real contradiction" in the Writings.

1. Questions arising from the marriages of Bahá'u'lláh:

With regard to the marriages of Bahá'u'lláh, Mr. Stauffer expresses the view that "there is an apparent contradiction in the life of Bahá'u'lláh [in contracting "two Islamic marriages during the time of the Bábí Dispensation in total disregard of the Bábí social laws" which were revealed in the Arabic Bayán and about which Bahá'u'lláh must have been informed], and in the Guardian's own views of when the Islamic Dispensation ended". The bases for the perceived contradiction in relation to the termination of the Islámic Dispensation are the letters written on the Guardian's behalf to the effect that:

"...[Bahá'u'lláh] was only acting according to the laws of Islám, which had not yet been superseded".
(11 February 1944 to an individual believer)

"...He [Bahá'u'lláh] was following the laws of the previous Dispensation and the customs of the people of His own land".
(14 January 1953 to an individual believer)

and the statements in "God Passes By", (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 25 concerning the abrogation of the Qur'ánic laws by the revelation of the Arabic Bayán.

Mr. Stauffer is invited to undertake his own reconciliation of the apparent contradictions by employing the general principles outlined in the section above, and we provide the following references and comments to assist him with this process:

- (1) Concerning the lives of the Manifestations of God, Mr. Stauffer is referred to "The Kitáb-i-Íqán", (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 55-57; p. 104.
- (2) The revelation of laws is a gradual process and, within each Dispensation, the laws are progressively and gradually applied. See the Introduction to the "Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas", (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), pp. 3-6.
- (3) The laws of Islám were abrogated with the revelation of the Arabic Bayán. However, the practice of these laws did not cease immediately. According to the general principle of progressive revelation outlined in (2) above, the laws of the new Dispensation, which eventually supersede the old laws, are gradually disclosed to the believers and progressively implemented.

- (4) The Guardian confirmed that at the time of the marriages of Bahá'u'lláh, the "laws of Islám...had not yet been superseded".

2. The identity of the 24 Elders:

Mr. Stauffer points to "another apparent error" in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian that was published in "Bahá'í News", no. 171, p. 2 (November 1944). In this letter the Guardian makes reference to a Tablet revealed by the Master in which He identifies 19 of the 24 elders and, of the remaining five, He indicates that "so far we do not know who these five others are". Mr. Stauffer also cites two additional references, one in Taherzadeh's book, "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh", vol. 1, p. 201, where it is stated that 'Abdu'l-Bahá designated Hájí Mírzá Muḥammad Taqí as the twentieth of these elders, and the second in a letter to Mr. Stauffer himself of 9 July 1979 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, which states:

"The Tablet Mr. Taherzadeh refers to is a well-known Tablet of the Master, and it cannot be assumed that Shoghí Effendí was not cognizant of its contents."

In conclusion he asks, "why the Guardian chose to error [sic] on answering this matter when he is an infallible interpreter of the Faith's Writings and on matters pertaining to the Cause"?

In applying the general principles for the resolution of apparent contradictions, the following points might well be relevant to Mr. Stauffer's study.

- (1) The Universal House of Justice has affirmed that "the writings of the Guardian contradict neither the revealed Word nor the interpretations of the Master" (cited under "General Principles") and that the Guardian was "cognizant" of the contents of the "well-known Tablet of the Master" (cited above).
- (2) The Master wrote at least three Tablets in Persian on this subject at different times in His ministry. In the first two Tablets He identified only 19 of the elders, while in the third Tablet, revealed nearer to the end of His life, He identified the twentieth elder.
- (3) From a semantic perspective, the form of construction employed by the Guardian is subject to a variety of possible meanings, e.g., "we do not know the name of any of the five", or "we do not know the names of all five" (with the implication that the identity of some of the five may be known).
- (4) With regard to the Guardian's motivation for responding in the chosen manner, the only authoritative text available on this subject is in the letter written on behalf of the House of Justice to Mr. Stauffer which states:

"No doubt at the time the beloved Guardian wrote his letter, he did not consider it propitious to enter into such details for the friends in the West."

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 3 October 1989

From: The Research Department

Question from Dr. Iain S. Palin

We have studied the question raised by Dr. Iain S. Palin in his letter of 1 September 1989 and submit the following.

The quotation, "And if he feareth not God, God will make him to fear all things; whereas all things fear him who feareth God", which appears on page 55 of "The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys", 1945 ed., is an Islamic Tradition, or ḥadīth, on the authority of the Prophet Muḥammad. This Tradition, in slightly differing wording, is found in such Islamic books as Ghazzālī's "Iḥyā' 'Ulūmī'd-Dīn" (Beirut: Dāru'l-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyih, 1986), vol. 4, p. 170, and 'Abdu'l-llāh Anṣārī's "Kashfu'l-Asrār va 'Uddatu'l-Abrār" (Tihrān: Amir Kabīr, 1361 Sh), vol. 1, p. 168.

Reproduced with the permission of Dr. Iain Palin

From the Los Angeles Bahá'ís "The journal", Vol. 55/ No. 11
February 1987/ 143 B.E.

page 8

Dancing -- and the Bahá'í Center

The Administrative Committee has recently received clarification on the subject of dancing from the National Spiritual Assembly, based on information sent on 11 December, 1986 from the Universal House of Justice. The Guardian stated in a letter, "... There is nothing in the teachings against dancing..." (Lights of Guidance, #1161, p. 429). In another letter, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, "... he (the guardian) sees no objection in allowing the youth to have their meetings there (the Haziratu'l-Quds, Bahá'í Center)... but dancing he does not feel is appropriate..." (February 1947.)

In response to a direct inquiry by the Administrative Committee to the appropriateness of having "cultural dance performances" at the Los Angeles Bahá'í Center, we have received the following advice from the National Spiritual Assembly, based on the recent communication from the Universal house of Justice"

"Cultural dance in connection with devotional or cultural programs may be performed in the Bahá'í Center."

The National Assembly also referred us to the following admonition by the House:

"... great care should be exercised by your Assembly to maintain the dignity of the Haziratu'l-Quds..."

In summary, while there are no prohibitions against dancing in the Writings, social (recreational) dancing at the Center is not appropriate. Performances of cultural or devotional dances are permissible in the Bahá'í Center."

Communicated by Robert Stauffer.

**The Protection of Diversity
in the World Order of
Baha'u'llah**

**From the Office of Public Information, Baha'i World Center
December 29, 1985**

The keynote of the Baha'i approach to social organization is not uniformity, but unity in diversity. Central to the Faith is a system of Teachings and Institutions that assure freedom of individual opinion, that protect individual rights irrespective of race, colour, religion, nationality, class or attitude toward the Faith, and that encourage the full participation of minorities in the life of the Baha'i community. In the words of Baha'u'llah: "There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God."¹

The operation of this principle is most readily apparent in the Baha'i attitude toward belief itself. As a soul gifted with reason, the individual human being is not merely free to investigate reality but is responsible to God for doing so. In the *Kitab-i-Iqan*, in describing the qualities of the "true seeker" Baha'u'llah sets out the standard of honesty, of ardour and of purity of motive which must govern this lifelong search for truth. It is only as inner confidence begins to form that the soul can make that commitment of mind and heart we call faith. Consequently, no one is compelled to become a Baha'i; he becomes one by discovering Baha'u'llah as the Manifestation of God for our age and by freely declaring his belief to a Spiritual Assembly. In the same way, should he for any reason lose his faith and cease to regard himself as a believer, he is equally free to withdraw.

Within the Baha'i community, the encouragement of diversity of opinion has important implications in the realms of both belief and action. The Universal House of Justice has pointed out that "... individual interpretation is considered the fruit of man's rational power and conducive to a better understanding of the teachings, provided that no disputes or arguments arise among the friends and the individual himself understands and makes it clear that his views are merely his own."² This respect for differences in view is by no means limited to the views of Baha'is. In the words of Baha'u'llah: "Warn ... the beloved of the one true God not to view with too critical an eye the sayings and writings of men. Let them rather approach such sayings and writings in a spirit of open-mindedness and loving sympathy."³

Likewise, in the decision-making process by which the Baha'i community conducts its affairs, great value is placed on the wide range of opinion which believers bring to such consultations. Once every nineteen days, at the Feast, every member of the Faith has the opportunity to express his or her views or recommendations on matters of local, national or even international nature. The institution of the Baha'i convention, operating at regional, national and international levels, offers yet another series of opportunities for this frank expression of individual views. The standards which

govern such activities are clearly set forth in the Baha'i Writings:

The members thereof [i.e., of Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies] must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should anyone oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth, cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions.⁴

The integrity of these consultative processes is further protected by the nature of the institutions which exercise authority in the Baha'i community. All decision-making powers in the Faith, whether legislative or administrative, have been vested by the Founder in institutions which are democratically elected by the body of the believers. The members of these institutions, without exception, are chosen by the Baha'i community through secret ballot, plurality vote, and an electoral process free of any form of electioneering, the authority for such provisions being clearly expressed in the revealed Writings themselves.⁵

One of the responsibilities which Baha'u'llah assigns to the Administrative Order thus instituted is the protection of the rights of all persons. The ultimate guardian of this vital principle is the Universal House of Justice itself, whose Constitution explicitly sets out as responsibilities: "to safeguard the personal rights, freedom and initiative of individuals," "for ensuring that no body or institution within the Cause abuse its privileges . . .," and "to be the exponent and guardian of that Divine Justice which can alone ensure the security of, and establish the reign of law and order in, the world."⁶

The standard of justice for all persons, to which reference is made in the foregoing, has been summed up by the Guardian in a letter to the Iranian believers:

The point that I should like to impress upon their notice is that they should have the most scrupulous regard to safeguarding the legitimate per-

“In all transactions and dealings that affect basic human rights, the standard required of the chosen supporters of Baha'u'llah—a standard that must claim their unhesitating and unreserved acceptance, and which they must meticulously and assiduously uphold—is that they should not make the slightest distinction between friend and stranger, believer and unbeliever, supporter and antagonist.”

Shoghi Effendi

sonal and civil rights of all individuals, whatever may be their chosen career or station in life, and irrespective of their racial, religious or ideological backgrounds. It is not permissible in matters related to such rights to make distinctions and discriminations or show preferences. In all transactions and dealings that affect basic human rights, the standard required of the chosen supporters of Baha'u'llah—a standard that must claim their unhesitating and unreserved acceptance, and which they must meticulously and assiduously uphold—is that they should not make the slightest distinction between friend and stranger, believer and unbeliever, supporter and antagonist.⁷

The same letter makes it clear that the rights of persons hostile to the Baha'i Faith, even those who have violated the Covenant of Baha'u'llah, are included. Covenant-breakers are those who, while claiming to be faithful exponents of the Cause of Baha'u'llah, reject the authority established in Baha'u'llah's own Writings and seek to divert the Faith to their own ends. Their position is different, therefore, from that of people who are merely opposed to the Faith and who, for that reason, may seek in some way to harm or suppress it. 'Abdu'l-Baha said that the only way in which the Baha'i community can deal with the fundamental insincerity underlying Covenant-breaking is for the believers to avoid contact with those involved, quite as healthy people avoid close contact with persons suffering from contagious physical diseases.⁸ This avoidance of unnecessary risks must not, however, lead to any curtailment of the human rights of any person, including a Covenant-breaker:

... the mere fact of disaffection or estrangement, or recantation of belief can in no way detract

from the legitimate civil rights of free citizens or otherwise impinge upon them, even to the extent of the eye of a needle. If the friends were to act otherwise it would be tantamount to a reversion on their part in this century of radiance and light to the ways of those of a former age: they would re-ignite in men's breasts the fire of bigotry and intolerance; they would cut themselves off from the glorious bestowals and bounties of this promised Day of God; and they would frustrate the full revelation of God's grace and favour to men in this luminous age.⁹

Most particularly does the Baha'i Faith cherish and promote the development of minorities. The Guardian explained that this nurturing of the diverse elements which make up the human family is a moral responsibility of the community of Baha'u'llah.

