

BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES BULLETIN



This Bulletin has the full support of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahā'īs of the United Kingdom: though they are not responsible for any of the views expressed within it. The BSB is primarily designed to facilitate communication between those among us engaged in the academic study of the Bābī and Bahā'ī religions; particularly between Bahā'īs approaching this field from such scholarly perspectives as Religious Studies, History of Religions, Iranian Studies, or Islamic Studies. It is hoped that at some stage in the future the Bulletin will be befittingly published rather than photostatically reproduced.

Articles published in this Bulletin are the perspectives of their authors alone. As with other Bahā'ī periodicals the content is obviously fallible; though hopefully intellectually and spiritually stimulating or challenging. Established Bahā'ī doctrine and the authoritative guidance of Bahā'ī Institutions is respected though creative and scholarly individuality is neither inhibited nor censored. When printed here, translations of Bahā'ī sacred scripture – not authenticated at the Bahā'ī World Centre – are provisional. Manuscript / original scriptural texts (when printed) may or may not be textually sound.

A steady and sustained flow of scholarly contributions is vital to the success of this Bulletin: academic qualifications from western Institutions of higher learning are not required of contributors. The nature and scope of contributions that would be welcome for inclusion in this Bulletin includes (for example):-

- Copies of manuscripts or of generally unavailable scriptural texts (or portions thereof) with or without comments about their importance / dating / diffusion / text-critical status or linguistic style.
- Essays or short notes upon aspects of Bahā'ī doctrine / history...
- Copies of letters written by or on behalf of the Universal House of Justice (or International Bahā'ī institutions) to Individuals about or relating to aspects of Bahā'ī scholarship.
- Methodological essays or notes.
- Notices of books, papers or reviews of interest to Bahā'ī scholars working within such disciplines as are listed above (first paragraph).
- Reviews or review essays of Bahā'ī publications.
- Reports of Bahā'ī studies seminars or conferences.
- Reports of work in progress from people working within the field of Bābī-Bahā'ī studies.
- [Bio-] Bibliographical essays or notes.

All contributions to this Bulletin should be addressed to: Stephen Lambden (BSB Editor), 44 Queens Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 2PQ, England, United Kingdom. Phone & Fax = 091. 2818597 (U.K.) / 44 91 2818597 (Overseas). Ideally, contributions should be sent in ASCII or any major DOS / Apple Mac. word processing formats with sample printout – transliteration must be clearly indicated. Otherwise, contributions should be clearly typed / word processed.

EDITORIAL NOTE

It was previously announced (in BSB 5:1 January 1991) that the use of the fiat macron for the transliteration of long vowels in Arabic / Persian will be preferred. As the BSB is primarily designed to enable Bahá'í academics to share their researches, certain aspects of internationally respected Arabic-Persian transliteration norms will be followed.

A new editorial board and an overseas group of sub-editors has recently been formed for the BSB. Stephen Lambden, in consultation with Moojan Momen and others, will act as main editor for the U.K. production (address overleaf). The overseas sub-editors, primarily responsible for American and Canadian contributions, are -:

Dr. Juan Cole, Centre for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, 144 Lane Hall, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1290 USA. FAX (313) 764-8523;

Dr B. Todd Lawson, 14b Rock Ave. N, Montreal W. Quebec H4X 2E9 CANADA. It is planned that both the U.K. and the overseas editorial / sub-editorial boards will, in future, be further expanded.

Valuable review, proof reading and other distribution work, has been carried out by Gillian Lambden, Robert Parry, Khazeh Fananapazir and Martin Woods -- among others who cannot all, unfortunately, be mentioned here.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The price of each issue of the BSB will vary according to size and postage costs but will not normally be less than £3.50 + postage rate (add 50p. UK & Europe; add £3 single issue or £6 double issue, rest of world). In the near future, (summer 93?) the BSB will be probably be published according to its earlier reduced format. In addition a new periodical (essentially an upgraded BSB; fully supported by the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of the U.K.) entitled, *Abhá: A Journal of Bábí-Bahá'í Studies* and consisting solely of academic articles will be launched. Separate BSB and *Abhá*. subscription rates will be announced in the future.

Persons resident in the U.S.A or Canada may enquire about and send their subscriptions (at a rate to be announced) to Ahang Rabbani, 17310 DeChirico Circle, Houston, USA. TX 77378; 713-251-9989 [H] /Fax [W] 713-586-2504.

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 50 pages) for the BSB. In the future it is planned to print revised, selected back issues of the BSB. 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.

REDATING THE SŪRAH OF GOD (SŪRAT ALLĀH): AN EDIRNE-PERIOD TABLET OF 1868?
— PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION APPENDED. JUAN R.I. COLE

The gradualism of Bahā'u'llāh's written declaration of his claims to be the promised one of the Bāb has recently been emphasized by myself and by Stephen Lambden.¹ Bahā'u'llāh's writings of the Baghdad period contain many hints and allusions to his claims, on retrospect, but they lack an explicit announcement. The one exception here appears to be a Tablet antititled *The Sūrah of God (Sūrat Allāh)*, wherein Bahā'u'llāh speaks of revealing verses, just as did the Bāb, Muhammad, Jesus and Moses.² But does this Tablet really belong to the Baghdad period? Only by examining internal evidence, especially content but also style, can this question be settled.

'Abd al-Hamīd Ishrāq-Khāvarī, in his concise survey of Bahā'u'llāh's major works, asserted that Bahā'u'llāh wrote the *Sūrah of God* from Baghdad after having been informed of his impending exile to Istanbul in the spring of 1863.³ He did not, however, say how he arrived at this dating. It appears to have been based on circumstantial evidence, in which case I wish to argue that the evidence can be read in a different manner. The tablet, addressed to one "Muhammad-'Alī", begins by asking him to "haarkan to this proclamation from thy Lord, at a time when He desireth to depart out from among ye by reason of what the hands of the oppressors have wrought." Ishrāq-Khāvarī appears to have seen in this opening sentence a reference to Bahā'u'llāh's exile from Baghdad. Another historical context, however, would fit this tablet much better, and that is the withdrawal of Bahā'u'llāh from the house of Amru'llāh to that of Riza Bay in Edirne (Adrianople) on 10 March 1866.

When Bahā'u'llāh first arrived in Edirne on 12 December 1863, he and his large party were housed in a caravanserai. Thereafter a small house was arranged for them in the Murādiyyah quarter. After about a week, they moved to a larger house in the same quarter. Bahā'u'llāh spent six to seven months in the large house in the Murādiyyah quarter, staying there till around July of 1864.

¹ Stephen Lambden, *Some Notes on Bahā'u'llāh's Gradually Evolving Claims of the Adrianople / Edirne Period*, pp. 75-83; and Juan R.I. Cole, *Bahā'u'llāh's Sūrah of the Companions: An early Edirne Tablet of Declaration (c. 1864), Introduction and Provisional Translation*, pp. 4-74, both in *Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin* 5:3-6:1 (June 1991).

² Bahā'u'llāh, *Sūrat Allāh*, in *Āthār-i qalam-i a'lā*, Volume 4 (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, B.E. 125/1968), pp. 16-23.

³ 'Abdu'l-Hamid Ishrāq-Khāvarī, *Ganj-i shayigān* (Tehran: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, B.E. 124/1967), pp. 60-61.

By August, 1864, Bahā'u'llāh and his entourage had rented a mansion, called the house of Amru'llāh, near the Sultan Selim mosque at the centre of the city. It had thirty inner, private rooms on three storeys. The public portion of the house had four or five reception salons, as well as many bedrooms. Bahā'u'llāh and his family lived on the upper floor of the private half of the house. Many of the Bābīs occupied the middle floor of the outer, public portion. Nearby, one smaller house was found for Azal and his family, and another for Mīrzā Mūsā and his. The Bābīs living in the public section of the house began working in the bazaar as traders, pedlars, shopkeepers, and artisans. Among the many inhabitants of the house were two strong partisans of Azal, Sayyid Muhammad Isfāhānī and Mīrzā Ahmad Kāshānī.⁴

These Bābīs lived relatively peacefully together at the house of Amru'llāh for one year, until about August of 1865, by which time Bahā'u'llāh's claims to be the return of the Bāb and the promised one of his religion had become widely and publicly known, and been greeted positively by many Bābīs back in Iran. Azal, of course, considered himself the appointed vicar of the Bāb, and was angry about Bahā'u'llāh's claims. Sayyid Muhammad Isfāhānī also seems to have been jealous of them, and despite the ways in which he had occasionally humiliated Azal, he chose to back and to use the latter. Thus, in the period August 1865 through February 1866 the Bābī community split definitively into two factions, one supporting Azal and the other supporting Bahā'u'llāh. These seven months were called by Bahā'u'llāh the 'Days of Stress' (*ayyām-i shidād*). The increasingly tense and rancorous relations between the two groups were exacerbated by their close living quarters in the house of Amru'llāh and by the culture of the bazaar, where most of them were employed, and wherein faction fighting of a physical sort was common.

Two major incidents led to the "Most Great Separation". First, Azal attempted to poison Bahā'u'llāh, and although the attempt failed, it left Bahā'u'llāh ill for a month and caused a trembling in his hands for the rest of his life. Second, the barber Muhammad-'Alī Salmānī reports that Azal attempted to recruit him to murder Bahā'u'llāh in his bath.⁵ Azal, who had been involved in plots to assassinate Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, and who had in Baghdad called for the assassination of a rival (Dayyān) for leadership of the Bābīs, had a violent streak that makes these accusations credible.

⁴ Muhammad-'Alī Salmānī, *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982), pp. 42-45; H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh, the King of Glory* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980), pp. 221-222.

⁵ Salmānī, *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 57-58, 97-100; Mīrzā Javād Qazvīnī, *Historical Epitome*, trans. in E.G. Browne, ed., *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919), pp. 22-23; Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh*, pp. 222-232.

In reaction to all these intrigues, Bahā'u'llāh chose to break up the Amru'llāh household, where Bahā'īs and Azalis had been attempting to live together. He moved to a different quarter, to the house of Riza Bey, on 10 March 1866. After he made provisions for the housing there of his own family and partisans, he went into seclusion for two months, refusing to see anyone. Bahā'u'llāh's loyal brother, Mīrzā Mūsā, said of Bahā'u'llāh's withdrawal from the house of Amru'llāh and his subsequent seclusion, "That day witnessed a most great commotion. All the companions lamented in their separation from the Blessed Beauty."⁶ Note that Bahā'u'llāh opens the *Sūrah of God* by saying that he desires to leave his house because of oppression. He had not desired to leave his house in Baghdad, but had rather been commanded to come to Istanbul by the sultan. It was the withdrawal from the house of Amru'llāh that was voluntary and came as a result of the oppression of Azal and his partisans. Later in the tablet, Bahā'u'llāh says, "We heard with Our own ears what the ear of no contingent being hath heard. It issued from behind the walls, from those who lived in Our House, next to that Sacred Spot around which circle the denizens of paradise." This passage, too, is consistent with the situation in February-March 1866. It was in Edirne that supporters of Azal would have been living in the large house of Amru'llāh with Bahā'u'llāh, plotting behind thin walls and affording the latter an opportunity to overhear them.

Bahā'u'llāh says that he concealed the plot he had overheard, so that Azal's associates had no idea they had been found out. At the time of his writing, Bahā'u'llāh is still deeply hurt, saying, "The matter continued into these very days, when the sacred Beauty desireth to veil Himself from the society of others and to sever Himself from all." We know that Bahā'u'llāh did, indeed, become highly reclusive for two months, March-May of 1866, on moving to the house of Riza Bey. Although he subsequently became more accessible, he appears to have thereafter remained a very private person. No such period of withdrawal from association with the Bābīs is recorded in the spring of 1863, however. Rather, we know that he associated with Bābīs and with the local Iraqi populace quite freely in that period.

Bahā'u'llāh's assertions in this tablet, that whoever does not believe in him has effectively denied the previous prophets, as well, and that the Bābīs had "turned away from the primal Beauty in His subsequent form," are both consistent with his diction in the Edirne period, after he had already made his claim in writing to be the return of the Bāb. His identification of himself with Moses, Jesus, Muhammad

⁶ Quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970), p. 167; see also Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, 4 vols. (Oxford: George Ronald, 1973 - 1987), 3: 162-165.

and the Bāb recalls his rhetorical strategy in the Edirne-period *Sūrah of Blood*. His insistence that he continued to uphold the revealed law of the Bāb ("Have I altered even one of the ordinances that were revealed in the Tablets of God . . . ?") resembles the sentiments in the 1865 Tablet of Ahmad Yazdī, wherein Bahā'u'llāh urges the Bābīs to obey the laws of the Bāb. I do not regard the open claims of prophethood as likely to have been made by him in writing in Baghdad, and it is such claims that would raise the question of possible revisions of Bābī law. (Bahā'u'llāh did, of course, eventually reveal his own book of laws, in 1873, but in the Edirne period he kept the Bayān in force, on the whole.)

A content and stylistic analysis of the *Sūrah of God*, then, suggests that it was revealed some time after spring, 1866, in the wake of Bahā'u'llāh's withdrawal to the house of Riza Bey in Edirne. By dating it in this way, we resolve an anomaly, the very explicit and evolved claims in the *Sūrah of God*, so unlike anything else in the Baghdad tablets. Looking at it in this manner also increases its historical importance. If the conversation Bahā'u'llāh overheard was in the house of Amru'llāh, we can conclude with fair certainty that these remarks concern a plot against Bahā'u'llāh being hatched by followers of Azal. This intriguing against him in his own house appears to have been a third impetus, along with Azal's attempted poisoning and attempt to hire Salmānī as a hit man, for Bahā'u'llāh to break up the Amru'llāh household and move out. After all, Azal did not live at the house of Amru'llāh, although he lived nearby and increasingly constituted a menace. Rather, it was the prospect of actually dwelling with individuals (Sayyid Muhammad Isfāhānī and Mīrzā Ahmad Kāshānī?) who meant to do him harm that impelled Bahā'u'llāh to withdraw.

A final puzzle comes in this short tablet's final paragraph. Bahā'u'llāh wrote,

Know, however, that the reason for My withdrawal was not what We have enumerated for thee in this luminous Tablet. Rather, We had found Ourselves to be a chief in the land and a guardian of this people, but then abandoned this position to such as desired and would accept it. There was no such person among the people, and distress, terror and murder were abroad in the land. We therefore manifested Ourselves between the heavens and the earth, and dawned forth from the axis of the horizon with perspicuous sovereignty. Then, when We observed that the land was tranquil, We secluded Ourselves and gave it into the care of another people.

To what events is he here referring? Their identification is important internal evidence for the dating of this tablet, but the wording is ambiguous. The passage could be read as referring to the early Baghdad period, when Bahā'u'llāh withdrew in 1854-56 to Sulaymaniyyah in Kurdistan, and perhaps Ishrāq-Khāvarī and

others interpreted it in this manner. On the other hand, it could equally well refer to the withdrawal of March-May 1866 within the house of Rize Bey. Whereas Bahā'u'llāh could plausibly be seen to have achieved the status of a 'chief' and 'guardien' of the Bābīs in the Istanbul and early Edirne periods, this seems an odd description of his position a decade earlier in Baghdad, when he had just arrived after a confinement in the Shāh's dungeon. Bahā'u'llāh may have kept in the background once the Bābīs arrived in Edirne, but saw the community deteriorate. He appears to have taken on a firmer leadership role when they moved to the house of Amru'llāh in summer, 1864, and to have insisted that the Bābīs in that house go find employment. At the same time, he pressed his claims to be the promised one of the Bāb. Once, however, he had established that claim and attracted a cohort of devoted, courageous followers, such as Nabī-i A'zam, Āqā Munīb Kāshānī, Ahmed Yazdī, and others, he felt justified in going into seclusion in the spring of 1866. The situation after March, 1866, remains most consistent with the events referred to in this tablet, and there is nothing in the tablet that cannot be plausibly explained in this context. On the other hand, Bahā'u'llāh's desire to leave his house, his overhearing of a plot against him by persons living in his house, his references to having already declared his station, and the unusual openness with which he refers to that station, are all hard to reconcile with the tablet having been written in March or April of 1863.

The sense of betrayal here is poignant, as is the determination to withdraw from human society as a result of this persecution. In this mood, Bahā'u'llāh very powerfully evoked his sympathy for the poor and the oppressed, saying that "the subordinate is more exalted than a myriad of his superiors, and one oppressed is more excellent than the city full of tyrants." Bahā'u'llāh's option for the downtrodden, here expressed so eloquently, still speaks powerfully to the late-twentieth-century world in which human rights are too often a mere dream and the tyrannical oppression of minorities all too common.

THE SŪRAH OF GOD (SŪRAT ALLĀH), PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION BY JUAN COLE

This is the *Sūrah of God* that hath been revealed In truth from the divine realm of the Hallowed, the Glorious, the Illumined One.

He is the Powerful.

O Muhammad-'Alī, hearken to this proclamation from thy Lord, at a time when He desireth to depert out from emong ye by reason of what the hends of the oppressors have wrought. Thereby have sorrows encompassed the entire creation in such wise that the Pen is hindered from mentioning the mysteries, the Tablet from giving its written testimony, the clouds of grace from raining down and the trees of paradise from bearing fruit, if ye be of them that know. Say: O people, ye are so wrapped in dense veils that ye expel God from His House and yet make mention of His names et morn and eventide.

Say: Blinded be the eyes that open every morning end yet shall never fall upon My glorious and refulgent Beauty, deaf be the ears that hear every sound but neglect to hearken to My wondrous end sweet melodies, and dumb be the tongue that shall never move with My Name, the All-Subduing, the Omnipotent, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Contemplete within thyself My calamities, end that which hath befallen Me. By God, they have afflicted no one else before Me, and they shall never be borne by the heavens end the earth. Matters have come to such a pass for Me on every side that I have resigned Myself to that which no one in all the worlds will accept for himself. Say: O People of the Bayān, have I forbidden you whet God allowed you, or have I enjoined upon you what God proscribed? Heve I altered even one of the ordinances that were revealed In the Tablets of God, the Almighty, the Glorious, the Generous? If My sin be the divine verses that are reveeled to Me, this was not from Me, but rather from the All-Powerful, the All-Beautiful. By God, I am not the first to perpetrate this crime, rather, most of the Prophets committed it, including 'Alī-Muhammad [The Bāb] and before Him, Muhammad the Apostle of God, Christ and Moses. Each spoke forth that with which the Strong Spirit inspired Him from the kingdom of God, the Protector, the Omnipotent.

By God, the creation heth never seen My like end no eye hath beheld My peer, for I am Powerful to do what I will, and I am the Pardoner, the Compassionate. Whoso denieth My Cause hath repudiated all the Messengers, and whoso tumeth away from My fece hath shunned the Countenance of God. To this bear witness the essences of all contingent beings, and the tongues of ell existing things, then this Tongue, the All-Knowing, the All- Perceiving. Say: O People of the Bayān, We lived among you as one of you, but you were not pleased thereby. For this reason did We drew some of the seventy thousand vells from the face

of this Cause, but this also gladdened you not. We lifted some more of the veils, until affairs came to the pass where this lofty and inaccessible station stood revealed. Should ye never be pleased therewith, We shall, in spite of you, continue to lift the veils with a power and sovereignty that derive from Us, O assemblage of the hateful. This hath ever been the practice of the Messengers and the character of the Sincere Ones, if ye but knew.

Since ye have turned away from the primal Beauty in His subsequent form, repudiated His verses, and disbelieved in His bounty, therefore doth He depart elone out from among you at a time when He is detached from all who are in the heavens and on earth. My deeds bear witness thereto, if ye be of the fair-minded. Say: Verily, We have turned Our face toward Him that created the heavens and the Throne, and I shall never ask for a helper other than God, the Glorious, the All-Praised. O people, know that My succourer is My heart and my fortress is My trust in God. My confidence is My beauty, My troops are My mention and My party is the concourse of the worlds. By God, when We discovered the people adoring the greven images of their delusions and vain imaginations instead of God, We visited upon them thereby a retribution for their deeds, that they might thus be led to perceive that a new people had come into being.

Therefore, be just within thyself. Is it seemly that those who turn their faces toward utter nothingness should make mention of the eternal Beauty? Nay, by My Self, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Therefore hath God cleansed the hem of His robe from the filth of any mention by the wicked, and hath purified it from all names and attributes, in private and in public. The people, however, neglected to take note, and remain heedless. O 'Alī, close thine eyes to the like of these, and turn they gaze away from all who are in the heavens and on earth. Then remind the people of that with which the Spirit inspireth thee at all times. If thou cleanseth thy soul from this world and from those in whom thou perceivest the odour of unbelief, thou wilt find that thou hast attained that station whereunto the hearts of the Near Ones shall never soar. Thou wilt discover that thou art more learned than all those endowed with perfect and sagacious knowledge. Therefore, rend the veils in My Name, the Chosen, and pay no heed to the impudent. Quaff the waters of the river of paradise that are reserved for the righteous, from this gleaming and radiant chalice, and stand in trepidation of no one. Put thy trust in My Name, the Forgiving, the Glorious, the Munificent. Abandon the world to those who seek it, and depart from the prison of earthly hopes. Content thyself with My love, for, verily it is better than the treasures of the heavens and the earth, and more excellent than all that was and is yet to be. This is My command to thee, and My counsel to the people of sanctity. Through the power of the All-Merciful, shun the serpent that hideth within its heart a hatred for the All-Bountiful, and turn away from it, though it recite for thee all that hath been revealed in the Holy Scriptures and though it cling to glorious and articulate Tablets.

O 'AIT, We heard with Our own ears what the ear of no contingent being hath heard. It issued from behind the walls, from those who lived in Our House and dwelt in the precincts of that Sacred Spot around which circle the denizens of paradise, and the people of the holy veils, then the angels that render praise to God. Nevertheless, We concealed this matter in such wise that they privately imagined God to be heedless of them. Say: How wretched is what ye have imagined! Verily, He knoweth what is invisible in the heavens and on earth, and He is, in truth, Omniscient. Thus was I tormented while I was among those persons and dwelt behind them. At My back was the murky gloom of rancour, and at My right hand were the sombre depths of melevolence, and God standeth witness to what I say. The matter continued into these very deys, when the sacred Beauty desireth to deny Himself the silk brocade of human friendship and to sever Himself from ell, male and female, young and old, save from those women toward whom God hath laid upon Me responsibilities. Verily, there is no God but Him, the Possessor of the world of creation and the kingdom of the Cause, and all is with Him upon a Preserved Tablet.

Know, however, that the reason for My withdrawal was not what We have enumerated for thee in this luminous Tablet. Rather, We had found Ourselves to be a chief in the land and a guardian of this people, but then abandoned this position to such as desired and would accept it. There was no such person among the people, and distress, terror and murder were abroad in the land. We therefore manifested Ourselves between the heavens and the earth, and dawned forth from the axis of the horizon with perspicuous sovereignty. Then, when We observed that the land was tranquil, We secluded Ourselves and gave it into the care of another people. For, by My Life, a subject is better than a thousand rulers, a subordinate is more exalted than a myriad of superiors, and one oppressed is more excellent than a city full of tyrants. Emulate thy Beloved therein and sever thyself from all things. Issue from behind the curtains of silence and speak forth with the truth in wondrous and precious melodies. Then soar into the realm of detachment with the wings of the Sanctified, the Exalted, the Soaring, the Benevolent, the All-High.

بذرة سورة الله قد نزلت بأحق من حبر وود المقدس العزيز المنير

هو الحسين

ان يا علي بسبب ميل اسمع نداء ربك عين الذي يريد ان يخرج عن بينكم بما
اكتسبت ايدي الظالمين وبذلك غشت الاعران كل الامكان بحيث منع التسلم
عن ذكر الاسرار والوجع عن الالتمار وغمام افضل عن الامطار واشجار العزود وس عن
الاشمار ان اتم من العارفين قل يا قوم تائه الحق قد حسدكم الغشوات على مقام
الذي تحرجون الله عن بيته وتذكرون اسماؤه في كل كبور واصل قل عمت عيون
التي تقع في الاصباح ولن تقع على جمالي الحسين المنير وسمت اذن سمع الاصوات
ولن سمع نغاتي البديع المليح وكبت لسان لن يتحرك باسمي الغالب المقدر لعليم
الحكيم وانك انت فخر في نفسك في مصابي وبما ورد على تائه ما ورد على حد
قبلي ولن يحلله السموات والارضين واشتدت على الامور عن كل شطر على شان
الذي رضيت على نفسي ما لا يرضى لنفسه احد من العالمين قل يا ملاهسيان احزن
ما احل الله عليكم او حللت ما حرّم عليكم او بدلت حكماً عما نزل في الواح الله المتعده
العزيز الكريم وان كان جرمي ما ينزل على من آيات الله تائه هذا لم يكن من
عندي بل من لدن عزيز جميل فواته لست انا اول من اركب هذا الذنب

بل اتركوا اكسمة الانبياء ومنهم على قتل نبيل ومن قبله محمد رسول الله ومن قبله
 المسيح ومن قبله الكليم كل تتكلموا بما الهتم شديد الروح من ملكوت الله المهين العدير
 قل تالله ما خلفه في الابداع شبي انا الذي مارأت عيون مشلى وانا المقتدر
 على ما شاء وانا الغفور الرحيم من انكر امرى فقد انكر كل الرسل ومن اعرض
 عن وجهى فقد اعرض عن وجه الله ويشهد بذلك حقايق المكنات ثم السن
 الموجودات ثم هذا اللسان العالم بنحير قل يا ملاهسيان انا كنا بينكم كما حد
 منكم وانتم ما رضيتم بذلك لنا كشفا حجابا من سبعين الف حجاب عن وجه
 الامر وانتم ايضا ما رضيتم وانا كشفا ايضا حجابا اخرى الى ان بلغ الامر الى هذا
 المقام المستع الرفيع وانتم ان لم ترضوا بذلك ترفع الاحجاب بقوة من لدنا
 وسلطان من عندنا رغما لانكم يا معشر المغلين وكذلك كان سنن المرسلين
 وسجية المخلصين ان انتم من العارفين وانتم لما اعرضتم عن جماله الاولى في
 بكيله الاخرى وانكرتم آياته وكفرتم بنعمته اذ اخرج من عن بينكم ووجه عين
 الذي يكون منقطعا عن كل من في السموات والارض ويشهد بذلك على لو انتم
 من المصفيين قل انا وجهنا وجهنا للذي فطر السموات والعرش المن يطلب
 ناصر الا الله اعسى نراحميد قل يا قوم فاعلموا بان ناصرى تسلى ثم حصنى

توكلت ثم موسى جمالي وجمدي ذكرى وغزبي اهل ملا العالين قل تائه لنا
 وجدنا الناس عبدة الظنون والادام من دون الله لئلا يشغلنا هم بهم حسنة
 اعمالهم لعل يتبين بذلك خلق احسن اذ انت فاضف في نفسك ان
 الذينهم يتوجهن الى العدم حل ينبغي بان يذكرن جمال العدم لا نفسى الرحمن
 الرحيم لئلا قدس الله ذيل رواه عن وسخ الانكار من بولاء الاشرار ولجسته
 عن الاسمار والصفات في السر والاهبار ولكن الناس ما اتفقوا بذلك و
 يكونن من العافلين وانك انت يا على فاعرض عينك عن مثل بولاءهم حول
 النظر عن كل من في السموات والارض ثم ذكر الناس بايهاك الروح في
 كل حين تائه لو تخلص نفسك عن الدنيا وعن الذين تجده منهم روائح الكفر اذا
 تجده نفسك في مقام الذي لن يطير اليه افسدة المقربين وتجد نفسك
 اعلم من كل ذي علم كامل حكيم اذا فخرق الاستار باسمي المحار ولا تطلقت
 الى القهار ثم اشرب تسنيم الأبرار من هذه الكانس المشع النوار ولا تخف من
 شئني فتوكل على سبي النصار احسن زالكريم دع الملك لطالبه ثم اخرج عن
 الآمال ثم اقع سبتي وانه خير عن كنوز السموات والارض وعن كل ما كان ويكون
 وان هذا من امري عليك ونصحي على المقدسين تحب بقوة الرحمن عن شعبان

الذي خسرن في قلبه ضعف المنان ثم اعرض عنه ولو يقرر عليك كل ما نزل
 في صحائف القدس او يتسك بالواجب عز مبين تامة يا علي انا سمعت
 سمعنا عن خلف الجدار من الذين هم سكنوا في الهيبة استجاروا مقام الذي كان
 ان يطوف حول اهل الفردوس ثم اهل حجابات القدس ثم ملكة المسبحين
 تامة ما لاسمع اذن احد من المكنات ومع ذلك سترنا الامر على شان الذي
 نتواني نفهم بان الله كان خافلاً عنهم قل بس ما ظننتم انه يعلم غير السموات
 والارض وانه بكل شيء عليم وكذلك كنت مغدباً بين هؤلاء وعن دراهم
 كان غضف الغل عن دراني ودياجن البعض عن عيسى وكان الله على ما اتول شهيد
 الى ان بلغ الامر الى هذه الايام التي فيها يريد ان يستر جمال القدس من
 سندس الانس ويتقطع عن كل انماش وذكور وعن كل صغير وكبير الا اللواتي
 جعلني الله كفيلاً من في بحسبوة الدنيا انه ما من الا اله الا هو له الخلق والامر وكل عنده
 في لوح محفوظ ولكن فاعلم بان حلة الحسروج لم يكن ما اذكرناه لك في هذا البرج
 المنير انا وجدنا تفسيراً كثيراً في الارض وراجياً لهؤلاء لذا تركناه لمن يريد
 ومن قبل لما لم يكن من الناس من احد وكانت الشدايد والخوف في القتل
 لذا اظهرنا نفساً بين السموات والارض واشرفنا في قطب الافاق سلطان بين

اذ انما وجدنا الارض ساكنة لذا غرنا انفسنا واودعناه لقوم احسنين فوعمرك
 ان المحكوم افضل من اعد حاكم والمرئوس اعلى من اعد رئيس والمظلوم خير من
 مدينة الظالمين وانك لما قتبت بحبيبتك في ذلك ثم انتطع عن كل شي ثم
 اخرج عن خلف حجابت اعنت ثم انطق بالحق على كبحي البديع المنسيع ثم طير في
 ملكوت الانقطاع بحبناحي المقدس المتعالي الطيار اللطيف الرفيع .

THE TABLET OF MEDICINE (LAWH-I ṬIBB) OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH: A PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Khazeh Fananapazir & Stephen Lambden

The Arabic - Persian text of Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Medicine (Lawh-i ṭibb)*¹ is to be dated to the early 'Akkā' period of his ministry (early 1870's?). It was addressed to a Bahā'ī named Mīrzā Muḥammad Ridā'-yi Ṭabīb-i Yazdī, a physician of the traditional school. The text is translated and selectively annotated below. Our tentative translation is highly provisional. The notes are designed to clarify what is a sometimes difficult text which could, at certain points, have been translated in quite a number of different ways. Only a few of the verses or terms contained within the *Lawh-i ṭibb* are commented upon. It is hoped that the translation and notes will be of interest to Bahā'īs in general and to those who are practitioners of modern medicine. Doubtless, in the future, scholars expert in both Bahā'ī doctrine and in the history of science / medicine will write learned and comprehensive commentaries upon this important Tablet.

As indicated, not all of the numerous Bahā'ī texts which might have an expository bearing on the *Tablet of Medicine* can be cited below. The following letter of Shoghi Effendi makes some centrally important points:

"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. Bahá'u'lláh has recommended that people seek the help and advice of experts and doctors: He does not say which school they should belong to.

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

Bahá'u'lláh says teaching is the greatest of all services, but He does not mean one should give up medicine to teach."²

¹ The *Lawh-i ṭibb* was first published in *Majmū'at al-awāh-i mubāraka* (Cairo 1920, Reprint Wilmette, Illinois: BPT 1981 pages 222-226 [reproduced below]).

² From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 18, 1945 cited UHJ:1984. See also the letter printed in BSB 4:3-4 (April 1990) p.58.

As indicated by Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated 14th January 1932, the first few Arabic paragraphs of the *Tablet of Medicine* contain useful advice for the maintenance of good health (see II:1ff).³ They echo those medical maxims and pieces of useful advice (*fawā'id*) found in a variety of Greek and Islāmic literatures -- generally speaking, a considerable proportion of Islāmic medicine has Greek roots. Ullmann has written in the introduction to his *Islamic Medicine*, "'Islamic medicine' did not grow up on Arab soil. Rather it is the medicine of later Greek antiquity which was formulated in the Arabic language in the south and west of the Mediterranean from the ninth century A.D." (p.xi). While the Qur'ān contains little or no explicit medicine -- neither the word doctor/physician nor medicine are mentioned (cf. Ullmann, p.4; Dols, review of Rahman p.417) -- this is more than made up for in the Sunnī and Shī'ī ḥadīth literatures.

From the early Islāmic centuries compilations of medical wisdom attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad were made by Sunnī and Shī'ī writers (see the various *Tibb al-nabī/ Tibb al-nabawī* works).⁴ Such major Sunnī canonical collections of *ḥadīth* as that of al-Bukhārī

³ Part of this letter of Shoghi Effendi reads, "With the appearance of every Revelation a new insight is created in man and this in turn expresses itself in the growth of science. This has happened in past dispensations and we find its earliest fruits in our present day. What we see however is only the beginning. With the spiritual awakening of man this force will develop and marvelous results will become manifest. Among other phases of human learning the medical science will have a place. There is a Tablet of Medicine that Bahá'u'lláh has revealed and which is translated into English. That does not contain much of scientific informations [sic.] but has some interesting advices for keeping healthy." (cited LDG 2:21)

⁴ Refer, for example, Cyril Elgood, *Tibb al-Nabī or Medicine of the Prophet, Being a Translation of Two Works of the same Name*. The *Tibb-ul-Nabbi* [= *Tibb al-Nabī*] of Al-Suyūṭī, II. The *Tibb-ul-Nabbi* of Mahmūd bin Moḥammad al-Chaghghaynī [= the scientist-astronomer Mahmūd Ibn 'Umar Chaghmīnī] in *Oriens* Vol.14 (1962) pp. 33-192. With respect to the al-Chaghmīnī's medical tract Elgood writes, "Next is the version by Mahmūd bin 'Umar Jaghmīnī [= Chaghmīnī] of which I also present a translation as a contrast to the much longer version of al-Suyūṭī and as a specimen of the aphoristic form of writing which was once so popular in Persia. This is written in Arabic. Mahmūd also wrote in Persian a book called *Qānūnchi fī al-tibb*, being an extract from the Canon of Avicenna. The edition that I used for my translation is a small book lithographed in Teheran in 1888/89 and is in my private collection." (p.43). On page 40 of the aforementioned article Elgood writes, "A reference to the Encyclopaedia of Hājjī Khalīfa [written 1658 CE] shows that he devotes a special section in his work to what he calls 'ilm al-Tibb al-Nabawī or The Science of Prophetic Medicine. Here he mentions seven different works on this subject which were existing in his day and were known to him. The authors whom he names as having made these collections are Nu'aym Ahmad of Isfahan [948-1038 CE], Abu al-'Abbās Ja'far Mustaghfirī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī [1445-1505 CE], Abu Hassan 'Alī al-Rīdā [the 8th Imām, Imām Rīdā' see below], Ḥabīb Nishāpūrī, Ḥabīb al-Thānī, and 'Abd al-Malik bin Ḥabīb." (transliteration altered). In books of the 'Prophetic Medicine' (*Tibb al-nabawī*) innumerable inauthentic traditions were attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) as noted by Ullmann "alone has said clearly that essentially this is bedouin medicine and can have no claim to be divine revelation and therefore cannot be obligatory under religious law." (p.5).