Unlike the nations and peoples of the earth, be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist, whether belonging to the Old World or the New, who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate, the racial, religious, or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction, every organized community enlisted under the banner of Baha'u'llah should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it.¹⁰

This principle is given practical expression in the provisions governing the functioning of Baha'i administrative institutions. The passage quoted above goes on to state that “in such circumstances, as when an equal number of ballots have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between various races, faiths

or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it . . ."¹¹

The great importance which the Baha'i Faith attaches to the diversity of human thought and experience should not, however, suggest that it encourages those extreme forms of individualism which imperil the common good. On the contrary, the Faith teaches that it is by surrendering a degree of personal freedom to a commonly accepted system of laws that the individual helps create a social environment that returns far greater benefits in terms of personal freedom than the investment required. In a letter written on his behalf in 1938, the Guardian explained:

The Baha'i conception of social life is essentially based on the subordination of the individual will to that of society. It neither suppresses the individual nor does it exalt him to the point of making him an anti-social creature, a menace to society. As in everything, it follows the 'golden mean.' The only way that society can function is for the minority to follow the will of the majority.¹²

The Baha'i Administrative Order, some of whose principal features are outlined in the foregoing, has been described by the Guardian "not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order"¹³ envisioned by Baha'u'llah. In it one can already begin to appreciate the form which the Baha'i Commonwealth of the distant future will assume. Increasingly, as its institutions develop and as the members of the Faith are able to apply more fully and intelligently its principles, the capacity of this unique system to protect the immense diversity of the family of man will be apparent to every fair-minded observer.

Notes

1. Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings From the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, p. 217.

2. The Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 88.

3. Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings From the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, p. 329.

4. 'Abdu'l-Baha, cited in *Principles of Baha'i Administration*, p. 42.

5. Two Universal House of Justice compilations, *The Local Spiritual Assembly*, and *The National Spiritual Assembly*, contain extensive passages on this subject.

6. *The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice*, pp. 5-6.

7. Translation of a letter from Shoghi Effendi to the Baha'is of Iran, July 1925: courtesy of Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

8. In a letter dated 16 May 1925, the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer.

With regard to avoiding association with declared Covenant breakers, Shoghi Effendi says that this does not mean that if one or more of these attends a non-Baha'i meeting any Baha'is present should feel compelled to leave the meeting or refuse to take part in the meeting, especially if that part has been pre-arranged. Also if in the course of some business transaction it should become necessary to negotiate with one of these people, in order to clear up the business, that is permissible, provided the association is confined to the matter of the business in hand . . .

9. Letter of Shoghi Effendi, July 1925, cited above.

10. Shoghi Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 35.

11. *Ibid*, p. 35.

12. Shoghi Effendi, *U.S. Baha'i News*, Wilmette, Ill., January 1938, p. 2, reprinted in *Baha'i World*, Vol. XVIII.

13. Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 144.

[This letter was printed in the Baha'i magazine *Dialogue* (Ed. Steven Scholl) Double Issue 1988].

**Remarks by H.B. Danesh, Chairman, Executive Committee
to the Meeting of
the Fraternal Affiliate Associations for Bahá'í Studies
Wednesday, October 6, 1988
Ottawa, Canada**

The Association for Bahá'í Studies has now been in existence for thirteen years. As with many other things in the Faith, the Association was formed as a response of the Bahá'ís to the imperatives of the time and to the fact that the Faith had evolved to the stage where such a venture could be successfully undertaken and supported.

It was in the Five-Year Plan (1974-79) that the Universal House of Justice gave a number of National Spiritual Assemblies around the world a similar goal:

To cultivate opportunities for formal presentations, courses and lectureships on the Bahá'í Faith in Canadian universities and other institutions of higher learning.

The Universal House of Justice used the phrase, "cultivate opportunities," a process related to the dynamics of growth and development. In Canada, in 1975, the National Spiritual Assembly brought together about fifty people at the University of Ottawa for a consultation lasting two-and-a-half days.

The individuals chosen were from all walks of life. At that time in Canada, we had a very small number of those who are traditionally called "scholars." We invited Bahá'í women and men who had shown interest in the study of the Faith and who were deepened in the Faith. Some were scientists, some were in the humanities, and some were artists. In addition, we invited people who didn't have a very high level of formal education but who had a deep knowledge of the Faith. From the very beginning, we believed that the concept of Bahá'í scholarship is not a limited concept. However, we really didn't have a very clear idea at that time of how the Association would evolve.

Our consultation focussed on specific approaches such as having Bahá'í speakers at universities and establishing courses or lectures on the Bahá'í Faith. We came to realize, however, that we are involved in a long-term process of *cultivation* with the ultimate aim of presenting the Faith on a formal level at universities.

We then asked ourselves how universities usually accept a course to be presented. First, they determine that the subject is important, that it is worthy of study, that there is a body of information and knowledge available to draw from, that there are people who are knowledgeable in that field who can teach it, and that there are people who are interested in learning about it. Those who are interested in promoting a new branch of knowledge begin by publishing books and journals; by organizing conferences and coming together to exchange views; by establishing associations; and by gradually establishing the validity of the subject of research and study.

It was at that time that the concept of an Association for Bahá'í Studies was formulated. Its original name was the Canadian Association for Studies on the Bahá'í Faith. The notion was accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, and the National Spiritual Assembly appointed an Executive Committee with members from across Canada.

At first, we thought we should have two categories of members: full members (with an academic background) and associate members (without an academic background). Very quickly, however, we discarded that idea, realizing that everyone who studies the Bahá'í Faith has to follow the principles established by Bahá'u'lláh along the lines of independent investigation of truth. Bahá'u'lláh, in *The Book of Certitude*, very clearly describes the qualities of the seeker after truth. Those qualities are the most excellent description of a scientific and objective approach to any topic. The Guardian, in describing the Bahá'í Faith, has also said that the Bahá'í Faith is scientific in its method. We recognized, therefore, that any individual who is a Bahá'í is, by definition, a person who has already started the process of being a scholar of the Bahá'í Faith. Therefore, we decided full membership in the Association would be open to everybody.

But the Bahá'í community, reflecting the same problems as those of the general community, has had some difficulty with respect to the intellectual aspect of the life of humanity. In the Bahá'í community, as in the non-Bahá'í community, there is a dichotomy between the intellectual and the spiritual. People perceive these two conditions of human reality as different, and at odds

with each other—one cannot be both intellectual and spiritual at the same time. This concept is prevalent in society today. People consider emotions and the stirrings of the heart as spiritual, and thoughts and intellectual activities as nonspiritual. Thus, there was and still is quite a bit of resistance towards the Association. That resistance appears at all levels: at the level of institutions as well as individuals.

Consequently, the early years of development of the Association were really difficult years. The only reason the Association survived, in my opinion, was because the Universal House of Justice, from the very beginning, encouraged its development. At the end of the Five-Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice said that the Association was "one of the very favorable outcomes of the Five-Year Plan" (Letter from Department of the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice to the Canadian Association for Studies on the Bahá'í Faith, 19 March 1989). In the consequent plan, the Seven-Year Plan, the House of Justice gave Canada the specific goal of further developing the Association of Bahá'í Studies and the presentation of the Faith at universities. So the Association began to have the weight and the legitimacy of being one of the specific goals of the Seven-Year Plan:

Expand the opportunities for teaching in Canadian institutions of higher learning and further develop the Canadian Association for Studies on the Bahá'í Faith.

Later in the Six-Year Plan, the House of Justice suggested to the Bahá'ís of the world that one of the possible ways of achieving the objective of "greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers" was to

develop and foster Bahá'í scholarship and lend support to the Associations for Bahá'í Studies. (*Canada's Six Year Plan 1986-1992*, p. 42)

The significance of this support is, of course, that the development of the Association for Bahá'í Studies has always been within the fold of the Covenant and under the guidance of the Bahá'í administration, following the principles that should apply to our manifold activities as followers of the Faith.

This encouragement was especially significant because it was around the same time that a few other initiatives in various parts of the world began vis-à-vis Bahá'í Studies, and a few other groups were organized. The history of their growth is quite different from that of the Association for Bahá'í Studies and so is their definition of Bahá'í scholarship.

From the very beginning, a dialogue began concerning the nature of Bahá'í scholarship. Two kinds of preliminary definitions evolved. One group said that Bahá'í scholarship means the study of the origins of the Faith in Islam and Islamic culture, that is, the study of the history of the Faith's evolution to clarify the origins of the teachings of the Faith vis-à-vis Islam and some of the events that took place in the early era of the Faith. According to this definition, Bahá'í scholars should focus primarily on such issues as Bábism, Shaykhism, the Covenant-breaking history of the Faith, the Azáls, etc. They also put emphasis on the study of the history of the Faith and its relationship with other religions and ideologies.

At the Association for Bahá'í Studies, we understood Bahá'í scholarship quite differently. We understood it to mean the study of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and their ramifications for the world of humanity. Bahá'u'lláh has given us teachings that are the cure for the diseases of humanity. He has provided guidance to help humanity evolve from its present adolescent stage to a new level of maturity, to establish a new civilization, a new way of life, and to usher in the era of the unity of humankind. How are these changes to occur? How are the world and the Faith going to interact and apply these teachings? These are questions about the spiritualization of human society and of human life. These are the concerns of Bahá'í scholarship—the application of the Bahá'í teachings to all aspects of human life. Therefore, whether a person is a physician, a historian, a philosopher, a psychologist, an agricultural specialist, or a development specialist, it doesn't matter; all these areas of human endeavor and many others are worthy subjects for Bahá'í scholarship, and we should attempt to understand the processes in which we could apply the principles of the Faith to the needs of humanity.

Furthermore, we identified another dimension in our attempt to develop a definition of Bahá'í scholarship, namely, that Bahá'í scholarship should *not* be limited to attempts to show similarities between the Bahá'í teachings and scientific discoveries. Of course, there are many similarities, but, rather what we should do is to see the process through which true science can be integrated

with the teachings of the Faith. Of course, we haven't concluded our work on defining Bahá'í scholarship; these are simply some of the glimpses of Bahá'í scholarship we have had thus far.

The Association gradually began to flourish and expand its membership and activities. Various National Spiritual Assemblies and other groups showed interest in establishing Associations for Bahá'í Studies around the world. We began our conferences and publications. We have begun to have fraternal affiliate associations around the world. We are starting to establish chapters at universities. Groups of people interested in specific areas such as agriculture, arts, consultation and conflict resolution, economics and business, education, environmental design, health, intercultural issues, marriage and family, philosophy of science, science and technology, and women's studies, have formed interest groups within the Association. During this evolution, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada and later the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Alaska showed great interest in this development.

But above all, it was the Universal House of Justice who honored and blessed us with its ongoing, loving, and freeing attention. The House reviewed the terms of reference and by-laws of the Association, and determined the nature of the relationship of the Association with its affiliates in different countries as well as the nature of the relationship between the Association and Local Spiritual Assemblies when dealing with chapters of the Association at universities. These matters have gradually been clarified, and the documents are available, making life much easier.

On August 9, 1984, the International Teaching Centre wrote a letter to the Counsellors that was devoted to Bahá'í scholarship. The International Teaching Centre, in essence, said to the Board of Counsellors that the intellectual development of the community is extremely important and that the Counsellors should focus careful attention on this aspect of the life of society.

This significant letter was very welcome input into the life of the Bahá'í community. It established the importance of Bahá'í scholarship, quoting a number of the Guardian's statements indicating clearly that this aspect of the life of the community is indispensable. The letter described the nature of Bahá'í scholarship and defined it to some degree. It focused on the importance of fostering Bahá'í scholarship and promoting an atmosphere of tolerance. As you know, people who *think* they know become arrogant, and arrogance leads to intolerance. As well, people who do *not* know become defensive, and they also are intolerant towards others. The nature of the Bahá'í community and Bahá'í scholarship is contrary to this attitude.

The statement on scholarship pointed out that Bahá'í scholarship should strengthen the core of the believers' faith and should not create doubt in the hearts of the faithful, because the whole objective of study is to find the truth. If you find the truth, truth always gives you certitude. Therefore, if somebody claims to be a Bahá'í scholar but gives a presentation that creates doubt in the hearts of the believers, shakes the faith of the believers, causes them to become confused, then we have to stop and ask, "Has the truth really been enunciated?" Truth brings certitude.

Aside from the Universal House of Justice, the greatest support, the most encouraging and immediate support for the Association came from several of the Hands of the Cause of God and Counsellors. Most prominent among the Hands of the Cause of God in supporting the work of the Association for Bahá'í Studies has been Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm. She is a member of the Association. She has been the main speaker at several of our conferences. She is a Bahá'í scholar par excellence. Her support, of course, was remarkably valuable. The same should be said about several other Hands of the Cause of God who have participated in the meetings of the Association for Bahá'í Studies—Dr. 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, Mr. Dhikru'lláh Khádem, Mr. John Robarts, and Dr. 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá—all have given extremely valuable assistance to the development of the Association of Bahá'í Studies.

Likewise, a number of Counsellors have participated in the work of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, and their input has always been most welcome and most remarkable. This is not surprising, because the institution of the Counsellors is the Institution of the Learned. The House of Justice in its letter of August 9, 1984 asked the Institution of the Learned to assume responsibility for enriching the intellectual life of the Bahá'í community.

In light of that letter and in light of our experiences over these number of years, we can begin to think about Bahá'í scholarship in a broader way. This certainly doesn't mean that we have reached an ultimate definition of Bahá'í scholarship, but we can now think a little bit more broadly than ever in the past.

'Abdu'l-Bahá is reported to have said that some people try to understand the beauty of the rose by studying the manure in which the rose grew. Obviously, it doesn't matter how much one

studies the manure, one will not understand the beauty of the rose and its essence. The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh came from one of the most corrupt and depraved societies in human history. God chose the most spiritually corrupt and bankrupt spot on earth to raise his Faith, because if the Faith of God can take root in that kind of soil, then it can take root everywhere else. And that is exactly what happened. So, it's not surprising that when we examine the early history of the Faith we find individuals who didn't behave well and circumstances which weren't completely according to the teachings of the Faith. But it is out of that milieu that God raised his rose. Bahá'u'lláh in one of his writings actually refers to Himself as a "Rose" (*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 320). So, this is very important to remember. But more things have to be said about Bahá'í scholarship.

Bahá'u'lláh has stated that there are two sciences. In the original language (Arabic) they are called *ilm' u'l 'abdán va ilm' u'l 'adyán*—the science of bodies (the material) and the science of religion (the spiritual). One is the study of the world of nature; the other one is the study of the spiritual world. These are the two sciences that we have. It is very interesting that Bahá'u'lláh uses "science" for both of them, emphasizing the scientific approach. Now, 'Abdu'l-Bahá defines both religion and science in exactly the same words, with no difference, on two different occasions (REFERENCE?). Science is a process in which we discover the relationships between the realities of things. The law of gravity is the description of a relationship. Biology is the description of the relationship of living beings. Sociology is the study of relationships in society, and so on.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has made it very clear that human beings cannot fully understand the reality of things. What we can understand are the characteristics of things and their relationships with each other. Now, the other definition that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives is that religion is also relationships emanating from the realities of things. The word *ashya'* [thing] really means "whatever is created." Because the only thing that is not created is God. Aside from God everything else is created. Some creations are physical, and others are spiritual.

It is my view that if we reflect on these statements, we can identify two main objectives for Bahá'í scholarship. One objective of Bahá'í scholarship is the spiritualization of science: the application of spiritual laws to scientific discoveries. If we apply these laws, then we prevent the disease of materialism, which occurs as a result of the application of scientific laws without regard for spiritual principles and laws. This is very important because materialism is really a destroyer of life. It destroys life in the form of making bombs. It destroys life in the form of violence. It destroys life in the form of killing the human spirit and causing the profound degree of sadness that occurs in human society and individuals. So, we could say the first objective of Bahá'í scholarship is the spiritualization of science.

The second objective is the scientific approach to religion. This is another objective of Bahá'í scholarship: application of scientific method to religious practices. Without this approach we have fanaticism, prejudice, superstition. Applying the scientific approach to religion prevents the diseases of fanaticism, prejudice, and superstition.

These two objectives—the spiritualization of science and the scientific approach to religion—are central to the concept of Bahá'í scholarship and as such should be integral to all our activities in the Bahá'í community and in our individual lives. Such a perspective of Bahá'í scholarship demonstrates the need for both conceptual and applied aspects of scholarship—we must know why we act and what the results of these actions are.

The Applied Dimension

Since the beginning of the Faith, Bahá'ís have tried to apply the Bahá'í teachings to their lives and to their communities, with varying degrees of success. Therefore, one aspect of Bahá'í scholarship is to begin to study the Bahá'í community to see why the Bahá'í community works as it does; why it is successful; why it achieves what it does in a world that is very different; and also why it hasn't yet succeeded in some areas. For example, one could study the impact of Bahá'ís having gone to other countries for more than one hundred and forty years, living among other people. What is the impact of this in the whole idea of creating one world, a united world? I would not be surprised if in conducting a methodical study of that process we saw that it has had profound impact on the process of the unification of humanity.

Or, for example, we say prayers. We don't know how and why prayers affect us. It's very important that we begin to study why prayers work; what are the processes leading to their helping us. There are many other such instances.

For example, what is the significance of people going to communities in the middle of jungles, in the heart of deserts, in the mountains, to meet people who have never had any connection with democratic practices whatsoever, and inviting them to become Bahá'ís and, where there are nine adult Bahá'ís, to form a Local Spiritual Assembly in their community? This concept is totally foreign to these people, but they do it out of faith. Aside from organizing the Assembly, they really don't know what else to do. But the responsibility of the Bahá'í scholar is to do at least two things: one, to study and describe the impact of creating Local Spiritual Assemblies in such countries, where there is a total change in the mind-set of the people—people who have always felt ruled by some kind of authority, tribal chiefs, ghosts. Suddenly these people are given power—they can vote. Some are members of an Assembly, and that creates new dynamics in the community. However, Spiritual Assembly members don't abuse their power as leaders did before, thus creating totally different dynamics in a society, possibly resulting in an acceleration of development of that society, from infancy to adolescence and soon to adulthood, in a much more direct way and a much less destructive way than, for example, a revolutionary approach.

Now, Bahá'í scholars should begin to study these processes to see how they relate. What's the difference between the Bahá'í approach to transforming human society, and the Marxist approach? The two movements came at the same time. And one grew very quickly—covering more than half of the world. And the other, the Bahá'í Faith, is growing very slowly. What can we learn from these processes? These are the kinds of things that can be the subject of study. This is one kind of scholarship. Scholars study something Bahá'ís have been doing and try to understand how Bahá'í principles have been applied, what are the dynamics involved, why it works, and so forth. That's one method.

The Conceptual Dimension

The other dimension of scholarship is for Bahá'ís to conceptualize, to develop theories about the transformation of the life of the individual, about the development of human society in all its aspects, and then to put those theories into practice to see how they work. For example, if we want to rear children who will create a peaceful world, we should develop curricula based on sound theoretical concepts which show that if the concepts are applied, these children (and their children after them) will gradually become more peaceful and able to create higher levels of unity among themselves, eventually bringing the world ever closer to the kind of peace and unity Bahá'u'lláh describes. Bahá'í scholarship becomes, therefore, the process of developing a theoretical framework, a conceptual framework, applying those principles, and then studying the application to determine the results. That is, I think, one aspect of the application of the scientific method to the Faith.

So, the arena of topics for Bahá'í Studies is virtually unlimited. Bahá'í Studies involves every one of us, because every one of us is involved in the transformation of our individual lives. Every one of us is involved in the development of families, in the training of our children, in the education of children in society. Every one of us is involved in the life of the community. We become members of the committees, we consult, we are on Assemblies, and so on. We are also involved in the non-Bahá'í world. And the whole system ultimately has to become one. It is one. There is no Bahá'í/non-Bahá'í division. That barrier is totally imaginary and without foundation.

So, these are new ideals and new concepts that are developing as we work together at these different meetings of the Associations. As we get reports from an Association in one or another part of the world describing how they are focussing on specific things, it is most exciting because it constantly opens new doors, new areas.

Recently, I had a very interesting experience that clarifies some of these issues. I travelled to Brazil at the invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil and the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Brazil. I went to the city of Manaus, which is on the Amazon River. It is a city of more than a million. The friends had arranged for me to meet with the civic police, primarily because of my writings and research on human violence and the concept of a violence-free society. When local officials learned that someone who was knowledgeable about violence was visiting their city, they invited me to address them.

The chief of police indicated his group wanted me to discuss how to disarm an armed, violent person; how to deal with the enormous violence that is going on with drug trafficking; and what to do in the maximum security prisons full of murderers when you don't have enough ammunition. There was a list of such questions.

When we arrived at the lecture hall, the Minister of the Security of State was there, some sixty or seventy policemen, and the chief of police. They were all sitting there with very masculine mustaches and uniforms, looking very dour and very large and forbidding. I decided that I would speak about the application of spiritual principles to the issue of human violence.

I addressed such issues as human nature and the fact that humans are created noble, the fact that people become violent because certain processes take place in their lives which don't allow the spiritual qualities of knowledge, love, and will to evolve. And so their lives go in the wrong direction. I discussed the fact that people who are violent are really basically ignorant of the fact of the unity of humanity and that violence to somebody else is violence to themselves. I also explained that to prevent violence, the one thing you should definitely not do is to be violent yourself because violence breeds violence. Then the discussion period began. The chief of police described me as a religious man teaching the prevention of violence, but he noted what religion has done in the world, the violence it has brought to this world. He went on to refer to the violent history of religion. I agreed but pointed out that we must make a distinction between religion and spirituality. Spirituality is related to those processes which enable our true nature, our spirit, our soul, to evolve so that our activities are loving, merciful, kind, and truthful, rather than the opposite. Spirituality is a *process* whereby we become our true selves.

Religion is the medium through which we attempt to put these spiritual laws into practice. If we apply those laws wrongly, the outcome would be wrong. Most of the leaders and followers of the religions of the world, unfortunately, have applied the spiritual principles improperly so that they disunite instead of unite people; they increase instead of decrease fanaticism; they cause hatred instead of love. This is the misapplication of spiritual principles. One can see it in all of the major religions of the world. The Bahá'í position is that this is an unfortunate misapplication of spiritual principles. Religion has been the cause of enormous violence when that religion has not followed the spiritual principles given to it by God. The chief of police had tears in his eyes as he admitted to being a spiritual person who had been terribly bothered by seeing what people do in the name of religion. On the one hand, he knew that there is a God, but on the other hand, he witnessed the violence of the followers of religion. Now, for the first time, he felt he had learned something new and positive about religion and spirituality that he could actually apply to his life.

A second policeman stood up to say he was an ordinary policeman who worked with violent young people in the community. He had always been taught that one had to be very tough with young people. So he had been very tough with them, treating them violently so they would be afraid of him. Now, having heard the Bahá'í view that basically he is a member of a community, the young people are also members of this same community, and that humanity is one community, he repeated and accepted the concept that one should treat others as one wished to be treated. He had never before considered applying this spiritual law to his work. He stated he could not continue to deal with people in that violent way. There were a number of other such responses in the two-and-a-half-hour meeting.

I specifically mention this event because I have given many talks to law enforcers in North America and have never received this kind of response. I think that the reason I received such positive response in Brazil was due to at least two things.

First, people in Manaus are not yet totally diseased by materialism. They are still in touch with their spiritual roots. They are searching and are more receptive. Therefore, as soon as a new reality is explained to them, they respond without hesitation. This was true throughout my journey in the northern part of Brazil. Wherever I went it didn't matter with whom I met—medical students, psychology students, lawyers, doctors, professors, ordinary people—when they heard about the spiritual principles, the universal principles of the Faith, they automatically responded very positively.

Second, I tried to formulate certain theoretical concepts about how we can create a violence-free society, based on the body of knowledge available in this professional field of study, on the one hand, and the principal teachings of the Faith, on the other hand, integrating these sources of knowledge and trying to present a new approach to this issue. By no means is this formulation complete or totally accurate. Nevertheless, it is a initial effort at integrating the scientific and the spiritual principles to create a body of knowledge or a framework, a perspective, a theoretical construct that can be applied. As we apply the principles, we can improve on the application. We can learn from the process, and it just goes on. This is an example of the application of a theory to see what results.