(810-870 CE) contain their own *Book of Medicine (Kitāb al-tibb)*. Many medical or quasi-medical traditions were attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. It is nonetheless the case that "The *hadīth* directly related to medicine are relatively few, usually late, and frequently contradictory."⁵

The medical wisdom of the Twelver Shī'ī Imāms (*tibb al- a'imma*) was likewise *assiduously compiled* (see Āghā Buzurg al-Tīhrānī, *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-shī'a* 25 Vols Tehran / Najaf 1355/1936>, 15:135-144).⁶ A great many statements are attributed to the Twelver Imāms that, in one way or another, have to do with medical matters or with bodily health. To the eighth Imām 'Alī al-Ridā' (c.768-818 CE) is attributed *The Golden Treatise*. (*al-Risāla al-dhahabīya / al-mudhahhaba fī 'l-tibb*); a treatise on medical cures and good health written for and at the request of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mansūr (text in Majlisī, *Bihar al-anwār* LXII: 308-328). Commentaries are said to have been written on this Arabic treatise which have been translated into Persian and Urdu (see W. Malelung, *Alī al-Rezā*, EIr. 2:877-8).⁷ There exists furthermore, a treatise in the Jābirean corpus -- writings attributed to Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (c.103/721-c.200/815) certain of which Bahā'u'llāh drew upon -- entitled *The Book of Prophetic Medicine according to the view of the Household of the Prophet (Kitāb al-tibb al-nabawī 'alā ahl al-bayt)*.

⁵ M.W. Dols, Review of Rahman in Hist.Sci., xxvi (1988), p.417.

⁶ The recently published Batool Ispahany (trans.) & Andrew J. Newman (Ed.), *Islamic Medical Wisdom, The Tibb al-A'imma* (= Medicine of the Imams) London: The Muhammadi Trust 1991) is a collection of statements of certain Twelver Imāms compiled by Abū 'Atāb 'Abd Allāh and al-Husayn, the sons of Bistām b. Sābūr -- Bistām was a companion of the sixth Imām Abū Abd Allāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) and the seventh Imām Abū al-Hasan Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Kāzim (d. 183/799) (cf. *al-Dharī'a* 15:139-140). In the preface to this work A.J. Newman writes, "There is no dearth of Twelver Shī'ī medical texts. Āghā Buzurg al-Tehrānī (d. 1389/1970) in his massive bibliography of Twelver texts [see above] devoted several pages to listing texts on medicine completed from the earliest years following the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam up to the last century." See for further details *Ibid* p. xxxiv ff.

⁷ See also Muḥammad 'Alī al-Bār, *al-Imām 'Alī al-Ridā wa risālat fī al-tibb al-nabawī, al-risāla al-dhahabīya, awwal risāla fī al-tibb al-nabawī*, (Beirut: Dar al-manāhīl, 1412/1991). This volume commences with material highlighting the glories of the "people of the House of the Prophet" (Pt.I pp.11-68) followed by an hagiographical biography of 'Alī al-Ridā' (Pt.II 69-110); the text of Imām Ridā's "Golden Treatise" (Pt.III pp. 111-126) and two further sections; a prolegomenon to the understanding of ancient medical books and books of the medicine of the Prophet (Pt.IV pp. 127-137) the *Risāla dhahabīya* and an exposition and glosses on some of its terms (Pt. V pp. 139-183).

A multitude of other Shī'ī works, which cannot possibly be even listed here, are relevant to the study of the background to the *Lawh-i tībb*. The *Lawh-i tībb* cannot be fully or adequately commented upon without some reference to its (Shī'ī) Islāmic background; not forgetting its pre-Islāmic antecedents which will only at certain points in the notes below be cursorily indicated.

Sources known to the present writer only allow the *sitz im leben* ("setting in life") of the *Lawh-i tībb* to be inadequately sketched. In volume three of his *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* (Oxford: George Ronald 1983) Adib Taherzadeh gives something of a summary of key points of the *Tablet of Medicine* (see 3: 358-360). He translates a passage from Hājī Muḥammad Tāhir-i Mālmīrī's memoirs, the *Khātirāt-i-Mālamīrī*, about Āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad-Ridā' (the recipient of the *Lawh-i tībb*):

"One of the early believers who embraced the Faith when Siyyid Yahyá-i-Dárábí, known as Vahíd, came to Yazd, was Āqá Mirzá Muḥammad-Ridáy-i Ṭabīb. He was a skilled and distinguished physician, and an embodiment of grace and steadfastness. The Pen of the Most High revealed the *Lawh-i-Tībb* in his honour. In that exalted Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh states that the mere visit of a physician who has drunk deep of the wine of His love will cure the patient. Mirzá Muḥammad-Ridá was truly the fulfilment of these words of Bahá'u'lláh. He used to cure the patient by administering very simple remedies. Truly, he possessed wonderful qualities which made him a very special person in the community of the Most Great Name. Owing to his intense piety he became highly disturbed when Mirzá Yahyá broke the Covenant. As a result he was bewildered and stunned; he even became hesitant in the Cause for a short time. Then it was as though Divine Providence sent Mullá Zaynu'l-'Ābidín, a native of Najafábád (he was entitled by Bahá'u'lláh as Zaynu'l-Muqarribín) to Yazd in order to calm his agitation and dispel his doubts. Zaynu'l-Muqarribín at first stayed in the house of this servant in the district of Malamír, but when he learned of the intense anguish and distress that Mirzá Muḥammad-Ridá was subjected to, he changed his residence and stayed in his home instead. Consequently, Mirzá Muḥammad-Ridá became fully aware of the circumstances of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. He later received many Tablets from the Pen of the Most High, and served the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with devotion and love till the end of his life. He was about eighty years old when he passed away."⁸

⁸ See *Khātirāt-i-Mālamīrī*, Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá'í-Verlag 149 BE/1992, pp.58-59, cited in translation in A. Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* Vol. 3 (Oxford: George Ronald 1983), p. 359.

PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION⁹

I Revealed unto a Physician, upon him be the Glory of God!

He is God, the One Who is Most Knowing

The Tongue of the Ancient of Days uttereth that which shall be a sufficient Treasure for the wise ones in the absence of physicians.

II ^[1] Say: O People! Eat not except after having hungered and drink not after retiring to sleep (*al-hujūʿ*). ^[2] How beneficial is exercise when one[ʼs stomach] is empty for through it the limbs become strengthened; and how dark a calamity is exercise when one[ʼs stomach] is full! ^[3] Do not avoid medical treatment (*al-ʾilāj*) when thou hast need of it but abandon it when thy constitution hath been restored (*istiqāmat*). ^[4] Do not commence a meal except after full digestion [of the previous meal] and swallow not save after the completion of chewing. ^[5] Treat an illness firstly with nutrients (or foods, aliments, *aghḏhiya*) and proceed not [immediately] unto medications (*adwiyat*). ^[6] If that which thou desirest resulteth from elemental nutrients (*al-mufradāt*) refrain from the compound treatments (*al-murakkabāt*). ^[7] Abandon medication (*al-dawāʾ*) when thou art healthy but take hold of it when thou hast need thereof. ^[8] If foods of opposing disposition (*diddān*) are available at table, do not mix them; under such circumstances content thyself with but one of them. ^[9] Commence first with the light food (*al-raqīq*) before moving on to the heavier one (*al-ghalīz*) and with the liquid before the solid. ^[10] To intake one food which becomes superimposed upon another (*idkhāl al-ṭaʾām ʿalā ṭaʾām*) is dangerous; be warned of this matter.

III ^[1] When thou wouldst commence eating, start by mentioning My Most Glorious Name (*al-abhā*) and finish it with the Name of Thy Lord, the Possessor of the Throne above and of the earth below. ^[2] And when thou hast finished eating, walk a little to settle thy meal. ^[3] That [foodstuff] which is hard to chew; the same is forbidden unto those possessed of intelligence. Thus doth the Supreme Pen command thee. ^[4] Eat a little in the morning for this is as a lamp to the body. ^[5] Eschew harmful habits [i.e. addictive substances *al-ʾāda al-mudīra*] for they

⁹ The versification in this provisional translation largely follows the sentence structure indicated in the Arabic printing referred to above. It is for the convenience of present and future commentary that this (provisional) versification is indicated.

truly, are a calamity for created beings. ^[1] Counter disease by utilizing established means (*bi'l-**asbāb***). This utterance is the decisive command in this discourse.

IV ^[1] Most necessary to thy well-being is contentment (*al-qanā'at*) under all circumstances for through it will the soul be saved from sloth and ill-being. ^[2] Eschew anxiety (*al-hamma*) and depression (*al-ghamm*) for through these twain will transpire a darksome affliction (*balā' adhām*).

V ^[1] Say: Envy (*al-hasad*) consumeth the body and rage [or anger, wrath, *al-ghayz*] burneth the liver: avoid these two as ye would a fierce lion (*al-asad*). ^[2] Purification of the bowels (*tanqiyat al-fudūl*) constitutes a pillar [of health, *al-'umdat*] when accomplished in the temperate seasons (*al-fuṣūl al-mu'tadila*). ^[3] He whose eating hath been excessive, his malady will be heightened. ^[4] We, assuredly, have decreed a cause (*sabab* ^{an}) for all things and vouchsafed everything with an effect (*al-athar*). All of this is by virtue of the effulgence of My Name, the Efficacious [the 'Producer of Effects' *al-mu'aththir*] upon existing things. Verily, thy Lord is the One Who exerciseth command over all that He willeth.

VI ^[1] Say: Through all that which We have expounded the [equilibrium of the] four humours (*al-akhlāt*) will not exceed their moderate balance (*al-'itidāl*), neither will their measures deviate from their mean conditions. ^[2] The [human constitutional] foundation (*al-aṣl*) will remain in its purity and the "sixth part" and the "sixth of the sixth part" (*wa'l-suds wa suds al-suds*) in their stable condition. ^[3] The twin active forces (*fā'ilān*) and the twin passive realities (*munfā'ilān*) will be rendered whole. And upon God is all our trust. There is no God but Him, the true Healer, the Omniscient, the One Whose succour is sought by all. ^[4] My Supreme Pen hath not moved over such words as the above save out of My love for thee, that thou mayest know that sorrows have not overtaken the Ancient Beauty and He is not saddened by that which hath befallen Him from the nations. ^[5] Sorrow is for that one who loseth a thing, and from My Grasp is not lost all that is in the heavens and the earth.

VII ^[1] O Physician! Firstly, heal thou the sick ones with the Remembrance of thy Lord (*bi-dhikr rabbika*), the Lord of the Day of Mutual Invocation (*yawm al-tanād*) and afterwards by that which We have ordained for the health of the constitutions of the servants. ^[2] By My life! Merely attaining the presence of the physician who hath drunk of the Wine of My Love conferreth healing and his mere breath bringeth mercy and hope. ^[3] Say: Adhere to him for the restoration of the body's well-being. ^[4] Verily such a physician is assisted by God for the treatment of ills. ^[5] Say: The science of healing is the most noble of all the sciences. ^[6] Verily, it is the greatest instrument given by God, the Quickener of mouldering bones, for the preservation of the bodies of peoples. God hath given it precedence over all sciences and branches of wisdom. ^[7] But this Day is the Day wherein thou shouldst arise to bring about My Victory, detached from all the worlds.

VIII Say: *"Thy Name is My healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope and love for Thee my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing (tabīb) and my succour in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."*

IX ¹⁰ ^[1] Give the salutations of God to all the Friends. ^[2] Say: In this Day two decrees (*du amr*) are beloved and to be desired. The first is wisdom and utterance. ^[3] The second is steadfastness in the Cause of thy Lord, the Most Compassionate. ^[4] Every one that attaineth unto these twin commands is accounted and mentioned, in the sight of God, as among the dwellers of the City of Immortality (*madīnah-i baqā'*). ^[5] For it is through the instrumentality of these twin decrees that the Cause of God hath been and will continue to be established amongst God's servants. ^[6] This inasmuch as, were it not for wisdom and utterance, all will become sorely tried. Were such to be the case none would remain to guide the people unto the Religion of the One True God. ^[7] Furthermore, if it were not for steadfastness, the words of the teacher [lit. narrator, reminder, *dhākir*] shall not be effective.

¹⁰ The remainder of the Tablet is in Persian.

X ^[1] Say: O Friends! Apprehensiveness and agitation pertaineth unto women. ^[2] And should the beloved of God reflect briefly upon the world and its manifest vicissitudes, the dominance of those who hath been tyrants will not frighten them. ^[3] Then shall they take their flight on the wings of yearning desire unto the One Who is at the centre of the Luminous Horizons [of the next World?] (*nayyir al-āfāq*) ^[4] This servant hath wished for Himself that which He hath wished for all the servants of God. ^[5] The reason that wisdom (*hikmat*) and the protection of the friends hath been and shall be commanded is that those who remember Me should remain in the world and occupy themselves with the mention of the Lord of all the worlds. ^[6] Thus it is binding and necessary that all may protect themselves and their brethren for the sake of the Cause of God. ^[7] If the beloved of God had performed that which they were commanded, the majority of the people of the world at this time would have been adorned with the garment of faith. ^[8] Great is the blessedness of him who leadeth another soul to the Immortal Faith of God and guideth him to life everlasting. ^[9] This is an act of supreme importance in the presence of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Most Exalted.

May the Spirit be upon thee! And may the Glory be upon thee also!

THE TEXT OF THE *LAWH-I TIBB* AS PUBLISHED IN *MAJMŪ‘A-YI ALWĀḤ-I MUBĀRAKA* (Cairo 1920, Reprint Wilmette, Illinois: BPT., 1981 pages 222-226)

﴿ قد نزل لأحد من الأطباء عليه بهاء الله ﴾

﴿ هو الله الأعلم ﴾

إِسَانُ الْقَدَمِ يَنْطِقُ بِمَا يَكُونُ غُنِيَّةَ الْأَطْبَاءِ عِنْدَ
غُنِيَّةِ الْأَطْبَاءِ * قَلْ يَا قَوْمُ لَا تَأْكُلُوا إِلَّا بَعْدَ الْجُوعِ
وَلَا تَشْرَبُوا بَعْدَ الْهَجُوعِ * نَعَمْ الرِّيَاضَةُ عَلَى الْخَلَاءِ بِهَا
تَقْوَى الْأَعْضَاءِ وَعِنْدَ الْاِمْتَلَاءِ دَاهِيَةٌ دَهْمَاءُ * لَا تَتْرُكْ

العِلاجُ عند الاحتياج ودَعَه عند استقامة المزاج
 لا تُباشِرُ الغذاءَ إلا بعد الهضم ولا تزِدُ رَدُّ الأَبعد أن
 يَكْمُلُ القضمُ * عالج العِلَّةَ أوَّلاً بالأغذية ولا تجاوزِ
 إلى الأدوية * إن حصل لك ما أردت من المفردات
 لا تعدلِ إلى المركبات * دَعِ الدَّواءَ عند السلامة وخذهُ
 عند الحاجة * إذا اجتمع الضَّدان على الخوانِ لا تخلطُهما
 فاقنَعِ بواحدٍ منهما * بادر أوَّلاً بالرقيق قبل الغليظ
 وبالمائع قبل الجامد * إدخالُ الطعام على الطعام خطرٌ
 كن منه على حذر * وإذا شرعت في الأكل فابتدئْ
 باسمي الأَبهى ثم اختم باسم ربك مالك العرش والثرى
 وإذا أكلت فامش قليلاً لاستقرار الغذاء وما عَمَرَ
 قَضْمُهُ منهيٌّ عنه عند أولى النهي كذلك يأمرك القلم
 الأعلى * أكل القليل في الصَّباح اِنَّه للبدنِ مصباح
 واترك العادة المضرَّة فإنها بليَّة للبرية * قابل الأمراض
 بالأَسباب وهذا القول في هذا الباب فصل الخطاب
 أن الزَمِ القناعة في كلِّ الأحوالِ بها تسَلِمُ النفسُ
 من الكسالة وسوء الحال * أن اجتنبِ الهَمَّ والغَمَّ

بهما يحدتُ بلاءُ أدهم * قل الحسد يأكل الجسد والغيظُ
يحرِق الكبد أن اجتنبا منها كما يجتنبون من الأسد *
تنقية الفضول هي العمدة والكنز في الفصول الممتدة
والذي تجاوزاً كَلَهُ تفاقم سقمه * قد قدرنا لكل شيء
سبباً وأعطاه آية أثره * كل ذلك من تجلّى اسمي المؤثر على
الأشياء إن ربك هو الحاكم على ما يشاء * قل بما
ينبأه لا يتجاوز الأخلاط عن الاعتدال ولا مقاديرها
عن الأحوال * يبقى الأصل على صفائه * والسدس
وسدس السدس على حاله * ويسلم الفاعلان والمنفعلان
وعلى الله التكلان * لا إله إلا هو الشافي العليم
المستعان * ما جرى القلم الأعلى على مثل تلك الكلمات
الالهي إياك لتعلم بأنّ اللهم ما أخذ جمال القدم ولم
يحزن عمّا ورد عليه من الأمم * والحزن لمن يفوت منه
شيء ولا يفوت عن قبضته من في السموات والأرضين *
يا طبيب اشفِ المرضى أولاً بذكر ربك مالك يوم
التناد * ثم بما قدرنا لصحة أمزجة العباد * لعمرى الطبيب
الذي شرب خمر حبي لقاءه شفاؤه ونفسه رحمة ورجاء *

قل تمسكوا به لاستقامة المزاج إنه مؤيد من الله
 للعلاج * قل هذا العلم أشرف العلوم كلها إنه السبب
 الأعظم من الله محيي الرمم لحفظ أجساد الأمم
 وقدمه على العلوم والحكم والكن اليوم اليوم الذي
 تقوم على نصرتي منقطعاً عن العالمين * قل يا الهي
 اسمك شفاي وذكرك دوائي وقربك رجائي وحبك
 مؤنسي ورحمتك طيبي ومعيني في الدنيا والآخرة
 وانتك أنت المعطي الليم الحكيم *

جميع أحبباً را من قبل الله تكبير برسانيد * بكو
 اليوم دو أمر محبوب وه مطلوب است * يكي حكمت
 وبيان * وثاني الاستقامة على أمر ربكم الرحمن * هر
 نفسى باين دو أمر فائز شد عند الله از أهل مدينة بقا
 محسوب ومذكور چه كه باين دو امر الهي ما بين عباد
 ثابت شده وخواهد شد چه اكر حكمت وبيان
 نباشد كل مبتلا خواهند شد * در اينصورت نفسى
 باقى نه تاناس را بشريعة أحديه هدايت نمايد * واكر
 استقامت نباشد نفس ذاكر مؤثر نخواهد بود *

بگوای دوستان خوف واضطراب شأن نسوان است
 وا کر أحبای الهی فی الجملة تفکر نمایند در دنیا
 واختلافات ظاهره در او لا تخوفهم سقوطه الذین
 ظلموا ویطیرن بأجنحة الاشتیاق الی نیر الآفاق *
 این عبد آنچه از برای خود خواسته ام از برای کل
 دوستان حق خواسته ام * واینکه بحکمت و حفظ
 امر شده و میشود مقصود این است که ذا کرین
 در أرض بمانند تا بد کر رب العالمین مشغول شوند *
 لذا بر کل حفظ نفس خود و اخوان لأمیر الله واجب
 و لازم است * واکر أحبباء عامل بودند با آنچه ما، و رند
 حال اکثر من علی الأرض بردای ایمان مزین
 بودند * طوبی از برای نفسی که نفسی را بشریة
 بانیه کشاند و بحیاة ابدیة دلالت نماید *
 هذا من أعظم الأعمال عند ربك
 العزيز المتعال * والروح عليك
 والبهاء عليك *

I

It is clear that at the beginning of the *Tablet of Medicine* Bahá'u'lláh alludes to his power of revelation as that of the "Tongue of the Ancient of Days" (*lisān al-qidam*). He indicates that he has summed up basic, existing medical advice of use when physicians are unavailable. Shoghi Effendi often translated the Arabic *al-qidam* (= "ancient") when referring to Bahá'u'lláh by the Danielic Biblical English (Authorized/King James Version) phrase "Ancient of Days" (see Daniel 7:9,13,22). e.g. see Gl: CXV, 242 where the original *qalam al-qidam* in a Tablet to Dhabīh is translated "Pen of the Ancient of Days".

The expression *ulū al-albāb* trans. "wise ones" (alternatively, "men possessed of minds" [Arberry]; "men of understanding" [Pickthall, Abdullah Yusuf Ali], "men of insight" [Bell]) is Qur'anic; occurring 16 times in the Islāmic Holy Book (see Q. 2:179[5], 197[3] etc., see Kassis, *Concordance*: 732-3).

II.

Some seventy years ago a translation of the opening lines (II:1ff) of the *Lawḥ-i ṭibb* was published in the *Star of the West* magazine and in other sources (See Appendix 2). These lines contain some general guidelines for the maintenance of good health. They would be meaningful to a practitioner of traditional Islamic medicine and often have striking parallels in Islamic and pre-Islamic sources; in the *Ṭibb al-nabī/nabawī* and related sources (see below). A few such parallels have been indicated in the paragraphs to follow.

It has been pointed out that the opening lines (II:1ff) of the *Lawḥ-i ṭibb* are echoed in many Graeco-Islamic works. The *Mikhlāt* (= "Nose-bag") of Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī (= Shaykh Bahā'ī 1527-1621 CE.) for example, contains some "moral prescriptions" (*fawā'id*), "most of which are concerned with man's physical health and well-being" :i.e. "One should have lunch early in the morning [cf. III:4] and not have dinner too late in the evening; nor should one allow a meal to follow on immediately after another [see II:10] or drink before breakfast [cf. II:1b]... and one should visit the privy on each occasion before going to sleep. Let him induce vomiting once a week, and let him beware of wind and cold wind and cold air after coming out from the bath.

God is all-sufficient!"¹ Similar *fawā'id* are "often attributed to such classical authorities as Galen...For the hints on hygiene and health, the ancients, from Galen and Hippocrates onwards, are naturally quoted..On p. 296 [of the *Mikhlāt*], similar counsels are attributed to Ishāq b. Hunayn [b. Ishāq (9th cent. CE.)]"²

II:1 "Say: O People! Eat not except after having hungered and drink not after retiring to sleep (*al-hujū'*)." ³

The Arabic noun *jū'* is a word signifying "hunger" (the verb *ja'a* = 'to hunger') which sometimes has connotations of extreme hunger or starvation – for the Qur'ānic references [verb once, noun 4 times] see Kassis, *Concordance*: 610-611. According to the *Lisān al-Arab* *hujū'* indicates 'the breaking of hunger without having completely satisfied one's appetite' (*Haj'a ju'uhu wa lam yashba'u ba'ad*). Hence, Bahā'u'llāh probably means, 'Do not eat unless it is really necessary'; eating unnecessarily or out of greed is not wise.

The exact sense of *hujū'* (above tr. = "retiring to sleep") is uncertain. The imperfect active form of the verb – form I *haja'a* = 'to slumber' (see Kassis: 489) – occurs in Qur'ān 51:17 (and only here) in the context of a description of the righteous : "[15] Surely the godfearing shall be among gardens and fountains [16] taking whatsoever their Lord has given them; they were good-doers before that. [17] Little of the night would they slumber (*yahja'ūna*), [18] and in the mornings they would ask for forgiveness..." (Arberry, 543). Pickthall translates 51:17, "They used to sleep but little of the night" Similarly, the Al-Azhar authorized translation (1984) of M. M. Khatib has, "Little of the night did they sleep." (London: Macmillan Press 1985, p.693). The Qur'ān commentaries give details about the significance of the word *hujū'*.³ *Lisān al-'Arab* III:775 has it that *hujū'* signifies "a light sleep in the beginning of the night (*nawmat khafīf min awwal al-Hayt*).

¹ *Mikhlāt* (Ed. Cairo 1377 A.H./1957 CE.) p.20 trans. C.E. Bosworth, 1989: 18. The *Mikhlāt* is an earlier amorphous collection of miscellany, superseded by the well-known *Kashkūl* ("Dervish's Beggars Bowl") of Shaykh Bahā'ī.

² Bosworth, 1989:18 fn.50. A few further parallel passages will be cited in the pages which follow.

³ See for example, Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān* 16: 196f (on 51:17); Zamaksharī, *al-Kashāf* 4:397 (on 51:17). See further Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāmeḥ* entry *hujū'* (p. 152) where it is stated that it signifies 'going to sleep at night'.

There is a great deal of advice regarding diet and eating in Graeco-Islamic medical literatures. Suyūṭī cites Hippocrates as follows, "The continuation of good health depends upon moderate labour and the avoidance of a surfeit of eating & drinking. He also said: A little of what is harmful is better than a lot of what is good." (p.54) The Prophet Muhammad and certain of the Twelver Imāms had a good deal to say on these subjects. It is recorded that the Prophet said, "Eat when thou hast a desire to but withhold thyself from eating whilst thou still desirest" (cited Mustaghfirī, BA 62:290). Suyūṭī in Section II (Practical Rules of Medicine; Elgood, 53) of one of his works on Prophetic Medicine records the words,

"Know then that food is taken when required for the continuation of health. ... Prolonged abstention from food is wearisome to the body and causes a drying up of it and a burning of its constitution. Similarly the taking of food when not required, engenders stupidity and sloth and is one of the causes of the generation of disease.."

... It is expedient to stop eating while you still have an appetite for more. But to keep on abstaining makes the body weak & thin. Nay rather, abstention in health is like mixing many different foods in disease. Always choose the best food unless a bad habit has been formed. In this case it must be given up gradually. He who is accustomed to take improper food, let him not cease altogether, but let him avoid taking food that causes fermentation in the stomach and rotten fruit.." (Suyūṭī:53).. Be it known that eating to satiety is something bad which arose after the first century of Islam. The Prophet used to say: The Believer puts food into a single stomach, the Unbeliever into seven. Wisdom will not go into a stomach filled with food. The less a man eats, the less will he drink...If a man is satisfied before satiety, then the better nourished will his body be and the better will be the state of himself and of his heart. But the man who is filled with food his body will be ill nourished, the state of himself will be bad, and his heart will grow hard. Avoid therefore excess of food, for it poisons the heart, slows the members of the body from the obedience due to God and closes the ears to His admonishments..."

The Prophet Muhammad is also reckoned to have stated,

"2...So eat when you desire and refrain when you desire. 3. The stomach is the house of every disease and abstinence the head of every remedy... 18. Excess of food is a misfortune. 23. Less food, less sin. 43. He who is accustomed to much food and drink, verily his heart is hard. (Chaghmīnī).

Imām 'Alī is recorded as having said to his son al-Hasan [b. 'Alī b. Abu Ṭālib (d. 49/669)],

"Shall I teach you four general principles so that you may have no need of medicine?' Al-Hasan replied: 'Yes indeed, O Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn.' He said: 'Do not eat unless you are hungry, cease eating while you still have a desire to eat, chew your food well, and, after you awaken from sleep, relieve yourself. If you practise these measures, you will not require medicine.'" ⁴ The first Imām is also credited with the following words, "The Qur'ān contains a verse which sums up all

⁴ The Arabic text of this tradition is contained in Majlisī, BA 62:267.

medicine: "Eat and drink but do not be prodigal." (Qur'ān 7:31).⁵ He also said: "There is no healthiness with gluttony." (IMW: xxv - xxvi). Similarly, the sixth Imām Ja'far al-Sādiq (d. 148/765) gave the following advice: "If people eat moderately, their bodies will be healthy." (cited *Ibid*). The seventh Imām al-Kāzīm (d. 183/799) said, "Abstaining from certain foods (*al-lahmiyya*) is the chief medication. The abdomen (*al-ma'ida*) is the house of illness. Accustom [the body] to what you are used to." (*Ibid*:xxvii).

A.J. Newman, commenting on the above and other centrally important traditions of the Imāms dealing with the fundamentals of good health, writes, "Cautioning against gluttony is the basis of treatment, moderation in eating according to the needs and soundness of the body, the requirement for rest and calm after suffering from an illness, abstaining from certain foods, accustoming the body to routine, cautioning against using medications without need and more than is necessary, explaining the natural constituents and elements of the body and, in fact, even pointing to artificial respiration, etc., is all general medical advice and does not apply to a particular individual or country, or to a particular era." (IMW:xxviii).

It could also be that at II:1b Bahā'u'llāh suggests that sporadic drinking during or throughout the night is inadvisable. That passage from the *Mikhlāt* of Shaykh Bahā'ī cited above, it is worth noting, contains the advice not to "drink before breakfast..." (trans. C.E. Bosworth, 1989: 18). Alternatively (?), one should not partake of fluids shortly after allaying one's hunger. cf. Suyūṭī "And go not to sleep immediately after food, for this will harden your bowels. This tradition is told by Abu Nu'aim." (p.56)

II:2 "How beneficial is exercise when one[s stomach] is empty for through it the limbs become strengthened; and how dark a calamity is exercise when one[s stomach] is full!"

Exercising after a meal is advised against in Suyūṭī:53,

"The partaking of one meal upon another is harmful [see II:10]. So is exercise after a meal. But exercise before a meal is best of all, just as when taken after it is the worst of all...(56) And take not violent exercise after food, for this does harm to it...(58) Know then that moderate exercise is a most potent means of preserving health. It warms the organs and dissolves waste products and renders the body light and active. The time for this is after the descent of the food from the stomach. It accomplishes this in five or six hours, more or less according to the constitution of the individual and of the food. By moderate exercise is meant exercise which makes the skin red and glow. When sweating begins, then it is proper to cease. That which increases the sweat is called violent exercise. Every organ is strengthened and enlivened by much exercise. The same is true of the internal faculties."

⁵ Note also the following saying of 'Alī ibn al-Husayn Ibn Wāfid: "God has collected all Medicine into half a verse when He said: Eat & drink but not to excess" [Qur'ān 7:31; Suyūṭī:54].

A number of Bahā'ī sources also underline the importance of physical exercise. 'Abdu'l-Bahā spoke of three kinds of education. He defined the first kind, "material education", in the following manner, "Material education is concerned with the progress and development of the body, through gaining its sustenance, its material comfort and ease." ('Abdu'l-Bahā SAQ:1981 ed., p. 8). On another occasion he stated, "...education is of various kinds. There is a training and development of the physical body which ensures strength and growth." (PUP: 330).

II:3 *"Do not avoid medical treatment (al-'ilāj) when thou hast need of it but abandon it when thy constitution hath been restored (istiqāmat)."*

In a Shī'ī source it is recorded that the seventh Imām Al-Kāzīm (d. 183/799) said: 'Stay away from the treatment of physicians (*al-aṭibbā'*) as long as you are well, for it is similar to building -- a little of it leads to much.' (IMW:xxvii). The eighth Imām, Al-Ridā' (d. 203/818) also said, "They, peace be upon them, said: 'Avoid medications as long as your body can bear the illness. When it cannot bear the illness, then take medications.'" (ibid).

Not only did Bahā'u'llāh recommend consulting medical practitioners but, in his *Most Holy Book (Kitāb-i aqdas)* stated, "Whenever ye fall ill, refer to competent physicians. Verily, We have not abolished recourse to material means, rather have We affirmed it through this Pen which God hath made the Dawning Place of His Luminous and resplendent Cause." (trans. cited LG:923). There are numerous passages in the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahā and Shoghi Effendi which repeat and comment on this directive (for some details see Appendix 2).

II:4 *"Do not commence a meal except after full digestion [of the previous meal] and swallow not save after the completion of chewing."*

Imām 'Alī, according to the tradition cited above (section on II:1), advised his son, the Imam Hasan to chew his food well. Suyūṭī records that Avicenna said, "Never take one meal until the one before it is digested" (p.55). See further on II:10.

II:5 *"Treat an illness firstly with nutrients [or foods, aliments, aghdhiya] and proceed not [immediately] unto medications (adwiya)."*

The following few selected Bahā'ī texts bear upon the theme of II:5,

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

"At whatever time highly-skilled physicians shall have developed the healing of illnesses by means of foods, and shall make provision for simple foods, and shall prohibit humankind from living as slaves to their lustful appetites, it is certain that the incidence of chronic and diversified illnesses will abate, and the general health of all mankind will be much improved. This is destined to come about. In the same way, in the character, the conduct and the manners of men, universal modifications will be made." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, SWAB: 152-155).

"It is, therefore, evident that it is possible to cure by foods, aliments and fruits but as today the science of medicine is imperfect, this fact is not yet fully grasped. When the science of medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, aliments, fragrant fruits and vegetables, and by various waters, hot and cold in temperature." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, SAQ: 257-259)

"In matters of diet, as in medicine, the Universal House of Justice feels that the believers should be aware that a huge body of scientific knowledge has been accumulated as a guide to our habits and practices. But it must be clearly understood that no specific school of nutrition or medicine has been associated with the Bahá'í teachings. What we have are certain guidelines, indications and principles which will be carefully studied by experts and will, in the years ahead, undoubtedly prove to be invaluable sources of guidance and inspiration in the development of these medical sciences. Moreover, in this connection the Guardian's secretary has stated on his behalf that 'It is premature to try and elaborate on the few general references to health and medicine made in our Holy Scriptures.' The believers must guard against seizing upon any particular text which may appeal to them and which they may only partially or even incorrectly understand." (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, July 11, 1978, cited LG: 1016)

"In matters of health, particularly regarding diet and nutrition, the House of Justice advises the friends to seek the help and advice of experts and doctors. This is what Behá'u'lláh has recommended and He does not indicate which school of thought or practice they should belong to. However, as you particularly ask about references in the Old Testament as they relate to meat and fish, the House of Justice has asked us to quote for you the following excerpt taken from a letter written on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary to an individual believer: "...there is nothing in the teachings about whether people should eat their food cooked or raw; exercise or not exercise; resort to specific therapies or not; nor is it forbidden to eat meat." (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, June 19, 1977, cited LG: 1017)

II:6 "If that which thou desirest resulteth from elemental nutrients (*al-mufradāt*) refrain from the compound treatments (*al-murakkabāt*)."