The vision of the future, as far as Bahá'í Studies is concerned, is enormously exciting and glorious. It is very interesting that such an exciting, enormously glorious vision of applying Bahá'í principles to the life of humanity also has a very simple requirement as far as its administrative process is concerned. What I have noticed in talking with a number of fraternal affiliate associations around the world is that people in different countries try to deal with their Association for Bahá'í Studies at a level that is frightening to them, at a level that is forbidding to them. They exclaim that they don't have enough scientists and academics; that they don't have enough people for a membership base, perhaps only one individual who has gone to university; and that they don't have the financial resources. They can't conceive how they could possibly establish and develop an association.

When I reflect on the Association's development in Canada, all of these factors were also true in Canada. We didn't have great human resources. We didn't have money, and we had all kinds of attitudinal problems as well. Nevertheless, two things helped. One was the institutional encouragement and support that I mentioned earlier.

The second was the fact that we had several individuals who dedicated themselves to the Association, who refused to get discouraged, who would fight for the Association, who would talk about it everywhere they went. They ate, breathed, thought, and slept "Association." Unless you have one or more individuals, who for a period of time become dedicated to the cause of the Association for Bahá'í Studies, and talk about it, encourage everybody, and devote their time and energy to it, it won't work. Because the Association is a new thing, and as we know, when you have a new baby, you cannot just sit there and enjoy the baby's smiles. Raising children is much more difficult; whoever accepts to raise a child has to be willing to do all the little things involved, the dirty work, and the hard work. That has been the case for the people who have been involved from the beginning of the Association.

Now the Association is reaching its teens. Finally, the Association is leaving the childhood years behind, arriving at the age of adolescence. During those earlier years, the challenges involved willingness to do all the minute but necessary chores. There was no glory in these tasks. You would organize a conference and yet receive complaints. All you can do is accept criticism without losing the vision of what you are doing and steadfastly persevere. Remember, the Association for Bahá'í Studies is an entity within the fold of the Covenant and exists with the express approval of the House of Justice. Associations for Bahá'í Studies are a kind of activity that I have no doubt more and more Counsellors will support and more and more National Spiritual Assemblies will bring into creation in their respective country. Once this happens, we have to work diligently, not give up hope, not let go, until the Association establishes itself. If we don't, the "little baby" won't grow. A number of Associations around the world have stopped at the level of being six months old, a year old, two years old. They are not growing because they are not being nourished. There is nobody to nurture them, parent them, and raise them. Consequently, they are feeble, waiting there to be fed and to be raised. Nurturing is far more important than whether you have sufficient resources. One should not be frightened of the Association in the same way that one shouldn't be frightened of a little baby. But one should be dedicated to the service of the Association and to helping the Association to grow in the same way that one has to be dedicated to the growth of a child. This requires certain kinds of people with a certain kind of dedication. Wherever that combination has occurred, the Association has worked.

However, wherever there have been people who felt that as PhD's or professors at university running the Association they should not do the leg work and the dirty work, and instead have attempted to start at a higher level, this approach to the Association hasn't worked. The baby has to grow. It's a process of cultivating. It's a process of developing. If you want to establish an Association initially at the level of a twenty-year-old, it won't work. The process has to start at the beginning and dynamically grow according to the circumstances of each Bahá'í society and Bahá'í community.

Now, I think, because certain Associations around the world have been successful and have grown, they can facilitate the process of growth of other Associations that are coming into existence. Nevertheless, each Association is going to have its own unique developmental processes, its own unique pains of growth as well as joys and sorrows of development like any other growing organism. I think if we keep that in mind, we will be able really to see ten years hence and imagine what will happen. I think that all of the Associations for Bahá'í Studies should begin now to think "year 2000." They should put their vision there and say, "In the year 2000, we

want to create a world in which certain things happened." It is to be hoped that by then peace will have been established and the institutions of the Bahá'í Faith will have grown and become mature.

If we begin to think along those lines, then we can look at our societies and Bahá'í community as well as the non-Bahá'í community and ask what are the needs of this society. Which direction do we have to go? On what elements of this society do we have to focus? On what dynamics do we have to focus? In some countries, you have to focus on social justice. In another country, the focus should be on equality. In another location, you have to focus on the family. Of course, all areas are within the scope of concern but with a greater emphasis in a given subject area according to the particular circumstances in that region.

Bahá'í scholarship applies at all levels. That's the point. At all levels any individual, any institution, any group of Bahá'ís can approach the Faith, their community, and their society with the dual objective of applying the spiritual principles to the life of society and understanding the life of the society in the light of these spiritual principles. As we do that, we are engaged in Bahá'í scholarship. Then if we discuss this process, formulate it, and write about it, we have something that we can share with others. Hence the importance of the conferences and the publications.

QUESTION: In Colombia, is it an affiliated Association, or is it independent?

The concept "Fraternal Affiliate Associations" means that the Associations are all independent yet related. They are each under the aegis of their respective National Spiritual Assemblies, but they are also connected, affiliated all over the world. The notion is that once you are a member of an Association for Bahá'í Studies anywhere in the world, you are a member of the Association for Bahá'í Studies everywhere in the world.

The only other thing in this respect is the role of the Association of Bahá'í Studies in North America. The Universal House of Justice has decided that the Association for Bahá'í Studies in North America has two distinct responsibilities. On the one hand, we are an Association for Bahá'í Studies for North America (Alaska, Canada, and the United States), and we oversee development of Bahá'í Studies for North America, as for example the Association for Bahá'í Studies in the United Kingdom does for English-Speaking Europe or the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Switzerland does for French-Speaking Europe, or the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Austria does for German-Speaking Europe, or the Association does in Colombia or in Brazil or wherever. So, the Association for Bahá'í Studies in North America has its organization, conferences, publications, membership, etc.

On the other hand, the House also said that the Association for Bahá'í Studies in North America should *coordinate* the work of all other fraternal affiliate Associations. That doesn't mean that we have direct authority over other Associations. Nor do we set any rules or regulations or laws for them. Rather, we put ourselves at their service. If there is anything we can do, we will do it.

Basically, at this time, the coordination that we do is very limited. We try to get information from all the Associations about their activities to include in our international bulletin which is distributed all over the world, so that everybody knows what everybody else is doing. We also try to publicize the activities of the various Associations and make them known, and encourage people to come to other countries. We also try to some degree to coordinate publications of materials, because publication is a very expensive undertaking.

The Journal of Bahá'í Studies

For example, *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* is interesting because it is a multilingual journal. We have chosen the three languages of North America: English, French, and Spanish. We print articles in the original language of submission—be it English, French, or Spanish—with summaries in all three languages. We are trying to create a medium that would help in sharing the Bahá'í research findings of the friends all over the world. Of course, as with any journal one has to establish certain standards. If the journal is to be received with respect and accepted in the academic world, it has to follow certain standards. A certain level of excellence should be present. Consequently, we have an editorial board which reviews submitted manuscripts. Then, if the manuscript appears interesting, we send it out for peer review to a number of Bahá'ís who are knowledgeable in that specific field, and sometimes to non-Bahá'ís. We do not tell reviewers who has written the paper, and authors don't know who the reviewers are. It's a double-blind review.

We ask for a review incorporating the reviewers' views and recommendations. We explain the standards of the Journal. Either the reviewers approve the paper and we publish it; or they indicate the paper needs certain changes. We convey the findings of these reviewers to the author. We explain our reviewers' recommendations and ask if the authors are willing to work on their papers. The majority of course choose to do further work. A few see their work as perfect and unchangeable. Then the process stops. It's a learning process for all concerned.

It's really not such a bad thing to submit your writing for review and feedback with suggestions for improvement. I have written articles that have been published and that I now wish hadn't been. Once printed, the work is unretractable. There is no room for second thoughts. Hence, we must publish works that in the future won't be an embarrassment. Therefore, we must have standards. This is not arrogance. It's simply that we don't want to publish anything unworthy in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*. We have to publish what we can be proud as Bahá'ís to give to anybody around the world.

QUESTION: Can non-Bahá'ís become members of the Association?

Once again this is a developmental process. For a long time, we didn't feel that we were developed enough, really, to open the Association for Bahá'í Studies in North America to membership outside the Bahá'í community. As well, all our conference speakers were Bahá'ís. But, during the last few years, we felt perfectly comfortable to open membership of the Association to anyone interested. We also invite prominent non-Bahá'í speakers as conference presenters, balanced by Bahá'í speakers. We feel that the same should apply to other Associations for Bahá'í Studies: that they should begin as an internal agency of the Faith and allow themselves to grow and evolve. When they reach a certain level of growth and feel comfortable that they are up to the standards of the society around them, then the Association should be opened to everybody. Some countries will do it sooner, some later.

QUESTION: Based on your experience with the police department in Manaus and your thought that maybe one reason why they responded to the lecture on a spiritual level was that they hadn't been so much the victims of materialism, I wonder if there could be another couple of things going on there. Could it have to do with the teaching work that's been going on in Manaus and in Brazil? Maybe that same talk to those same people ten years ago wouldn't have had a similar effect. Don't you agree?

Yes, that may be the case. You see, I said one reason that they were receptive was because they have not been as diseased by materialism as we are in North America or Europe. Therefore, they are receptive, their hearts are open. Their minds are open. They can accept new ideas without much difficulty, without much pride, without much arrogance. For the same reason they are also more receptive to the teaching activities that take place in their environment. Even if they are not directly involved, nevertheless, the teaching efforts have profound impact on people of a given community. More specifically about Manaus, what is interesting is that in Manaus there are about 800 Bahá'ís. These 800 Bahá'ís have relatives, and they know all kinds of people. So invariably they have a certain impact on the larger society. Also, Bahá'ís are very much in the forefront of development in Manaus. They have some activities that are quite remarkable. For example, a Bahá'í couple has established a unique orphanage so highly valued by the government that they received an exceptional government grant for the construction of a beautiful modern orphanage.

QUESTION: It seems that when you have a conceptual entry to the group you are addressing, in your teaching efforts, the entry is more successful. Is this generally the case?

Yes, I think so. I met the Director of Human Rights in Brazil, for example, and we talked about creating a society free from violence. He identified several concepts—psychological, sociological, and political (power) the dynamics of the society—that need to be considered. However, a Bahá'í identifies another dimension that has to be added. In describing this dimension, you don't bluntly say this is a spiritual dimension. You just describe the dimension. As you describe it, they see that indeed this was what was missing. And what is it that you are doing? You are applying the spiritual principles to their social issues. You don't need to be

sanctimonious and announce that the missing dimension is spiritual. You just simply present it to them naturally and unthreateningly as a gift.

It was very interesting because, after I did that, the minister turned to me and stated that his government didn't care if everybody becomes whatever religion as long as we can improve the society. You see, I wasn't trying to convert them; rather, I was trying to offer, to the best of my ability, a description of how spiritual principles can be applied to social problems. And that, I think, is what Bahá'í scholars have to try to do to have a maximum impact on other scholars, leaders of thought, and thoughtful people all over the world.

EXTRACTS FROM THE *BULLETIN* OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES
NO 32 (JANUARY 1990 /SULTAN B.E. 146).

ASSOCIATION FOR BAHÁ'Í STUDIES PUBLICATIONS

The Bahá'í Faith and Islam

Within the next six to nine months, the Association will publish *The Bahá'í Faith and Islam*, which contains the proceedings of the First International Symposium on the Relationship of the Bahá'í Faith and Islam, McGill University, Montréal, Québec, 23-25 March 1984. This historic event attracted several eminent international scholars who participated as presenters and/or discussants during the three-day event. This publication will be available to members at the special price of \$9.95 and to non-members at \$14.95. A flyer is enclosed for your convenience.

"Les Valeurs économiques et les valeurs morales"

Reprinted from *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* volume 1, number 4, the article, "Les Valeurs économiques et les valeurs morales" by William S. Hatcher, is available from the French Translation Committee (Le Centre bahá'íe, 75 rue d'Auteuil, Québec, QC, Canada G1R 4C3) at a cost of \$. 50 per reprint. The article is in an economical offprint form without a cover. The article, in French only, supports the thesis that economic activity actually presupposes an underlying morality of a more fundamental sort and that an economic system based on Bahá'í ideals is ultimately more satisfactory than any existing economic system or combination of systems.

Call for Papers

The Association for Bahá'í Studies will be publishing a special volume on the arts. More material is needed to complete this volume. If you would like to submit an article for publication, please send *three* copies of your manuscript to the Association for Bahá'í Studies, 34 Copernicus St., Ottawa, ON, Canada K1N 7K4.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Orison

The first edition of *Orison*, a publication of the Association for Bahá'í Studies Bahá'í Institute for the Arts, is available. Included in this first issue are a letter from Don Rogers, member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas, on the subject of "vision"; two poems by Roger White with an appreciation of "A Whispered Epitaph" by Geoffrey Nash; artwork and a description of the work of Bruce Hanks; a poem by Ann Boyles; an article written by pioneer and artist Ed Epp; an ode by Táhirih; and a mention of the activities of Mark Ochu and Anne Atkinson. The cover artwork by Lorraine Phillips is printed in color on a background of beautiful paper. A call for submissions is also included. *Orison* will be published twice a year. Copies of *Orison* are available for \$3.50 plus .75 for shipping (payable to Bahá'í Institute for the Arts). Send orders and submissions to Sasha Rogers Hariri (70 Poyntz Ave., Willowdale, ON, Canada M2N 1J2). In the United States, copies may be obtained from Anne Atkinson (400 Laurel Ave., Wilmette, IL, USA 60091).

Directory of Artists

An updated *Directory of Artists*, published by the Association for Bahá'í Studies Bahá'í Institute for the Arts, is available. This directory contains the names, addresses, and descriptions of artwork of Bahá'í artists from Canada, the United States, and a number of other countries. The directory costs \$5.00 plus \$1.50 shipping and can be ordered from Sasha Rogers Hariri (70 Poyntz Ave., Willowdale, ON, Canada M2N 1J2), or Anne Atkinson (400 Laurel Ave., Wilmette, IL, USA 60091).

BAHÁ'Í SEMINARS AND INSTITUTES

Bahá'í Seminar on Philosophy of Science

The Philosophy of Science Seminar held its inaugural annual meeting jointly with the Science and Technology Seminar (see report of Science and Technology Seminar) at the Association's annual conference in Irvine, 15 September 1989.

Bahá'í Seminar on the Study of Religion

The first annual gathering of the Bahá'í Seminar on the Study of Religion was a great success! It was held at the Association's 14th Annual Conference in Irvine, 15 September 1989. Attendance varied from fifteen to thirty during the meeting. Todd Lawson presented a well-received paper on the images of Fátimih in the early writings of the Báb. Andrew Pemberton Pigott's paper on Hindu and Bahá'í meditation practices, presented on his behalf, stimulated much positive and interesting conversation. Roger Coe presented a paper on the need to coordinate scholars and to improve communications among them to bring about the "profound and coordinated scholarship" called for by the Guardian.

Both the morning and afternoon sessions included time for consultation on the direction of the Study of Religion Seminar. It was noted that everyone should feel comfortable to offer a paper; academic credentials are not a prerequisite. The format of the seminar should be flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of presentations, including lectures, brief papers, panel discussions, workshops, brainstorming, etc.

A membership list of names and addresses of those interested in receiving communications, networking with others in this seminar, or participating in some way, has been drawn up and circulated to those on the list. If you would like more information about the Bahá'í Seminar on the Study of Religion or would like to be added to the list, please send your request to Robert Stockman (38 Hancock St., Somerville, MA, USA 02144).

FRATERNAL AFFILIATES

Association for Bahá'í Studies for English-Speaking Europe

The Association for Bahá'í Studies for English-Speaking Europe has recently moved from Ireland to Britain. Please note, the new address is Dr. Iain Palin, Secretary, Association for Bahá'í Studies for English-Speaking Europe, c/o 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD, England. This affiliate will hold its annual conference April 6-8, 1990 at Newman College, Birmingham, England, on the theme "Community and Diversity." The conference will seek to show the unique contribution the Bahá'í teachings can make to an understanding of this subject and will tie in with the United Nations International Year of Literacy and Decade of International Cultural Development. The conference format will be plenary sessions with keynote speakers and seminars/discussions. Those who are already members of the Association for English-Speaking Europe or any other Association for Bahá'í Studies will be entitled to one-third off the conference registration fee. For conference or membership information, please contact the Association at the above address. Papers should be submitted by 21 March 1990.

Association for Bahá'í Studies for French-Speaking Europe

The Association for Bahá'í Studies for French-Speaking Europe held its annual conference at the Palais des Congrès in Paris, France, 18-19 November 1989. The theme of the conference was "Freedom," and over 180 people took part in this two-day conference. Professors Albert Jacquard and William Hatcher participated as keynote speakers for the conference. Shapour Rassekh, member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe, spoke on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Seven Candles of Unity." Several non-Bahá'ís participated in the conference, including Professor A. Jacquard, biologist, and Professor A. Adler, historian.

To inquire about membership with Comité de l'Association-européenne francophone pour les études bahá'íes, please write to c/o Hamid Samandari, 7 chemin le Grenier, 1291 Commugny, Switzerland.

Association for Bahá'í Studies for German-Speaking Europe

The Association for Bahá'í Studies for German-Speaking Europe is planning a three-day conference for the fall of 1990 at the University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria. For further information about this conference, or membership, please write to Marieluise Weidinger, Secretary, Gesellschaft für Bahá'í Studien für das deutschsprachige Europa (Thimiggasse 12, 1180-Wien, Austria).

Association for Bahá'í Studies-Trinidad and Tobago

On 27 June 1989, the Association for Bahá'í Studies-Trinidad and Tobago held their first very successful event entitled "Harmony between Religion and Science," the event was cosponsored with the Trinidad and Tobago Inter-Religious Organization at the University of the West Indies. Four talks were given by scholars on the Christian, Hindu, Islamic, and Bahá'í Faiths. Dr. H. Collymore gave the presentation on the Bahá'í Faith. For further information about activities and membership, please contact the Association for Bahá'í Studies-Trinidad and Tobago (c/o National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Trinidad and Tobago, 3 Petra St., Woodbrook, Port of Spain, Trinidad, WI).

Landegg Academy

The Landegg Academy has published its 1990 Program Calendar. Numerous courses are offered under the themes of "Education and Family," "Individual Development," "Special Interest," and "Bahá'í Studies." There are too many courses to list here, but perhaps of special interest to Association for Bahá'í Studies members are the four courses listed under the theme "Bahá'í Studies":

- 29 July-26 August, 1990 "Certificate Programme in Bahá'í Studies, Year 1" is the first year of a three-year foundation course leading to a Certificate in Bahá'í Studies, offered by the Academy in association with the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, USA. An international faculty will guide students through the one-month residential component of this program. Directors are Suheil Bushrui and James Malarkey. The course code is 9014 and is offered in English.
- "Certificate in Bahá'í Studies, Year 2" will be held 5-26 August 1990, with resource persons Dwight Allen, Amin Banani, William Hatcher, Vahid Rafati, and Nasr Rassekh. The course code is 9015 and is offered in English.

- "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh" is being offered 18-25 August 1990 with resource persons Amin Banani and Vahid Rafati. The course code is 9013 and will be conducted in English.
- "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh," part one of a three-part series exploring the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is being offered 30 December 1990-5 January 1991, with resource persons Massoud Berdjis and Dariush Maani. The course code is 9027, is being offered in German, and is for Bahá'ís only.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Steven J. Lonning (921 7th St., Apt. 2, Hopkins, MN, USA 55343) seeks Bahá'í references or papers in the area of ethics and scientific research for a colleague's survey of the literature on this topic for a doctoral thesis.

Jim Harrison (780 N.W. Gleneagle Dr., No. 15, Sherwood, OR, USA 97140) is preparing an article on the theological and political forces that created and shaped the concept of Original Sin. He would like contact from other Bahá'ís conducting research on the concept of Original Sin.

**The Association
for Bahá'í Studies
English-Speaking Europe**

What is the Association for Bahá'í Studies?

It is an association of Bahá'ís and others designed to promote the study of the Bahá'í Faith and its application to the needs of humanity.

Originally established in Canada in 1974, by 1981 its work had expanded so greatly that the present name was approved by the Universal House of Justice to reflect the worldwide nature of its membership and activities.

The Association works through a network of fraternal affiliates established around the world. The fraternal affiliate for English-speaking Europe was established in 1984.

What does the Association in English-speaking Europe do?

- holds regional, national and international conferences
- publishes an annual journal, *The Bahá'í Studies Review*, and a quarterly newsletter
- produces audio-visual materials
- encourages the creation of campus associations at colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning

What are the aims of the Association in English-speaking Europe?

- to raise the level and status of study of the Bahá'í Faith within the Bahá'í community in general
- to promote and encourage the study of the Bahá'í Faith in universities, colleges and schools, both by Bahá'ís and others, and to assist the work already being carried out in this area
- to help the development of a European consciousness on the part of the Bahá'ís throughout the continent
- to seek to increase and diversify contact with academics and with appropriate organisations

*The Association**for**Bahá'í Studies**English-Speaking Europe*

*27 Rutland Gate
London SW7 1PD
United Kingdom*

Annual Membership Rates

- £12 individual
 £ 8 unwaged (i.e. fulltime students,
 senior citizens, those in receipt
 of state benefit for
 unemployment or incapacity
 £60 patronage membership

If you would like to subscribe to the publications of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Canada, please include an additional £13.50 with your cheque.

Membership Application Form

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

Post Code _____

Telephone _____

Please enrol me in the Association for Bahá'í Studies English-Speaking Europe at the individual / unwaged / patronage rate (please circle appropriate category).

I would like / would not like (please circle appropriate term) to subscribe to the publications of the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Canada.

I enclose a cheque for _____ (amount)

Please return with cheque to: The Secretary, ABS-ESE, 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD. Please make cheques payable to Association for Bahá'í Studies English-Speaking Europe.

Why should I join the Association for Bahá'í Studies English-Speaking Europe?

- * the Association provides a forum for new approaches to the study of the Bahá'í Faith
- * the Association provides a framework for sharing work in progress
- * the Association provides a network of people engaged in similar activities
- * the Universal House of Justice has commended membership to all Bahá'ís

How can I join?

Membership is open to everyone. Simply complete the application form and send it with a cheque for the appropriate amount to the Association secretary.

Membership of the Association for Bahá'í Studies English-Speaking Europe provides you with membership of the parent Association based in Canada. We are also affiliated with Associations for Bahá'í Studies in other parts of the world and membership entitles you to attend conferences held by those Associations at a reduced rate.

BAHÁ'Í STUDIES SEMINAR: FRIDAY 7th -> SUNDAY 9th DECEMBER
1990. THE BAHÁ'Í CENTRE, 30 VICTORIA SQUARE, JESMOND, NEWCASTLE-
UPON-TYNE.

" There are certain pillars which have been established as the unshakeable supports of the Faith of God. The mightiest of these is learning and the use of the mind, the expansion of the consciousness, and insight into the realities of the universe and the hidden mysteries of Almighty God. To promote knowledge is thus an inescapable duty imposed on every one of the friends of God." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, passage from SWAB [Haifa 1978] p.126).

Dear

Over the last 20 years or so small groups of Baha'ís interested in studying the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths from an academic point of view have gathered together for seminars/discussions and the presentation of papers. At the last such seminar gathering (held in Newcastle between June 1st and 3rd 1990) Hugh Adamson, NSA secretary and chairman of the recently formed and now UK centered *Association for Bahá'í Studies- English Speaking Europe* explained something of the nature of the ABS-ESE and spoke highly of the UK 'academic seminars'. After consultation those present concluded that the academic seminars should continue as a specialist (but non-elitist) branch of the ABS-ESE. As previously, all persons interested in Bahá'í studies would be welcome to attend and contribute to the discussion. Formal academic qualifications would neither be expected of persons presenting papers nor those attending though disciplined and high standards would continue to be aimed at.

In December two expert Bahá'í Islamicists from Canada and the USA., Dr. B.Todd Lawson and Dr.J.Walbridge will be presenting papers and joining the discussions. Other papers will, for example, be presented by Moojan Momen (*The Baha'í Community of Iran 1853-1892*), Hari Docherty (*Towards a Baha'í Work Ethic*) and Stephen Lambden [provisional] (*Towards the theological positivity of the Via Negativa : some notes on the importance of the doctrine of the Unknowability of God in the history of religions*). Some further discussion of the field of Bahá'í scholarship, Bahá'í publications and of the role and importance of the ABS-ESE will also take place. The international state of Bábí-Bahá'í studies will again be reviewed. Open panel and 'questions and answers' sessions may form part of this December's seminar. All Bahá'ís are welcome to attend.