In the *Tibb al-nabawī* of Suyūṭī relating to compound drugs (119) we read,

"Doctors say that they prefer Simples to Compound Drugs if they find that they suffice. So they make use of Compound Drugs either for the correction of the properties of Simples or to cover their unpleasant taste or to render them more potent...Again, if a disease is a compound disease, the remedy for it must be compound too. Or, if the violence of the disease and its strength are constant or because of the humours of the temperament of the patient, no single drug can be found which opposes all adverse actions, then a compound drug must be sought." In the same source it is also stated, "Whenever it is possible to use a light drug, do not make use of something other. Go from the weak to the stronger, if the weak proves of no use. Do not content yourself with a single drug in your treatment. For the constitution of the patient will grow accustomed to it and the benefit will become less. If you are in doubt about the diagnosis, do not attack the disease with any medicine at all until the whole matter is clear. When a dietary regime alone is sufficient, do not resort to drugs." (Suyūṭī:66).

II:8 "If foods of opposing disposition (*diddān*) are available at table, do not mix them; under such circumstances content thyself with but one of them."

Something of the Islamic attitude to eating various combinations of foods may be gathered from the following passage from Suyūṭī,

"The Prophet forbade to have at the same meal milk & fish or vinegar & milk or fruit & milk or lettuce & fish or garlic & onions or dried meat & fresh meat or things sour & things acid or sumach & vinegar or vinegar & rice or grapes & excessive eating of brinjals or pomegranites & meat pudding or two cold dishes or two hot dishes or two windproducing dishes...Whoever eats fish & eggs together will become paralysed, and for this blame no one but yourself.." (54).

During the Edime (Adrianople) period of his ministry, in his *Kitāb-i Badī'*, Bahā'u'llāh exhorted his followers to moderation: "In all circumstances they should conduct themselves with moderation; if the meal be only one course this is more pleasing in the sight of God; however, according to their means, they should seek to have this single dish be of good quality." (Bahā'u'llāh, *Kitāb-i Badī'*, cited UHJ:1970).

On the subject of mixing foods of opposite temperament or disposition we have this explanation from 'Abdu'l-Bahā,

"You have asked about the verse: 'Do not mix [two] foods of opposing disposition' [cf. II:8]. Know that what is meant by opposing foods (*ta'ām-i mutadādd*) are those foods and nourishments which do not agree with each other; but He [Bahā'u'llāh] has not indicated whether this is the case with respect to either ancient or modern medicine. So the intention is this: If two foods of opposing temperament and nature are present simultaneously at table it is not permitted to partake of both. This is because of the human constitution and the weakness of the powers of the stomach.. Thus,

in a weak constitution it is not possible to reconcile the effects of two heavy and rich foods or two cold foods or two hot foods. Again the nature of someone may not bear the effects of two specific foods or two foods which, when mixed, would add to each other's richness and heaviness. The mixing of all of these is not permitted. The exact description of these is referable to the physicians.. So any two foods whose combination doctors would describe as *diddān*, "opposers" for a particular person are such indeed...." Ishrāq Khāvarī (Ed.), *Māda-yi Āsmānī* (First Indian edition, New Delhi: BPT., 1984) Vol. II: 550-1 (= Vol. 9:142-3).

II:9 *"Commence first with the light food (al-raqīq) before moving on to the heavier one (al-ghalīz) and with the liquid before the solid."*

The Arabic word *raqīq* can signify a flat loaf of bread (see Wehr⁴, 408) though the meaning here may not be quite so specific – indicating a food that is "delicate / soft / tender" (*raqīq*) or easily digestible. It is here rendered "light" to follow the common English usage; "light" and "heavy" meals, foodstuffs. When applied to food the word *ghalīz* can mean "solid, stringy, tough" (see Wahr,⁴ 979). As noted, it is here translated "heavy".

II:10 *"To intake one food which becomes superimposed upon another (idkhāl al-ta'ām 'alā ta'ām) is dangerous; be warned of this matter."*

II:10a has various exact parallels in Islamic medicine. A tradition recorded, for example, in Majlisī's *Bihār al-anwār* reads,

"The Arab physician al-Hārith Ibn Kaladah [a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad and his physician who had allegedly studied at Jūndī-Shāpūr] was asked about the intake of one food superimposed upon another food (*idkhāl al-ta'ām 'alā al-ta'ām*). He said in reply, "This practise is what has caused the destruction of the created sphere (*barīya* = mankind's health?) and likewise the destruction of the wild beasts in the created sphere (*al-sibā' fī-barīya*). He [the Prophet] has made the intake of one food superimposed upon another (*idkhāl al-ta'ām 'alā al-ta'ām*) which has not been fully digested in the stomach and which has not left that organ, a devastating disease (*dā' mahīk*). This is in accordance with a widespread disposition which God, exalted be He, has put into effect. The reason is this: what is thrown over that which is already being digested penetrates [badly] the inflamed and fiery constituents of the stomach [which are involved in the digestive process]. All this is dependent upon the power of God – glorified be His greatness." (*Bihār*, 62:71).

Similarly, it is recorded in al-Suyūtī, "The partaking of one meal upon another is harmful" (53). This piece of advice is immediately followed by words about exercise virtually paralleling II:2 (cited above). A little later we read, "Hārith bin Kalada, the physician of the Arabs, was once asked: What is the best medicine? He replied: Necessity, that is Hunger. When asked: What is disease? He replied: The entry of food upon food." (*Suyūtī*:55)

III.

III:1 *"When thou wouldst commence eating, start by mentioning My Most Glorious Name (al-abhā) and complete it with the Name of Thy Lord, the Possessor of the Throne above and of the earth below."*

III:1a is reminiscent of Qur'ān 6:119f (trans. Arberry) – "Eat of that over which God's name has been mentioned...And eat not of that over which God's name has not been mentioned; it is ungodliness". There are various circumstances in Islam in which the mentioning of the name of God (Allāh, the *basmalla*, etc.) is related to the slaughter of food, foodstuffs, and eating. The following tradition (*ḥadīth*), for example, is cited in the *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ* of Walī al-Dīn al-Tabrizī, "Mention God's name, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is next to you" (Bukhārī and Muslim; Robson, *Mishkāt* II:886). Further directives relating eating and the recitation of the name of God / prayer can be found in Islamic texts. It is related, for example, that the Prophet said "Masticate your food with the name of God and with prayer." (Suyūtī 56). A tradition about reciting the protective Name of God over food deriving from Imām 'Alī reads, "I fully guarantee that one who eats food and says Alīah, the Exalted's, Name, will not be harmed by it..." (IMW:70)..

At III:1 Bahā'u'llāh states that at the commencement of a meal, the superlative form of the word *bahā'* (the greatest name) namely, *al-abhā'* (= the All-Glorious) should be uttered. At its end "the Name of Thy Lord (*rabbika*), the Possessor of the Throne above and of the earth below (*mālik al-'arsh wa'l-tharā*)." It may be that the same word *abhā'* is also to be recited at the end of the meal. Perhaps, alternatively, the meal should be completed with the utterance of the name Bahā'u'llāh or some other name of God. The recital of the greatest name could thus be viewed as the alpha and the omega of eating; the essence of both senses of the word grace. Other forms of grace (= the recitation of a short prayer before or after a meal) are found within the Bahā'ī writings. 'Abdul-Bahā', it should be noted, wrote prayers to be recited at table both before and after a meal.¹⁰

¹⁰ □ To be recited before eating. "My Lord and my Hope. Praise be to Thee that Thou hast sent down upon us this spiritual table, this divine bounty, this heavenly blessing. O our Lord, enable us to eat of this food of the kingdom that its subtle essences may pervade the corners of our spiritual being and that there may be produced from that

III:2 "And when thou hast finished eating, walk a little to settle thy meal."

It is a time-honoured practise to walk after completing a meal as an aid to good digestion. In the context of digestion Suyūṭī cites the Prophet Muhammad as having said, "Walking after dinner is beneficial. [If you cannot] Prayer will replace it, for then food will rest in the pit of the stomach and digestion will be better." (Suyūṭī:55).

III:4 "Eat a little in the morning for this is as a lamp to the body."

The importance of a breakfast is indicated in such sayings as that in the *Tibb al-nabī* of Mustaghfirī, "Breakfast ye! for in breakfast [during Ramaḍān, the month of fasting? *al-sahūr*] there is a blessing." (Majlisī, BA 62:292).

III:5 "Eschew harmful habits [i.e. addictive substances *al-i'āda al-mudirra*] for they truly, are a calamity for created beings."

By "harmful habits" (*al-i'āda al-mudirra*) which should be avoided, the partaking (as indicated) of addictive substances is probably intended; such 'substances' as can, from the Bahā'ī and ethico-religious perspective, be viewed as calamitous for human beings. From this point of view it is important to note that the following verse (372) of the *Most Holy Book (al-Kitāb al-aqdas)* in which Bahā'u'llāh forbids gambling (*maysir*) and the taking of opium, he states, "Beware lest you make use of that which will result in the sluggishness of your human temples and will damage (*yaduru*) your bodies..". The Arabic verb used here is an imperfect form of *darra* (form I = to harm, hurt, injure). It is the active participle (at III:5) from the same root *mudirra* which is thus translated "harmful habits". Addictions such as the taking of opium (twice

heavenly strength for the service of Thy cause, the spread of Thy revelation, and the adorning of Thy garden with lofty trees bearing branches near at hand, perfumed with fresh breezes. Thou, verily, art the generous. Thou art the possessor of mighty grace. Thou art the Merciful, the Compassionate." (Amr 3:69 trans. MacEoin, Ritual 98 App. Eight) □ **To be recited after eating**, "My Lord and my Hope. Thanks be to Thee for these bestowals and bounties. Lord, Lord, raise us up unto Thy Kingdom and seat us at the tables of Thy realm on high. Give us to eat of the food of Thy presence and give us to taste of the sweetness of beholding Thy beauty – this, in truth, is our highest wish and Thy greatest bestowal and most mighty bounty. Lord, Lord, make this easy for us. Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Bountiful, and Thou art the Giver, the Mighty, the Compassionate. Upon Thee be greetings and praise." (Amr 3:70 trans. MacEoin, Ritual 98 App. Eight).

interdicted in the Most Holy Book, see *Ishrāq Khāvarī*, *Ganj*, 343) are most probably indicated. 'Abdu'l-Bahā and Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice have forbidden to Bahā'īs (except under qualified medical prescription) all manner of addictive, hallucinogenic or habit-forming drugs: including (in addition to opium and alcohol) hashhish, marijuana, cannabis and LSD. Tobacco smoking is likewise strongly discouraged. (For further details see *Ganj*.443ff; SWAB:148-149 LG Nos. 717-719 2nd Ed. Nos. 1183-1188).

III:6 *"Counter disease by utilizing established means (bi'l-asbāb). This utterance is the decisive command in this discourse."*

Bahā'u'llāh may here mean that disease should be cured or prevented through well-tested, proven methods. It could be implied that properly qualified physicians should be consulted (see above on II: 3 and Appendix). In the 19th century middle east, medical cures were often little more than superstitious practises. Especially in villages, sometimes extremely superstitious or folkloric cures were widely indulged in. Within the largely inauthentic "Prophetic Medicine" (*Tibb al-nabī*) "numerous incantations for the prevention and treatment of the evil eye, demons and sorcery" (Dols review of Rahman p.418) may be found (see also Mahmoud Omidsalar, *Charms* Elr 5:386-7). The eccentric uses of charms, magical incantations, and blood or camel urine in traditional or folk-medicine, is probably directly or indirectly warned against by Bahā'u'llāh at various points in the **Tablet of Medicine**. Using sensible, established methods of healing -- communicated by "qualified physicians" -- was ultimately authoritatively set down (see Appendix Two).

IV.

IV:1f *"Most necessary to thy well-being is contentment (al-qanā'at) under all circumstances for through it will the soul be saved from sloth and ill-being. ²⁹ Eschew anxiety (al-hamma) and depression (al-ghamm) for through these twain will transpire a darksome affliction (balā' adhām)."*

Psychological or spiritual states of mind as well as environmental factors are among the 'six necessities' (*sittah darūriyyah*) which, in Islamic medicine, must be taken account of relative to the maintenance of good health, i.e. "emotional rest (including the question of which emotional states help or harm health)" (see Nasr, *Islamic Science*, 162). Bahā'u'llāh likewise

presupposes an all-embracing or holistic medicine. The whole psycho-spiritual state of the human being is centrally important.

Fundamental to much oriental medicine is a spiritual psychology. In *Suyūṭī*, for example, we read, "But as for Apprehension and Sorrow, they are the commencement of the Sleeping Fevers. The Prophet used to fly to God for refuge from apprehension and sorrow. Tradition says that he who has much of these, his body becomes sick. This is related by Abu Nu'aim." (64). The central importance of contentment (*al-qanā'at*) for psychological-spiritual health is here presupposed. This is also the case in other writings of Bahā'u'llāh. In the *Words of Wisdom (As-h kull al-khayr)* the "source of all glory" (*asl al-'izzat*) is reckoned to be "acceptance of whatsoever the Lord hath bestowed, and contentment (*al-qanā'at*) with what God hath ordained." (MAM:33/TB:155). This dynamic, spiritual "contentment" is not at all an idle self-satisfaction. Rather, it should perhaps be viewed as a spiritual state of being, revolving around loving contentment with the Will of God. True contentment with life and with God's revelation results in that spiritual happiness which leaves no room for anxiety and depression; negative states of mind which have disastrous consequences for health. 'Abdu'l-Bahā has stated that, "A happy state brings special blessings. When the mind is depressed, the blessings are not received" ('Abdu'l-Bahā: SW:XIII, No. 5, p. 102.) and explained, "You must be happy always. You must be counted among the people of joy and happiness and must be adorned with divine morals. In a large measure happiness keeps our health while depression of spirit begets disease." (cited Zohoori, p.23) The following passages are also expressive of the Bahā'ī viewpoint, "You must live in the utmost happiness. If any trouble or vicissitude comes into your lives, if your heart is depressed on account of health, livelihood or vocation, let not these things affect you. They should not cause unhappiness, for Bahā'u'llāh has brought you divine happiness. He has prepared heavenly food for you: He has destined eternal bounty for you..." ('Abdu'l-Bahā: PUP:183 cited ibid 23); "Happiness has a connection with health preservation, and from sorrow, diseases are born." ('Abdu'l-Bahā: SW XIX:254); "... Still, as the believers of God are turning to the limitless world, they do not become very depressed and sad by disastrous calamities--there is something to console them..." TAB 2: 263-4)

V:1 "Say: Envy (*al-ḥasad*) consumeth the body and rage (or anger, wrath, *al-ghayz*) burneth the liver: avoid these two as ye would a fierce lion (*al-asad*)."

Bahā'u'llāh's warning about the negative physical or bodily consequences of envy (*al-ḥasad*), is paralleled with respect to its devastating spiritual consequences in the *Hidden Words (Kalimāt-i makhūnih)*:

"O Son of Earth!

Know, verily, the heart wherein the least remnant of envy (*ḥasad*) yet lingers, shall never attain My everlasting dominion, nor inhale the sweet savours of holiness breathing from my kingdom of sanctity." (Persian No 6; tr. 25 text MAM:373).

Mīrzā Yahyā was, according to various Bahā'ī sources, consumed with *ḥasad*. In his *Centennial Tablet (Lawḥ-i qam)* Shoghi Effendi reckons that all the peoples of the world would fail in their attempt to compute the extent of the "envy" (*ḥasad*) and "hatred" (*baghd*) exemplified in the person of the Judas of Bābī-Bahā'ī history and the half-brother of Bahā'u'llāh (see *Lawḥ-i qam*: 38). At one point in his *God Passes By*, the Guardian of the Bahā'ī Faith refers to Bahā'u'llāh's stigmatization of Sayyid Muḥammad Isfahānī (who had led Mīrzā Yahyā astray) as "the source of envy and the quintessence of mischief" (underlining supplied, GPB:112). Envy is a negative quality which can fuel disobedience to the covenant of God.

The importance of controlling human anger is widely affirmed in religious ethics. Many passages could be cited from the world's sacred scriptures in illustration of this fact. It must suffice to cite a few passages from Suyūṭī's *Tibb al-nabī*, section on 'The Emotions' which commences with the subject of anger,

"With regard to Anger, it worms the body and dries it up. Anger is forbidden by the Prophet. Al-Bukhārī relates that a man once said to the Prophet: Pray give me some advice. And he replied: Never be angry. The meaning of this traditional saying is that a man should never act from motives of anger. A proof of this is the further saying of the Prophet: Do not reckon as one of you those in a fit of anger... And we said: Is there any man who does not suffer from fits of anger? And he replied: No, there is not. But men there are who master themselves when angry and being bad tempered train themselves so that anger will not overcome them and that they will not act under its influence. And this is the meaning of the saying of the Almighty: Those who restrain their anger. It confirms the fact of their anger and praises them for their restraint. When the Prophet was angry, it was evident in his face. He once said: Anger is from the Devil... Abu Dāwūd relates this..." (63)

From antiquity correlations have been made between psychological states and organs of the body. In his *Tales of the Prophets (Qisās al-anbiyā')* al-Kisā'ī records that Wahb ibn-Munabbih (34-110?/ fl.732 CE?), an early Muslim expert on Judaeo-Christian lore, discoursing upon the creation of Adam's body said,

"..In the liver is compassion, in the spleen is mirth, in the kidneys are guile and deceit; the lungs are a fan and the stomach a storehouse.." (Ullmann, 5)

Ullmann, furthermore, records that this same authority had "certain ideas about human physiology as taught by the Greeks. He speaks of the four primary qualities and the four humours related to them and of the balance of temperament which signifies health. He located the mental powers in particular organs: intellect in the brain, greed in the kidneys, **anger in the liver**, courage in the heart, fear in the lungs, laughter in the spleen, sadness and joy in the face. Man was thought to have 360 members. He claimed to have found all this information in the Old Testament where they were said to be quoted in connection with the creation of Adam." (Ullmann 5-6).

The history of the medico-psychological correlation between anger and the liver invites further research.

V:2 "Purification of the bowels (*tanqiyat al-fudūl*) constitutes a pillar (of health, *al-'umdat*) when accomplished in the temperate seasons (*al-fusūl al-mu'tadila*)."

With regard to the intimate relationship between disease/health, diet and the seasons according to ancient medicine we read, for example, at selected points in Section III of the *Aphorisms* attributed to Hippocrates of Cos (Arabic Buqrāt, c.470-c.370 BCE),

"I. It is chiefly the changes of the seasons which produce diseases, and in the seasons the great changes from cold or heat, and so on according to this same rule. II. Of constitutions some are well or ill adapted to summer, others are well or ill adapted to winter. III. Certain diseases and certain ages are well or ill adapted to certain seasons, districts, and kinds of regimen [diet]... XVI. The diseases which generally arise in rainy weather are protracted fevers, fluxes of the bowels [etc.]. XIX. All diseases occur at all seasons [of the year], but some diseases are more apt to occur and to be aggravated at certain seasons...". (Tr. W.H.S. Jones, [Loeb Classical Library] Hippocrates IV: 123, 127, 129; cf. Adams, *Hippocratic Writings*, 134-5).

Among other possibly relevant background passagas we read at Section IV: 12,

"It is bad [thing] to purge upwards [cleanse the bowels through inducing vomiting?] in winter those [persons] whose bowels are in a state of lientery [i.e. liquid evacuation of undigested food]." (Ibid IV:137 cf. Adams 135; see also *Airs, Waters, Places* | in Loeb I:71ff; Adams,ibid.,pp. 9-19).

Many of the principles contained in the so-called 'Hippocratic corpus' (including the *Aphorisms* [early translated into Arabic] and many other writings) markedly influenced the medical and other teachings deriving from Galen of Pergamum (Arabic Jālīnūs, 129-c.200 CE). The Galenic corpus was highly influential in Islām. Galenism was a chief cornerstone of Islamic medicine. Galen's works were systematized within the Islamic world by, among others, 'Alī ibn al-'Abbas al-Majūsī (= Haly Abbas d.994 CE) author of *The Perfection of the Art/The Royal Book (Kāmil al-ṣinā'ah/ Kitāb al-malikī* = Latin. *Liber regius*) and Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā (= Avicenna 980-1037 CE) author of *The Canon of Medicine (Qānūn fī'l-ṭibb*; for some details see Ullmann, Index, Galen [131]).

The *Golden Treatise (Risāla dhahābiyya)* of Imām Ridā' includes a section relating health and the seasons of the year (*dhikr fuṣūl al-sana*; see Majlisī, BA 62:312f). Summing up aspects of the medicina of the Imāms, Newman writes,

"The medical treatments related from the Imams in this book of ours, and others, contain medical preparations and prescriptions of specific proportions and particular qualities. They sometimes deal with particular cases, observation of the condition of the patient, the climate (*al-taqs*) of his province and the soil (*al-turba*) of the place where he lives. The answer of one of the Imams in reply to the patient's question, and the medication, may have been given after considering the above-mentioned points. This is a matter which should be taken into account, since variations in the climate and seasons of different countries require specific treatments for certain patients. For example, it would not be correct to use a medical treatment of the same proportion and quality for a hot country as for a cold country, and vice versa." (IMW:xxviii)

V:3 *"He whose eating hath been excessive, his malady will be heightened."*

See comments on II:1.

V:4 *"We, assuredly, have decreed a cause (sabab^m) for all things and vouchsafed everything with an effect (al-athar). All of this is by virtue of the effulgence of My Name, the Efficacious [the 'Producer of Effects' al-mu'aththir] upon existing things. Verily, thy Lord is the One Who exerciseth command over all that He willeth."*

The accusative *sabab*^{an} (tr. "cause") here indicates that everything has a means, reason or cause for its realization. *Athar*^{an}, has a wide range of meanings but is translated "effect" (listed in *Wehr*⁴, 5) as the natural complement of the preceding *sabab*^{an}.

VI

VI:1 *"Say: Through all that which We have expounded the [equilibrium of the] four humours (al-akhlāt) will not exceed their moderate balance (al-ḥidāl), neither will their measures deviate from their mean conditions."*

The entry *humours* in the MDHS by Vivian Nutton contains a useful and succinct paragraph about the origins of the theory of the humours,

"In the earliest extant Greek medical texts (450–400 BC), bile and phlegm are viewed as the two humours most responsible for disease in the individual, and blood as the provider of life. An excess of phlegm in the brain causes epilepsy, of bile frenzy. However, perhaps under the influence of the philosopher Empedocles (c492–c432 BC), who posited a universe composed of four "elements" (Earth, Air, Fire, Water), a fourth major humour, black bile or 'melancholy', was added. There is considerable doubt whether this mysterious substance was at that time isolated empirically, but Galen (AD 129–c200) ascribed definite physical properties to it, such as boiling and hissing upon touching the ground. The Hippocratic treatise 'On the nature of Man' (c390 BC) identified the four humours with the four elements and developed a complex theory relating them to sensory qualities and assigning the potential preponderance of each humour to one of the four seasons, the four ages of man, and the four major organs of the body, heart, brain, liver and spleen. The perfect balance, mixture or temperament of the humours is constantly in danger, and any imbalance is unhealthy and possibly fatal. Preventive and corrective treatments were not difficult."

The theory of the humours became central within Islamic medicine which inherited Galenism (see below). Newman writes at one point in *Islamic Medical Wisdom*,

"Briefly and broadly speaking, the essence of the Galenic medical system was humoral pathology: equilibrium of the four humours (*al-akhlāt*) – blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile produced well-being, while disequilibrium produced illness, the specificity of which depended on the affected humour. Together with the doctrines of the elements, temperaments, qualities, and faculties, the Galenic medical system presupposed a system of therapy aimed at maintaining or restoring equilibrium in the body by changes in diet, environment, activity, and by use of external medications." (Newman, *IMW*:vii-viii).

In his chapter on Avicenna in his *Medicine in Persia* Elgood at one point writes,

"There is yet another feature of Avicenna's physiology and pathology which is quite unknown in modern medicine, but which has left its mark in the speech of today. The human body was built

up, as has already been said, from the four elements. Corresponding to these four elements and depending upon them for their relative proportions were four Humors, generated from the food taken by the mouth. These are called Blood, Bile, Phlegm, and Black Bile or Spleen. These in no way resemble their modern synonyms. If these four are perfectly balanced, the temperament of that man was in perfect harmony. But such a state of affairs rarely, if ever, was found. One of the Humors would be in excess, which thereby gave to a man a bias or tendency in a certain direction. If Air was in excess in the original make-up, the temperament of that man would be sanguinous or show excess of blood or be hot and wet, to express the same fact in different ways. If, on the other hand, Earth was in excess, the temperament would be the exact opposite, splenic or cold and dry. One of the most fruitful causes of disease was an error in these Humors: excess, improper functioning, or even putrefaction. Fever was usually, though not always, due to putrefaction of one or more of these Humors. It was thus possible to classify sickness also into hot or cold and damp or dry diseases, depending upon the temperament of the Humor that was attacked or the organ that was diseased. For the theory was carried so far that not only did the individual have his own characteristic constitution, but every organ in the body also had its own peculiar temperament. Of all organs the brain was the coldest." (Elgood, *Medicine in Persia*: 49-50).¹¹

Without going into details (see further Appendix 3), Bahā'u'llāh at VI:1f explains how the medical advice which he has earlier given will maintain and safeguard the equilibrium of the four humours. In one of his Tablets 'Abdul-Bahā explains the Bahā'ī position with respect to the cause of human disease and touches upon that bodily equilibrium which is essential to good health,

¹¹ Many further details could have been added to this all too brief reproduction of passages bearing upon the roots and Islamic understanding of humoral pathology. In addition to Appendix 3 the following passages are worth noting a) *Paradise of Wisdom (Firdaws al-hikmah)*, (c. 850 CE; ed. M. Z. Siddiqi [Berlin, 1928], p. 40.) of 'Alī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī "Man derives his nourishment from the four natures, since he inhales *air*, drinks *water*, eats food like meat, grain [corn] and fruit, which are transformations of *earth*, and all these contain particles of *fire* as well. The foods which derive from water, become *phlegm*, those that derive from air, *blood*, those that derive from fire, *yellow bile* and those from the earth, *black bile*. (Rosenthal, CHI : 187) b) Suyūṭī: "Next among the seven components of the Constitution come the Four Humours. Of these the most excellent is Blood, which is damp & hot. Its property is to feed the body. Normal blood is sweat and without smell. Next comes Phlegm and this is wet & cold. Its property is to convert blood whenever the body lacks food, to keep the organs damp and to prevent drying up due to movement. Normal phlegm is phlegm that is near to changing into blood. Abnormal phlegm is salt or somewhat warm or sour. It tends to be ripe and insipid. It is unmixed cold.

The third humour is Bile, which is hot & dry. It is stored in the Gall Bladder. It renders the blood subtle and helps it to pass through the very narrow channels. Part of it is carried to the bowels and produces the characteristic colour of the faeces. Normal bile is slightly red. Abnormal bile may be coloured like the yoke of an egg or coloured like leeks or verdigris or be inflamed. Rusty bile is more powerful than leek-coloured and it is a warning of Death. Bile is sometimes known as Yellow Bile. Finally, there is Spleen. This is cold & dry. It thickens the blood and feeds the spleen and the bones; Part of it passes to the mouth of the stomach and sets up a desire for food and causes an acidity. Normal spleen forms the dregs of the blood. Abnormal spleen is described as inflamed that is, impure. Spleen is sometimes called Black Bile." (p. 50). (See further Ullmann's useful summary and translation of passages from 'Alī Ibn al-'Abbas al-Majūsī's *Kitāb al-Malakī* in chapter four of his *Islamic Medicine* (pp.55-71).

"The outer, physical causal factor in disease, however is a disturbance in the balance, the proportionate equilibrium of all those elements of which the human body is composed ... the body of man is a compound of many constituent substances, each component being present in a prescribed amount, contributing to the essential equilibrium of the whole. So long as these constituents remain in their due proportion, according to the natural balance of the whole – that is, no component suffereth a change in its natural proportional degree and balance, no component being either augmented or decreased – there will be no physical cause for the incursion of disease ... It is the function of a skilled physician to determine which constituent of his patient's body hath suffered diminution, which hath been augmented. Once he hath discovered this, he must prescribe a food containing the diminished element in considerable amounts, to re-establish the body's essential equilibrium. The patient, once his constitution is again in balance, will be rid of his disease ... And likewise, when the constitution is in a state of equilibrium, there is no doubt that whatever is relished will be beneficial to health..." (SWAB: 152-156).

VI:2 "The [human constitutional] foundation (al-asl) will remain in its purity and the "sixth part" and the "sixth of the sixth part" (wa'l-suds wa suds al-suds) in their stable condition."

In addition to the information quoted above which throws some light on the roots and significance of the humoral pathology presupposed in VI:1ff (full details cannot be gone into here), it is important to note that Bahā'u'llāh, in answer to a question posed by his apostle Zayn al-Muqarrabīn about the "sixth part and the sixth of the sixth part" (VI:2), wrote,

"On the meaning of "sixth part and the sixth of the sixth part". We intended by this the measures and portions of the humours (*akhlāt*) in the human body when it is in a balanced condition as accords with the belief of the people. Know thou that the phlegm (plasma, *balgham*) is the sixth of blood, and bile is derived of the sixth portion of the phlegm. And black bile, "melancholia", is three quarters of the bile. And We have other explanations. Verily thy Lord is All-informed, All-knowing." (MA 1:8).

VI:3 "The twin active forces (fā'ilān) and the twin passive realities (munfā'ilān) will be rendered whole. And upon God is all our trust. There is no God but He, the true Healer, the Omniscient, the One Whose succour is sought by all."

The exact medical, human microcosmic (?) significance of the "twin active forces (*fā'ilān*) and the twin passive realities (*munfā'ilān*)" requires further research. Details cannot be gone into here. It is worth noting however, that in his *Tablet of Wisdom (Lawḥ-i hikmat)* Bahā'u'llāh uses similar Arabic dual terms *fā'ilayn* (lit. "twin active forces") and *munfā'ilayn* ("twin passive realities") in a cosmological context:

"As regards thine assertions about the beginning of creation, this is a matter on which conceptions vary by reason of the divergences in men's thoughts and opinions... The world of existence came into being through the heat generated from the interaction between the [twin] active force[s] (*fā'layn*) and that which is its recipient (*munfā'layn*). These two are the same, yet they are different. Thus doth the Great Announcement [Bahā'u'llāh] inform thee about this glorious structure. Such as communicate the generating influence and such as receive its impact are indeed created through the irresistible Word of God which is the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof. Verily thy Lord is the Expounder, the All-Wise. (MAM:40-41 tr. TB:140).¹²

VII.

VII:1 *"O Physician! Firstly, heal thou the sick ones with the Remembrance of thy Lord (bi-dhikr rabbika), the Lord of the Day of Mutual Invocation (yawm al-tanād, see Qur'ān 40:32 [34]) and afterwards by that which We have ordained for the health of the constitutions of the servants."*

Here the physician is directed to first pray to God or invoke His Names; to indulge in the "Remembrance of thy Lord". There are a large number of prayers and invocations for the sick in Bābī and Bahā'ī scripture (see for example PM Nos. 64-67). In one of his Tablets Bahā'u'llāh says, "Well is it with the physician who cureth ailments In My hallowed and dearly cherished Name [presumably the "greatest name" *bahā'/ Aliāh al-Abhā'*." (From a Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh, cited UHJ:1970). 'Abdu'l-Bahā taught, "That the Most Great Name [= Bahā'/ Bahā'u'llāh] exerciseth influence over both physical and spiritual matters is sure and certain." (UHJ:1984, p.2) The following brief passage from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahā is instructive,

"O maidservant of God! Continue in healing hearts and bodies and seek healing for sick persons by turning unto the Supreme Kingdom and by setting the heart upon obtaining healing through the power of the Greatest Name and by the spirit of the love of God." (TAB III:629).

On one occasion it was written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi,

"... Any such cure effected, however, should be done in the name of Bahā'u'llāh and in accordance with His Teachings. For God, and God alone is the Supreme and Almighty Physician and all else are but instruments in His hands." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 23, 1935 cited UHJ:1970, p.8)

¹² Cf. the Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahā to Shaykh 'Alī Akbar Qūchānī touching upon this part of the *Laws-i Hikmat* in MA 2:68-70 [Indian Edition II:72-5] and see Keven Brown, 'A Bahā'ī Perspective on the Origin of Matter' in JBS 2:3,(1989-90) p. 28f.

Bahá'í scriptural texts and their authoritative interpretation recognize that true healing is of two kinds; namely, physical healing and spiritual healing. Both these dimensions of healing are presupposed in the attainment of holistic, abiding health. Consider the following selected passages,

"Bahá'u'lláh tells us that in case of disease we should pray but at the same time refer to competent physicians, and abide by their considered decisions. Shoghi Effendi wishes you therefore to find whether your son has really become ill, and if he is, then follow the directions of the doctor. Being versed in the medical sciences they can treat better than a loving mother can. You can render your assistance by praying for him and at the same time helping the physicians to treat him." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, April 9, 1933: cited UHJ:1970, 5-6)

"O thou distinguished physician! ... Praise be to God that thou hast two powers: one to undertake physical healing and the other spiritual healing. Matters related to man's spirit have a great effect on his bodily condition. For instance, thou shouldst impart gladness to thy patient, give him comfort and joy, and bring him to ecstasy and exaltation. How often hath it occurred that this hath caused early recovery. Therefore, treat thou the sick with both powers. Spiritual feelings have a surprising effect on healing nervous ailments." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, SWAB:150-151)

"With reference to your question concerning spiritual healing. Its importance, as you surely know, has been greatly emphasized by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who considered it, indeed, as an essential part of physical processes of healing. Physical healing cannot be complete and lasting unless it is reinforced by spiritual healing. And this last one can be best obtained through obedience to the laws and commandments of God as revealed to us through His Manifestations. Individual believers, however, can also help by imparting healing to others. But the success of their efforts depends entirely on their strict adherence to the Teachings, and also on the manner in which they impart them to others. According to Bahá'u'lláh man cannot obtain full guidance directly from God. He must rather seek it through His Prophets. Provided this principle is clearly understood and explained, the Guardian sees no harm that the friends should try to effect spiritual healing on others. Any such cure effected, however, should be done in the name of Bahá'u'lláh and in accordance with His Teachings. For God, and God alone is the Supreme and Almighty Physician and all else are but instruments in His hands." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 23, 1935: UHJ:1970, p. 8)

VII:2 By My life! Merely attaining the presence of the physician who hath drunk of the Wine of My Love conferreth healing and his mere breath bringeth mercy and hope. [3] Say: Adhere to him for the restoration of the body's well-being. [4] Verily such a physician is assisted by God for the treatment of ills.

The therapeutic effect of a truly spiritual physician is fully recognized here. Among the passages relating to this theme are the following words from Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

"He who is filled with the love of Bahá, and forgets all things, the Holy Spirit will be heard from his lips and the spirit of life will fill his heart.... Words will issue from his lips in strands of pearls, and all sickness and disease will be healed by the laying on of the hands." (cited in SW VIII: 233).

"When giving medical treatment turn to the Blessed Beauty, then follow the dictates of thy heart. Remedy the sick by means of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation, cure the sorely afflicted by imparting to them blissful glad tidings and heal the wounded through His resplendent bestowals. When at the bedside of a patient, cheer and gladden his heart and enrapture his spirit through celestial power. Indeed, such a heavenly breath quickeneth every mouldering bone and reviveth the spirit of every sick and ailing one." ('Abdu'l-Bahá SWAB:151)

VII:5f *"Say: The science of healing (hadha al-'ilm) is the most noble of all the sciences (ashraf al-'ulūm kullihā). [6] Verily, it is the greatest instrument (sabab al-a'zam) given by God, the Quickener of mouldering bones (muhyī al-rimam), for the preservation of the bodies of peoples (al-umam). God hath given it precedence over all sciences (al-'ulūm) and branches of wisdom (al-hikam)"*.

Speaking with the voice of God Bahā'u'llāh proclaims the greatness of medical science. Indeed, its superlative importance is underlined. VI:5a has many echoes and parallels in the history of Graeco-Islamic medicine. At the beginning of *The Law (Nomos)* of Hippocrates we read, "Medicine is of all the Arts the most noble.." (Adams & Brock:144). This maxim was variously translated in Arabic and countless times repeated and commented upon in certain Islāmic literatures. In the *'Uyūn al-anbā'* (I.26) of Ibn Abī Uṣaiba'ah [1203-1270] we read, "Medicine is the most noble of all the sciences." (cited Rosenthal, CHI:184). Suyūṭī in his *Tibb al-nabī* states in the section headed, *Encouragement to the Study of Medicine*,

"The Imām Shāfi'i [150-205/767-820] said: After the Science which distinguishes between what is lawful and what is unlawful, I know of no Science which is more noble than that of Medicine. He was grieved to see how much Moslems had lost of this Science. Often he used to say: They have lost one-third of human knowledge and have allowed themselves to be replaced by Jews and Christians. He also used to say: Verily the people of the Book have now conquered and surpassed us in this sublime Art. Now Shāfi'i besides his immense superiority in the Science of Law, besides his transcending merit in the Arabic language, was a skilled doctor." (128-9).

Parallels to VII:5 could be greatly multiplied. Bahā'u'llāh's elevation of the science of medicine reflects Islāmic estimates of the importance of this branch of learning. In illustrating this, reference may be made to the opening paragraph of the excellent chapter, 'Arabic Medical Literature' in the volume *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period* (see bib. CHAL.),

"None of the sciences received more patronage among the Arabs than that of medicine - a discipline which they acquired from the Greeks and in which they excelled most. The Arabic adage states: *'al-'ilm 'ilmān, 'ilm yanfa', wa-'ilm yanfa', fa-l-rāfi al-dīn wa-l-nāfi al-tibb'* ("science is

twofold, that which exalts and that which is useful - that which exalts is religion, and that which is useful is medicine"). Islam not only put medicine on a high level but also conferred the title of *hakīm* (wise) on medical practitioners, a term used by Muslims up to the present day in many areas. The association of medicine with religious learning is noteworthy, and is a pleasing feature of Muslim life; for according to a Tradition of the Prophet: "*al-'ilm 'ilmān, 'ilm al-fiqh li-'adyān wa-'ilm al-ṭibb li-'abdān*" ("science is twofold, theology and medicine")." (p.342)

'Abdu'l-Bahā advised a Bahā'ī in the following manner,

"Thou shouldst endeavour to study the science of medicine. It is extremely useful and serveth as the greatest instrument for the dissemination of the Cause. It is absolutely imperative that thou acquire this bounty. Strive day and night that thou mayest become highly qualified in this science. And when thou wishest to dispense treatment set thy heart toward the Abhá Kingdom, entreating Divine confirmations." (From a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahā to an individual believer, cited UHJ:1970)

The reference to God / Bahā'u'llāh as the "Reviver of mouldering bones (*muhyī al-rimam*)" is rooted in the Qur'ān. Therein the adjective *ramīm* = rotten, decayed, occurs twice; once in the rhetorical question "...who shall quicken the bones when they are decayed" (36:78) and once as "stuff decayed"; the material left after a "withering wind" was loosed by God against Ad (51:42).

It is also the case that in the *Sūrah of the Greeks (Sūrat al-rūm)* God is referred to as the "Quickener of the dead" (*muhyī al-mawta*) for it is His "Mercy" (*al-rahman*) that is the "quickener of earth after its death" (see 30:50).¹³ In various of his Tablets Bahā'u'llāh refers to himself as the "Reviver/Quickener of mouldering bones (*muhyī/musawwir al-rimam*)" (refer, for example, AA 4: 38 and cf. Ishrāq Khāvarī *Rahīq-i makhtūm* 2: 480-1). In one of Bahā'u'llāh's meditations the devotee addresses God in the following manner, "I beseech Thee, O Thou Shaper of all the nations and the Quickener of every mouldering bone (*asaluka yā khāliq al-umam wa muhyī al-rimam* .. PM* 135/PM:153)". In another meditation we read, "Great is the blessedness of him who hath acknowledged Thy most excellent majesty, and whom the veils that have shut out the nations from Thee have not hindered from directing his

¹³ It is also usually the case that the name of God "the Quickener" (*al-Muhyī*) is counted among the 99 "Most Beautiful Names of God" (No. 71 in some listings). Note that in the *Kitāb-i Īqān* Bahā'u'llāh at one point interprets "earth" as the sphere of the human "heart" which is capable of "change" or spiritual "resurrection". In various of his prayers/meditations Bahā'u'llāh refers to God/himself as the "Quickener of the entire creation (*muhyī al-'alamīn*)" (PM*:75 / PM:79).

eyes towards Thee, O Thou who art the King of Eternity and the Quickener of every mouldering bone (*musawwir al-rimam*)!" (PM*:41/PM:41) Shoghi Effendi counted "Reviver of mouldering bones" (*muhyī al-rimam*) a title of Bahā'u'llāh in his *Centennial Tablet (Lawh-i qam; p.77)*.

VIII.

"Say: *Thy Name is My healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope and love for Thee my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing (tabīb) and my succour in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.*"

The 'Healing Prayer' (pre-Shoghi Effendi trans.) and a few further lines are found in John Esslemont's *Bahā'u'llāh and the New Era* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1923) chapter VII (see Appendix 6). The translation of the 'Healing Prayer' occurring in the latter half of the *Tablet of Medicine* is that of Shoghi Effendi, printed in *Prayers and Meditations* ([first printed in 1938] London: BPT 1957) No. 170 (p.200) -- also printed in numerous Bahā'ī Prayer Books and other compilations of Bahā'ī scripture.

X.

[1] *"Say: O Friends! Apprehensiveness and agitation pertaineth unto women. [2] And should the beloved of God reflect briefly upon the world and its manifest vicissitudes, the dominance of those who hath been tyrants will not frighten them. [3] Then shall they take their flight on the wings of yearning desire unto the One Who is at the centre of the Luminous Horizons (nayyir al-āfāq) [4] This servant hath wished for Himself that which He hath wished for all the servants of God. [5] The reason that wisdom (hikmat) and the protection of the friends hath been and shall be commanded is that those who remember Me should remain in the world and occupy themselves with the mention of the Lord of all the worlds. [6] Thus it is binding and necessary that all may protect themselves and their brethren for the sake of the Cause of God. [7] If the beloved of God had performed that which they were commanded, the majority of the people of the world at this time would have been adorned with the garment of faith. [8] Great is the blessedness of him who leadeth another soul to the Immortal Faith of God and guideth him to life everlasting. [9] This is an act of supreme importance in the presence of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Most Exalted.*

May the Spirit be upon thee! And may the Glory be upon thee also!

X:1ff At the beginning of this paragraph Bahā'u'llāh may be addressing the Bahā'ī friends (*dūstān*) of Yazd. He acknowledges that "Apprehensiveness (or 'fear', *khawf*) and agitation (or perturbation, upset, nervousness, etc., *idtirāb* = *verbal noun of VIII*) pertaineth unto women (or 'females', Ar. *niswān*). It is possible that this pertains to Yazdī Bahē'ī women at some stage during the early 1870's -- when the *Lawh-i libb* was written. Perhaps, in other words, there is reference to the situation within the much persecuted Bahā'ī community of Yazd; a centre of Muslim anti-Bahā'ī persecutions and sporadic Bahā'ī martyrdoms (1891 CE).

X:1f need not be read as an overtly sexist statement but might pertain to a period of terrorization precipitated in Yazd by tyrannical and frightening authorities (see X:2f). Possible impending martyrdoms may be alluded to; a *Sitz im Leben* ("setting in life") that is, in which the Bahā'ī women were naturally afraid. Zealous Bahā'ī men may have sought martyrdom; leaving the Bahā'ī women understandably fearful and agitated. This agitation is lovingly acknowledged and understood by Bahā'u'llāh.

X:3 could be taken to refer to the life after death transition following martyrdom: "flight" unto the "One Who is the Luminous Horizons" of the next or spiritual World (?) (*nayyir al-āfāq* = Bahā'u'llāh). Most probably rooted in Qur'ān 41:53 -- "We shall show them Our signs in the horizons (*āfāq*) and in themselves, till it is clear to them that it is the truth" (trans. Arberry; cf. AA 1:154) -- *nayyir al-āfāq* is among the titles of Bahā'u'llāh listed towards the beginning of the *Lawh-i qam* [p.76]. Bahā'u'llāh himself wished for martyrdom; life in the worlds beyond. At one stage in his ministry he enjoined it upon others (e.g. *Hidden Words*, Arabic Nos. 45-47) as implied in X:4. Later, as here, he emphasised "wisdom" (*hikmat* cf. the Islāmic *taqiyya*) or prudence in the face of martyrdom, "thus it is necessary that all may protect themselves and their brethren for the sake of the [Bahā'ī] Cause (X:6). Those that live for their Faith and proclaim it with "wisdom" ("living martyrs") are blessed. Mass conversion results from living the Bahā'ī life. Such is one possible way of understanding X:6ff.

APPENDIX ONE: EARLY TRANSLATIONS OF PORTIONS OF THE 'TABLET TO A PHYSICIAN' [= TABLET OF MEDICINE]

Unapproved or provisional English translations of passages from the *Tablet of Medicine* have been around since the time of the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahā. Among the translations which may be noted are the following-:

□ From J.E.Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* Ch.VII 'Health and Healing'(1st Ed. 1923) pp. 98,99,103 [5th Ed. 1980/90 pp. 106, 108, 112].¹

"Do not neglect medical treatment when it is necessary, but leave it off when health has been restored... Treat disease through diet, by preference, refraining from the use of drugs; and if you find what is required in a single herb, do not resort to a compounded medicament. Abstain from drugs when the health is good, but administer them when necessary." (106)

"Verily the most necessary thing is contentment under all circumstances; by this one is preserved from morbid conditions and from lassitude. Yield not to grief and sorrow: they cause the greatest misery. Jealousy consumeth the body and anger doth burn the liver: avoid these two as you would a lion." (108)

"In God must be our trust. There is no God but Him, the Healer, the Knower, the Helper.... Nothing in earth or heaven is outside the grasp of God.

"O physician! In treating the sick, first mention the name of Thy God, the Possessor of the Day of Judgment, and then use what God hath destined for the healing of His creatures. By My Life ! The physician who has drunk from the Wine of My Love, his visit is healing, and his breath is mercy and hope. Cling to him for the welfare of the constitution. He is confirmed by God in his treatment.

"This knowledge is the most important of all the sciences, for it is the greatest means from God, the Life-giver to the dust, for preserving the bodies of all people, and He has put it in the forefront of all sciences and wisdoms. For this is the day when you must arise for My Victory.

"Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succour in both this world and the world to come. Thou verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise." (112)

□ *Star of the West* (Vol. 13 No.9 [December 1922] Vol. 8 [of the reprint] George Ronald: Oxford 1978) p.252 – the translator is not named.

Some rules for health, from a Tablet revealed by Baha'Ullah.

"O God ! The Supreme Knower ! The Ancient Tongue speaks that which will satisfy the wise in the absence of doctors.

O People, do not eat except when you are hungry. Do not drink after you have retired to sleep. Exercise is good when the stomach is empty; it strengthens the muscles. When the stomach is full it is very harmful. Do not neglect medical treatment when it is necessary, but leave it off when the body is in good condition.

Do not take nourishment except when (the process of) digestion is completed. Do not swallow until you have thoroughly masticated your food.

¹ The translations from this tablet printed in the first edition of BNE were slightly revised in later editions. It is the slightly revised passages from the 5th Ed.(1980 rep.1990) which are reproduced above.

Treat disease first of all through diet and, refrain from medicine. If you can find what you need for healing in a single herb do not use a compound medicine. Leave off medicine when the health is good, and use it in case of necessity.

If two diametrically opposite foods are put on the table do not mix them. Be content with one of them. Take first the liquid food before partaking of solid food. The taking of food before that which you have already eaten is digested is dangerous....

When you have eaten walk a little that the food may settle.

That which is difficult to masticate is forbidden by the wise. Thus the Supreme Pen commands you.

A light meal in the morning is as a light to the body.

Avoid all harmful habits: they cause unhappiness in the world.

Search for the causes of disease. This saying is the conclusion of this utterance."

Another and slightly different English translation -- not available to the present writers -- was published in the Australian Bahá'í magazine, *Herald of the South* 2:4 (October-November 1927). See also letter of the Universal House of Justice, 8 June 1988, which appeared in the *Australian Bahá'í Bulletin* (September 1989) p.4. and in BSB 4:3-4 (April 1990), p.58.

In William Collins' *Bibliography of English Language Works on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths 1844-1985* (Oxford: George Ronald 1990, p.1) there is reference to another published partial (? single page) translation, Bahá'u'lláh's Letter to a Physician. Mokelumne Hill, Calif.: Health Research, n.d. [197-?].

APPENDIX TWO: REFERRING TO COMPETENT PHYSICIANS ²

The following are a number of passages from Bahá'í sources which are directly or indirectly related to that verse of the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* in which Bahá'u'lláh advises that the sick refer (or be referred) to competent physicians.

"...In the *Kitáb-i Aqdas* Bahá'u'lláh has stated: 'Whenever ye fall ill, refer to competent physicians. Verily, We have not abolished recourse to material means, rather have We affirmed it through this Pen which God hath made the Dawning Place of His luminous and resplendent Cause.' The secretaries of the Guardian have conveyed his guidance on this point in many letters to individual believers in passages such as these: '...refer to competent physicians, and abide by their considered decisions', '...invariably consult and follow the treatment of competent and conscientious physicians...' and '...consult the best physicians...doctors who have studied a scientific system of medicine.' Thus the obligation to consult physicians and to distinguish between doctors who are well trained in medical sciences and those who are not is clear, but the Faith should not be associated with any particular school of medical theory or practice. It is left to each believer to decide for himself which doctors he should consult, bearing in mind the principles enunciated above..." (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 24, 1977)

² A proportion of these passages are collected in Zohoori, 1985.

"Whatever the competent physicians or surgeons prescribe for a patient should be accepted and complied with."
(Bahá'u'lláh, cited UHJ:1984, 1)

"..Therefore thou shouldst also accept physical remedies inasmuch as these two have come from the mercy and favour of God, Who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also." (SWAB:151-2).

"It is incumbent upon everyone to seek medical treatment and to follow the doctor's instructions, for this is in compliance with the divine ordinance, but, in reality, He Who giveth healing is God."
(Abdu'l-Bahá, SWAB: 156)

"... thou hast written about thy poor sight. According to the explicit divine text the sick must refer to the doctor. This decree is decisive and everyone is bound to observe it. While thou art there thou shouldst consult the most skilled and the most famed eye specialist." (From a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an individual believer, cited UHJ:1970)

"One must obey the command of God and submit to medical opinion. Thou hast undertaken this journey to comply with His command and not for the sake of healing, since healing is in the hand of God, not in the hand of doctors."
(From a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an individual believer, cited UHJ:1970)

"According to the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh one must not turn aside from the advice of a competent doctor. It is imperative to consult one even if the patient himself be a well-known and eminent physician. In short, the point is that you should maintain your health by consulting a highly-skilled physician." ('Abdu'l-Bahá SWAB:156)

".. He fully sympathizes with you in this great sorrow that has afflicted you. At such occasions, the true servants of God should be resigned and try to act wisely, using at the same time all available means to help their loved one who is in distress and is suffering from illness.

"Bahá'u'lláh tells us that in case of disease we should pray but at the same time refer to competent physicians, and abide by their considered decisions. Shoghi Effendi wishes you therefore to find whether your son has really become ill, and if he is, then follow the directions of the doctor. Being versed in the medical sciences they can treat better than even a loving mother can. You can render your assistance by praying for him and at the same time helping the physicians to treat him." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 9, 1933 cited UHJ:1970, pp. 5-6).

"In His Most Holy Book (the Aqdas) Bahá'u'lláh says to consult the best physicians, in other words, doctors who have studied a scientific system of medicine: he never gave us to believe He Himself would heal us through 'healers', but rather through prayer and the assistance of medicine and approved treatments."

"In the Book of Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh urges us, that when we obtain any physical ailment we should refer to the doctor and abide by his decision. Physical and spiritual forces have both to be used to secure the speedy recovery of the patients; no partial treatment is sufficient. So you should pray for your son and also be faithful in your obedience to the directions of the physicians who are trying to restore him to health." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 1, 1933 cited LG:939)

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

(cited LG: 930 From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, June 8, 1948; [ibid. p. 811 Bahá'í News, No. 237, p. 2, November 1950)

"He is pleased to see that you are feeling better, and will certainly pray for your full recovery. Before having any serious operation, you should consult more than one qualified physician." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 8, 1954 cited LG:989)

"You should always bear in mind Bahá'u'lláh's counsel that we should take the utmost care of our health, surely not because it is an end in itself, but as a necessary means of serving His Cause. In case of illness, He emphatically tells us, we should refer to the most competent physicians..." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 17, 1937, cited LG:991)

"Whatever the skilled physicians prescribe is pleasing and acceptable." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 10, 1928, cited UNJ:1970, 5)

"You should always bear in mind Bahá'u'lláh's instruction to the effect that in case of any illness, no matter how slight, we should always seek the help and advice of the most competent physicians." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 17, 1937, cited *ibid.*, 6)

".. follow the advice which Bahá'u'lláh has so repeatedly given in His Tablets namely, that in case of sickness we should invariably consult the most competent physicians, follow their instructions and leave the rest in God's hands." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 29, 1938, cited *ibid.*, 7)

"According to the explicit decree of Bahá'u'lláh one must not turn aside from the advice of a competent doctor. It is imperative to consult one even if the patient himself be a well-known and eminent physician. In short, the point is that you should maintain your health by consulting a highly skilled physician." ('Abdu'l-Bahá cited UHJ:1970, 4)

"He was very sorry to hear that you have been so afflicted by disease; and he assures you that he will supplicate for your healing in the Holy Tomb.

"He also urges you to consult first-class doctors, and see if perhaps modern medicine has not found a remedy for this malady which is afflicting you so sorely.

"He urges you in spite of your disability to persevere in spreading the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, for this will attract to you the divine blessings."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 1, 1951, cited *ibid.*, 8)

"He was very sorry indeed to hear of your serious affliction, but he feels very strongly that you should not despair of your condition but on the contrary put yourself in the hands of the best specialists you can find and combat this disease both spiritually and physically." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 6, 1945, *ibid.*)

"As already urged by cable, he should continue the treatment. He should not be in a hurry but must comply with the instructions of a skillful physician and not go against what the doctor may prescribe or advise." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 20, 1938 *ibid.*, 7)

"As regards Miss ... Shoghi Effendi feels unspeakably grateful for all the kind assistance you have been continually extending to her father in this assuredly heart-rending, nay indeed calamitous situation facing him. You did certainly well, however critical and hopeless his daughter's case may have been considered by the doctors, to advise him to take her to a hospital, and give her the best treatment medical science could possibly offer. In doing so you have acted in full conformity with the counsel so tenderly and repeatedly given by Bahá'u'lláh that in case of illness one should invariably consult and follow the treatment of competent and conscientious physicians." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 18, 1939: *ibid.*)

"He was very sorry to hear of the condition of your sister-in-law... He has already assured her that he will pray for her in the Holy Shrines, and advised her not to passively submit to her disease but to take the very best care of herself under the guidance of the best physicians available." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, January 17, 1945: *ibid.*)

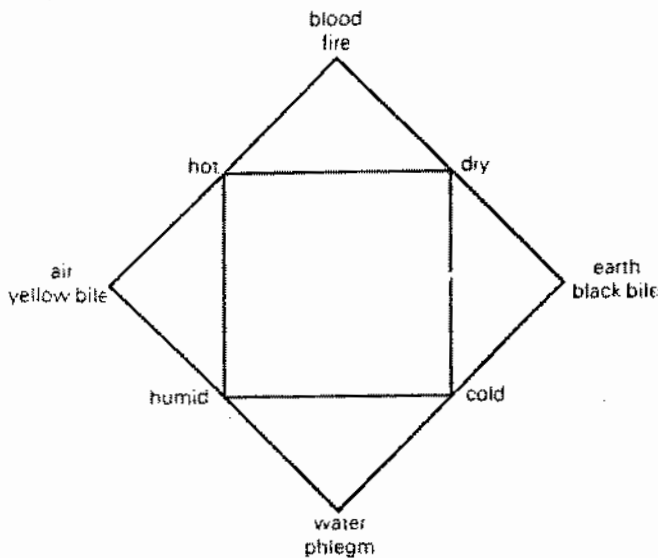
APPENDIX THREE : THE FOUR HUMOURS ¹

Figure 75a. The four natures and humours.

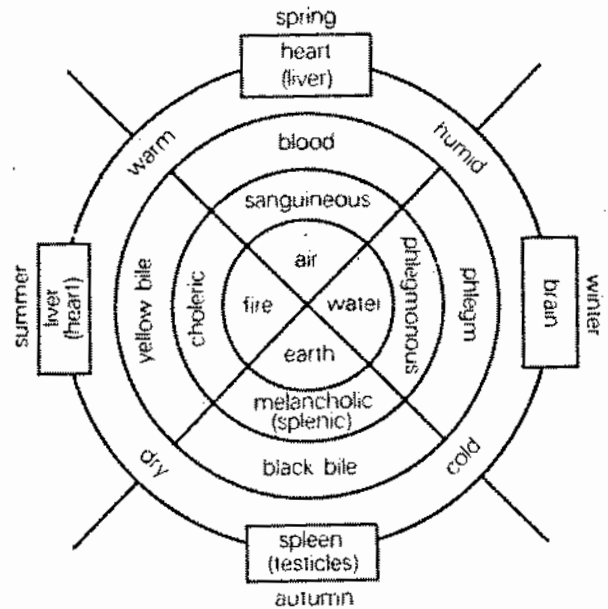


Figure 75b. The basic organs of the body in relation to the humours, qualities, natures and seasons according to the Jābirean corpus.

"The four humours, that is blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile are composed of the elements and natures according to the above diagram (Figure 75a). Each humour is related to two natures and two elements and possesses qualities which are at once the same and different from other humours. The humours form the foundation of animal activity and the body of all animals including man is comprised of them. They mix together to form the temperament of each individual. In fact each person possesses a unique temperament as do the organs of his body based upon the particular combination of the humours comprising his constitution. Moreover, the harmony of the humours tends in each case towards a particular type of imbalance; hence some tend to be phlegmatic, others melancholic, etc. Also, each temperament possesses its own heat in addition to the innate heat which everything possesses.

¹ An extract from Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Science – An Illustrated Study* (World of Islam Festival Publishing Company Ltd 1976), pp.160-161.

But neither the humours nor their mixture is the cause of life. They are only the vehicle which make possible the manifestation of life. The Muslim physicians believe in the spirit (*rūh*)² which descends upon this mixture of the humours and which is the subtle body standing intermediate between the physical body comprised of the humours and the force of life which comes from the world above. It is worth drawing attention to the similarity between the words *rūh* and *rīh* (the wind or air) in Arabic and to the Galenic doctrine that through the air breathed by the organism the life-force enters the body. It is also of significance to note that in Arabic as in many other languages the words for breath (*nafas*) and soul (*nafs*) are related. Therein lies a profound cosmological principle which is also related to the invocation of the Name of God (*dhikr*) as the central technique of Sufism for spiritual realization.

The spirit or *rūh* in its medical sense is, according to Muslim physiologists, and following Galen, of three kinds:

1. The vital spirit which is hot and dry, has its centre in the left ventricle of the heart, preserves life, causes the body to grow, move and reproduce, and travels within the arteries.
2. The psychic spirit which is cold and wet, has its centre in the brain, causes sensation and movement and moves within the nerves.
3. The natural spirit which is hot and wet, has its centre in the liver, is concerned with the reception of food, growth and reproduction and travels within the veins.

Each of the spirits produces a series of faculties which carry out its functions. For example, each physical sense has its faculty, the heartbeat its faculty, etc.

In addition to these factors, there operate of course within man the three souls, namely the vegetable, animal and rational, all of which descend from the world above and each of which possesses its own faculties.³ The more refined the mixture of the humours the greater the perfection and the more complete and perfect the possibility of receiving the soul. Moreover, in each man, health means the harmony of the humours and illness the disruption of the balance of the constitution.⁴ Of course the harmony is never perfect in any person,⁵ but relative to his

² The medical use of the term *rūh* must not be confused with the metaphysical and theological use of this term as the spirit which stands above the soul and belongs to the purely angelic world.

³ This is the subject of the well-known 'faculty psychology' developed by so many Muslim philosophers and physicians such as Ibn Sīnā.

⁴ Modern medicine cannot define the meaning of health in its own terms, whereas for traditional Greek and Islamic medicine the definition of both health and sickness is quite clear.

own constitution, health means the re-establishment of the balance of the humours. Diagnosis for such disorders as fever are in fact based on searching for the way in which the balance of the humours has been upset. But for diseases which show overt signs, the most notable sign or signs are made use of for diagnostic purposes and often the disease receives the name of the leading sign connected with it. Even in English to this day people speak of having a fit or a stroke.

APPENDIX FOUR: PHYSICAL & SPIRITUAL HEALING [See VII:1ff]

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

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

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

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PT [1972 ed.], 19)

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

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

Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the Divine Kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them." ([TAB: III: 587] SWAB:151-152)

"As you know Bahá'u'lláh has ordained that in case of illness we should always consult the most competent physicians. And this is exactly what the Guardian strongly advises you to do. For the prayer alone is not sufficient. To render it more effective we have to make use of all the physical and material advantages which God has given us. Healing through purely spiritual forces is undoubtedly as inadequate as that which materialist physicians and thinkers vainly seek to obtain by resorting entirely to mechanical devices and methods. The best result can be obtained by combining the two processes, spiritual and physical." (LG:927 From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 12, 1934: cited UHJ:1970, 9)

⁵ Many traditional sources believed that only the Prophet of Islam as the most perfect of God's creatures possessed a perfectly balanced temperament, both medically and psychologically.

"With regard to your question concerning spiritual healing. Such a healing constitutes, indeed, one of the most effective methods of relieving a person from either his mental or physical pains and sufferings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has in His 'Paris Talks' emphasized its importance by stating that it should be used as an essential means for effecting a complete physical cure. Spiritual healing, however, is not and cannot be a substitute for material healing, but it is a most valuable adjunct to it. Both are, indeed, essential and complementary." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 16, 1935, cited UHJ: 1984, 10)

"With reference to your question concerning spiritual healing. Its importance, as you surely know, has been greatly emphasized by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who considered it, indeed, as an essential part of physical processes of healing. Physical healing cannot be complete and lasting unless it is reinforced by spiritual healing. And this last one can be best obtained through obedience to the laws and commandments of God as revealed to us through His Manifestations. Individual believers, however, can also help by imparting healing to others. But the success of their efforts depends entirely on their strict adherence to the Teachings, and also on the manner in which they impart them to others. (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 23, 1935, cited UHJ:1970, 8)

"As regards Miss ... Shoghi Effendi feels unspeakably grateful for all the kind assistance you have been continually extending to her father in this assuredly heart-rending, nay indeed calamitous situation facing him. You did certainly well, however critical and hopeless his daughter's case may have been considered by the doctors, to advise him to take her to a hospital, and give her the best treatment medical science could possibly offer. In doing so you have acted in full conformity with the counsel so tenderly and repeatedly given by Bahá'u'lláh that in case of illness one should invariably consult and follow the treatment of competent and conscientious physicians." (From a letter on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, June 18, 1939 cited UHJ:1970, 7)

"We have no reason to believe that the healing of the Holy Spirit cannot be attracted by ordinary human beings. But this is rare, a mystery, and a gift of God." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 26, 1950: Ibid.,9)

"... The prayers which were written for the purpose of healing are both for the spiritual and material healing. Therefore chant them for the spiritual and material healing. If healing is best for the patient surely it will be granted. For some who are sick, healing for them shall be the cause of other ills. Thus it is that wisdom does not decree the answer to some prayers.

"O maid-servant of God. The Power of the Holy Spirit heals both material and spiritual ills." (Abdu'l-Bahá: Daily Lessons Received at 'Akká, 1976 ed., p. 86 [LG:924])

BIBLIOGRAPHY

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* [= SWAB] Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978

————— *Daily Lessons Received at 'Akká* Rep. Los Angeles: Kalimat Press 1976.

————— *Some Answered Questions* [=SAQ] Wilmette, Illinois: BPT. 1981

————— *Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas*, (Albert R. Windust [Comp.] = TAB) Vol. III Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society, 1919.

————— *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* [=PUP] Wilmette, Illinois, BPT. 1982

Adams, F. & Brock, A.J. (Trans.), *Hippocratic Writings + On the Natural Faculties by Galen*, Chicago, London : William Benton/ University of Chicago, Inc.,/ Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 1984.

Arberry, Arthur J., *The Koran Interpreted* (= The World's Classics) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Bahá' al-Dīn al-Āmilī (= Shaykh Bahá'í) *Mikhlāt* Cairo: 1377 A.H./1957 CE. (See Bosworth)

Bahá'u'lláh, *Majmū'a-yi Ahwāh-i Mubāraka*, [=MAM] Cairo: 1920 ; Rep. Wilmette, Illinois: BPT., 1981

————— *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* [=TB] trans. H. Taherzadeh et al. Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978.

————— *Majmū'a adhkār wa ad'īa min āthār hadrat Bahá'u'lláh* [=PM*] Rio de Janeiro: Editora Baha'-Brasil, 138 BE/ 1981.

————— (trans.[of above] Shoghi Effendi), *Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh* London: BPT., 1957

————— *Kalimat-i makhūnīh* (Persian) In MAM:373-398.

————— *The Hidden Words* trans. Shoghi Effendi London: BPT 1975

al-Bār, Muhammad 'Alī *al-Imām 'Alī al-Ridā wa risālat fī al-tibb al-nabawī, al-risāla al-dhahabiyya, awwal risāla fī al-tibb al-nabawī*, Beirut: Dār al manāhil, 1412/ 1991 (contains the text of Imām Ridā's "Golden Treatise" [Pt.III pp. 111-126]).

Bosworth, C.E., *Bahá' al-Dīn al-Āmilī and his Literary Anthologies* (= Journal of Semitic Studies Monograph No. 10) University of Manchester, 1989

Brown, Keven, 'A Bahá'í Perspective on the Origin of Matter' JBS. 2:3 (1989-90) pp. 15-44

BSB = Stephen Lambden Ed., *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin*, Newcastle upon Tyne: 1982>

CHAL= *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* M.J.L. Young et al. (Eds.) *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period* (CUP:1990).

CHI= Rosenthal, Franz, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1992.

Dols, Michael, W. Islam and Medicine a review of Fazlur Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition: Change and Identity*, The Crossroad Publishing Company: New York 1987 in *History of Science* 26 (1988), pp. 417-425.

Elgood, Cyril, *Medicine in Persia* New York: AMS Press, 1978

—————'Tibb-ul-Nabbi Medicine of the Prophet, Being a Translation of Two Works of the same Name I. The Tibb-ul-Nabbi of Al-Suyūti II. The Tibb-ul-Nabbi of Mahmūd bin Mohammad al-Chaghghayni [=Chaghmīnī]' in *Oriens* Vol.14 (1962) pp.33 -192.

Elr. = Ehsan Yarshater Ed., *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vols. 1-5 [ongoing] London, Boston & Henley / New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul/ Los Angeles: Mazda Publishers, 1985> .

Esslemont, J.E., *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* 1st Ed. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1923 /:BPT. 5th Ed. 1980 rep. 1990.

Fādlī-i Māzandarānī, Mīrzā Assadu'llāh, *Asrār al-āthār* [= AA] 5 Vols. Tehran: BPT., 128 BE/1971>.

Ishraq Khāvarī, 'Abd al-Hamīd *Ganj-i-shāygan* [=GS] (Tehran:BPT. 124 BE/ 1967-8).

—————, *Rahīq-i makhtūm* [= RM] 2 Vols., Tehran: BPT., 1973.

—————(Comp.), *Mā'idā-yi āsmānī* [= MA] Vol. 1 Tehran: BPT. 104 BE./ First Indian Edition, New Delhi : BPT., 1984 Vol. II [= 1st Ed. Vols. II, V, IX].

Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad Ibn Muḥarram, *Lisān al-'arab al-muḥīṭ*. Revue et Complete Youssef Khayat Beirut: Dār Lisān al-'Arab Vol. 3 n.d.

Ispahany, Batool (trans.) & Andrew J. Newman (Ed.), *Islamic Medical Wisdom, The Tibb al-A'imma* [=IMW] ([= Medicine of the Imams] London: The Muhammadi Trust 1991 [= a collection of statements of certain Twelver Imāms compiled by Abū 'Atāb 'Abd Allāh and al-Husayn, the sons of Bistām b. Sābūr.

Jones, W.H.S. [Tr.], *Hippocrates* [Loeb Classical Library], Cambridge Mass.:Harvard University Press/ London: William Heinemann Ltd., Vols. I, II, (1923) IV (1931).

Journal of Bahá'í Studies [=JBS] Canada: Association for Bahá'í Studies (1:1, 1988 ongoing).

al-Kisā'ī, 'Alī, *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisā'ī* trans. W.M. Thackston, Jr. Boston: Twayne, 1978

Kassis, Hanna, *A Concordance of the Qur'an* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London : University of California Press, 1983.

LG² = Helen Hornby (Comp.), *Lights of Guidance* 2nd Ed. New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988

MacEoin, Denis, *Ritual and Semi-Ritual Observances in Babism and Baha'ism* (unpublished paper).