This seminar invitation sheet is included here as it sums up a few points concerning the 'academic seminars'--which for the last few years have been held in Newcastle upon Tyne (England UK)--and their recently worked out relationship to the ABS-ESE. A more detailed report covering the last few 'academic seminars' will be included in the next issue of the BSB.

BAHÁ'Í CASSETTE TAPES

Since the sixties--and to some extent previously--an increasing volume [almost a deluge in recent years] of 'Bahá'í Cassette Tapes' has been produced internationally either by individuals or by various Bahá'í institutions. A good many of these tapes contain important record of modern Bahá'i perspectives. A useful though by no means complete catalogue of such tapes was printed for Australian Bahá'í purposes in the *NEWSLETTER* of the *Association for Bahá'í Studies- Australia* Issue 16 (February 1990) pp. 4-6. It is reproduced below.

TAPES AVAILABLE

1. The twin processes of growth and decline - Dr. Peter Khan.
2. Religion in a scientific world - Dr. Peter Khan.
3. Words for the world (Song of the New Age) - readings from the Bahá'í Writings.
4. Fire & Snow / Dreams of tomorrow - Bahá'í songs.
5. The significance and functions of the Universal House of Justice - Deepening with W. Sears.
6. Conservation, trees and the Sahara reclamation program - R. St. Barbe Baker.
7. Role of Bahá'í Youth in today's world - Ruhíyyih Khanum.
8. Wake up America - Public talk - W. Sears.
9. Deepening and consolidation - Daniel Jordan.
10. The spiritual nature of giving - study & Deepening - W. Sears.
11. Hear the song of the wind - Bahá'í songs.
- 12.c1. Enrolling the masses - pt 1 - study course - W. Sears.
- 12.c2. Enrolling the masses - pt 2 - study course - W. Sears.
13. Pioneering challenge to Bahá'í youth - Ruhíyyih Khanum.
- 14.c1. Intensified individual teaching - study class - W. Sears and Eleanor Marcella.
- 14.c2. ditto.
15. The Bahá'í elections - Dr. Peter Khan.
16. Talk in Persian - Mr. Furutan (trans. by Mr. Faizi) to Sikhs about the Koran.
17. The power of the Covenant (3 tapes): Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant with mankind: The problem of Covenant breaking ; and The face of opposition.
18. Dawn of unity - public address - A.B.M. John Walker 22.5.73.
19. Predictions on the future of the world - Universal House of Justice (U.H.J.) member. H. Chance.
20. The beloved Guardian - talk C. Featherstone: The Fund - Afnan Fassy.
21. Songs of the New Age - Prayers & devotional music.
22. Bahá'í history - Firuz Kazemzadeh.
23. Dare to be different - Dwight Allen: Bahá'í morality - P. Christensen.
24. The significance of Covenant breaking - study & deepening - W. Sears.
25. Commentary on the Hidden Words - A.O. Faizi.
26. The contributions of the world religions to our society - A. Deutscher 13.1.76.
27. Heroic figures of our Faith - Vafa Payman.
28. Souvenir of Abdu'l Baha: The Perfect Man - R. Pettit: The Mystery of God - Dhikru'llah Khadem.
29. Drugs and alcohol - Don Darby 14.1.76.
30. Epistle to the Son of the Wolf - F. Kazemzadeh: Fragrances of Holiness - Writings with music
31. Education - Where do we go from here? - Dwight Allen
32. Teaching - Living the Life - study and deepening - W. Sears.
33. Presenting 1844 - Bahá'í songs
34. Agriculture, food & environment - R. Bell. Making a happy home - Ruben Busby.
35. Majesty & greatness of the Divinely ordained L.S.A. - study & deepening - W. Sears.
36. The role of education in the New Dispensation - Daniel Jordan.
37. The Universal House of Justice - Collis Featherstone.
38. 'The Flame' - W. Sears and Robert Quigley.
39. Bahá'í education of children - Albert James.
40. The individual and the Administrative Order - Dr. Peter Khan.

41. Daystar - Baha'i songs by Changler, Siegel & Edwards; It's a Sunshine Day by Gary Olsen.
42. Relationship of Men & Women - Betsy Haynes: Marriage for a Baha'i - Mary K. Radpour.
43. Becoming a dedicated Baha'i - Thelma Perks.
44. Gladden the hearts - A. Gash; Visiting the Mother Temple of the Antipodes & staying at the Pilgrim's hostel - S. Bolton; Baha'i Community preparation for tests to come - J. Davidson.
45. The Wonder Lamp: Banishments: Sing His Praises - A.O. Faizi (for children).
46. Deepening with Peter Khan - includes The nature of Deepening; The Calendar; The Lesser Peace; Questioning the Lord; The 24 Elders; The Supreme Tribunal; Kingship; Passing of the Guardian; Will & Testament; Politics; Opposition to the Faith; Baha'i morality; Knowledge of the Koran; The devil; Christ's descent into hell; Do all Manifestations eradicate evil?; Administration versus teaching; Spiritual Truths; Women on the Universal House of Justice.
47. Shoghi Effendi: Guardian of the Baha'i Faith - Ruhyyih Khanum.
48. Baha'i marriage - a session with Peter and Janet Khan.
49. Baha'i consultation - D. Allen & D. Jordan.
50. Child education - A.Q. Faizi 12.1.77.
51. Sex, morality: their relationship to marriage - P. Khan.
52. Baha'i marriage - deepening session with A. & K. Stark.
53. The Covenant of Baha'u'llah - A.B.M. John Walker.
54. Turkish teaching - talk & reading - Sami Doktorglou (2 tapes).
55. Election of the first Universal House of Justice: The Conquest of the Citadel of Men's hearts - Ali Nahkjavani; Teaching in Panama - Ruth Pringle.
56. The education of Henry Halifax - a musical comedy about the spiritual struggles and triumphs of a Baha'i youth.
57. The Oneness of God. of religion & mankind - study class with Gina Garcia.
58. Tahirihi; Mulla Husayn (their stories) - L. Johnson.
59. The Baha'i teachings on health & healing - Dr. Brian Cameron.
60. Extinction: The implications of the loss of our biological heritage - Prof. P. Ehrlich (non-Baha'i).
- 61.c1 Spiritual development - Dr. Peter Khan (Baha'i law series).
- 61.c2 Rectitude of conduct - Dr. Peter Khan (Baha'i law series).
- 61.c3 Chastity & holiness - Dr. Peter Khan (Baha'i law series).
- 61.c4 Guidelines for implementing Baha'i principles - Dr. P. Khan (Baha'i law series).
- 61.c5 Social teachings of the Faith - Dr. P. Khan (Baha'i Law Series).
- 61.c6 Means by which the Baha'i community grows - Dr. P. Khan (Baha'i Law Series).
62. World unity with security - W. Sears. 1963.
63. The Baha'i Faith in America - Dr. P. Khan.
64. The World Centre - Its supreme administrative importance - Paul Haney, 1963.
65. Aging - Health Report special (non-Baha'i).
66. Leading incidents in the life of Baha'u'llah - Amoz Gibson: Children & television violence - A.M. Ghadirian.
67. One God. One Faith. One People - Collis Featherstone: Interfaith service, 1976.
68. Diamond girl - Seals & Crofts (music).
69. The simplicity of the Message of Baha'u'llah - P. Ainsworth.
70. Flight - Baha'i songs: One in the Spirit - Baha'i songs by Adrian Byron Burns.
71. In His Presence - Tarazu'llah Samandari's historic presentation at the World Congress - re his meeting with Baha'u'llah.
72. East & West: The Mystical Connection - Interview with Fth. Bede Griffiths (non-Baha'i).
73. The Covenant - talk by John Walker - Deepening for Baha'is.
74. Baha'i songs - Gary Olsen.
75. A call to pioneering - William Sears.
76. A Health Report special - Chronic pain; Alzheimer's Disease; Guillain Barre disease: diet & nutrition in the Third World (non-Baha'i).
77. David Suzuki (Prof. Genetics at Brit. Columbia Uni) in Australia:
- 77.c1 The Australian Crisis & the Canadian Experience.
- 77.c2 What price progress.
- 77.c3 3R & D or R.I.P.
78. Schizophrenia - A.B.C. Science Show - One in a hundred: The ideological din; Up in the air - Anne Devenson (non-Baha'i). 2 tapes.
79. Day of victory - Ruhyyih Khanum.
80. Money - understanding it and ourselves more fully - Lionel Fifield (non-Baha'i).
81. Tithing - The great challenge. the great door opener - Lionel Fifield (non-Baha'i).
82. The turning point - Dr. F. Capra - an address on the state of the environment, the modern industrial economy & the choices individuals make in everyday life (non-Baha'i).
83. A brighter world - Robert Muller, a leading U.N. official (non-Baha'i).
84. Inner learning, inner knowing - Barry Kaufman on his work with developmentally handicapped children (non-Baha'i).
85. Irretrievable breakdown - separation & divorce. Dealing with feeling: In their own words (non-Baha'i).

86. Christian subjects No. 1. - St. Marks Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles: Security for this world of ours - Eric Bowes.
87. Christian Subjects No. 2. - Through Christ to Baha'u'llah: Coals of fire - E. Bowes.
88. Visions of the 21st century with Barbara Hubbard (non-Baha'i).
89. Forgiving your parents - Harold Bloomfield, M.D. (non-Baha'i).
90. Exercise - Separating the myths from reality (A Science Show special).
91. The Baha'i Fund - Dr. Peter Khan.
92. Speaking effectively- Change your thinking & become a more effective speaker.
93. Can't you see the New Day - Baha'is in the South - a collection of spontaneous recordings of Baha'i songs (good for children's classes).
94. Keys to harmony - D. Jordan - a musical presentation on unity.
95. A commentary on the Kitab-i-Aqdas by A.Q. Faizi.
96. God's Great Plan: Faith for freedom - two introductions (excellent for firesides).
97. Prophecy fulfilled by the coming of Baha'u'llah - W. Sears (3 tapes).
98. In the Day of the Guardian - Leroy Loas.
99. Stories from "The Dawnbreakers" - adapted by William Sears (4 tapes) - for children.
- 100.c1 Coping with Grief - Facing grief; Two steps forward & one step back - Mal McKissock (non-Baha'i).
- 100.c2 Coping with grief - Life goes on: Getting it all out - Mal McKissock.
- 100.c3 Coping with grief - Difficulties in resolving grief: But what do I say? - Mal McKissock.
101. Aboriginal values in white society: Attitudes to land rights - Interview with Bob Randall (non-Baha'i).
102. Religions of the world - David Chittleborough.
103. Baha'i Faith - Klaas Havinga (excellent introductory talk).
104. Jewish Faith - Eric Bowes.
105. Hindu Faith - Tushar Kanti-Paul.
106. Do we need religion? - Mrs. S. Chittleborough: Religions of primitive man - S. Mann.
107. Meeting with Abdu'l Baha - Mother Dunn.
108. The nobility of man: Knowing ourselves: Development of the individual: The individual in his society - includes extracts from the Writings with background music.
109. Buckminster Fuller: The 50 year experiment. A documentary look at a 20th century genius - how he transcended failure & despair & devoted his life to serving humanity. (non-Baha'i).
110. Comparative religion: Hinduism. Buddhism. Shintoism. Islam. Taoism. Zoroastrianism. Confuses.
111. What is Baha'i - address by W. Sears (excellent for teaching).
112. All men are needed - talk by Ruhyyih Khanum.
113. Bringing vision into form - Dorothy Fadiman, a visionary filmmaker who tells how to manifest our own unique vision in the world (non-Baha'i).
114. Peace: The impossible dream? - address Duan Varan, Brisbane 1.11.87; Peace finding the elemental quality.
115. Teaching talk by William Sears, Adelaide, 1963.
116. The Sahara Reclamation Program - R. St. Barbe Baker: Some radio interviews: The return of Christ: God and human society.
117. Minority teaching - a deepening session with A. Deutscher.
118. Life of Shoghi Effendi - A.Q. Faizi.
119. Becoming your true self - Daniel Jordan.
120. Psychic Phenomena and the Baha'i Faith: Evil - Dr. P. Khan.
121. The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice - John Walker.
122. Peer pressure - Daniel Jordan
123. Zoroastrianism - talk by Marcus Bach.
124. The Principle of equality between men & women - discussion.
125. I wouldn't miss the chance - musical comedy about the Baha'i community of North-east-south-weston.
126. Every Friday night - musical comedy about weekly fireside.
127. Questions & Answers with Mrs. Gloria Faizi, Brisbane 25.2.89 (Deepening & Teaching).
128. More effective use of the Baha'i administration - Dr. P. Khan.
129. Unleashing the inner writer - Gabriellor Rico, Prof. English & Creative Arts, San Jose Uni. - how to unlock our own innate creativity (non-Baha'i).
130. Words are powerful - talk by Lionel Fifield (non-Baha'i).
131. Birth without violence - Frederick Leboyer. Attends to a fresh & important perspective on the birth process (non-Baha'i).
132. Fresh insights & a positive approach to death & dying - Ian Gawler (non-Baha'i).
133. Tibetan Plateau. Music for meditation or use behind readings. Majestic feeling of space from synthesizer sounds resembling organ, plus sounds from nature - David Parson (non-Baha'i).
134. Baha'i victory chorus - conducted by Russ Garcia.
135. The aspects of the Baha'i Faith which concern change & development in the world - deepening session - Dr. P. Khan.
136. Music to use behind readings (Orchestral music, in segments). Good for Feasts, etc.
137. Consultation in the family - Alice Fitzgerald.
138. Building a new world - public address - Dr. P. Khan.
139. Significance of losing voting rights - Robin Jones: Love & Marriage - M. Jackson.
140. Think of it this way - Anne Infante. Songs of brotherhood & fellowship and a new way of living in harmony (non-Baha'i).