Māzandarānī, Fadl-i, *Amr va khalq* (4 Vols. in 2) Vol 2 Hofheim-Langenhaim: Bahá'í-Verlag 142/1986.

Mālamīrī, Hājī Muhammad Tāhir-i, *Khātirāt-i-Mālamīrī*, Hofheim-Langenhaim: Bahá'í-Verlag 149 BE/1992,

Malelung, W., *AIT al-Rezā*, Elr. 2:877-8).

Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Bihar al-anwār*² [=BA] Vol. 62, Beirut: Dār al-Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1403 / 1983 [see al-Ridā].

MDHS = Bynum W.F. et al., (Eds.), *Macmillan Dictionary of the History of Science* London: Macmillan Press 1983

Mustaghfirī, Shaykh Abū'l-'Abbas, *Tibb al-nabī* printed in Majlisī, BA 62:290-304.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Islamic Science, An Illustrated Study*, World of Islam Festival Publishing Co. n.p. [London]: 1978

al-Ridā', Imām 'Alī, *The Golden Treatise.. (al-Risālat al-dhababīya/al-mudhahhaba ft' t-tibb* text in Majlisī, *Bihar al-Anwār*² LXII: 308-328).

Shoghi Effendi, *Lawh-i qam* [= "Centennial Tablet"] in *Tawqī'at-i-Mubarakih* Hofheim-Langenhaim: Bahá'í-Verlag, 149 Badī'/1992 pp.75-271.

————— *The Light of Divine Guidance, Letters from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to Individual Believers, Groups and Bahá'í Communities in Germany and Austria* [=LDG] Vol. 2 Hofheim-Langenhaim: Bahá'í-Verlag 1985/142.

SW = *Star of the West* (Vol. 13 = Vol. 8 [8 Vols.] Rep. George Ronald: Oxford 1978.

al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarīr, *Jamī' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* 30 Vols. in 15 Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1409 / 1988.

al-Tabrizī, Walī al-Dīn, *Mishkāt al-Masābīh*, Vol. II (trans. James Robson) *Mishkat al-Masabih*, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1975.

Taherzadeh, Adib, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* Vol. 3 Oxford: George Ronald, 1983

al-Tehrānī, Āghā Buzurg, *al-Dharī'a li' l-tasānīf al-shī'a* 26 Vols. Beirut: Dār al-adwā', 1403-6/1983-6

UHJ: 1984 = Universal House of Justice/ Research Dept. (Comp.), *Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health, Healing, Nutrition and Related Matters*, April 1984

UHJ:1970 = Universal House of Justice/Research Dept. (Comp.), *Extracts from the Guardian's Letters on Spiritualism, Reincarnation and Related Subjects*, February 1970.

Ullmann, Manfred, *Islamic Medicine*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978

Wehr⁴ = Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ed. J. Milton Cowan) Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979.

al-Zamaksharī, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar, *al-Kashshāf 'an haqā'iq ghāwamid al-tanzīl wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl*. 4 Vols. n.p. [Beirut]: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1406/1986

Zohoori, Elias, *The Throne of the Inner Temple*, Jamaica: University of the West Indies 1985.

PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY IN BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES: SOURCES, METHODS AND FOUNDATIONS; A NOTE TOWARDS AN ORIENTATION OF BAHĀ'Ī THEOLOGY.

ROBERT PARRY

A cursory reading of a number of passages by Shoghi Effendi on the theme of Bahā'ī scholarship may well indicate, either intentionally or otherwise, the pathway to the initial analysis and perhaps the further development of a particular theological interpretive strategy; namely, that of Rhetoric or what one could call a **Rhetorical Analysis or Theology**. In a letter, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer in 1934, reference was made to presenting the Bahā'ī Teachings "in a manner that would convince every unbiased observer of the **effectiveness and power** of the Teachings" (BS:2). In 1949 through the medium of another letter to an individual believer, Shoghi Effendi asked for "a profound and co-ordinated Bahā'ī scholarship...to attract... at least the thinking world...". Further, and with reference to Bahā'u'llāh's "projected World Order", scholars were again asked to present the Teachings "intelligently and enticingly" (ibid).

In the letters partially cited above then, I suggest was proposed or rather implied, the genesis of a highly fruitful avenue of Bahā'ī theological scholarship, with implications far wider than the Philosophical and Theological scholarship with which this paper is concerned. The focus perhaps, in this proposed analysis, would not be on attempting to isolate the propositional content of the Teachings, nor again on placing the complex network of Bahā'ī beliefs in an asymptotic yet adequate and workable explanatory nexus. Emphasis would be placed on bringing about what has been termed, by one influential analytical strategy, an existential response to, and an interaction with, what is basically a **power-full** message located ultimately, for Scholarship's purposes anyway, in a scriptural Text. This presupposes that we not only have the ability, it seems, to understand in varying degrees the conceptual content of the Teachings, within various hermeneutical contexts of understanding, but also the capacity to respond (and interact) in multifarious ways, to a galaxy of genres. This would not be achieved simply through a sustainable re-ordering of thought processes, but in terms of sustained concrete action informed by such a re-ordering. I do not intend, however, to expand here on the framework for a potential **Rhetorical Analysis** of Bahā'ī teachings, or outline a **Rhetorical Theology**. Nor will I relate this potential interpretive strategy to aspects of a contemporary Narrative Theology, Practical Theology, or Homiletics, in the process of development by Christian theologians at present. The intention is simply to indicate what I believe to be a pathway for a valuable theological and philosophical approach to the Bahā'ī teachings. Shoghi Effendi's brief but pregnant remarks on a scholarly discourse of *effectiveness, power, attraction* and *enticement*, seem not only to home in on the performative nature of particular aspects of certain Bahā'ī texts. They also focus on a potential strand of scholarly discourse based on, or even better, extending somehow the performative nature -- the effect such a discourse engenders through power and performance -- to bring

about sustained and sustainable patterns of action (the Bahā'ī life?). A question is also raised as to the rhetorical aspects of the writings of the Bāb, Bahā'u'llāh, 'Abdu'l-Bahā and also Shoghi Effendi – worthy, I think, of further research. Also, and of more than theoretical interest would be the thematising of the narrative aspects of certain secondary Bahā'ī historical sources (cf. *Tārīkh-i Zarandī / The Dawn-Breakers and God Passes By*).

The title of this paper "Philosophical Theology in Bahā'ī Studies.." may seem a little out of place at this stage of the paper, given that so far we have dealt (if only very briefly) with the possibility of a Rhetorical Theology based on a few remarks by Shoghi Effendi. This has been deliberately done in order to highlight, as far as possible, the nature and method of Philosophical Theology and perhaps also to undermine some of Philosophical Theology's strategies in relation to a general Bahā'ī Theological enterprise. My aim, as stated, is to indicate in a very general fashion the orientation of an emergent Bahā'ī Theology by looking at certain developments that have grounded Christian Theological strategies. I would suggest that there are structural similarities between the Bahā'ī Faith and Christianity that may lend themselves to similar thematising; though there is certainly, on the face of it, less narrative in the primary Bahā'ī Texts, then say in the Hebrew Bible and large portions of the New Testament. The generality of the paper and its wide-ranging programmatic approach will lead inevitably to a blurring of some of the issues touched upon. All in all, as the sub-heading indicates, what follows is a note on the general orientation of Bahā'ī Theology through an analysis of the notions of Sources, Methods and Foundations; detailed work will of course come later.

Firstly though, a brief note about Philosophical Theology: As a discipline within the genus Theology¹, Philosophical Theology² comprises a fairly diverse set of pursuits. It has developed, specifically in the

¹ The word Theology, particularly Christian Theology, covers a vast area of study. Simply put I call it the articulation of the description, meaning and truth of a particular religious tradition. This demarcates it to some degree from the Phenomenology of Religion and the Philosophy of Religion; the former is largely a descriptive discipline, the latter a discipline whose evaluative criteria are coincident with its methodology, and whose quest for clarity and understanding is not a particularly religious quest. Refer though, to my proviso concerning audience. Although I have said that Theology is the articulation of the meaning and truth of a particular religious tradition, it is on the whole the articulation of particular aspects of various traditions. There is though the discipline of Systematic Theology which attempts to cohere all aspects of the Christian experience in an interrelated theological discourse. Otherwise what we have is a terrain of theologies qualified in certain ways by their particular objects of study i. e. doctrines, symbols, human experience, natural phenomena, audience. For a concise account of theology see D.F. Wright, *Theology* in S.B. Ferguson and D.F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology*, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press / Illinois: Downers Grove, 1989) pp. 680-681.

² Philosophical Theology is a major part of Theology insofar as it is that aspect of Theology which attempts to ground the intelligibility, rationality and meaning of its particular subject matter in structural features that are considered to be given with human experience. In this way Philosophical Theology attempts to isolate the abiding features of its data, and shows that these abiding features are consonant and continuous (= participate in?) with the

West, over the period of over a millennium and a half as a function of a conceptually refined dialogue with and an interrogation of Christian, Jewish and Islamic texts; both the primary sources (Hebrew Bible + New Testament, Qur'ān and "sound" hadīth) and the voluminous secondary reflections on primary sources (devotional, pedagogical and analytical texts).

I need not go into any major detail concerning the origins of this refined interrogative method. What needs to be stated, however, is that such a method was not, at the end of the day, simply the transposition of the methodologies and conclusions of "mature" and dominant conceptual systems (Pre-Socratic-Platonic-Aristotelian-Philonic-Neo-Platonic-Augustinian) onto and into a group of religious traditions. It was rather, that such a method was itself the result of a sustained and tense dialogue between these dominant conceptual systems and the novel metaphysical and epistemological interpretive elements of a revealing Transcendence and a cognitive and affective Faith-as-trust (elements which were unknown to these major influential conceptual systems).

The resultant tension lay between what were virtually two "conceptualities". One, deriving its authority and coordinates from what was certainly believed to be the actual occurrence of divine revelation "recorded" in multivalent texts and subsequently received in a subjective cognitive-affective response. The other deriving from the systematic application of a human-centred trusting sense of wonder and inquiry, expressed as far as possible, after a process of rigour, in indicative sentential form to assert propositions; thereby supposedly gaining insight into the nature(s) of the manifold objects of wonder and inquiry.

It is this continuing and rigorous relationship with the propositional content of both the primary and secondary sources of Judaism, Christianity and Islam which demarcates Philosophical Theology from the subject of Philosophy of Religion. The latter has developed as a more general, non-aligned approach to the propositional content of primary and secondary sources, often abstracting from the evocative force of particular doctrinal formulations. It has also tended to reflect on traditions other than Judaism, Christianity and Islām, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese religions, but this has been a relatively recent development. It may be the case though, that Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion are finally demarcated by the type of audiences to which they have been historically tailored, and not by their subject matter(s) or methodology. Philosophy of Religion, moreover, has generally developed in an academic environment, but this is not to say that it has developed out of purely academic interests! Philosophical Theology moreover, also differs from the Roman Catholic studies of **Fundamental**

of the world and human experience.

Theology³ (the inheritor of the traditional task of Apologetics with the contemporary emphasis on Praxis) and **Natural Theology**. The primary intention of **Philosophical Theology** is not to commend a particular religious formulation to a situation "outside" of the religious tradition under analysis (a never ending "modern" situation). Neither does it attempt to commend a particular religious tradition through a response to questions posed by a contemporary human subjectivity. Such a commendation is often done after showing that what the religious formulation presupposes and / or proposes, remains credible in the light of "modern thought". Neither again, is it an attempt at demonstrating the existence of a Transcendent Ground from so-called evidences within creation and apart from appeals to Revelation and Mystical Experience (suspensions of normal consciousness).

Philosophical Theology, is, however, continuous with the project of **Fundamental Theology** in so far as it attempts to lay bare both the conceptual content (and its presuppositions) of a text through the use of a method and a syntax "shorn" as much as possible of evocative, elliptical, parabolic, persuasive, metaphorical, symbolic, litigious, promotional and all the other tropical devices available in discourse -- what has come to be called a rational discourse of clarity and intelligibility, which informs rational method i.e. Rationality! This laying bare by **Philosophical Theology** is more than a basic though vital phenomenological recovery. It is more than the synchronic determination of the logical geography of concepts (pace Ryle), either by locating and then highlighting occurrences in particular texts, or relating occurrences across a matrix of texts. Neither is it a diachronic attempt at a historical geography of concepts (relating concepts across time). It is though, an attempt at showing the rational structure of the text under analysis. Moreover, by exhibiting the structure underlying a particular text **Philosophical Theology** can, hopefully, retrieve the singular or polysemous meaning(s) of the text; though on the whole it has to be said, that **Philosophical Theology** is (and to some degree remains) uncomfortable with the notion of polysemy. Thus we could say that the dual themes of text -- meaning⁴ and text -- rationality⁵

³The Protestant Theologian Gerhard Ebeling has however, proposed the development of a Fundamental Theology as a discipline within Protestant Theology. He states that 'Fundamental Theology should be broadened to a total theological conversation that can never be only an inner-theological conversation' *The Study of Theology*, (London: Collins, 1979), p.161.

⁴ Meaning is a term with many associations and a vast Philosophical literature has been devoted to the development of a number of Theories of Meaning. One influential theory called the Referential Theory (also called the Naming Theory) locates the meaning of words or sentences (which have meaning as a function of the words which comprise them) in what the words or sentences stand for--either a physical, mental or abstract entity. Another well known theory, that associated with Wittgenstein, explains meaning in terms of use -- the issue here though is whether Use Theories involve attention to actual use or rules for use. Contemporary Theories however, give the meaning of a term or sentence as giving their truth-conditions. We can see how closely related the Theory of Meaning is to the Theory of Truth. A sentence expresses a particular thought because of our ability to detach its truth-

condition the task(s) of Philosophical Theology.

If then the task of Philosophical Theology is not to commend a particular religious affirmation or a particular religious tradition it seems, therefore, that we have to accept to some degree a dialectical understanding of its role, operating (in logical space) in two directions simultaneously:

A) As a specific interpretive strategy Philosophical Theology directs itself to a singular or

conditions from its grammatical and syntactic structure, through understanding the conventional linguistic practices which determine the appropriate utterance of the sentence. Following Frege's analysis of Sense (Sinn) and Force (Kraft), the sense(s) of a sentence are those factors which relate it to a certain state of affairs over and above the sentence. The force of a sentence is that which determines the conventional significance of a sentence in relation to the state of affairs associated by sense i.e. asserting, commending, wishing that the state of affairs obtains (cf. Dummett, M. *Truth and Other Enigmas*, London: Duckworth Press, 1973). In a Theological context, it is for Bahá'í Theologians to see whether the above analysis is helpful or not. There may well be mileage in an analysis of the adjective 'meaningful', where we can talk of someone realising that their life is no longer meaningful, or where an object or project means something to someone, is very much worth having or doing. In the first case we say that the point of a person's life has, for them, disappeared; that a significance which was there is there no longer. In the second case, an object or project means something insofar as it has a value for that person, is integrated into their needs and plans. It is perhaps these senses of meaning that may provide the groundwork for a Theology of Meaning, though it is important for Bahá'í's interested in Philosophical Theology to be familiar to some degree with the Philosophical analyses of Meaning. Cf. the collection of influential essays by Parkinson, G.H.R. (ed.), *The Theory of Meaning*, London: Oxford University Press, 1978. See also the seminal essay by H.P. Grice, 'Meaning' in Strawson, P., *Philosophical Logic*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

⁵ Rationality, again is a theme with a vast literature, particularly in the Sociology of Knowledge and the analysis of Rational Action and Decision Theory. Philosophers on the other hand, have tended to deal with the terms Reason and Reasonableness as they appear in sentences. For our discussion we can bridge these concepts by saying, simply, that Rationality is Reason in thought and action. 'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of Reason as an historically conditioned criterion (*mizān*) of human knowledge (n.b. PUP pp. 21, 254, 356-357; SAQ pp. 297-298); thereby emphasizing the historicity of reason. As a criterion, reason or rationality, has been considered as an authority, standard or foundation, whose final court of appeal lies in the so-called faculty of reason or some kind of intellectual intuition. Such a faculty or intuition supposedly generates clear and distinct ideas (pace Descartes) as raw material for Rational thought and / or Rational action. Rationality then, can be said to be tied to the notion of Justification. A major issue in the explication of Rationality has been the idea of self-reference. Briefly, the setting up of a standard would seem to require that the standard itself be justified somehow! There has been much discussion on this. I follow, provisionally at least, W. W. Bartley's account of what he calls Pancritical Rationality, which is basically a non-justificational account of Rationality unlimited with regard to criticism. What he suggests is the development of an ecology of Rationality which is basically an environment that promotes creativity and avoids error as far as possible. Again this has been the subject of much debate, and we must be familiar with this and other various theories of Rationality that have been developed. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's view of the historicity of Rationality is helpful, and his view of Reason (Rationality) as a sort of cognitive map (n.b. BWF p.383) may be of assistance in our understanding of the role of Tropes in language. This last point is how I read the passage in *Bahá'í World Faith*. For a detailed account of Rationality cf. Radnitzky G. & Bartley W.W.(Eds.), *Evolutionary Epistemology Rationality and the Sociology of Knowledge*, (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1987); see especially Bartley's chapter 'Theories of Rationality' pp. 205-214. Cf. Willson, B., *Rationality*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971). Also of value is Alfred Schutz's classic paper 'The Problem of Rationality in the Social World', *Economica* 10, (1943), pp. 130-149, and Garfinkle, H., 'The Rational Properties of Scientific and Common-Sense Activities', in Giddens, A., (Ed.) *Positivism and Sociology*, (London: Heinemann, 1975) pp. 53-75.

polysemous(!) text. It then attempts to lay bare as clearly as possible the meaning(s) of specific terms and sentences (the propositions and concepts they express) in order to:

- 1) understand their function(s)-use(s) as elements of description, explanation, and prescription as they cooperate in building particular World-views;
- 2) to show the intelligibility of meanings (their Rationality or Reasonableness);
- 3) to ascertain as clearly as possible the truth-value and truth-conditions⁶ of the propositions and concepts under examination;

B) As an interpretive strategy, **Philosophical Theology** will attempt to transmit the insights it has derived from scrutinizing Bahā'ī texts, to the so-called modern situation, through the medium of its specific style and method(s). Such a transmission is done in order to bring about increments in understanding of the human situation within, through and by the texts. Put in another, and perhaps more illuminating way, **Philosophical Theology**, as noted, goes beyond exhibiting a phenomenological geography of concepts in Bahā'ī texts. It tries to clarify the semantic role of concepts both within the movement of the text and within (here is a point of vital importance) the wider drive towards the Correlation (pace Shoghi Effendi) of Bahā'ī "... beliefs with the current thoughts and problems of the people of the world" (BS:3). Also of relevance, by way of example, is the flow of argument in Bahā'u'llāh's *Lawh-i hikmat (Tablet of Wisdom)*; TB:137-52), which in the author's opinion is a sustained piece of such Correlation; not, however, between two structurally different orders i.e. Revelation and the "contemporary" human situation or human consciousness, but of Revelation and a human situation or a human consciousness that is unaware, through lack of proper attention maybe (has it forgotten?), that it is already oriented towards Transcendence.

⁶ Questions concerning Truth have played an important part in Philosophy, often giving rise, and certainly in the contemporary context, to a detailed logical analysis of sentences in which the word True or Truth appear. When a proposition or statement is said to have Truth-value it is capable of being True or False. The Truth-conditions of a proposition or statement are the conditions which must be satisfied if the proposition or sentence is True; that is, True or Truth is related to something being or not being the case; obtaining in some way. Questions are also raised concerning the role of Justification, adequate Evidence and Warrant, about what it is that makes something the case. Just as contemporary Theories of Meaning have tended to focus on the meaning of statements or propositions and rarely on meaningfulness as a discernable pattern in human experience. Similarly, Theories of Truth in contemporary Analytical Philosophy have concentrated on the Truth of propositions and not on the experience of authenticity and practical vision in a more holistically conceived human life; something Existentialist Philosophy noted some years ago. For an overview of the various Theories of Truth see the articles in Edwards P. (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, (New York: Macmillan & Free Press, 1967).

Interrelated objects of inquiry in a Bahā'ī Philosophical Theology would involve, through a close reading of Bahā'ī texts (both Primary and Secondary):

- The nature of God (Transcendence, Immanence) and the question of grounds; the nature and role of the Manifestation of God; the nature and function of Revelation; the examination and clarification, as far as possible, of the conceptualities utilised by the central figures of the Bahā'ī Faith, when they are referring to Transcendence, World and Human nature; questions of Theodicy i.e. questions concerning the power of God;
- Questions of Metaphysics: exhibiting and assessing categorial frameworks as expressed in Bahā'ī Texts i.e. fundamental categories such as being, essence, existence, qualities, space and time, nature, cause and effect, contingency, necessity, universals; questions of Cosmology etc. Metaphysics is certainly a broad field and its implications will spill over into the other areas of research outlined here;
- The analysis of religious experience and revelation as co-relative mediums of encounter; evaluating the nature and role of mystical experience and religious experience in general, in relation to a practical ethical-spiritual demand; the nature and role of Grace;
- The analysis of the structure, meaning and use of Religious Language (if such a concept can be delineated) and even language in general as it directs itself to explicating religious phenomena. This is a vital area of research and would involve an attempt at discerning the complex polysemous nature (and use) of this language, through a difficult but rewarding analysis of (and response to) its tropic, performative and literal senses and uses. Again, such research may be focused on the language of a particular text or its parts, or may extend to proposals about the general nature(s) of Religious Language cf. a post-modern theological emphasis on the metonymical character of religious discourse over the popular trope of metaphor. Another important area of study would involve highlighting as far as possible (without committing the genetic fallacy) the various strata of conceptual schemes in Bahā'ī texts that are themselves functions of an already historically thematised analytical strategy i.e. Platonic, Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic, Scholastic (Christian, Jewish and Islamic), Illuminationist et al.

- Questions about the structures of human nature over and above indications provided by an empirically and behaviourally based Psychology; questions on the Soul, Spirit and Mind; the nature of personal eschatology;
- Questions of Epistemology, Meaning and Truth: the nature of the various knowledge-claims made in the texts; the nature of presuppositions; epistemic justification; the important question of whether knowledge has Foundations (modest or otherwise); the role and ratification of criteria and the evaluation of truth-claims; the structure of Faith (what are the pre-ambls to Faith (If any), what is the role of will in Faith); questions concerning the relativity of Knowledge and Belief; the relation between the Intentionalities of Knowledge, Faith and Belief (cognitivity / non-cognitivity); the relative weight of "knowing-how" and "knowing-that"; the vital question of the scope and nature of Rationality -- what notion is presupposed in Bahā'ī texts? (n.b. the post-modernist critique of the historical hegemony of Dialectic over Rhetoric); the need to be familiar with and to harness the positive aspects of the theory and practice of Deconstruction (it will not go away, even though the word itself may have been considerably overused in some circles, especially in the work of some American Literary Theorists!);
- Questions on the nature of history as the arena of God's Self-communication (beautifully brought into relief by Søren Kierkegaard's question of how a moment in time can have eternal significance?);
- Questions of Ethics and Human action (cf. 'Abdu'l-Bahā's emphasis of the role of knowledge in the evaluation of action SAQ: LXXXIV); Questions of Value;
- Questions of Aesthetics, Aesthetic experience and Aesthetic responsibility;
- Questions concerning the relationship of the above areas to similar areas in other religious traditions. Of particular interest to the author would be the attempt at relating Bahā'ī Metaphysics and Epistemology to the same areas in Buddhism and Taoism. Others may focus on aspects of Christianity or Islam or any Tradition whatever, provided that the Tradition in question is reflexive and has attempted to conceptualise its self-understanding. Such an attempt at relating could ground a Bahā'ī contribution to the lively contemporary debate on Religious Pluralism;
- Questions of a reflexive nature i.e. questions on Method and Foundations in a Bahā'ī **Philosophical Theology**. Is there finally one Method and one Foundation?;

- Questions on the relationship between a Bahā'ī **Philosophical Theology** and other related areas of academic interest i.e. a reflective natural science, mathematics, psychology, sociology, linguistics and anthropology et al. What does a Bahā'ī **Philosophical Theology** presuppose; indeed a Bahā'ī Theology in general?;
- Further questions of a reflexive nature involving work on the nature of the audience to which a Bahā'ī **Philosophical Theology** is directed. Is such a Theology structurally related to specific types of audience (Academy, Bahā'ī Community, Society) as a function of a particular syntactical style and method, or are its insights related to a broad spectrum of audiences (even a universal audience!).

This brief list indicates then, in broad fashion, the areas of study for a Bahā'ī **Philosophical Theology**. It is important to stress at this point that the enterprise of **Philosophical Theology** is a collaborative one in so far as it is firmly tied to the availability and continuing emergence of its main resource; namely, Bahā'ī texts and secondary reflections. This availability and emergence of resources will often demand a close working relationship with Scholars in Bahā'ī Textual Studies, History and History of Ideas as well as Bahā'īs working in Islāmic, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Chinese Studies. It goes without saying that there will also be a primary and necessary collaboration with Philosophical, Theological, Linguistic and Literary Studies.

Theological Method, Sources and the question of Foundations

I will refer briefly to some aspects of decision-making within a Christian Theological enterprise in order to highlight some important issues on Method, Sources and Foundations, though anyone who has read the appropriate texts will see that similar issues have been dealt with in varying degrees within Jewish, Islamic and Hindu theologies and even within Buddhist religious conceptual analysis.

Theology as a progressive specialisation within the shift towards systemisation has been seen as an attempt at thematising a text-based religious life of enactment; a life which itself is characterised by varying degrees of conscious awareness and reflexivity. Catalytic, to some degree, within this systemisation of Theology have been the deep-rooted changes and challenges that have occurred in the extra-textual cultural context in which Theology has done its work, the general dialectical nature, of which, has been mentioned earlier. Concrete historical examples of such major influential changes and challenges on a Christian theological enterprise have been, for example, the influence of Hellenism in early A.D., the mysticism of Augustinian reflections, the appeal of Aristotelianism in the Middle Ages, the

far reaching Implications of the Enlightenment (late 17th century onwards) and the awareness of, and dialogue with other major Religious Traditions. Further recent developments In Natural Sciences, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Linguistics and Politics, including the challenges from within the confines of Christianity itself by Christian theologians affirming particular commitments i.e. in Feminism (Feminist Theologies), Black Theologies, Liberation Theologies, Inter-Faith Dialogue, Narrative Theologies, Post-Modern Theologies, Ecumenism and the new Jewish-Christian Dialogue have effected far-reaching changes.

As a result of such sustained changes and challenges (= developments?), theologians in the contemporary period, have to varying degrees been forced (as had their forebears) to re-examine their method(s), that is, the approaches that they have adopted with respect to their subject matter -- what is technically called Theological Method. Moreover, most contemporary discussions of Theological Method have also centred on questions relating to the sources of Theology i.e. the material objects of inquiry, which in turn lead to important questions concerning the role of Foundations in the Theological enterprise. Foundations significantly, are considered as Sources seen under a particular aspect; that of providing some sort of epistemic justification for theological assertions. Developments in the understanding of the questions pertaining to Method (= approaches) and Sources (= objects of inquiry) are related inasmuch as attention to both Method and Sources through recurrent practice yields results of a particular, significant and relevant sort. Christian Theology has exhibited, promoted and explicated a variety of sources and starting-points for its activity of systematic specialisation. Among sources an important and basic starting-point has been the texts of the Old (Hebrew Bible) and New Testaments. As far back as the 4th cent. C.E. the theologically significant figure of Athanasius (c.298-373) affirmed that "knowledge of religion and of the truth about the universe" could be discovered directly "from the words of...the sacred and divinely inspired scriptures".⁷ The emphasis on Scripture as the primary source was allied though, to the growing acceptance of official pronouncements from the Church's teaching authority -- the Magisterium. Although Scripture was considered materially sufficient, that is, complete in itself and in need of no supplementation, it was nevertheless considered formally insufficient; that is, Scripture required authoritative and normative interpretation through the continuing interpretive presence of the successive authoritative and normative teaching of the Church. Such a continuing process of

⁷ *Contra Gentes* 30 in Thomson, R.W. (ed. & trans.) *Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). For an overview of the issues see, Lane, A.N.S. *Scripture, Tradition and Church: An Historical Survey*, *Vox Evangelica*, 9, (1975) pp. 37-55. Cf. also Rahner, K. "Scripture and Tradition" and 'Scripture and Theology' in *Theological Investigations* Vol. 6 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd), 1974, pp. 89-98 and 98-113.

interpretation in combination with a textual and oral residue (provided by saints and scholars and also requiring continuing interpretation) gave rise to a second major Source for theological analysis; namely, Tradition. The Reformation, however, initiated in the 16th century, brought with it a serious critique of Tradition. The focus of the critique, though, was not on Tradition utilised as a conceptual resource for Theology (the Reformation, in fact, accepted Tradition as an assist to Scripture) but on Tradition utilised as an ideological mandate for the successive authoritative role of the Roman Church in that period. However, the precise nature of the Protestant critique is irrelevant. What is significant was a growth in the acceptance of a resource alongside Scripture; a further Source for theological analysis.⁶

Christianity, Islam and post-Exilic Judaism originated and developed in the vicinity of societies whose cognitive and affective hierarchy and outlay had seemingly not been influenced by the notion of a revealing Transcendental Word. Most certainly the Graeco-Roman world had been dominated in part by a mythic and mythopoeic consciousness. The growth and development however, of certain other human capacities brought the diverse complexity of Muthos (story) in stark contrast to Logos (reason, word, mind). Other seemingly cognitive relations were also called into question and came to be contrasted with Logos, namely Phantasia (imagination), Mimesis (imitation), Aisthesis (perception) and Doxa (belief, opinion). The basic thrust of the development of a logos-based approach to experience was the desire to establish (= recognise?) a pattern and relatedness, that is, an ordering of experience as object-of-inquiry. Rationality (Logos in thought and action) became an ethical norm for the Platonic Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. A vital corollary (with ontological implications) of what could be styled a "microcosmic" rationality was the further acceptance of what was virtually an isomorphic "macrocosmic" rationality -- a rationality structurally embedded in the cosmos as an imminent principle of order and exemplified through regularity, pattern and repetition. The regularity and order of the cosmos had been observed for a long time, though the origin of such order had often been the subject of dispute. Plato's cosmological text *Timaeus*, in fact posited dual causes for the orderliness of the cosmos, namely, Mind (Logos) and necessity. For Plato though, the rationality of the cosmos was an external imposition of form on matter. Aristotle's own depiction of a universe structured by ends carried on the belief in the pervasive

⁶ On Sources see, Hodgson, P. and King, R. (eds.), *Readings in Christian Theology*, (London: SPCK, 1985), also Galloway A.D. (ed.) *Basic Readings in Theology*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964). See also, Graf Reventlow, H., *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, (London: SCM Press, 1984); Reid, J.K.S., *The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and Post-Modern Understanding of the Bible*, (Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1981); Uffenheimer, B. and Graf Reventlow, H., *Creative Biblical Exegesis, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 59*, 1988; Morgan, R. with Barton, J., *Biblical Interpretation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

and peculiar nature of Rationality. Rationality not only exemplified itself in cosmic structures and in the action of a Rational person, but also in a type of language utilised as a medium of Rational analysis. The tropical use of language was also recognised, especially and specifically exemplified in Poetry, but was considered as a secondary linguistic medium liable to distort reality. The tension between such an approach to experience and a set of religious traditions which emphasised the primary role of authoritative revealed texts, is well documented from the early Middle Ages onwards under the rubric of Faith and Reason. By the High Middle Ages, Aristotelianism as a method and conceptual resource, informed much of the analysis pertaining to the Natural World, Language and Religion. This persistent though not unopposed application of rationality was allied with the effective rise in mathematical analysis and experimental sciences operating viably in "mandated territory" endorsed by the Reformation.

The ensuing Enlightenment period witnessed a gradual breakdown of traditional authority structures. It was an accumulation of a number of things. Basically of questions about what were hitherto unquestionably held to be sources of authority in many spheres of human experience. The growing natural and experimental sciences opened up on a vast arena of potential data, thereby implicitly questioning the authority of the Church (both Roman and Protestant). Increased trading brought to light textually and conceptually rich cultures, and the notion of a religiosity more "natural" to humanity, somehow more basic than the revealed Religions implicitly questioned Christianity's claim to be the sole medium of Transcendence. A slowly emerging historical criticism contributed to a growing appreciation of the historicity of human understanding, something Classical culture did not appreciate with its emphasis on norms, imitation and universality. The systematic exercise of reason coupled with an awareness of the role of sensory experience in the writings of Philosophers and Cultural critics put into serious question the cognitive (and thereby the authoritative) hierarchy presupposed and imposed by the Church and State. An emerging Empirical approach alongside a Rationalism of clear and distinct ideas demanded, in fact, as far the proponents were concerned, actually exhibited the structure of a human nature belonging to humanity by natural right, as well the structures of the ever widening natural world and cosmos. Basically a third source for Theology was emerging, namely, human experience under the guise of a serious, rigorous and systematic inquiry into virtually everything!

Even though I have briefly highlighted three major Sources for a Christian Theology, there are similarities with "theo"-logical enterprises in other religious traditions. In Islām the Qur'ān and hadīth (compiled by al-Bukhārī and Muslim) function on the interface between Scripture and Tradition. The supposedly experientially grounded texts of Sufism and the analytical works of the Islamic Philosopher-Polymaths and Scientists matches to some degree the Human Experience Source. Within Hinduism the

Śruti / Smṛti distinction; that is, the distinction between authoritative utterance (oral and textual revelation) and indirect or secondary "revelation" is similar to the Scripture / Tradition sources. The later Upanishads and Yogic writings provide material arising from a more experientially oriented milieu, which could be equivalent to the human experience source? Buddhism, however, does not fit the pattern so easily. Three major Canons comprise what could be called Scripture, that is the Pali Tipitaka, the Chinese Tripitaka and the Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur. The innumerable commentaries and manuals could well be considered a Tradition of commentary on the Canons. Human Experience as a source derives directly from the teachings of the Canons themselves, which claim to be functions of a wider human experience and the result of a systematic application of reason (and, certainly in the Abhidhammapitaka, a much more expanded notion than the Western Logos).

To treat Human Experience, then, as a source for Theology in contemporary Western Theology means that the results of the increasing specialisation within a wide variety of disciplines (in the arts and the natural and human sciences) in the 19th and 20th centuries were, and are, very seriously considered to provide cumulative insights into the structures of human nature, culture and the natural world. Consequently, twentieth century Theology in the West has undergone a series of major methodological revisions in response both to methodological developments in non-theological disciplines and to internal discussions concerning the theological role of the sources we have outlined.

I will, very briefly, comment on what I consider to be the major methods (approaches) in Theology. What follows is highly programmatic and in no way does justice to the obvious complexity of such Theologies.

Method and sources are related. Method presupposes a prior evaluation of the sources in terms of their prospective role in Theological analysis, and in their turn sources require a patterning in terms of recurrent and related operations, i.e. method(s), if they are to be useful objects of Theological inquiry. Generalisations may or may not be heuristic. In the case of twentieth century theology, a useful generalisation is to highlight the relative emphases on particular sources utilised by, what are by now familiar Theologies. For example, Orthodox Theologies rely heavily on Scripture and Tradition remaining as faithful as possible, in their pronouncements, to the explicit meaning of the Scriptural texts and Traditional documents. Theological Methods are generally exegetical in nature and tied directly to the task of explicating an unambiguous revealing Word expressed in doctrinal form (though of course contradictions in scriptura had been recognised for centuries). Liberal Theologies, on the other hand, as inheritors of certain coordinates of the Enlightenment, place a high value on culture and human experience as correlatives of religious faith. The understanding of Scripture and Tradition is considered

to be rooted in a universal religious consciousness rather than purely in an "unambiguous" and historically conditioned revealing Word. The texts of Scripture and Tradition moreover, become subject to an historical-critical method. Neo-Orthodox or Dialectical Theologies, as a "union" of Reformation and Liberal Theological tendencies emphasise the radical otherness of Transcendence, while accepting a variable and qualified role for human experience. The breakdown of cultural promise in Europe contiguous with developments leading to and including the First World War put paid to any belief in an abiding and inherent value in human experience and its various cultural expressions. Theological analysis in Neo-Orthodox Theologies revolves around bringing the decision of faith into focus – a decision structured ultimately by the gracious activity of God. Related to the Liberal Theologies are the far-reaching analyses provided by Hermeneutical Theologies. The major aspect of Hermeneutical Theologies is the attempt at securing a valid interpretation of texts through emphasising the role of understanding as a fundamental structure of human nature. Recognition of the familiar concept of the Hermeneutical Circle as a proper description of the conditioning structure of interpretation focusses on the interplay between the inquiring human subject and a text(s). As with Liberal Theology, human experience is treated by Hermeneutical Theologies as isonomic to the texts of Scripture and Tradition under analysis, and it is generally a text that is the subject of such analysis. The theological programme developed initially by the major Protestant theologian Paul Tillich constitutes a markedly significant contribution to Theological Method. In general terms the method of Correlation, as his method is known, involves the task of correlating human questions (generated out of a philosophically, culturally and existentially reflexive consciousness) with Transcendental answers provided by an analysis of the symbolic power of the Gospels. Irrespective of the criticisms that have been levelled at Tillich, Correlation Theologies take as pivotal the role of a reflexive Human Experience and Culture (=Western!) as the starting point for a contemporary theological inquiry. Likewise Liberation, Feminist, Narrative and Post-modern Theologies, in their particular ways also emphasise aspects of successively expanding human experience as a major conditioning point of departure for their analyses.⁹

The question of Theological Method is related to the question of sources. It is though more properly a question of proportionality, that is, the weight a theologian gives to the sources, with respect to the questions asked and the objects of inquiry attended to. Likewise the question of proportionality can also be directed at Method(s). As a point of entry into the discussion of Method I will use a preliminary notion

⁹See Livingstone J.C., *Modern Christian Thought, From the Enlightenment to Vatican II*, London: Collier Macmillan, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co..

that is initially context independent. With characteristic clarity the Catholic Philosopher Bernard Lonergan states that,

"A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. There is a method, then, where there are distinctive operations, where each operation is related to others, where the set of relations forms a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing the job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are, not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive"¹⁰

Lonergan is concerned here with establishing a Transcendental (in both a Scholastic and a Kantian sense) analysis of Theological Method, that is he is attempting to show the conditions for the possibility of any method whatever operating on any set of data whatever. As Lonergan states, his is a "concern that is both foundational and universally significant and relevant" (ibid. p.14). I will comment on this point concerning foundations shortly.

The preliminary notion of method (Lonergan's phrase) as a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations might seem a little mechanical and algorithmic were it not for the role that he gives to "insight", "discovery" and "probability" as factors conditioning "progressive and cumulative results" (p.6). Lonergan has his own aims in discussing Theological Method, but his preliminary notion of method is helpful insofar as it highlights the theologian's attempt at patterning (=method) data (=sources) systematically.

Again, because of the programmatic nature of this paper, I can only briefly mention what I consider the major modes of patterning (= methods) which have been utilised in theological inquiry.

The use of inductive and deductive generalisations as a general method applicable to Scripture and Tradition, has conditioned theological practice for centuries. Peter Abelard's (1079-1142) "systematic" text, *Sic et Non* which contained 158 "demonstrable" propositions (derived from Scripture, Tradition and reason) grounded an early attempt at a coherent systematising of the data of Scripture, Tradition and reason. Interestingly, Abelard's strategy of securing a series of determinate propositions paralleled to some degree the Platonic-Aristotelian project of the definition of terms and names (nb. Aristotle's notion of *pros hen* equivocity i.e. reference to one), and laid the foundation for a full-blown Scholastic Theology which was to emerge later. Aquinas's own use of the techniques of the Quaestio demanded a clear set of terms and relationships in order to provide the systematic principles which grounded the proposed Theological solutions. To be able to make inductive and deductive generalisations workable it was

¹⁰ Lonergan, B., *Method in Theology*, (London: Darton, Lonergan & Todd, 1975) p. 4.

important not only to identify valid data through definition (i.e. clear data worth working on), but also to secure the meanings of terms and their implications. This would either be of single words or of larger units such as verses, and even of larger portions of discourse e.g. Epistles, Gospels or Council documents. Further, the whole edifice was presupposed and grounded through "laws" of Logic distilled from Aristotelian analysis. Theology had already distinguished between the literal, allegorical (criticised strongly from the High Middle Ages onwards), moral and anagogic senses of meaning. Its task was to exhibit these particular mode(s) of Meaning(s) in a text. Philosophical Theology was particularly interested and strategically involved in extricating the literal meaning of a text and with exhibiting the presence of the other modes of meaning. The literal meaning significantly, would then figure in inductive and deductive generalisations expressed in indicative propositional form to provide the data for innumerable manuals of Theology.

The Phenomenological movement initiated by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of this century also influenced the Theological programme. It attempted to establish a method for enabling items of human experience, technically called Phenomena (=percepts, concepts and meanings) to be cognised by the experiencing subject as free from presuppositions as possible. This process is analogous to a blurred perceptual object being made clear and optically well-defined by the addition of a lens. The lens simply facilitates the clear observation of the per se features of the object; here, the lens can be considered analogous to the Phenomenological method. Husserl's method was not only a means of accurately describing the objects of experience but was an attempt at grounding human knowledge, of giving it firm foundations similar to the earlier Cartesian project. It is though, through the work of Martin Heidegger, who shifted from an analysis of knowledge to an ontology of human existence that Phenomenology more directly influenced Theological Method. Heidegger influenced Rudolf Bultmann's programme of Demythologisation as well as providing conceptual resources for, among others, the Protestant Theologian John Macquarrie, the Catholic Karl Rahner and a generation of theologians, including emerging Post-Modern developments.

A focus on language considered as our experiential, interpretive and communicative medium gave rise to a Phenomenological Hermeneutics directed mainly at the explication of texts, and of texts whose origins were generally distant from the reader i.e. Scripture. The task (simplified here) was to understand the role of understanding in extracting / imposing the meaning(s) of the texts under analysis. Hermeneutics came to recognise a pluriformity of meanings (polysemy), and understanding was considered as a contextual process of interpretation directed at an always present and ever emerging contemporary audience. It is this last point which generally demarcates the Hermeneutical approach from

a subject such as Biblical Studies and Textual Analysis. The latter tend on the whole to fix on the genesis of meaning(s) in a text (as well as often on their use), through a somewhat formal analysis, while Hermeneutics attempts to understand the role of the text in providing a contemporary understanding; that is, how the text's meaning(s) can illuminate the personal lives of contemporary readers and their understanding of the world. It is interesting to note that Husserl's initial quest for a presuppositionless analysis, which was really a quest for certainty, should develop (through the work of others) into an Hermeneutical strategy (whether of language or signs in general), which itself gave an almost ontological status to a generally non-formal notion of interpretation and understanding. The development of Semiotics out of the linguistic studies of de Saussure with its analysis of signs and the signifier-signified relationship, deepened and intensified the understanding and analysis of language. The result (coupled with developments in Semantics) was a view of language as an interrelated system of signs operating with an underlying deep structure.

Any notion of language as having one primary and paradigmatic function and therefore one primary meaning (that is, bridging the gap between linguistic items and a non-linguistic reality i.e. a literality conceived in this particular way) was strongly criticised by Semiotics, Semantics as well as by the allied discipline of Structuralism. The view of a basic (=primary, paradigmatic) function and meaning with a manifold of secondary functions and meanings operating on a spectrum which took the basic as their point of departure was considered an ill-formed view of language. This had potentially serious ideological implications. Consider for instance, how the language of Science claimed authority over other discourses because it was "transparent" to the structures of reality. Language came to be seen as an active and interactive medium within and of human experience, such that a person's linguistic competence and their experience of the world was difficult to distinguish clearly.¹¹ Moreover, the work of philosophers within the analytical philosophy of language such as, among others, L. Wittgenstein, J.L. Austin and J. Searle,

¹¹ Again, the literature is vast. For Hermeneutics, see, Ricoeur, P., *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: essays on language, action and interpretation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Ricoeur, P., *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies in the Creation of Meaning in Language*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Derrida, J., 'White Mythology' in *Margins of Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Loades, A. and McLain, M. (Eds.), *Hermeneutics, the Bible and Literary Criticism*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Academic and Professional, 1991); Ferguson, D. S., *Biblical Hermeneutics*, (London: SCM Press, 1987); Thistleton, A.G., *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with special reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer and Wittgenstein*, (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980); cf. also Ricoeur, P. 'Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia* 4, 1975. For Phenomenology, apart from Husserl's own generally dense writings, see the classic expository text, Farber, M. *The Foundations of Phenomenology E. Husserl and the Quest for a Rigorous Science of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943); cf. also the article on phenomenology in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. For the often difficult area of Semiotics, see the relatively accessible introductory work, Clarke Jnr, D. S., *Principles of Semiotics*, (London, New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

emphasised the performative nature of certain aspects of language, through the notions of language-games, language-use and speech-acts. Also, analysis in the Theories of Truth found the Correspondence Theory (i.e. a belief or statement is true if it corresponds to reality) problematic, and a lot of work was done on Coherence Theories, which highlight the inter-supportive nature of our beliefs.

I have indicated, again in very broad fashion, two wide ranging methods that have been applied to Theological sources. One method utilised by Philosophical Theology, and paralleling to some degree Analytical philosophy, attempts to tease out the literal meaning(s) (as well as displaying other forms of meaning), in order to exhibit the intelligibility and rationality of a text. This enables the development of inductive and deductive generalisations. The other method, a broadly Phenomenological-Hermeneutical-Semiotic approach, responding to the pluriformity and "textural" nature of language and meaning attempts, through the process of interpretation to gain an insight into the meaning(s) of texts.

The discussion of sources and methods in Theology (Philosophical or otherwise) is not complete without an attempt at dealing with the important issue of foundations. Lonergan had, as highlighted earlier, indicated that his theological concern was with a method that was "...foundational and universally significant and relevant" (MIT p.14). To be fair to Lonergan and to make an interesting point for Bahā'ī Theologians, his understanding of foundations has to be seen as a function of his Transcendental analysis. What is foundational is not a particular Source or mix of sources, nor a particular explicit Method or set of Methods, but the conditions for the possibility for approaching a Source and utilizing a Method. Lonergan locates this in the recurrent patterns of intentional consciousness, issuing significantly after major existential and attitudinal changes in what he calls intellectual, moral and religious conversion. This threefold conversion is foundational in the sense that it does not provide a set of basic propositions or assertions, but is "a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is" (p.270). Lonergan's analysis deserves further study and Bahā'ī theologians would benefit from a dialogue with Lonergan's voluminous and often programmatic writings. One point to note, however, is that even though he does not propose a foundational set of propositions or premises as grounds for deductive and deductive entailment, he does attempt to secure a universal, unchanging (recurrent) pattern of conscious operations; a seeming move from foundational sources and Methods to a foundational and differentiated consciousness.¹²

The question of foundations in Theology then involves the questions of authority and sources, about

¹² Lonergan, B., 'Cognitive Structure', in Crowe S.J., F. (ed.), *Collection, Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, (London: Darton Longman & Todd Ltd. 1967); cf. also, Lonergan, B., *Method in Theology*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), esp. pp.20-27.

what counts as the epistemic starting-point(s) for a theological analysis. The issues can be illuminated somewhat by examining the problem of foundations as discussed in contemporary Epistemology. The justification or ratification of knowledge-claims has been seen as a function of the search for foundations to human knowing. The traditional framework of the necessary and sufficient conditions for a knowledge-claim or epistemic justification and bridging the Platonic analysis (cf. Plato's *Meno*) with that of a good number of 20th century philosophers has been schematised thus:

P knows that Q is true
 (where P is a subject with psychological states,
 and Q is a proposition or set of propositions),
 iff (if and only if),
 Q is true,
 P is sure or certain or believes that Q, and
 P is justified; has evidence that Q.

The schema shows the juxtaposition of three aspects of a traditional claim to knowledge; namely, truth, certainty and justification. From this, the ideal of traditional Epistemology can be seen as the co-incidence of the psychological state of certainty with an extra-psychological state of affairs through a process of justification. Truth is supposedly the end result. Without this co-incidence it is accepted that the knowing process or in more substantive terms Knowledge (as certainty and indubitability) cannot even get off the ground; it does not have a starting point, or in the terms just stated, a foundation. There has been much philosophical argument about the precise nature of what is or here to count as foundation(s). Major candidates for such foundations have been: individual perceptions (the sensory given), psychological states and common-sense experiences. Beliefs arising out of perceptions, psychological states and common-sense experiences are called basic beliefs or basic propositions, and are a conjunction (co-incidence) of the truth of a justified proposition (or belief) and the act of believing it. Such beliefs or propositions are what philosophers call incorrigible; that is, they provide us with certainty because they themselves are both self-justified and non-inferentially justified. Because of this they can be considered candidates for securing foundations for knowledge.

Such a view of knowledge however, has been the subject of serious and cumulative criticism over the last thirty years or so. What is known as the Gettier argument or counter-example (propounded by E. L. Gettier) is considered to have successfully driven a wedge between the truth-condition and the certainty-condition of the traditional schema, thereby complicating the epistemic role of the co-incidence of the two

conditions. Moreover, the notion that incorrigible propositions are the result of a direct non-inferential knowledge has come under serious attack. Likewise, the analytic-synthetic distinction (by W.V.O. Quine especially), so cherished by Logical Positivism, between truths of reason and truths of empirical fact. The distinction cannot be clearly maintained because of the circularity of analyticity in which both notions imply each other. The empiricist theory of concept formation, where the learning of a word or the exercise of a concept is associated directly with experiencing features of the world has been strongly criticised. It seems that for an individual to recognise a blue object as blue, rather than say red, the concept blue has to be presupposed rather than derived. It seems that any attempt to secure foundations for Knowing faces serious difficulties, though there are philosophers who propose what has been called a modest foundationalism. I spoke earlier of work in Theories of Truth where a Correspondence theory had come under criticism from proponents of a Coherence theory which focused instead on a consistency independent of a notion of truth tied to a notion of correspondence.¹³

With respect to the problem of method and foundations in Bahā'ī Theology we may well be helped by examining the role of Foundations in a Christian Theological enterprise. In fact, I think those of us working in the West will, initially at least, have to look at Christian Theological methods, most certainly Islamic methods and we will benefit from having no initial phobias about Buddhist, Hindu and other Traditions, providing us all in all with a full programme! Although I have referred to a Christian Theological enterprise my comments will be directed more at a Philosophical Theology.

Just as the notion of foundations in Epistemology had focused on what were thought to be indubitable and incorrigible items of human experience securing a starting-point (= Foundations) for Knowing. So too have items within Theological Methods and sources been thought to secure indubitable starting-points for a theological enterprise (though more importantly from our point of view they have been considered

¹³ Valuable general discussions are found in, Lehrer, K. *Theory of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 1992); Shope, R., *The Analysis of Knowing*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Bonjour, L., *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Haack, S., 'Recent Obituaries of Epistemology', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 27, No.3 July 1990; Papineau, D., 'Is Epistemology Dead?', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 82, 1982. For specific issues see Rescher, N., *The Coherence Theory of Truth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); Bonjour, L., 'The Coherence Theory of Empirical Knowledge', in Moser, P.K. (ed.) *Readings in Contemporary Epistemology*, (Totowa, NJ.: Rowman Littlefield, 1986); Gettier, E. L., 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge', *Analysis*, 23, 1963; Quine, W. V. O., *From a Logical Point of View*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953); Sellars, W., *Science, Perception and Reality*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963); Harris, J. F. and Severens R. H., (eds.) *Analyticity*, (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970); Moore, G. E., 'A Defence Of Common Sense' in *Philosophical Papers*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959); Quine, W. V. O. and Ullian, J., *The Web of Belief* (2nd.ed), (New York: Random House, 1978); Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations*, (Oxford: Blackwells, 1968).

proper sources for Theology's work).

Doctrines, Narratives, Myths, Symbols etc., extracted from texts of Scripture and Tradition have been acknowledged (in varying degrees) as providing foundations for the theological enterprise. It is irrelevant for the moment, whether, for example, doctrines are used to develop a Theological or Philosophical conceptual scheme (e.g. Thomist, Neo-Thomist or Process Theologies), or whether by focusing on Narratives, Myths or Symbols an illuminating analysis of human consciousness in its responsive and creative aspects can be developed (Demythologisation, Existential and Narrative Theologies). In both cases a foundation is supposedly secured. Similarly, Theologians who utilise the Human Experience source as data for their work will treat specific items of experience as foundational i.e. morality, meaningfulness, feeling, language, contingency-historicity, freedom, justice, aesthetic and mystical experience, value, death etc. (Correlation, Hermeneutical, Existential, Post-Modern, Liberation, Feminist and Inter-Religious Theologies). In the majority of cases there will be a foundational blend of sources, certainly in the work of the latter. Methods too could be regarded as foundational, if through their exercise a theologian believes that the results of application are going to have a secure starting-point (in much the same way that someone might believe that sensory observation [= a particular Method] brings data to light.). For example, a strict Phenomenological Method could be considered as providing the best means of accessing the essence(s) of objects or things under inquiry. However, irrespective of analogy, in both cases i.e. sources and methods, what is at question is basically two sets of propositions operating in a linear, one-directional relationship. That is, there will be a set of propositions that are basic or foundational (requiring no independent justification) and a set of non-basic propositions that are justified by the former.

Relating this to the question of Theological sources, are we to say that the sources I have outlined are to be regarded as foundational and basic in the senses that a traditional Epistemology understands the terms foundational and basic? I shall leave this question open to further more detailed analysis, though I want to make some points for discussion.

The question of sources for Theology is really, after reflection, a question of authority; of how the sources authorise the activity of Theology, more though of how they authorise results and conclusions (provisional or otherwise). Earlier I spoke of Theology operating in a logical space between religious texts (= Scripture and Tradition) and an ambiguously termed modern situation. This tense relation is now further heightened by whether (and in what way) the religious texts authorise the meaningfulness, intelligibility and truth of theological conclusions? The question is further sharpened by asking whether the sources operate as a Criterion? For a Christian Theology, I would venture to say that they could not be considered as such! The often narrative and story-like nature of the texts (and here I am referring

primarily to the Gospel accounts and thereby touching on the issue of a Canon within the Canon) could certainly be considered as primary authority for Theology, but not sufficient authority! The texts could be considered primary insofar as they provide a means for securing and ensuring an appropriate Christian witness by a Christian Theology, but not a sufficient authority for securing and ensuring the meaningfulness, intelligibility and truth of theological conclusions. These are to be assessed by justificatory and clarificatory procedures developed and refined over centuries and which are believed to be structural to human experience. The question is obviously different for Bahā'ī Theology where the religious texts contain a vast range of already highly developed theological assertions (= propositions) readily insertable into progressive and developing theological arguments. Again, though the issue is raised of whether and in what way these assertions or propositions are to be treated as foundational or basic in our Epistemological sense, and whether they are to be accepted as a *de facto* or *de jure* authority for theology. That is, are the high level theological assertions in the Bahā'ī texts to be accepted by the Bahā'ī Theologian as authoritative i.e. foundational *per se*, and therefore *de facto* authoritative, or are the assertions subject to a rule i.e. subject to a matrix of justificatory or clarificatory procedures, and thereby *de jure* authoritative? This is a vitally important question.

Developments over the last thirty years in the Philosophy of Language, Deconstruction, Literary Criticism and Theory, Structuralism, Linguistics and consequently Theology have witnessed a further and deeper turn to language as an object of study and medium of encounter. The areas of particular development have been in the areas of Polysemy (multiple meanings), Tropes (figures of speech), Rhetoric and Story¹⁴. The following discussion can only hint at the complexity of these issues

The notion that words have different ways of meaning was acknowledged long ago. Aristotle recognised that "every name is either a standard word, or a foreign word, a metaphor or an ornamental word, an invented, expanded or altered word" (*Poetics* 1457b1). The later use of allegory via a Philonic Hermeneutics grounded a figurative theology which took as its goal the overcoming of contradictions

¹⁴ I have selected a number of texts which I have found valuable in the area of Tropes and Rhetoric. Miall, D. S.(ed.), *Metaphor, Problems and Perspectives*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982); Ortony, A.(ed.) *Metaphor and Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Lodge, D., *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy and the Typology of Modern Literature*, (London: E. Arnold, 1977); McFague, S., *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*, (London: SCM Press, 1982). On Rhetoric see, Vickers, B., *In Defence of Rhetoric*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Wicker, B., *The Story-shaped World, Fiction and Metaphysics: Some Variations on a Theme*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1975). See also the discussion in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 51, 1990, Munz, P., 'The Rhetoric of Rhetoric', pp. 121-142, McCloskey, D. N., 'Reply to Munz', pp.143-147 and Vickers, B., 'The Dangers of Dichotomy', pp.148-159; Searle, J., *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

posed by literal readings of religious texts. A consistent figurative reading, however, could not be sustained without reference to the notion of literality. As indicated earlier, Scholastic Theology was concerned with securing the definition of terms and thereby fixing their referential meanings. In this they were only following and perhaps improving Plato's distinction between the surface features of terms and their deeper or inner meaning(s) (hyponia, cf. *The Republic* and also *Gorgias*). Also of relevance is the Platonic conception of names as expressing i.e. naming the essence (ousia) of (or in) a thing or object, (cf. *Cratylus*). Thus the Scholastic project of fixing the meanings of terms enabled the further fixing of the meanings of sentences and propositions. These in their turn came to be considered as preferred meanings. Therefore, language in Theology came to be seen primarily as a referential system expressing as far as possible the preferred literal meanings of sentences and propositions, at least those which came under the purview of the Theological project.

Literality as a concept is not easy to unpack. Firstly, it has little if nothing to do with the empirical, spatial or temporal actuality of an event obtaining. Such an event as expressed by the sentence "He jumped up and literally stomped out of the room!" is not what is meant in the specific sense of the term, although a peculiar analogised fixity can be gleaned from the sentence. Literality (or Literal meaning) has to do with meaning of a particular and compounded sort; what is called univocal and conventional meaning. Univocal meaning is the singular meaning a term or proposition has each time it is uttered or written or subsequently heard or read. Conventional meaning is the possibility of reiterable univocal meaning; that the univocal meaning is expressed and expressible each time a term or proposition is uttered or heard in a pattern of speech and written or read in texts. These two aspects of meaning then, make or compound literal meaning. As stated earlier the strategy, certainly of Scholastic Theology and perhaps implicitly of contemporary Theology as a whole, to stress literal meanings implied that these meanings had a temporal and semantic priority. I would say that this strategy has certainly conditioned the work of **Philosophical Theology**, both past and present.

The growing acceptance of Polysemy (multiple meanings operating at a number of levels in language, generally in a text or pattern of speech), the interest in signs and symbols and the more detailed analysis of the tropical aspects of language (particularly Metaphor and Metonymy as more than stylistic ornamentation), has contributed to a keener and more thematised awareness of the linguisticity of our experience. Earlier, the Wittgensteinian emphasis on use, the Austin-Searlean theory of Speech-acts and the more holistic Theories of Meaning and Coherence Theories of Truth had provided a notion richer than a purely referential theory. Further, the analysis (and experience) of Polysemy and Tropes highlights (

= reveals?) the creative, participative and yet sometimes cognitively disturbing aspects that lie at the root of our experience of the world.

I said at the beginning of this paper that, based upon a few remarks by Shoghi Effendi, I wanted to hint at the possible development of a Rhetorical Theology or Analysis. This was done not only to suggest a particular interpretive strategy with its own inner dynamic, but also to undermine a strategy (or perhaps the strategy) of Philosophical Theology. It is at the level of Polysemic and Tropical analysis that Philosophical Theology's general quest for univocal and conventional meanings for indicative sentences and propositions is put into question. I shall say no more at this stage, but I will make a few comments on the growing interest in a new non-stylistic Rhetoric that has grown out of an older and more stylistic Rhetoric which took as its point of departure Aristotle's definition of it "as the power of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 2, 1355b27 cf. also 4, 1359a30). Contemporary developments of Rhetoric have emphasised and attempted to map the transforming effect of discourse (written or spoken) on a reader or auditor (whether hearing a speech or reading the text), in bringing about commitment to a particular view; this will be more than a naively theoretical or "intellectual" adherence. One of our tasks as emerging Bahā'ī Theologians is surely this: to present and re-present in our writing the "effectiveness and power of the teachings" (BS:2), their attractiveness and their capacity to entice! This may well issue in a particular type of Writing, what I earlier called extending the performative nature of the Bahā'ī text(s) under study.

There are two issues here: Firstly, as I suggested, a Rhetorical Theology could be developed in order to present the Bahā'ī Teachings in a particular way so that their value as modes of transformation can be better appreciated and appropriated by an audience (whether readers or listeners). Secondly, a Polysemic and Tropical analysis could be utilised in order to examine the Rhetorical nature of aspects of the Bahā'ī texts themselves.

In any case, whatever Theological work Bahā'īs undertake, they will, I suggest, be working within the horizons of a Philosophical Theology and a Rhetorical Theology. Both are valuable and pervasive and both are equally compulsive. Why this should be so is another matter, and is not a question in Theology or Philosophy as they stand.

Concluding remarks

This essay has been deliberately programmatic, partly because of its scope and partly due to the intrinsic difficulty of some of the issues I have touched upon. I focused on a particularly Western and

particularly Christian approach to Theology. I believe that, initially at least, the Bahā'ī Teachings lend themselves to the interpretative strategy that has come to be called Theology, particularly that which has been developed in the West by Christian, Islamic and Jewish practitioners. I also focused upon Philosophical Theology, because, of all the particular types of Theological analysis one can do, this one has developed into the most robust, demonstrative and assertive type, attempting as it does to serve 'two masters'. It tries to remain appropriate to the religious texts themselves, and on the other hand, by operating within certain structurally human criteria of justification, it attempts to show the meaning(s) and truth-values of the texts (or aspects of the texts).

The tasks of such a Philosophical Theology were enumerated, with some additions that a more traditional Philosophical Theology would not have attempted. This I indicated to be a function of the wider scope of data available to the Bahā'ī Theologian. I went on to highlight the issues of sources, methods and foundations, and showed that discussions about them had developed over time as a function of systematic responses to texts, within the wider sphere of increments in human understanding. In showing the role of sources, methods and foundations, I wanted to indicate what Bahā'ī Theologians may well have to deal with in developing their strategies, especially given the problems associated with the notion of foundations and Theories of Reference after philosophical scrutiny. One thing which is certain, is that work in a Bahā'ī Philosophical Theology will have to broach the Issues of the relationship between sources-as-foundations and Theological conclusions (again, provisional though they may be); the issues will be primarily epistemic, that is of how, and in what way, the sources-as-foundations warrant the conclusions.

Finally, richer conceptions of language were seen to have been emerging within the last thirty years or so, and which could ground a Rhetorical Theology based on a new and deepened Rhetorical Analysis. It is this richer understanding of language that we should be examining, if only to truly understand whether the notion of non-conceptuality (an important issue in any theological analysis) makes any sense, but certainly to experience those aspects of language which open us up, as individuals, to new personal and corporate opportunities -- the Bahā'ī life. Theology as Theo-Logos will always remain speech, a conversation utilising concepts of one sort or another and, as I hope to have indicated, tropes of one sort or another. So it seems that Theology's tasks will be a tensive blend of systematic, 'cartographic', evocative and suasive Language. All we can do as emerging Bahā'ī Theologians is witness appropriately and truthfully in our asymptotic language, to what 'Abdu'l-Bahā states is "...above words

and letters and...the murmur of syllables and sounds..."¹⁵ Theology cannot, however, remain silent but it can be responsive to a better appreciation of its raw-materials; namely, Language. And behind, above, below and within Language, the Speaker of Language.

ABBREVIATIONS

BS = *Bahá'í Scholarship*, Auckland: NSA of Bahá'ís of New Zealand, Inc., 1985

TB = *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978.

SAQ = *Some Answered Questions*, Wilmette, Illinois: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981.

MIT = *Method in Theology*, Lonergan, B., London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975.

¹⁵ Prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Bahá'í Prayers*, (London: BPT., 1975) No. 99. p.104.

THE AMERICAN BAHĀ'Ī IDENTITY, 1894-1921

Robert H. Stockman

What did it mean to become a Bahā'ī in the United States, between 1894 and 1921? What sorts of people became Bahā'īs? These two questions are intimately bound up with each other. They also have strong implications about the nature of the Bahā'ī community during these years, and to what extent it saw itself as an independent religion.

Various conceptions of Bahā'ī membership reigned during this period. A preliminary examination of the data suggests that the American Bahā'ī community went through three phases in its understanding of what it means to be a Bahā'ī: an initial exclusivistic phase (1894-1900); a phase where the definition of Bahā'ī became progressively weaker and less sharply defined (1900-21); and a phase where the definition became sharp and clear again (1921-present). These phases, it must be stressed, are phases in the community's self-understanding; the Bahā'ī writings themselves did not change during the period of study.

The *Kitāb-i aqdas* -- which was available in English translation as early as 1900, and which circulated among some of the deepened American Bahā'īs -- clearly advocates an independent religious community with its own organization, Holy Days, and personal religious rituals (such as obligatory prayer and fasting). All of these were implemented in the Chicago Bahā'ī community between 1900 and 1903. The inclusivistic statements of 'Abdu'l-Bahā were few, were oral and not written, yet in the teens were repeated over and over by the Bahā'īs with a more inclusivistic mindset. To understand this we must first understand what the definitions of community were; we must look at the types of people attracted; and we must look at the organizational attitudes they brought into the Bahā'ī community with them.

Definitions of Membership

While Ibrahim Kheiralla did not offer a definition of Bahā'ī membership, his teachings and actions resulted in fairly sharply drawn borders for the American Bahā'ī community before 1900. His emphasis that the prophecies of the Bible had been fulfilled by Bahā'u'llāh and 'Abdu'l-Bahā, that their advent signalled the coming of the Kingdom, and that the millennium would be established by 1917 made the American Bahā'īs a somewhat millennial community.¹

¹ Ibrahim George Kheiralla, *Beha' U'llah* (Chicago: I. G. Kheiralla, 1900), 480-81.

In order to become a Bahā'ī one had to take a series of lessons from Kheiralla or a teacher authorized by him, and then had to be given *the greatest name* in order to be considered a member of the community.² As a result of these beliefs and practices, the Bahā'ī community was sharply differentiated from the churches and from "metaphysical" groups.³ Although the sources are meager, there is no evidence in Bahā'ī records that most Bahā'īs in Chicago, Kenosha, or New York -- the three large communities -- were regularly attending church on Sundays, not before 1910 at least.⁴ In smaller communities Bahā'īs probably continued to attend local churches -- the new Bahā'ī groups could not yet supply equivalent services -- but even in smaller communities Bahā'īs often attended churches to find people to whom they could proclaim the new religion, and not because they possessed a dual religious identity.⁵

After June 1900 Kheiralla's lessons ceased to be taught, replaced by the teachings of Bahā'u'llāh and the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahā. Because the latter was the head of the Faith, authorized to pronounce on the meaning of Bahā'u'llāh's text, and because he could be visited in person or could be written about personal questions, the pronouncements of

² The word was *bahā'* (glory, light, or splendor) and its superlative form *abihā'* (most glorious) which were considered the *greatest name*. Some Islamic traditions maintain that God has one hundred names, ninety-nine of which were revealed in the Qur'ān; Bahā'u'llāh stated that *bahā'* was the hundredth or "greatest" name of God. Bahā'īs usually use the greatest name in compounds, such as *Alīh al-Abihā'*, "God is most glorious," which is used as a greeting.

³ The word *metaphysics* is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "that branch of speculative inquiry which treats of the first principles of things, including such concepts as being, substance, essence, time, space, cause, identity, etc.; theoretical philosophy as the ultimate science of Being and Knowing." In popular usage (which the Oxford English Dictionary notes is "inaccurate"), *metaphysics* refers to speculation about religious, philosophical, mystical, "spiritual," or "occult" subjects. J. Stillson Judah, in his book *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), after apologizing that no other term could be found that was appropriate, used the word *metaphysics* to refer to the beliefs of such groups as Theosophy, New Thought, Christian Science, Divine Science, and Spiritualism. It is this use that will be the primary meaning of *metaphysics* in this work.

⁴ Of course, church records might be a better source to check, if they exist.

⁵ For example, Isabella Brittingham's involvement in Grace Episcopal Church in Union City, New Jersey, in 1899 is mentioned in [Hooper Harris], "Arthur James," MS, New York City Bahā'ī Archives, and is discussed in the next chapter. Mary Revell, organizer of the first active Bahā'ī community in Philadelphia, in 1907-08, was active in a church and taught the Bahā'ī Faith to many parishioners until the minister preached against it; see Philadelphia Bahā'ī History Committee of the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia, "History of the Bahā'ī Movement in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America," TS, 103, National Bahā'ī Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

'Abdu'l-Bahā exerted great influence on the American Bahā'ī community.

Kheiralla's system of appointing authorized teachers was discontinued because it was incompatible with Bahā'u'llāh's prohibition of clergy. Thenceforth anyone could teach the Bahā'ī Faith to anyone else. Kheiralla's system of teaching people through a series of required lectures lapsed, and was mostly replaced by informal methods of disseminating information on the Bahā'ī religion, such as meetings held by individual adherents in their homes. Since anyone could hold such meetings, and most Bahā'īs had a very inexact understanding of Bahā'u'llāh's teachings, considerable misinformation on the Bahā'ī teachings was disseminated.