141. Take me to my garden, mummy - Vicki Bennett (to teach children to achieve goals - 5-12 years old) (non-Baha'i).
142. The quality of Baha'i life - Dr. P. Khan.
143. Crisis in the Baha'i world - U.H.J. member. Borrah Kavelin.
144. Short talks - introductory talk: religious truths: Baha'u'llah: Abdu'l Baha: Principles, etc.
145. Trees - talk by Richard St. Barbe Baker.
146. Intone O my Servant - Persian & Arabic chanting.
147. The spiritual destiny of man - Dr. P. Khan - public talk.
148. Pronunciation guide to the Baha'i glossary - Marzieh Gail.
149. Pleasant & Delightful - Galimaufery - Folk music by Baha'i group.
150. Economy of a world commonwealth - public address by John Huddleston.
151. Individual enterprise & initiative - D. Chittleborough: Travel teaching - Ilona Rodgers.
152. Tablet of Ahmad & chanted Prayers (Arabic)
153. Poems, prayers & chants of Baha'u'llah, Abdu'l Baha & Tahiri (Persian).
154. Baha'i prayers read by Gale Volker.
155. At the World Centre & the Holy Land - Richard St. Barbe Baker.
156. Christianity: Prophecies - Kate Dwyer: Divine Law - Alice Fitzgerald.
- 157.c1 Time ... and how we experience it: biological time (non-Baha'i):
- 157.c2 ditto : time and memory:
- 157.c3 ditto : social time:
- 157.c4 ditto : time, the clock & the future.
158. Let's have music - songs for kids (non-Baha'i).
159. Maturing Assemblies - talk by U.H.J. member. Ali Nakhjavani.
160. Conflict resolution - a deepening session with Ann Stark.
161. Islam - a talk by Mona Waters.
162. Islam - a talk by Frank Khan.
163. Panel discussion on Peace - V. de Araujo. H. Danesh. R. Corazo.
164. Development of the Baha'i International Community - M. Sawicki & B. de Araujo.
165. Unity - the creative foundation of Peace - Dr. Hossain Danesh.
166. Shoghi Effendi - Expounder of the Baha'i Faith - David Hoffman.
167. Disarmament and the Baha'i Faith - B. Pokorny.
168. The Power of Baha'u'llah - Dhikru'llah Khadem.
169. Marriage & family life - Amatu'l-Baha. Ruhiyiyh Khanum.
170. A psychological theory of martyrdom - Dr. Fereshteh Bethel.
171. Nutrition - talk by Dr. Hashmat Ta'eed, Brisbane 11.1.88.
172. Iran: crisis & challenge - talk by Counsellor Iraj Amun.
173. Address to Youth - Hugh Chance, National Convention, 1987.
174. Proofs of Baha'u'llah - talk by Ray Meyer; The Trusted Ones of God (on L.S.A.).
175. The Baha'i Faith - An intro. (Basic Teachings, songs, Youth fireside).
176. The Four Dragons - songs by Anne Infante. Lyrics of the emerging new values being embraced by increasing number of people (non-Baha'i).
177. Flight - songs by Anne Infante, expressing her belief that our planet is heading into a time of change, when old beliefs & attitudes will be questioned and rejected in favour of a new understanding. Flight speaks for the planet and emerging angel in each of us (non-Baha'i).
178. Mele - Jaed. Soft keyboard for meditations or readings background.
179. Fire & Steel - Baha'i songs by Grant Hindin Miller.
180. Sing O Carmel - Baha'i songs by Grant Hindin Miller.
181. Creative visualisation - Matthew Manning (Visualisation in healing & creativity: A meditation: cortex in context) (non-Baha'i).
182. Finding your power in release - Lionel Fifield (non-Baha'i).
- 183.c1 Making sense of life. Caroline Jones interviews John Smith (former minister of religion who took his ministry to bikers & street peopl) and James McLelland (former Judge & Royal Commissioner into British Nuclear Weapons tests in Australia) (non-Baha'i).
- 183.c2 Making sense of life. Caroline Jones interview Emma Pierce (Author of "Ordinary Insanity", returned from terror of years of madness with practical recipe for staying sane) and Stella & Helena Cornelius (mother and daughter team promoting peace-making through Conflict Resolution Network) and Gary Morris (young entrepreneur and manager of Aust. rocks bands speaks of dramatic religious experience) (non-Baha'i).
- 184.c1 Heavens above - a simple guide to astronomy.
- 184.c2 Heavens above - a simple guide to astronomy.
185. Dos & don'ts of public speaking - Percy H. Whiting (non-Baha'i).
186. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of India (script F. Sabha, reader P. Hinton); The Baha'i Faith in action - Dr. P. Khan; Women in the Pacific region - Tinai Hancock.
187. Three speakers on the Baha'i education of children - S. Fouts. M. Sreenivasan & B. Stafford: The Baha'i Funds - M. Salmanpour; Youth: upholding the Divine Standard - Miss G. Taheri.

- 188.c1 The Spiritual Axis - Australia & Japan. A Pilgrim's report - Mr. Stanley Bolton: Japan & the Axis - Dr. T. Suzuki: Growth in the Pacific Mr. Collis Featherstone: The significance of the Spiritual Axis - Counsellor P. Khan: Pilgrim's Report - Mr. H. Takano: Persian chant.
- 188.c2 The Spiritual Axis - Australia & Japan. Review of the Axis - Dr. A. Dahl: Potential for Growth - panel: Role of Baha'i youth - Paul Lupai & Frankie Ang.
189. The L.S.A. Development & strengthening of L.S.A.s - Dr. Ugo Giachery: Development of Assemblies in village areas - Counsellor Samaniego: Development of L.S.A.s in mass conversion areas - Mr. K. Vajdi.
190. The life & station of the Greatest Holy Leaf - Counsellor Anneliese Bopp: The role of women in the Baha'i Faith - Mrs. Pau Chang, Samoa: A tribute to the Hands of the Cause - Mrs. Lillian Aja'i.
191. Environment & Survival - Dr. A. Dahl: World Order, an imperative - Judge R. Benson (public addresses): Early days of the Guardian - Dr. Ugo Giachery, Baha'i international conference, Canberra, 1982.
192. To live the Baha'i life - panel discussion with Elizabeth Hindson & Victor Tom: Imparting the Divine Fire - Mr. Collis Featherstone, Canberra, 1982.
193. Food Irradiation - public meeting Brisbane, 16.9.86 - panel.
194. The Advent of Divine Justice - A.B.M., Mrs. B. Stafford (The Kitab-i-Aqdas & the gradual implementation of Baha'i law):
Obtaining the Gem of Divine Virtue - Mr. Collis Featherstone, July, 1988.
195. Carrying forward an ever-advancing civilization - A.B.M., Mrs. B. Stafford (Principles related to social, scientific, artistic and economic development, & the role of the administrative order); The spiritualization of mankind - Judy Hassall (Baha'i teachings about prayer, meditation, love, knowledge and unity); This handful of dust is one home - Mr. Collis Featherstone (principles for a new social order in the Tablets following the revelation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas), 1988.
196. Science & Ethics (3 tapes) Treatment of animals: The human cost of medical technology: genetic engineering - who decides? (non-Baha'i).
- 197.c1 "Partners in Development" seminar, 6.9.88, organised by Qld. UNICEF Aust. & U.N. Assoc. of Aust. Educn. Committee. (Directions in Dev. Ed.): Development education - an international perspective. Speakers: Mr. N. Ross, Pres., Aust. Council for Overseas Aid; Ms. R. Berthier, Co-ord. Qld. Devt. Educ. Committee; Ms. L. Scott, Dev. Educ. Officer Aust. International Development Assistance Bureau.
- 197.c2 Development education - a national priority. Colin Henry, Snr. Staff member, Deakin Uni. presents paper re Development of post secondary courses prepared jointly by Dr. Lomas, Ms. Harvison & Dr. Ray Anderson (Dean of Educ, C.A.E.): Possible relevant educational trends in 1990s - Mr. David Scott, Division of secondary education, Curriculum Services, State Education Dept., Qld.
- 197.c3 Aspects of development & internationalism in a scientific & technological age - Speakers: Barry Corrick, Pres., World Future Society, Qld., & Mr. Mac Hazelwood, Educ. Off., U.N.A.A.; Possible relevant educational trends in the 1990s - Peter MacColl, Div. of Secondary Educ., Curriculum Services, State Educ. Dept., Qld., & Mr. John Fien, Lecturer, Social Science, Kelvin Grove, T.C.A.E.
198. Communications 2000. A look forward to the techniques of communication in the year 2000 and the possibilities for more intense relationships internationally.
199. Leisure 2000. A look at the problems and questions which will arise from the newfound leisure in the year 2000.
200. Ten Nia Mondo - a new radio course in Esperanto, an international language.
201. The future of integration - Dr. Martin Luther King. A recording of one of his last speeches, made at a time when black power threatened to replace the philosophy of non-violence among Afro-Americans. The choice is between non-violence and non-existence.
202. New trends in the mass media - Phillip Adams. Communication satellites as the new space race of the future - the development of holography and more spectacular forms of film and TV.
203. Thinking with Paulo Friere. Conscientisation (critical awareness): Praxis (action/reflection).
204. Thinking with Paulo Friere. Violence: Class struggle & illusion of neutrality: The Church & the liberation of the oppressed.
205. The Spectre of Truganini - Bernard Smith. Lectures based on the premise that Australia was acquired by the dispossession of the indigenous people of their ancestral lands, a process that might be more fittingly described as invasion or conquest. 1. The ethical roots of culture. 2. The mechanisms of forgetfulness. 3. The concerned conscience. 4. Black voices. 5. A cultural convergence. (Two tapes)(non-Baha'i).

206. The quest for Gaia - Dr. Kit Pedler, research scientist & writer talks about his view that the earth is a living organism & how that view influences the way in which he lives: Butterflies, engineering & being wrong - Prof. E. Laithwaite, Prof., Electrical Engineering, Imperial College, London talks about butterflies, engineering and how technology has altered man's relationship with the earth.
207. From the Heart - a relaxing musical tapestry of Australia's unique & beautiful wilderness. For meditation or for use with readings.
208. Personal Teaching Campaign and the 6 Year Plan. Speakers: Ruhyyih Khanum & Mr. Collis Featherstone, Tom Price & U.H.J. member, Hugh Chance.
209. The condition of growth & development of the Baha'i Faith - U.H.J. member, Dr. P. Khan, Brisbane, 27.1.89.
210. Dr. Barry Commoner's Presidential Candidate's address. Dr. Commoner is Prof. Environmental Science, Washington Uni., St. Louis & Director of its Centre for Biology of Natural Systems. Here he speaks for the Citizen's Party; Richard St. Barbe Baker's Ballina address. This world renowned forester, founder of Men of the Trees, visited Australia for a series of lectures, including this one, taped at Ballina, N.S.W.