Because Bahā'u'llāh had forbidden the creation of rituals, the ceremony of giving the greatest name to new believers was abandoned. When one accepted Bahā'u'llāh, one wrote a letter declaring one's faith to 'Abdu'l-Bahā in Palestine, instead of enrolling in a local community. Thus, Institutions that had developed in the nineteenth century American Bahā'ī community, and that had unintentionally helped to define membership in the Bahā'ī community, were abolished because they found no justification in Bahā'ī scripture.

In this new situation the question of the nature of the Bahā'ī Faith was asked anew. Was it an independent religion or an international spiritual reform movement? Questions of what constituted membership in it, and what sort of organization it should have, were dependent on the question of the nature of the Faith. Closely related was the basic question of what to call this new religious community. Bahā'u'llāh did not actually give his following a name, preferring the term "people of Baha" instead.⁶ The word "Bahā'ī," like the word "Christian," is an adjective; it is used as a noun only to refer to an adherent. The term "Bahaism" was an early

⁶Interestingly, Bahā'u'llāh never uses the term "Bahā'ī" in his published English writings. "People of Bahā" occurs seventy-three times in them. See Lee Nelson, comp., *A Concordance to the Writings of Bahā'u'llāh* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1988), entry for "Bahā."

Even though Bahā'u'llāh did not give his people a name, it should not be assumed that he did not intend to establish a religion or a community. As the religious historian Wilfred Cantwell Smith has pointed out, until the nineteenth century the term "religion" itself did not carry as one of its meanings the notion of an organized community with a body of beliefs and practices; the term "Christianity" did not refer to a religion, as much as to Christian faith and piety, until the seventeenth century; Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians did not possess words equivalent to "Hinduism," "Buddhism," and "Confucianism" respectively until their encounter with Europeans in the nineteenth century; and even Muhāmmad did not mean "Islam" to be the name of a religion (see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* [N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1978], 15-85).

invention -- Thornton Chasa (1847-1912), the first American Bahā'ī, claims to have coined it -- but it never became popular among American Bahā'īs because it implied, they thought, that the Bahā'ī Faith was just another "ism."⁷ Various compounds, such as "Bahá'í Cause," "Bahá'í Movement," "Bahá'í Faith," "Bahá'í revelation" and even "Bahá'í reformation" were proposed; cursory examination of American Bahā'ī literature published before 1921 suggests that the first three terms were used with similar frequency, and were synonymous.

'Abdu'l-Bahā's statements about the nature of the Bahā'ī community and membership, in practice, did not always make the independent nature of the Bahā'ī Faith clear. His written replies to questions asked by Bahā'īs tended to be exclusivistic: for example, he called on Bahā'ī communities to organize themselves and advocated following such Bahā'ī worship practices as obligatory prayer and fasting.⁸ In his will and testament, part of which was composed as early as 1903, 'Abdu'l-Bahā detailed the establishment of a system of local and national houses of justice and specified how the latter were to be elected; however, he chose deliberately not to publicize these provisions or promulgate administrative details, and they remained unknown until his death.⁹

When sympathizers to the Bahā'ī Faith asked him about the Faith, however, he often gave general answers that implied that it was nonexclusive. For example, when a Christian who had accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahā as her teacher asked him how she should teach her orthodox Protestant friends about the Bahā'ī Faith but not offend them, 'Abdu'l-Bahā is reported to have

⁷ Thornton Chase to Mrs. Elizabeth A. Rice-Wray, 11 May 1909, Thornton Chase Papers. "Bahaisme" became a common word in French and remains acceptable in it to this day; similar terms are used in Arabic, German, Russian, and other European languages as well.

⁸ 'Abdu'l-Bahā wrote a series of tablets (letters) to the Chicago Bahā'īs about organization; he also urged the Milwaukee, Portland, and Cincinnati Bahā'īs to organize themselves. Three tablets to American Bahā'īs, urging them to fast, dated 1902, 1904, and 1908, are known. The medium obligatory prayer was translated in 1899 -- one of the first Bahā'ī prayers to be rendered into English -- and the other two obligatory prayers were available by 1905. The history of adherence to Bahā'ī worship practices in the United States is given in chapter seven.

⁹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, trans. Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944). The will and testament was read in public after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in November 1921, and then was published by Shoghi Effendi in 1922.

advised her to act as a Christian and remain in the Christian church.¹⁰ Verbal statements by 'Abdu'l-Bahā on the nature of the Bahā'ī Faith that apparently were misunderstood or mistranslated provided considerable support for those American Bahā'īs who saw their religion in inclusivist terms.¹¹ A very popular statement attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahā said that

The Bahai Movement is not an organization. You can never organize the Bahā'ī Cause. The Bahai Movement is the Spirit of this Age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Bahai Cause is an inclusive movement: The teachings of all the religions and societies are found here; the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, et. al., find their highest aims in this Cause. Even the Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this Movement.¹²

In 1929 Shoghi Effendi, apparently commenting on this statement, said it was "an obscure and unauthenticated translation of an oral statement by 'Abdu'l-Bahā."¹³ Since many Bahā'īs had become disillusioned with churches before converting to the Bahā'ī Faith, many were opposed to organization. They tended to quote 'Abdu'l-Bahā's inclusivistic statements heavily and ignored his written statements implying the contrary.

¹⁰ Myron H. Phelps, *The Master in 'Akká* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1985), 125. It is important to note that Phelps was reporting a story he had heard, not witnessed, and that he was a non-Bahā'ī who frequently criticized efforts to organize the Bahā'ī religion. Thus the story's accuracy is questionable. Bahā'īs who saw the Bahā'ī Faith in inclusive terms, however, tended to seize upon statements such as the one Phelps attributes to 'Abdu'l-Bahā and use them to argue their position.

¹¹ It should be pointed out that such statements are not considered part of the Bahā'ī scriptures; only words of Bahā'u'llāh and 'Abdu'l-Bahā that were approved by them in writing are considered scripture. None of the statements attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahā that are strongly inclusivistic come from his letters or written statements; all of them were given in talks or personal meetings.

¹² Words attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahā, quoted in Isabel Fraser, "The Bahai Temple at Wilmette to be Built with Money from Every Race, Clime and Religion Under the Sun," in *Star of the West*, vol. 5, no. 5 (June 5, 1914), 67. Almost certainly this passage is what Bahā'īs call *pilgrim's notes*, notes made by a Bahā'ī pilgrim of statements he or she heard 'Abdu'l-Bahā say. Since 'Abdu'l-Bahā spoke in Persian he had to be spontaneously translated, and often this was done poorly; furthermore, pilgrims generally did not write down 'Abdu'l-Bahā's words until hours after they heard them. For these reasons, pilgrim's notes are not considered Bahā'ī scripture. It is not known who attributed these words to 'Abdu'l-Bahā, or in what year they first circulated; they probably were first published about 1912. In the teens they were circulated very widely among the American Bahā'īs.

¹³ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahā'u'llāh: Selected Letters by Shoghi Effendi* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahā'ī Publishing Trust, 1974), 4.

If all of this were not enough to erode the barriers of the Bahā'ī community, accessibility to Bahā'u'llāh's teachings, ironically, proved to be another factor. From 1900 through 1908 translation of many of Bahā'u'llāh's most important writings made it possible for the American Bahā'īs to study his basic teachings, especially his social reform principles. When Bahā'īs realized how sweeping his teachings for reforming the world were, they came to doubt increasingly that they alone could apply such principles to the world's problems; hence some Bahā'īs began to emphasize the need to break down the barriers between Bahā'ī and non-Bahā'ī and advocated that Bahā'īs join non-Bahā'ī organizations, including churches, in order to reform them from within. As a result of all these factors, membership in the Bahā'ī Faith became less and less sharply defined from 1900 to the late 'teens. With that change, fewer and fewer membership lists were kept.

Starting in 1922 the new Bahā'ī leader, Shoghi Effendi, reversed the trend and emphasized that the Bahā'ī Faith was an independent religion. He even standardized the religion's name: the Bahā'ī Faith.¹⁴ He insisted that the Bahā'īs elect spiritual assemblies, and added that they had to establish and maintain voting lists. Many Bahā'īs were dismayed by the change to an organized religion. Some -- probably only a handful, but the number is still unknown -- eventually left the Bahā'ī Faith.¹⁵ From the 1920s to the present, membership in the Bahā'ī community has been clearly defined and can be quantified using voting lists. Since about World War II, when an individual wishes to join the Bahā'ī community, s/he signs a card bearing the statement "in signing this card, I declare my belief in Bahā'u'llāh, the Promised One

¹⁴ The author has counted the frequency of Shoghi Effendi's use of the terms "Bahá'í Cause," "Bahá'í Movement," and "Bahá'í Faith" in his letters to the American Bahá'ís written between 1922 and 1929, as published in Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974). For the years 1922 to 1925, "Cause" was used between 80 and 88% of the time; "Movement" was used between 8 and 12% of the time; "Faith" was used between 0 and 9 percent of the time, and usually the incidence was about 3%. In the years 1926 to 1928, "Cause" occurred 52 to 54% of the time; "Faith" 36 to 46% of the time, and steadily increased; "Movement" dropped from 9 to 5% of the occurrences. In 1929, "Faith" was preferred 68% of the time, "Cause" was used 30% of the time, and "Movement" appeared only once, or 2% of the time.

¹⁵ I have not studied the relevant records in detail; however, I asked the national Bahā'ī archivist, who has read the institutional and personal papers of many Bahā'īs, about the number of Bahā'īs who withdrew from the Bahā'ī Faith when it became more organized, and he said he thought it was very small (Roger Dahl, personal interview with the author, 23 November 1988). It is likely that many sympathizers of the Bahā'ī Faith, loosely considered Bahā'īs in the teens, no longer were so considered after 1922.

of God. I also recognize the Báb, His Forerunner, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant. I request enrollment in the Bahá'í Community with the understanding that Bahá'u'lláh has established sacred principles, laws, and institutions which I must obey." ¹⁶ This text constitutes the nearest thing to an official creed that the Bahá'í Faith has ever possessed.

The foregoing makes it clear that Bahá'í membership has gone through three phases in the United States: a sharp, clearly set-apart, millennial Bahá'í community from 1894 to 1900; an increasingly inclusivistic and increasingly vague definition of Bahá'í membership from 1900 to the teens; and a sharp, administratively defined conception of membership and community since 1921.

Types of People Attracted to the American Bahá'í Community

What attracted Americans to the Bahá'í Faith? Every individual's experience was different, but certain common tendencies can be noted. Religious seekers can be classified to some extent according to *ideal types*. Most individuals, of course, do not fit any ideal type exactly, and some partially match more than one ideal type. But a classification scheme provides a framework for interpretation. It permits one to compare the Bahá'í Faith's attraction and its sources of converts to those of other nonwestern religions.

Comparison of the American Bahá'ís with the American converts to Buddhism is particularly illuminating. Thomas A. Tweed, in his study of American Buddhism, identified three ideal types among its European-American adherents and sympathizers. ¹⁷ The *esoteric or occult type* studied Neoplatonism, Theosophy, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, or Swedenborgianism before or in addition to Buddhism, and was attracted to it through an interest in "hidden sources of religious truth and meaning." They often had a "metaphysical and cosmological focus" to their interests. In Sydney Ahlstrom's terms, these people were attracted to Buddhism as a

¹⁶ The text is taken from an enrollment card in the author's possession.

¹⁷ Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington, Ind.: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1992), chapter 3, "Esoterics, Rationalists, and Romantics." I am indebted to his work for the interpretive methodology of this chapter.

"harmonial religion." ¹⁸

The *rationalist type* took his inspiration mainly from the skeptical enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, from rationalist Unitarianism, and from Auguste Comte's positivism. They often associated with the Free Religious Association or the Ethical Cultural Society. Most were men. ¹⁹

The *romantic or exotic culture type* had his or her religious interests shaped by Romanticism and a concern for the aesthetic. Such sympathizers usually focused their study on Buddhist art, architecture, music, customs, and rituals -- Buddhist culture as a whole--rather than on the religion, narrowly defined. ²⁰

None of these ideal types fits the American students of the Bahā'ī Faith exactly. There are two reasons: the Bahā'ī Faith offered different sources of attraction from Buddhism; and the Bahā'īs were generally drawn from lower social and educational strata than the Euro-American Buddhists. Only one Bahā'ī is known to have been a member of the Free Religious Association and none are known to have been affiliated with the Ethical Culture Society. No early American Bahā'ī mentioned reading Comte. Furthermore, the Bahā'ī Faith, as an intellectual and cultural tradition, was new -- virtually the entire body of its literature was its scripture -- consequently it had not yet developed its thought enough to attract many intellectuals to it. Certainly it had not developed a culture that could interest aesthetes. Hence the ideal types of the Euro-American Buddhists need to be redrawn or replaced in order to fit the American Bahā'īs. Four ideal types seem to describe the American Bahā'īs best: the *scripturalist type*; the *esoteric type*; the *secular-reform type*; and the *romantic-mystical type*.

¹⁸Ibid., 51, 164; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, vol. 2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1975), 528.

¹⁹Tweed, *American Encounter with Buddhism*, 60-61.

²⁰Ibid., 69.

The Scripturalist Type

The first and most important type was the *scripturalist type*. He or she felt a strong attachment to the Bible as the Word of God or as the primary source of truth. Scripturalists were likely to be mainstream Protestants, but could include persons raised Protestant who had become disillusioned with the churches for a variety of reasons. Generally they were not strongly attached to evangelical doctrine or a traditional interpretation of the Bible. They could also be Catholic or Jewish, though only rarely. They were more likely to belong to the middle and lower classes, although some of the upper-middle class Bahā'īs were of this type.²¹

The Bahā'ī scriptures say much about Christianity and the Bible; that is one reason many of the American Bahā'īs were scripturalists. Many Americans were attracted to the Bahā'ī Faith who had even been active church goers and who had never had a quarrel with Christianity.

Perhaps the best example of a scripturalist is Paul Kingston Dealy (1848-1937).²² The details of his conversion are not available, but it is clear from his writings that he retained a strong love for Christianity after accepting the Bahā'ī Faith:

In the great Christian church in which we were reared, we have seen, during this period, the temporal power taken away from the Mother Church[,] and all her descendent denominations disturbed, agitated and divided up by the so-called heresies of advanced thinkers and the unorthodox views put forth by leading, eminent professors in the different theological seminaries. In consequence of which, many have wandered from the different folds to embrace new doctrines, and [have been] seduced by the attractive elements of the diversified doctrines, fads and isms established by new thought elements...²³

²¹ Based on my experience of the Bahā'ī community, I think this type is less common in the 1990s, but remains important, especially in the South.

²² Paul Dealy and his book, *The Dawn of Knowledge and the Most Great Peace*, will figure prominently in this work. Born in Saint John, New Brunswick, Dealy married in 1881 and eventually had four children. After working on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, Dealy and family settled in Chicago, where he worked as a stationary engineer and in 1895 ran for tax assessor. In 1897 he became a Bahā'ī; Ibrahim Khelralla appointed him as the primary Bahā'ī teacher in Chicago. He also lectured frequently in Kenosha. In 1899 Dealy and his family moved to the Single-Tax colony of Fairhope, Alabama, where he worked as a farmer the rest of his life.

²³ Paul Kingston Dealy, *The Dawn of Knowledge and the Most Great Peace* (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society, 1908), 49.

Clearly, Dealy was extremely conservative in his biblicism and believed liberal interpretations of the Bible had undermined Protestantism. Since Dealy was the teacher of over half the Chicago Bahā'īs -- and many of the Kenosha Bahā'īs as well--his view of metaphysical groups as "thoughtless apostacy" must have discouraged persons deeply involved in them from investigating the new religion, and probably discouraged Bahā'īs with interest in metaphysical groups from continuing their study of them. Scripturalists frequently emphasize that they had never joined "metaphysical" groups before becoming a Bahā'ī.

It is not known how active Dealy was in the Protestant church before his conversion, but there were Bahā'īs who had been active, church-going Christians until they became Bahā'īs. James Brittingham is a good example. When his sister, Charlotte Emily Brittingham Dixon, became a Bahā'ī in 1898, she wrote him about the new religion. But she had to do so cautiously because, James later explained, "she knew I was working in the [Episcopal] church and she knew that if she touched the church in any way i would not listen." Because she had to write subtly about her new faith, James thought "she was dealing in Christian Science or Spiritualism or some other funny thing" and he "did not want anything to do with it." But his wife Isabella became interested and dragged him to a Bahā'ī meeting, where he heard Kheiralla's lessons on biblical prophecy and the Return of Christ. They "literally [*sic*] swept the ground from under our feet, and we accepted it [the Bahā'ī Faith] at once," he later explained.²⁴

Once the Brittinghams became Bahā'īs they began to teach the Faith to their fellow parishioners at the Grace Episcopal Church in Union City, New Jersey. A man named Arthur James, who was born in England but had become a naturalized American, was a "very active" member of the church; he sang in the choir and was superintendent of the Sunday school. When the Brittinghams told him about the Bahā'ī Faith it struck him as "a terrible blow" because he was "a Church of England man." Nevertheless, the attractiveness of the Bahā'ī teaching "was so strong he could not get away from it, and accepted the Truth. . . in the year 1898." Mrs. James, Mr. Charles Jones, and Miss Lillian Kappes also left the church for the

²⁴ James Brittingham, "My first experiences in the Cause of Baha'U'llah and the Great Message of Eternal Life," MS, pp. 1-2, New York City Bahá'í Archives.

Bahá'í Faith. With the Brittinghams they became the core members of the Bahá'í community of northern Hudson County, New Jersey.²⁵

Not all of the scripturalists were active church-going Protestants. Andrew D. Fleming of New York City heard of the Bahá'í Faith from a fellow employee at the same factory in 1904. Fleming had been "brought up in a strict Christian [Congregational] home" and knew the Bible "pretty well" but in 1903 had told his wife, Etta, that the church no longer interested him, much to her grief. Fleming wasn't impressed by what his friend said about the Bahá'í Faith; "I thought it was just another Ism, or Oriental fad that someone had been talking him into." Fleming decided to attend a Bahá'í meeting "to try and set him straight." At the meeting Fleming asked some of the questions about the Bible that had always puzzled him, and for which he had never received satisfactory answers from ministers; the speaker, gave 'Abdu'l-Bahá's answers, however, and they intrigued Fleming. After attending Bahá'í meetings weekly for several months he realized that he believed and had become a Bahá'í. Etta Fleming, meanwhile, prayed fervently that her husband would return to Christianity and even asked her minister to visit the house to talk to him. When the minister was unable to convince Andrew of the error of his ways, and "seemed confused" by her husband's questions, Etta began to investigate the Bahá'í Faith as well. A dream convinced her to pursue her study of the Bahá'í religion, and she eventually joined it.²⁶

Most Kenosha Bahá'ís apparently were scripturalists as well. Bahá'í records in Kenosha and Racine contain no references to metaphysical groups. One Kenosha Bahá'í is known to have been interested in Swedenborgianism when he had been a young man in Sweden, but apparently he never joined a Swedenborgian church.²⁷ In 1904 the Kenosha

²⁵[Hooper Harris?], "Arthur James," MS, New York Bahá'í Archives. The manuscript seems to have been a eulogy written on the occasion of Mr. James's death.

²⁶ Untitled personal recollections of Andrew D. Fleming, New York Bahá'í Archives; untitled personal recollections of Etta Fleming, New York Bahá'í Archives. Fleming's congregational background is mentioned on his historical record card, National Bahá'í Archives.

²⁷ Paul Voelz (a member of the Kenosha Bahá'í community since 1910), personal interview, 9 July 1984, author's personal papers.

Bahā'īs were in contact with the local Christian Science church. But there is no evidence that Bahā'īs had been members of the church; more likely, the Christian Scientists were the only church in the city that would maintain ecumenical relations with the Bahā'īs.²⁸

Apparently many Kenosha Bahā'īs had been involved in mainline Protestant churches before conversion. In late 1899 the mainline Protestant churches in Kenosha hired a former missionary, Stoyan Vatralsky, to take some of the Bahā'ī lessons and give sermons refuting them. Apparently the churches hired Vatralsky because they were losing members to the new religion, which had attracted over two percent of the population of Kenosha by the fall of 1899. Vatralsky's talks produced a controversy that occupied the front pages of Kenosha's newspapers for two months.²⁹ An early Racine Bahā'ī recalls that the Racine churches also attacked the Bahā'ī Faith in 1899 because church members had converted.³⁰

The conversion stories above share two common motifs: emphasis on the Bible and prophecy, and criticism of "metaphysical" groups. In the story of Legh Wilson Foster, Protestant attitudes are so strong that one finds it difficult to understand why he ever became a Bahā'ī at all. On 6 June 1901 Foster tendered his resignation from the Bahā'ī Faith. He said that he "can never forget the Holy love, affection and friendship which they [the Chicago Bahā'īs] have so freely given me" and he prayed that God would enable him "to overcome all sin." The emphasis in the letter on the importance of love suggests that the disunity and disharmony that characterized the Chicago Bahā'īs -- Kheiralla had just left the Faith a year earlier -- had prompted Foster's decision to withdraw. He closed the letter with three biblical quotations on love, one of which was Jude 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of

²⁸ Kenosha Assembly of Bahá'ís to Chicago Assembly of Bahá'ís, 1 December 1904, p. 1, House of Spirituality Records, National Bahá'í Archives. None of the Kenosha Bahā'īs are known to have been Christian Scientists.

²⁹ The best description of the Vatralsky controversy is William Collins, "Kenosha: The history of the second Bahá'í community in the United States," *Bahá'í News*, no. 553 (April 1977), 1-9. Vatralsky's criticisms of the Bahā'ī Faith are summarized in Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky, "Mohammedan Gnosticism in America: The Origin, History, Character, and Esoteric Doctrines of the Truth-Knowers," in *American Journal of Theology*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Jan. 1902), 57-78.

³⁰ The controversy in Racine is described in Andrew J. Nelson, "Racine Assembly -- History of," *Bahá'í Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 6 (Apr.-May 1909), [p. 17].

our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." His closing salutation was "Yours to all eternity for Our Lord Jesus Christ."³¹

The letter's Christian language is even more striking when one considers that subsequent records indicate that Foster did not leave the Bahá'í community, but remained an active member. Foster's references to Jesus Christ do not seem to have been meant as symbols of distinction between his beliefs and those of the Bahá'ís, but as common beliefs that united them, and that bolstered his arguments about the importance of strengthening the love found in the Chicago Bahá'í community. His letter provides a rare insight into the depth of the biblical and Christian commitment that many Chicago Bahá'ís still felt in mid 1901, and suggests that at that time membership in the Bahá'í community was defined in a sufficiently vague manner to allow persons with strongly conservative Protestant attitudes to remain in the fold.

The Esoteric Type

Probably second most common was the *esoteric type*, individuals who had abandoned Protestantism for the Harmonial religious movements before becoming Bahá'ís. If the previous group can be called the *Protestant Bahá'ís* then these and the following types may be styled *exprotestant Bahá'ís*. Like the Euro-American Buddhists, the spiritual journeys of these Bahá'ís included study of Theosophy, Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Swedenborgianism. Some had been members of Masonic orders and secret societies. Others had been interested in alternative methods of healing.³²

The Bahá'í scriptures themselves are not esoteric, nor is the religion a harmonial religion: it emphasizes a transcendent God, contains laws of personal behavior, and rejects such practices as psychic communication with the dead. Its holistic approach to life and its teachings on health, diet, and healing often appealed to esoteric types, especially if they ignored Bahá'u'lláh's statement that one should consult a physician when sick. But its teachings on

³¹ Legh Wilson Foster to the Chicago Bahá'í House of Justice, 6 June 1901, House of Spirituality Records, National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Ill.

³² This type continues to represent a large group of students of the Bahá'í Faith, but the harmonial groups have changed; in the 1980s Transcendental Meditation, EST, astrology, macrobiotic diets, and the writings of Krishnamurti are some examples of harmonial interests that some Bahá'í converts have held.

health are not central to Bahā'ī belief. Probably the main reason the American Bahā'ī community contained many esoteric types is because they represented a large group of persons who have rejected traditional religious forms and were open to new ones; thus they were more likely to hear about the Faith than a church-goer, and were more likely to investigate it. Ironically, for esoteric types, becoming a Bahā'ī often was a return to a conventional form of religion; the Bahā'ī emphasis on the Bible required a rediscovery of Christianity.

Thornton Chase is an example of this ideal type. Chase left mainline Protestantism about 1883 for Swedenborgianism. He attended a Swedenborgian church in Denver for about five years and, as he explained to a friend in 1902, "studied Swedenborg daily."³³ But the Swedenborgian belief in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, coupled with controversies in the Denver church, caused him to abandon Swedenborgianism. As a result, he "became for a period empty of all belief in any of their [the churches'] teachings."³⁴ In search for an alternative, Chase combed libraries and studied all the religions of the world. His library contained at least one book on Masonry, and he is known to have studied Theosophy. His unpublished talks reveal considerable knowledge about the history of the ancient Near East and some familiarity with Hinduism and Buddhism. He even learned hypnotism and "practiced it somewhat."³⁵ None of these alternatives satisfied him, however, until he encountered the Bahā'ī Faith in June 1894. Significantly, it was the Bahā'ī interpretation of biblical prophecy that attracted him to the religion. And as a Bahā'ī he had to accept the teaching that caused him to leave Swedenborgianism-- the virgin birth -- because Bahā'u'llāh upholds it.³⁶

Other prominent Bahā'īs are known to have gone through similar religious journeys. Corinne True, one of the most active Chicago Bahā'ī women, eschewed her father's orthodox

³³ Thornton Chase to P. M. Blake, 26 April 1902 (copy), 3, Thornton Chase Papers, National Bahā'ī Archives.

³⁴ Thornton Chase to 'Abdu'l-Bahā (copy), 19 April 1906, 3, Thornton Chase Papers.

³⁵ Thornton Chase to John J. Abramson (copy), 13 April 1898, 7, Thornton Chase Papers.

³⁶ Thornton Chase, "A Brief History of the American Development of the Bahai Movement," *Star of the West*, 5 (19 Jan. 1915), 263. Unfortunately, Chase's conversion narrative is extremely short and impersonal, so it is not very helpful for determining why Chase became a Bahā'ī.

Presbyterianism and explored Unity, Christian Science, and Divine Science before becoming a Bahā'ī. A significant fraction of the Chicago Bahā'īs were interested in one group that bears many similarities to "metaphysical" movements: Masonry. The weekly Bahā'ī meetings in Chicago were held in a rented room in the Masonic Hall for a decade or more. Several Bahā'īs are known to have been members of the "Oriental Order of the Magi" when they converted to the Faith.³⁷

The New York Bahā'ī community was made up of many individuals with interest in "metaphysical" groups. Many of those who attended Kheiralla's first lessons in New York had been members of a New Thought group; it seems to have provided a network of contacts from which came many of the first New York Bahā'īs. Howard MacNutt, one of the city's most prominent Bahā'īs, had been very much interested in Vedantism before conversion, and had even had a swami living at his house at one point.³⁸

Undoubtedly a significant barrier preventing esotericists becoming Bahā'īs, or remaining interested in esoteric matters, was the attitude of Ibrahim Kheiralla toward "metaphysical" groups. In his talks he specifically criticized Christian Science, Theosophy, and Spiritualism as irrational or misdirected. His critiques revealed many errors in his understanding of these groups, suggesting that he had never studied them himself; nevertheless, according to one pupil, the result was to give them a "severe drubbing."³⁹

³⁷ True's religious search is described in Nathan Rutstein, *Corinne True: Faithful Handmaid of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), 18. The best source of information on Bahā'ī involvement in the Oriental Order of the Magi is John Osenbaugh, Biographical Information on John Osenbaugh, TS, John Osenbaugh Papers, National Bahá'í Archives.

³⁸ According to Wendell Phillips Dodge, "In Memoriam: Arthur Pillsbury Dodge: 1849-1915," in *Star of the West*, 6 (2 Mar. 1916), 163, 165, Eliza Talbot, an early New York Bahā'ī, had been a member of a New Thought class, and she invited the rest of the class to Kheiralla's lessons. The article also mentions MacNutt's interest in swamis.

³⁹ Miss A. A. H. to Edward G. Browne, 15 May 1898, in Edward G. Browne, comp., *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1918), 118.

Kheiralla remained in New York to teach the Bahā'ī Faith for only a few months, however; consequently his opposition to metaphysical groups would have been less effective than in Chicago, his home base. Paul Dealy, who also strongly criticized metaphysical groups, never visited New York and exerted no influence over its community at all. Hence the New York Bahā'īs, though of Protestant extraction -- and thus influenced by the religious values of their childhood -- were apparently less concerned about Protestant questions and issues than the Bahā'īs of Chicago and Kenosha.

The Secular-Reform Type

Much rarer in the 1894-1912 period was the *secular-reform type*. The extreme examples of this type were individuals who had abandoned Protestantism for anarchism and socialism. More common were individuals who abandoned Protestantism for agnosticism, popular philosophy, faith in science, or for popular common-sense philosophy. Bahā'u'llāh's emphasis on independent investigation of truth and 'Abdu'l-Bahā's urging that individuals investigate reality were very appealing teachings for secularists. The Bahā'ī scripture's positive attitude toward science and its emphasis on practical matters--such as social reform--have long interested secular persons who would like to join a rational and pragmatic religion. Before about 1905 the Bahā'īs were largely ignorant of their religion's social teachings, but even before that date a few were attracted to the Faith through its emphasis on the reasonableness of religion. Once the American Bahā'īs came to understand and advocate the Bahā'ī social teachings, starting in the years 1905 to 1912, secular people began to make up the bulk of the new converts.⁴⁰

Many of the earliest secular-reform converts were upper-middle class Americans. Many joined the religion in Europe. Charles Mason Remey became a Bahā'ī in Paris in 1899 and wrote many early pamphlets on the Faith. The pamphlets initially describe the Bahā'ī Faith in terms of the Bible and Christianity, but by 1905 the Bahā'ī social teachings become an increasingly important focus in them. Horace Holley, an intellectual from Connecticut who

⁴⁰ I would judge that the secular-reform type was probably the largest source of converts to the Bahā'ī Faith in the 1960s and 70s. It may still be the largest source of converts.

became a Bahā'ī in Paris in 1910, wrote two books in the teens that demonstrate considerable familiarity with western philosophical thought and contain a strong emphasis on social change. Hippolyte Dreyfus, the first French Bahā'ī, wrote the first book specifically about the Bahā'ī Faith and social reform and frequently utilized Marxist questions in organizing the book's chapters. Helen Campbell, a sociologist who became a Bahā'ī in Boston in 1908, also published essays on the Bahā'ī social reform teachings. All of these individuals downplay biblical prophecy and the spiritual side of the Bahā'ī religion in favor of an exposition of the Bahā'ī teachings that is practical, scientific, and rational.⁴¹

Thomas Tweed notes that among the Euro-American Buddhists, the rationalists usually were the most radical politically. This is true of secular-reform Bahā'īs as well. Dreyfus's familiarity with Marxism is a mild example; the most extreme is Honoré Joseph Jaxon (1861-1952). He was born William Henry Jackson in Ontario, of English Methodist parents, and studied philosophy at the University of Toronto. Moving to the frontier, he joined Louis Riel's rebellion against the Canadian government in 1884. Jaxon changed his name to make it sound French -- Riel's people were half Indian and half French -- joined Riel's new religion, and became Riel's secretary. After the Canadian army crushed the rebellion Jaxon fled to the United States and settled in Chicago.

There he worked for an anarchist defense fund that was raising money to pay the legal fees of the seven anarchists who were accused of throwing a bomb at the police during the Haymarket Square riot. Jaxon also helped organize a world conference of anarchists, spoke at the first national convention of the Populist Party in 1892, advocated Indian rights, and helped raise money for a socialist colony in northern Mexico. In 1894 he joined "Coxey's Army," a group of unemployed army veterans who marched on Washington demanding government assistance. He became a Bahā'ī in 1897 but was rarely a member of the active core of the Chicago Bahā'ī community. Eventually he drifted out of the Bahā'ī Faith.⁴²

⁴¹ Many of these individuals, and their books, are described in the chapter about the Bahā'ī Faith and social reform.

⁴² Donald B. Smith, "Honoré Joseph Jaxon: A Man Who Lived for Others," in *Saskatchewan History*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Autumn 1981), 81-101.

Rationalistic ideologies were frequently associated with all four of the types of students of the Bahá'í religion. Scripturalists -- as I have shown elsewhere⁴³ -- usually emphasized the importance of common sense, both in interpreting the Bible and in investigating truth. The esoteric types usually saw their own study of religion as systematic or even as scientific. Hence the secular-reform type of student is best identified by his or her concern for pragmatic issues -- such as social reform -- and not by a language that emphasizes arguments from modern science or philosophy.

The Romantic-Mystical Type

Finally, one finds a few individuals of the *romantic-mystical* type, who emphasized God in nature or the encounter with God in one's personal life. For these persons, the experience of God was paramount. Such persons often became Bahá'ís after reading Bahá'u'lláh's mystical works, or even after hearing a single Bahá'í prayer. They tended to see religious truth not in rationalist or esoteric terms, but in terms of aesthetics, feeling, and intuition. Some of them were artists.⁴⁴

The best example of attitudes based on romanticism expressed by an early Bahá'í comes from the writings of Isabella Brittingham (1852-1924), wife of James Brittingham. She had been an Episcopalian, apparently was more widely read than most Bahá'ís, and apparently was more of a Protestant liberal in her religious views than most. She did not ever argue that her approach to religion was rational or logical, as Paul Dealy did. She never spoke about common sense, as he frequently did.⁴⁵ Rather, she frequently spoke about faith and love.

Her perspective is epitomized by her interpretation of a statement by 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said that higher than all four of them was the station of faith. Brittingham noted that

⁴³ Robert H. Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith and American Protestantism*, Th.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1990, chapter 4, "New Word and Old: The Bible and the American Bahá'is."

⁴⁴ Although rare in the first two decades of the American Bahá'í community, I would judge that this group is more common today.

⁴⁵ The use of common-sense language by American Bahá'ís is discussed in Stockman, *Bahá'í Faith and American Protestantism*, chapter four, "New Word and Old."

thus, through spiritual evolution, man arises from the animal station (the station of sensation, which is our Satan) and attains the station of intellect [the station of the Human kingdom]; then dies to that station and arises in the station of spirit. It has been said that "the last degree of reason is the first degree of love."⁴⁶

In this one passage, in addition to seeing love (emotion or feeling) as superior to intellect, Brittingham also interpreted Satan metaphorically and accepted the concept of evolution (which many early American Bahā'īs, including Kheiralla, rejected).