NOTE: The reference 'non-Baha'i', noted on the list forwarded by the Baha'i Cassette Library, has been retained simply because it identifies some tapes not made with the explicit intent of expounding the spirit, teachings, and laws of the Faith of Baha'u'llah.

**THE GREAT WORLD RELIGIONS & NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS:
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY.**

In future issues of the BSB selected miscellaneous and recent publications of possible interest to Bahá'ís working within religious studies/orientalist and related academic disciplines will be listed (and occasionally briefly reviewed). The editors would henceforth greatly appreciate potential entries under the various headings (see below). Books for possible review would be gratefully received.

'ARYAN' & FAR EASTERN RELIGIONS.

Eric J. Sharpe, The Universal Gita: Western Images of the Bhagavadgita: a bicentenary survey. Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1985, 188pp. ISBN 0-7156-2503-9 (£19.50 hdbk/£8.95 pbk).

An important insight into "the best loved and most widely read of all Hindu scriptures" first published in English translation in 1785.

Alan Sponberg & Helen Hardacre (Eds), Maitreya, the Future Buddha Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York etc., 1988. xiv+304pp. ISBN 0-521-34344-5.

For Bahá'ís interested in Buddhist messianism this is a very important collection of essays in which certain of the "many faces of Maitreya" are authoritatively sketched.

SEMITIC/JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN-ISLÁMIC AND RELATED RELIGIONS.

D.E.Gowan, Eschatology in the Old Testament, T. & T. Clark Ltd. Edinburgh, 1986 150pp. ISBN 0-567-09453-7 (hdbk £11.95). This theological study of the eschatological traditions of ancient Israel gives great weight to the Zion traditions.

R.J.Coggins & J.L.Houlden (Eds), A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation. SCM Press, London + Trinity Press International Philadelphia, 1990, 751 pp. ISBN 0-334-00294 (£35).

This is an extremely important volume with articles devoted to each book of the Bible and much more besides. It is an academically authoritative and up to date guide to Biblical interpretation/hermeneutics. Articles are brief and to the point

and, for example, include-: Adam (L.Krietzer); Allegorical Interpretation (A.Louth); Bultmann,R. (R.Morgan); Eisegesis (J.Barton); Eschatology (R.P.Carroll); Etymology (J.Sawyer); Feminist Interpretation (D.Middleton); Fundamentalism (M.Corner); Hermeneutics (W.G.Jeanrond); Moses(W.Johnstone); Muslim Interpretation[of the Bible](A.Rippin); New Religious Movements (P.Clarke); Other Faiths (A.G.Hunter); Parousia (C.Rowland); Syriac Tradition (S.P.Brock); Targum (C.Hayward)...

Colleen McDannell & Bernhard Lang, Heaven - A History - Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1988, 410pp. ISBN 0-300-04346-5 (HB)£16.95.

Bentley Layton, The Gnostic Scriptures - A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions..SCM Press Ltd, London 1987 526pp. ISBN 0-334-02022-0 (HB)£25.

This volume includes good translations of many of the most significant gnostic texts and sources associated therewith.

B.Layton is "Professor of Ancient Christian History at Yale.."

Paul E.Knitter, No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World's Religions. SCM Press Ltd. London 1985, 288pp. ISBN 0-334-02223-1 (PB) £9.50.

" This is a clear and detailed guide to the complex question of the relationship between Christianity and the other world religions. The first chapter sets the problem: the new experience of religious pluralism in today's world and the vision many people have of a new kind of unity and dialogue... "

(From the jacket note)

John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Eds), The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. SCM Press Ltd., London 1987, 227pp. ISBN 0-334-01066-7 (PB) £8.50.

" A decade after *The Myth of God Incarnate* this book, by a representative mixture of Christian theologians... tackles perhaps the most important theological question of our time, that of the relationship between Christianity and other religions... "

(From the jacket note)

The two books listed immediately above contain much that might prove educative for Baha'is in their dialogue with Christians and other religionists.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Abú Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarír al-Ṭabarí, The Commentary on the Qur'án, being an abridged translation of Jámi' al-bayán 'an ta'wíl áy al-Qur'án, with an introduction and notes by J. Cooper, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York etc., 1987, xliv+492 pp. ISBN 0-19-920142-0 (HB) Vol. 1, £45.

" This is the first of five volumes in which it is intended to present an abridged translation of Tabarí's Commentary on the Quran... "

(from the inside jacket note)

This important volume is an abridged English translation of the first part of one of the most important and early (al-Tabarí died in 839 A.H./923 C.E.) Sunní collections of exegetical traditions- some 35,000 are cited [with duplication] a fair proportion of which go back to the 1st Islámic century. The original Arabic was first published in Cairo in 1903 [new edition 1954>] in 12 massive (tightly packed) volumes.

A. Rippin, Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'án, Oxford University Press 1988. ISBN 0-19-826546-8 (HB), £35.00, 334pp.

This is a particularly important exploration of aspects of the multi-faceted hermeneutic science (*tafsír*) of Islám (for notice of selected articles see below).

Shí'í Islám

In this and future BSB's selected books and articles will only be listed (under this heading) which are not mentioned in Moojan Momen's An Introduction to Shi'i Islam..(George Ronald, Oxford 1985 esp., Select Bibliography pp. 345-361) .

Abdul Aziz Abdul Hussein Sachedina, The Just Ruler [al-sultán al-cádil] in Shi'ite Islam, The Comprehensive Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence, New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press 1988, 281pp. ISBN 0-19-505363-X £22.50.

" The problem of juridical and political authority during the occultation of the Twelfth Imam is of central importance to shi'ism. This is an exhaustive and judicious treatment of the theme, based on intimate and critical acquaintance with the primary sources. Another major contribution to Shi'ite studies by Abdulaziz Sachedina. "

Hamid Algar, University of California at Berkeley
(A review on the jacket of the book)

Sayyid Haydar Amuli, Inner Secrets of the Path [Asrár al-Shari'ah], with an introduction and explanatory notes by Muhammad Khajavi; translated from the original Arabic by Assadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate. Element books in association with Zahra Publications. Zahra Trust 1989. Element Books Ltd., Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 321pp. ISBN 1-85230-061-2 (pbk £14.95)

Haydar Amuli (d. after 1385 C.E.) is a central figure in the Shí'í gnostic (*irfaní*) tradition an an important commentator on the great Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabí (d.1240 C.E.).

Said Amir Arjomand (Ed), Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism. State University of New York Press, Albany 1988.

Shaul Bakhash, Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform under the Qajars 1858-1896. Ithaca Press, Exeter 1978 444pp. (HB) £11.50.

'Allamah Sayyid M.H. Tabataba'i, The Qur'an in Islam, Its Impact and Influence on the Life of Muslims, Zahra Publications/Dist. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1987 118pp. ISBN 0-7103-0265-7 (HB)/0-7103 0266 5 (PB) £8.95.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed), Islamic Spirituality 1, Foundations. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1987 450pp. ISBN 0-7102-1097-3 (HB) £39.50 (PB) £19.50[?].

This is Vol.19 in the important series World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest (25 volumes are planned many of which are now in print). Vol.20 (publication imminent) will be entitled, Islamic Spirituality II Manifestations. Most of the twenty chapters of Vol.19 contain material of considerable interest to Bahá'í students of Shi'í Islam, the central religious milieu of the Bábí and Bahá'í religions. Part Two (= *Aspects of the Islamic Tradition*) contains useful introductory chapters entitled *Twelve Imam Shi'ism* (Syed Husain M. Jafri) and *Isma'ilism* (Azim Nanji) as well as chapters on *Sunnism* and *Female Spirituality in Islam*. Of particular interest are the excellent chapters, *Traditional Esoteric Commentaries on the Qur'an* (Ch.3 Abdurrahman Habil), *The Angels* (Ch.17 Sachiko Murata) and *Eschatology* (Ch.20 William Chittick). All of the contributors to this volume are apparently practising Muslims. Like certain other volumes in the World Spirituality multi-volume series Vol.19 is certainly worth purchasing.

Henry Corbin, Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth, From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran. Translated from the French by Nancy Pearson, I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., London 1990 ISBN 1-85043-142-6/ 1-85043-143-4 pbk £9.50 (originally published in French as Terre céleste et corps de résurrection: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shi'ite.. [Buchet-Chastel, Paris, 1960] /a reprint of the 1976 English translation).

This reprinted translation of an important volume of the late Henry Corbin's writings contains much that is of central interest: including translations and discussions of Shaykhi writings (pp. 180-268).

Henry Corbin, Temple and Contemplation. Translated by Philip Sherrard with the assistance of Liadain Sherrard (KPI. London, Boston and Henley in association with Islamic Publications London 1986. ISBN 0-7103-0129-4 (cloth)/0-7103-0130-8 (paperback £9.95). (Originally published in French as, Temple et Contemplation [Flammarion et Cie, Paris 1980]).

The English translation of five lectures "...originally delivered at different sessions of the Eranos Conferences in Ascona, Switzerland..The last three studies explicitly ask us to reflect on the role of the Temple, in the spiritual traditions of the

Religions of the Book.."(p.ix).The five chapters of this volume are-:

1) The Realism and Symbolism of Colours in Shiite Cosmology, According to the "Book of the Red Hyacinth" by Shaykh Muhammad Karim-Khan Kirmani (d.1870 [3rd Shaykh of Kirmani Shaykhis]) (pp. 1-54).

2) The Science of the Balance and the Correspondences between Worlds in Islamic Gnosis according to the work of Haydar Amuli, 8th/14th century (pp. 55-131).

3) Sabian Temple and Ismailism (pp. 132-182).

4) The Configuration of the Temple of the Ka'bah as the secret of the Spiritual Life according to the work of Qadi Sa'id Qummi (1103/1691)(pp. 183-262).

5) The Imago Templi in Confrontation with Secular Norms (pp. 263-390).

'Allama Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, The Life and Religion of Muhammad (Hayat al-Qulub)(Vol.2) tr. Rev. James L Merrick (d.1866) The Zahra Trust (University Press, Cambridge) 1982. 483 pp. SBN 710302169.

An amended reprint of the English translation of Vol.2 of the originally 3 Vol. Persian history of the renowned Majlisi [d.1111 A.H.=1699/1700 C.E.].The publishers have added a new Preface and cut out certain of the inaccurate notes though the translation seems to have been printed as originally-:

The life and religion of Mohammad, as contained in the Sheeah traditions of the Hyat-ul-kuloob, translated from the Persian by James L. Merrick. Boston, Philips, Sampson, 1850.

'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (Sel.)+ William C. Chittick (Tr.), A Shi'ite Anthology, London, The Muhammadi Trust of Great Britian & Northern Ireland, 1980. 152pp. (PB)£5.95. ISBN 0-9506986-1-X/ 0-7103-0160-X(c);0-7103-0159-6(p). May be ordered from KPI Ltd. Routledge & Kegan Paul plc. 14 Leicester Square London WC2H 7PH.

M. Ayoub, The Speaking Qur'an and the Silent Qur'an: A Study of the Principles and Developments of Imami Shi'ci tafsir, in A. Rippin, Approaches... (see above) pp177-198.

W.Madelung, Religious trends in early Islamic Iran (Bibliotheca Persica. Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies, Ed.E.Yarshater,4.) Albany N.Y.State Univ.of N.Y.Press x,128 pp.1988.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

At some stage in the future it is my hope to correct, revise extend and (re-) publish my 1984 BSB article An Early Poem of Mirza Husayn °Alí Bahá'u'lláh, The Sprinkling of the Cloud of Unknowing (Rashh-i-°Amá). [Refer BSB Vol 3 No 2.pp.4-114]. Further details about themes touched upon in the commentary or about the multifarious usages of the term °Amá and its significance in Islámic and/or Bábí/Bahá'í literatures or Tablets - be they in Persian and/or Arabic- would be greatly appreciated. Corrections to the provisional translation or possible alternative renderings would be welcomed.

(Stephen Lambden).