Elsewhere in the same work she reflected on the rise of pluralism and the declining role of Protestantism in American society. Unlike Dealy and Kheiralla, however, she viewed it in an optimistic and positive light, as one might expect from a liberal Protestant:

In the present day there is comparatively little atheism. While many have rejected what is known as orthodox belief, yet, in this age there is a recession in the tide of infidelity. Back of the law is recognized its Founder; back of the effect is a Cause; back of life the Bestower of life; and, to an extent of which it is not itself cognizant, the world is seeking light. This explains the existence of the many new forms of religious thought which are now developing.⁴⁷

Brittingham was not critical of "metaphysical" movements, as Kheiralla and Dealy were; nor was she strongly enamored of Protestant orthodoxy.

A Presbyterian missionary to Iran, Samuel G. Wilson, who wrote against the American Bahā'īs, offered a classification of them that is similar to the four ideal types. He divided the American Bahā'īs into four groups: 1) novelty seekers; 2) pantheists and comparative religionists; 3) those attracted to the Bahā'ī Faith because of its ethical and social teachings; and 4) those who saw it as Christianity renewed and fulfilled. While the first two do not correspond exactly to the mystic-romantic type and the esoteric type, the last two match the secular-reform type and the scripturalist type quite well. Wilson noted (correctly, I believe) that most American Bahā'īs belonged to the fourth group.⁴⁸ However, all four aspects of the

⁴⁶ Isabella D. Brittingham, *The Revelation of Bahā-Ullāh in a Sequence of Four Lessons* (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society, 1903), 2. The quotation she gives is probably from Mirza Asadu'llah; see Mirza Asadu'llah, *Explanations Concerning Sacred Mysteries* (Chicago: Bahais Supply and Publishing Board, 1902), 13.

⁴⁷ Brittingham, *The Revelation of Bahā-Ullāh*, 1.

⁴⁸ Samuel Graham Wilson, "Bahalism an Antichristian System," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 72, no. 285 (Jan. 1915), 3-4.

Bahá'í Faith were part of its overall appeal to Americans: it offered a cosmopolitan world-view that was inclusive of all religions and advocated a vision of a united, peaceful humanity while retaining an old-time religion biblicism and an emphasis on a personal relationship with God.

Of the four groups, the scripturalists generally underwent a transition from Protestantism to the Bahá'í Faith most easily. For them, becoming a Bahá'í meant transferring their loyalty from one Word of God to another. The other three groups generally consisted of persons who had created or chosen their own belief system individually, and thus often had greater difficulty than the scripturalists in accepting all the details of the Bahá'í teachings. Many of them were what a sociologist of the early American Bahá'í community has called *epistemological individualists*, persons who gave primacy to an internally derived and measured truth, as opposed to those who see truth as external and grounded in revelation.⁴⁹ Often epistemological individualists opposed efforts to organize the Bahá'í Faith; sometimes they were unable to reconcile their beliefs with the Bahá'í scriptures and did not remain Bahá'ís.⁵⁰ In extreme cases they attempted to create their own schismatic branches of the Bahá'í religion. As the American Bahá'í community came to understand the Bahá'í scriptures better and better, from 1910 to 1920, a concept of normative belief developed, and often the epistemological individualists came to be seen as "heterodox."

The three groups other than the scripturalists also share many traits with T. J. Jackson Lears's antimodernists. Lears defines *modernism* as follows:

the process of rationalization first described by Max Weber—the systematic organization of economic life for maximum productivity and of individual life for maximum personal achievement; the drive for efficient control of nature under the banner of improving human welfare; the reduction of the world to a disenchanted object to be manipulated by rational technique.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Peter Smith, "Reality Magazine: Editorship and Ownership of a Bahá'í Periodical," in *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History, volume two: From Iran East and West* (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1984), 135-56.

⁵⁰ Opposition to organization of the Bahá'í religion, and the associated question of an anti-modernist impulse among the American Bahá'ís, is discussed in Stockman, *Bahá'í Faith and American Protestantism*, chapter six, "Organizers of the Covenant: Activism and the American Bahá'ís."

⁵¹ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 7.

Antimodernism, as described by Lears, took many forms. A major characteristic was the quest for "authentic experience" in the form of a return to medieval Catholicism; a focus on arts, crafts, ritual, and aesthetics; and interest in Eastern religions.⁵² Such a quest is reflected in the lives of many of the esoteric and romantic-mystical types, as well as in the actions of the anarchists and single-taxers of the secular-reform type.

A major challenge facing Bahā'ī historians is to develop a clear understanding of the roles of these different groups in the American Bahā'ī community, and how they interacted with each other as the definitions of Bahā'ī membership shifted. Some publications have created the impression that the Americans who became Bahā'īs were largely a group of former cultists who, under 'Abdu'l-Bahā's encouragement, added Bahaism to their beliefs until Shoghi Effendi insisted on creating an exclusivistic Bahā'ī religion (that is, an exclusivistic organization and community). But exclusivistic factors were always present—hundreds of American Bahā'īs fasted in 1905, for example, and few were attending church on Sundays -- and sometimes the exclusivistic factors were very strong, especially in Kenosha and, to a less extent, Chicago. The opposite swing of the pendulum -- that the American Bahā'īs were a bunch of former Bible Fundamentalists who went from a millennial vision of an exclusivistic religious community to an administratively defined exclusivistic community -- must also be avoided, as downplaying the ideological diversity of the community's roots and ignoring the inclusivistic forces that were at work in the 1900-21 period. In different local communities the balance between these forces was different -- New York City, perhaps Boston, and the European Bahā'ī communities seem to have been particularly inclusivistic -- thus making the task of judging the overall balance of forces a particularly complex and subjective one. My personal judgment is that the biblical background was always the strongest of the four in North America, and that exclusivistic forces were always stronger than inclusivistic forces among the American Bahā'īs. But this judgment can only be one voice in the ongoing dialogue about early American Bahā'ī history, a dialogue that has yet to produce a consensus on this and other key issues.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xvii.

LETTERS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE / MEMORANDA OF THE
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE, HAIFA.

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 14 March 1989

From: The Research Department

QUESTIONS ABOUT ASPECTS OF THE TEACHINGS

The Research Department has considered the questions on various aspects of the teachings raised by ----- in his letter of 28 January 1989. We provide the following response.

1. The Holy Spirit and the Most Great Spirit

----- refers to a passage in "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh", vol. 4, (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p. 134, by Adib Taherzadeh. This section both describes the relationship between the Most Great Spirit and Bahá'u'lláh and suggests that, while in the past Dispensations, God's revelation has been indirect through the intermediary of the Holy Spirit, in this Dispensation the Most Great Spirit of God has revealed Himself directly to Bahá'u'lláh and ushered in the Day of God. ----- asks for additional information on this subject.

The Research Department has, to date, not been able to locate a comprehensive definition of the term "Most Great Spirit" in the Writings or the letters of Shoghi Effendi. The discussion in Mr. Taherzadeh's book appears to be based, in part, on an extract from the *Súriy-i-Haykal* which states:

The Holy Spirit itself hath been generated through the agency of a single letter revealed by this Most Great Spirit, if ye be of them that comprehend.

("The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters", rev. ed. [Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982], p. 109)

Shoghi Effendi has provided an interpretation of this extract in a letter dated 23 July 1936 written on his behalf to an individual believer in response to a series of questions about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Bahá'u'lláh and His relationship to the other Manifestations of God. The letter states:

As to your question concerning the Holy Spirit and its relationship to Bahá'u'lláh; the Holy Spirit may well be compared to the rays of the sun, and Bahá'u'lláh to a perfect mirror reflecting these rays which radiate from the sun. Briefly stated the comparison is this:

God is the sun; the Holy Spirit is the rays of the sun; and Bahá'u'lláh is the mirror reflecting the rays of the sun. In the passage you have quoted from the "Súriy-i-Haykal" Bahá'u'lláh refers to His station of identity with God, to His reality which is Divine. In this passage it is really God speaking through Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh is not the Intermediary between God and the other Manifestations, although these are under His shadow, for the simple reason that the Messengers of God are all inherently one; it is their Message that differs. Bahá'u'lláh appearing at a time when the world has attained maturity His message must necessarily surpass the message of all previous prophets. Not only so, but His message is potentially greater than any message which later prophets within His own cycle may reveal. This is because the stage of maturity is the most momentous stage in the evolution of mankind....

In "God Passes By", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 101, Shoghi Effendi describes the coming of Revelation to Bahá'u'lláh in the Siyáh-Chál and makes the following statement about how the "Most Great Spirit" was manifested symbolically in earlier Dispensations. He wrote:

...at so critical an hour and under such appalling circumstances the "Most Great Spirit" as designated by Himself, and symbolized in the Zoroastrian, the Mosaic, the Christian, and Muhammadan Dispensations by the Sacred Fire, the Burning Bush, the Dove and the Angel Gabriel respectively, descended upon, and revealed itself, personated by a "Maiden," to the agonized soul of Bahá'u'lláh.

From the foregoing, it appears that the term the "Most Great Spirit" is used to convey both the kindling of Revelation in the Manifestations of God and God speaking through His Manifestations. The term thus seems to be applied only to "Manifestations 'endowed with constancy'". We note, in passing, that in Bahá'í Writings which designates Mullá Husayn and Ouddús as "prophets", though, clearly, they have high stations. For a description of their stations please refer to "God Passes By", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), pp. 49-50.

As to the identity of the One Who spoke to Moses on Sinai, the Guardian, in a letter dated 19 October 1947, written on his behalf, provided the following elucidation:

Bahá'u'lláh is not the Intermediary between other Manifestations and God. Each has His own relation to the Primal Source. But in the sense that Bahá'u'lláh is the greatest Manifestation to yet appear, the One Who consummates the Revelation of Moses, He was the One Moses conversed with in the Burning Bush. In other words Bahá'u'lláh identifies the Glory of the Godhead on that occasion with Himself. No distinction can be made amongst the Prophets in the sense that They all proceed from one source, and are of one essence. But Their stations and functions in this world are different.

This theme is developed by Bahá'u'lláh in His Tablet of Tajalliyát which appears in "Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas" [rev. ed.] (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), pp. 45-54.

With regard to the operation of the Most Great Spirit or the Holy Spirit in today's society, the following references which describe the "Major" and "Minor" plans of God could well provide a framework for understanding the role of the Spirit and Will of God in the world:

- "Citadel of Faith: Messages to America 1947-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 139-140.
- "Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963-1968", 1st rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 133-34.

2. Spiritual Worlds of God

----- refers to a discussion of a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh, which is included in "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh", vol. 1 (Oxford: George Ronald, 1974), pp. 58-59. The tablet describes in broad terms the spiritual worlds of God. ----- raises a number of questions about the occupants of the various spiritual worlds and enquires about the possibility of certain souls progressing through these worlds. While the Writings contain many references to the spiritual worlds and to life after death, these are subjects that remain shrouded in mystery. Indeed, in relation to the "worlds of God", the following appears in "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh".

None can reckon or comprehend them except God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise....

Further, the Master, in "Some Answered Questions", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985), p. 242, indicates that:

...the life of the Kingdom is the life of the spirit, the eternal life, and ... it is purified from place, like the spirit of man which has no place....

The following sections from "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984) might assist ----- in his study of this subject:

- LXXIII: After death, the spirit of the true believer "will everlastingly circle round the Will of God". (p. 141)
- LXXIX: The worlds of God.
- LXXXI: The "Prophets of God and His chosen ones" will seek the "companionship" of the detached soul after its "separation from the body". (p. 158)
- LXXXVI: The consciousness that human souls have of one another after their separation from the body.
- CLXIV: The knowledge of the nature of the afterlife of those who recognize the Manifestation "is with God, alone". (p. 346)

With regard to the passage on p. 11 of "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984) referred to by -----, the Research Department has, to date, not been able to locate any authoritative interpretation of this extract in the Bahá'í Writings or the letters of Shoghi Effendi.

3. The Sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh

As to the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh in emphasizing His sufferings in His own Writings, to further -----'s study of this subject we refer him to "The Bahá'í World", vol. XVI (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), pp. 9-22, for a comprehensive compilation of extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh on His sufferings. This same volume also contains an essay by the Hand of the Cause George Townshend entitled "The Sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh and Their Significance". See pp. 635-37.

4. The Date the Bahá'í Faith Was Founded

With regard to the question about the date the Bahá'í Faith was founded and the relationship between the Bábí and Bahá'í Dispensations, we enclose an extract from a letter dated 21 May 1981 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice. The extract addresses a number of issues associated with the commencement of the Bahá'í cycle. -----'s assumption that the passage on page 48 of "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh" is a reference to the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in 1863 is correct.

Enclosure [not available]

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date 18 April 1988

From: The Research Department

THE IDENTITY OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The Research Department has studied the questions about Bahá'u'lláh raised by ----- in her letter of 14 March 1988 to the Universal House of Justice. ----- explains that, as a result of studying the Teachings with one of the members of her community, she has come to believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the Father of Jesus, that He was the Holy Spirit who took the form of a man and addressed Mary. She seeks clarification of a number of issues concerning the identity of Bahá'u'lláh. We provide the following points in response.

1. The Father of Jesus Christ

With regard to the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains in "Some Answered Questions", Rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p. 63 that "Christ found existence through the Spirit of God". To elaborate this idea and to underline the miraculous nature of Christ's birth we provide the following extracts from three letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to individual believers:

With regard to your question concerning the Virgin Birth of Jesus; on this point; as on several others, the Bahá'í Teachings are in full agreement with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. In the "Kitáb-i-Íqán" (Book of Certitude) p. 56, and in a few other Tablets still unpublished, Bahá'u'lláh confirms, however indirectly, the Catholic conception of the Virgin Birth. Also, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the "Some Answered Questions" Chap. XII, p. 73, explicitly states that "Christ found existence through the Spirit of God (p. 63) which statement necessarily implies, when viewed in the light of the text, that Jesus was not the son of Joseph. (14 October 1935)

It is true that Jesus referred to himself as the Son of God, but this, as explained by Bahá'u'lláh in the "Íqán", does not indicate any physical relationship whatever. Its meaning is entirely spiritual, and points to the close relationship existing between him and Almighty God. Nor does it necessarily indicate any inherent superiority in the station of Jesus over other Prophets and Messengers. As far as their spiritual nature is concerned all Prophets can be regarded as Sons of God, as they all reflect His light, though not in an equal measure, and this difference in reflection is due to the conditions and circumstances under which they appear. (29 November 1937)

First regarding the birth of Jesus Christ. In the light of what Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have stated concerning this subject it is evident that Jesus came into this world through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit and that consequently his birth was quite miraculous." (31 December 1937)

Based on these extracts it can be seen that:

- Jesus came into the world "through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit".
- The term "Son of God" does not imply any "physical relationship whatever".
- From the point of view of their "spiritual nature", "all Prophets can be regarded as Sons of God".

As to whether Bahá'u'lláh is the Holy Spirit who took the form of a man and addressed Mary, such a view is not supported by the Bahá'í Writings. For example, the Guardian in a letter of 23 July 1936 written on his behalf to an individual believer clearly distinguishes between the Holy Spirit and Bahá'u'lláh. He wrote:

As to your question concerning the Holy Spirit and its relationship to Bahá'u'lláh; the Holy Spirit may well be compared to the rays of the sun and Bahá'u'lláh to a perfect mirror reflecting these rays which radiate from the sun. Briefly stated the comparison is this: God is the sun; the Holy Spirit is the rays of the sun; and Bahá'u'lláh is the mirror reflecting the rays of the sun... (23 July 1936)

In this same letter, Shoghi Effendi also states that "Bahá'u'lláh is not the intermediary between God and the other Manifestations".

With regard to whether the "Our Father" in the Lord's Prayer is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh as the Father of Christ, this question was addressed to Shoghi Effendi who responded, in a letter written on his behalf on 28 September 1941 to an individual, that:

When Christ prayed "Our Father who art in heaven" He referred to God, not to Bahá'u'lláh.

Likewise, although Shoghi Effendi stated that the promise of Isaiah about the coming of the "Everlasting Father", and the prophecy of Christ about the advent of the Son of Man "in the glory of the Father" were fulfilled through the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh, he also made it clear that these prophecies relate to the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation, and do not imply that He was an intermediary between God and Jesus. How much less can they indicate that He was the Father of Jesus.

2. The Lord of Hosts

The Lord of Hosts, Whose advent is foretold in the Bible, is one of the titles of Bahá'u'lláh. The statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which is quoted in "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters", 2nd rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 139, relates to this subject. The Master indicated that:

...what is meant in the prophecies by the "Lord of Hosts" and the "Promised Christ" is the Blessed Perfection (Bahá'u'lláh) and His holiness the Exalted One (the Báb)....

As to whether or not the word "Hosts" is a reference to the Manifestations of God, the following extract from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Tablets of the Divine Plan Revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the North American Bahá'ís", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust), pp. 47-48, contains a definition of the "meaning of the Hosts of God". It states:

The Blessed Person of the Promised One is interpreted in the Holy Book as the Lord of Hosts -- the heavenly armies. By heavenly armies those souls are intended who are entirely freed from the human world, transformed into celestial spirits and have become divine angels. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of reality who will illumine all the continents. Each one is holding in his hand a trumpet, blowing the breath of life over all the regions. They are delivered from human qualities and the defects of the world of nature, are characterized with the characteristics of God, and are attracted with the fragrances of the Merciful. Like unto the apostles of Christ, who were filled with Him, these souls also have become filled with His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh; that is, the love of Bahá'u'lláh has so mastered every organ, part and limb of their bodies, as to leave no effect from the promptings of the human world.

These souls are the armies of God and the conquerors of the East and the West. Should one of them turn his face toward some direction and summon the people to the

Kingdom of God, all the ideal forces and Lodyly confirmations will rush to his support and reinforcement. He will behold all the doors open and all the strong fortifications and impregnable castles razed to the ground. Singly and alone he will attack the armies of the world, defeat the right and left wings of the hosts of all the countries, break through the lines of the legions of all the nations and carry his attack to the very center of the powers of the earth. This is the meaning of the Hosts of God.

Any soul from among the believers of Bahá'u'lláh who attains to this station, will become known as the Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh. Therefore strive ye with heart and soul so that ye may reach this lofty and exalted position, be established upon the throne of everlasting glory, and crown your heads with the shining diadem of the Kingdom, whose jewels may irradiate upon centuries and cycles.

3. and 4. God and Bahá'u'lláh

----- expresses the view that while Bahá'u'lláh is not the "unknowable Essence", He is God and the Divine Source through which we were created. We enclose for ----- a section from the "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters", 2nd rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), pp. 112-14, which deals with the relationship between the Manifestation and God. In this extract Shoghi Effendi makes a clear distinction between the person of the Manifestation, the "human temple that has been made the vehicle of so overpowering a Revelation" and the "Invisible yet rational God" and he states that "one of the major beliefs of our Faith is that Bahá'u'lláh is "never to be identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity Itself". It is not then, in conformity with the teachings to consider Bahá'u'lláh as God.

Finally, as to whether Bahá'u'lláh is the Source of all creation, while the Teachings of the Manifestations of God are the means for the recreation, the spiritual transformation of humankind, the Bahá'í Writings indicate that it is God Who "created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein".

Enclosure [not included]

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice
From: The Research Department

Date: 23 February 1992

ANCIENT GODDESS RELIGION

The Research Department has studied the questions concerning the possible existence of an ancient goddess religion and goddess worship contained in the letter dated 26 November 1991 from explains

that there is renewed interest in goddess worship in the United States and that neo-pagan groups are encouraging an elevated status of women and white witchcraft, which they regard as healing techniques. She seeks assistance in knowing how to respond to questions that are based on what she describes as "supposed new archeological findings". We provide the following response.

1. Ancient Goddess Religion

The Research Department has not, to date, been able to locate any statements in the Bahá'í Writings concerning either the existence of an ancient goddess religion or the subject of goddess worship.

2. Responding to Questions about Goddess Worship

While the Research Department cannot provide detailed comment on the archaeological findings that are being presented as evidence of the existence of an ancient goddess religion and goddess worship, we would like to suggest a strategy that might assist ... in formulating her response to such questions. It is our view that by considering the reported research evidence and the underlying issues raised by such evidence within the overall framework of the Bahá'í teachings, it is possible to begin to generate responsive answers. We provide the following example as a stimulus to ...'s thinking.

Some archaeological records have been interpreted to suggest that, in certain neolithic civilizations, the Godhead was female and that goddesses were the principal religious figures. Female deities have been variously linked to the fertility of crops, the sovereignty of kingship, the protection of ceremonial centres, and the waging of warfare against enemies. These records raise such issues as the nature of God, the gender of the spirit, the nature and function of the Manifestation of God, the relationship between women and men, and the role of the feminine in religion and society. And these are issues on which the teachings of the Faith have a great deal to say.

2.1 The Nature of God

A number of authors express the view that religions which stress the maleness of the Supreme Being tend to deify the masculine principle and see it as the only source of legitimate authority. It is important, therefore, to appreciate the Bahá'í perspective on the nature of God. To assist ... in her study of this subject, we attach a brief compilation on this subject, from which a number of points can be drawn:

- From the Bahá'í perspective, the "Essence" of God is "unknowable".
- The "Reality of Divinity ... is Invisible, incomprehensible, inaccessible, a pure essence which cannot be described ..."
- God is "exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence..."
- "God is never flesh". The Godhead has no physical form and does not in any way resemble a human

being, male or female.

- The "attributes" of the Manifestations of God are the means by which the "Divine characteristics and perfections" of God are made known to humanity.

For additional information about the nature of God, ... is referred to the book by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, "The Desire of the World" (Oxford: George Ronald, 1982). Of particular interest is the listing of the names and titles of God found on pp. 167-186. It will be seen that many of these titles encompass such feminine qualities and attributes as have been associated with the so-called "Great Goddess".

2.2 The Gender of Spirit

In "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), pp. 79-80, the Master affirms that both women and men are created in the image of God. He states:

...in the sight of Bahá, women are accounted the same as men, and God hath created all humankind in His own image, and after His own likeness. That is, men and women alike are the revealers of His names and attributes, and from the spiritual viewpoint there is no difference between them. Whosoever draweth nearer to God, that one is the most favoured, whether man or woman....

Further, in one of His Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá indicates that "the spirit and the world of the spirit" are neither male nor female:

Know thou that the distinction between male and female is an exigency of the physical world and hath no connection with the spirit; for the spirit and the world of the spirit are sanctified above such exigencies, and wholly beyond the reach of such changes as befall the physical body in the contingent world. (From a Tablet, recently translated from the Arabic)

2.3 The Nature and Function of the Manifestation

The Manifestations of God embody the names, the attributes and the perfections of God. While 'Abdu'l-Bahá has clearly affirmed that women and men both reveal the attributes of God and that "from the spiritual viewpoint there is no difference between them", the Manifestations have the particular function of revealing the Will of God to humanity. Bahá'u'lláh explains in the "Gleanings" that the Manifestation of God "representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation".

Concerning the sex of the Manifestations of God and the implications for the equality of women and men, the Universal House of Justice, in a letter dated 27 October 1986 written on its behalf to an individual believer, provides the following elucidation:

Even though there have been outstanding women such as Sarah, Āsīyih, the Virgin Mary, Fátimih, Ṭáhirih and the Greatest Holy Leaf in every Dispensation, it is an incontrovertible fact that all Manifestations of God known to us have been men. Moreover, it is a clear provision in Bahá'í administration that the Guardians were to be men and that membership on the Universal House of Justice is confined to men. Whether these facts point to a differentiation in function that is unalterable, or whether it was merely a characteristic of a period which will change when mankind attains its maturity is a matter that will, no doubt, become clear in the future. The important point for Bahá'ís to remember is that, in face of the categorical pronouncements in Bahá'í Scripture establishing the equality of men and women, even these facts are no evidence at all of the superiority of the male over the female sex. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained that equality does not mean identity of function. He has also stated that the few areas in which men and women are not equal are "negligible".

We must also remember that sex is a characteristic of this world, not of the spiritual world.

Hence, while no known Manifestations of God have, to date, been female, it is also true that throughout religious history outstanding women, who do not have the station of Manifestation or goddess, have performed many of the creative, nurturant and protective functions that have been ascribed to female deities and goddesses in ancient times. In other words, religious history provides examples of female role models who can inspire, motivate and empower the (women) believers. Further, it is interesting to observe that Bahá'u'lláh refers to His Revelation as the "Mother Book", which symbolizes, among other things, the creative and regenerative influence of His teachings, and in "Some Answered Questions" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), 'Abdu'l-Bahá likens the Law of God to a woman. See Chapter 13.

2.4 The Role of the Feminine in Religion and Society

A number of recent archaeological records have suggested that there was a time when women had the preeminent role in religion and society and that later this role was taken over by men. They contrast this period with the present day and attribute contemporary social and ecological problems to the relative absence of the feminine element in society. While there are no specific references in the Writings to the early period, it is interesting to note that the Master indicates that "From the beginning of existence until the Promised Day men retained superiority over women in every respect". And, in one of His talks, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasises the uniqueness of the Bahá'í position on the equality of women and men. He states that Bahá'u'lláh

establishes the equality of man and woman. This is peculiar to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, for all other religions have placed man above women.

("The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 455)

Clearly, the Bahá'í Faith sees a role for the feminine in religion and society as 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains in the following extract:

The world in the past has been ruled by force, and man has dominated over woman by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities both of body and mind. But the balance is already shifting; force is losing its dominance, and mental alertness, intuition, and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an age less masculine and more permeated with the feminine ideals, or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced.

(From a talk, cited in "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, 5th rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 149)

For additional references to the importance of the contribution of women to religion and society, is referred to the compilation on "Women" (Thornhill, Ontario: Bahá'í Canada Publications, 1985).

2.5 The Equality of Men and Women

As ... indicates, some of the interpretations of the new archaeological findings and the activities of the neo-pagan groups directed toward raising the status of women underline a concern about the lack of recognition of the equality of women and men and the need to identify means by which the current imbalance can be redressed. The compilation on "Women" contains many extracts from the Bahá'í Writings and the letters of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice which indicate the Bahá'í commitment to the principle of equality and its achievement, set out the steps that must be taken to raise the status of women and stress the importance of the participation of women in all walks of life to the attainment of peace. Further, reports of educational and deepening programmes and of social and economic development activities undertaken in the worldwide Bahá'í community, which are contained in such publications as "The American Bahá'í", serve to demonstrate the seriousness of the Bahá'í commitment to attempt to put this important spiritual principle into practice.

3. Concluding Statement

The comments contained in the above paragraphs are by no means exhaustive. They are intended to serve as a stimulus to assist ... in her thinking about the issues she raised, and to illustrate possible ways in which areas of common concern might be identified and bridges of communication built between the Bahá'í teachings and persons involved in goddess worship.

TWO COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO BAHÁ'Í REVIEW

MEMORANOUUM

To: Or. Janet Khan

Date: 8 September 1991

From: The Department of the Secretariat

Subject: Questions from Dr. Robert Stockmen, your memorandum to the Universal House of Justice dated 4 April 1991

The Universal House of Justice has asked that we reply to your memorandum as follows.

The first question from Dr. Stockman concerns the use of provisional (and therefore unreviewed) translations of the Bahá'í Writings that appeared in an article by Keven Brown. We have been asked to say that the policy of the House of Justice in this matter has not changed and that translations into English, and revisions of earlier translations in that language, must be checked at the World Centre and officially approved before publication. There have been, however, occasions when the House of Justice has permitted the publication of provisional translations made by individuals whose work is known to it. In these cases the translations usually appear in scholarly or other publications of limited distribution and are not likely to be used as a basis for translations into other languages. Such usage does not alter the general policy as stated above.

A letter dated 31 August 1989 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, states that "This policy is not intended to prohibit Bahá'ís from making scholarly study of these Writings of the Faith, including analysis of existing translations, use of more technical terms in parentheses or in footnotes, and commentary on the approach to translation used by the Guardian."

In the specific matter raised by Dr. Stockman concerning translations made by Mr. Keven Brown, the Association for Bahá'í Studies in Canada was informed by the Department of the Secretariat in a message dated 21 November 1990, that although the extracts Mr. Brown had translated could not be reviewed here at the Bahá'í World Centre for the present, "...there is no objection in principle, given the competence of the author, to their use if clearly identified as provisional in character."

Concerning the second question from Dr. Stockman which relates to literature review, specifically whether the Universal House of Justice might be considering changes in policy in relation to the review process, kindly convey to him that no change is being considered at the present time.

This issue sometimes raises lively discussion in the Bahá'í community, particularly among scholars in the West. As the Universal House of Justice has commented on it on a number of occasions through letters from the Department of the Secretariat, we are providing excerpts below that may be of particular interest and help to Dr. Stockman.

At this early stage in the development of the Bahá'í Faith, which is striving against great odds to establish itself in a world that is highly critical, often antagonistic towards

new ideas, and whose communications media tend to emphasize negative information, it is important that Bahá'í authors, scriptwriters and filmmakers endeavour to present the Faith with accuracy and dignity. It is one thing for a non-Bahá'í to make erroneous statements about the Faith; this can be excused on the basis of ignorance. But for a Bahá'í to make such errors is quite a different thing, because he is considered to be knowledgeable about that which he espouses.

Therefore, a Bahá'í author is expected to ensure to the extent possible a correct representation of the Faith in his work; as an aid he draws upon the reviewing facilities provided by Bahá'í institutions. A great many authors spontaneously and informally submit their manuscripts to a type of review, although they would not necessarily call it that, when they request the comments and criticisms of persons whose expertise and judgement they respect. Submission to Bahá'í review is no greater a requirement, and may well be less demanding in most cases, than the rigorous review of scientific papers before their publication. In the same way that scientists have acceded to the discipline of review in the interest of ensuring the precision and integrity of their dissertations, Bahá'í authors respect the function of review in the Bahá'í community.

The Bahá'í Faith makes very serious claims and has a rich and complex history, but it is as yet a young religion whose precepts are not widely understood. It has been undergoing severe persecution in the land of its birth and is experiencing serious opposition in other places where its detractors have no compunction in misrepresenting its purposes. Until its history, teachings, and practices are well known throughout the world, it will be necessary for the Bahá'í community to make efforts within itself to present correct information about the Faith in books, films or other media. This can and must be done without violating the principle of freedom of expression, which, according to the teachings of the Faith, is a vital right of all persons.

Although the function of review in the Bahá'í community is concerned with checking an author's exposition of the Faith and its teachings, this function is not to be confused with evaluation of the literary merit of the work or of its value as a publication, which are normally the prerogative of the publisher....

(From a letter dated 25 September 1989 to an individual believer)

The House of Justice has not felt that it is feasible as yet to exempt Bahá'í scholars from the process of review for their general publications. There are two reasons for this. Although there are Bahá'í scholars who have a profound understanding of the Cause and would not misrepresent or distort it in their writings, there are, alas, some who, while having academic qualifications in a certain area are, at the same time, seriously deficient in their knowledge of the teachings. The writings of such authors, if published without review, could mislead the general public, and the very fact that they were recognized

academics would give added seriousness to the errors that they would propagate at this stage of the development of the Faith. Moreover, the House of Justice feels that it would not be wise, at this juncture, to have a list of reliable Bahá'í scholars who would not be subject to review as distinct from all other believers.

(From a letter dated 17 March 1988 to an individual believer)

Perhaps of interest to Dr. Stockmen, in case he has not already been informed about it, is that some time ago the House of Justice decided that doctoral theses and similar treatises submitted to institutions of learning for the obtaining of a degree are not subject to Bahá'í review unless they are to be published more widely than is required for the degree in question.

Kindly assure Dr. Stockman that the House of Justice would welcome receiving a copy of the ideas he is planning to submit to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States for improving its review process.

A LETTER OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE TO SELECTED NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES ¹

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat
To Selected National Spiritual Assemblies

30 October 1991

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Review

The Universal House of Justice has requested us to send you the enclosed copy of a letter dated 28 October 1991 which we have written at its instruction to a believer who is an academic and who requested that consideration be given to changing the Bahá'í administrative policy requiring pre-publication review of manuscripts authored by Bahá'ís. The concern expressed is that this policy contradicts values of free inquiry as perceived in academic circles and that submission to it could undermine scholarly credibility. As you will see from the enclosure, the House of Justice does not agree with this perception of Bahá'í review, but it sympathizes with the difficulties faced by Bahá'í academics in upholding and defending Bahá'í policy. Your attention is called particularly to the penultimate paragraph of the letter which mentions an approach intended to ease these difficulties and which can readily be accommodated by the current regulations on Bahá'í review.

¹ This letter was cited by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom in a communication dated 1 February, 1992.

The scholar who has authored a manuscript on a Bahá'í subject may recommend to the National Spiritual Assembly one or more individuals for inclusion among the reviewers selected by the Assembly. If for some particular reason the Assembly finds his nominees unacceptable, it may ask the author to submit other names for its consideration. While the National Assembly must retain control of the reviewing process and operate its reviewing mechanism as it sees fit, it must at the same time exercise a flexibility which will allow it to accommodate such a procedure. As in any other instance of review, the Assembly should exercise independent judgment as to the merits of the recommendations it receives from its appointed reviewers.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
 For Department of the Secretariat
 Enclosure
 cc: International Teaching Centre
 Reviewing Board for Bahá'í Literature in Arabic
 Persian Reviewing Panel

**THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
 BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE**

Department of the Secretariat

28 October 1991

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Further to our letter of 10 March 1991, we have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to convey the following comments in reply to your letter of 4 January 1991.

The House of Justice was deeply touched by the spirit of your letter, warmly congratulates you on the status you have attained as an academic, and appreciates your efforts to make use of your scholarly training in lending expression to the Faith in academic circles.

The requirement that materials about the Faith authored by Bahá'ís must be reviewed by Bahá'í institutions before publication is imbedded in a Bahá'í administrative policy which originated with the explicit instruction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi included this instruction in his outline of the duties of National Spiritual Assemblies, and the duty of reviewing Bahá'í material is included in the constitution of these institutions with his approval. The requirement is temporary and is meant to protect the Interests of the Faith at the early stages of its development.

You are, of course, entirely correct that only the Guardian had the prerogative of interpretation; it is not a prerogative that he could have devolved on other institutions. Yet in a number of letters written on his behalf, the importance of reviewing manuscripts about the Faith was repeatedly emphasized, such

as in a letter dated 15 November 1956 written to an individual, in which the following is stated:

Any Bahá'í book presenting the Faith should be reviewed by a competent body. This only means that they should ascertain whether there is any misrepresentation of the Teachings in it. Sometimes the friends think they have to go into literary reviews and interfere with the author's style etc., which of course is wholly unnecessary....

Clearly, then, there is a distinction between the function of interpretation for which Shoghi Effendí was solely responsible and the function of Bahá'í review, which is essentially a matter of judgment. Literary review is, of course, a separate matter.

The House of Justice feels certain that it is possible for scholars to abide by this requirement without undermining the academic standard of their work, since the purpose of review is not inimical to academic excellence. Your concerns as an academic certainly deserve careful attention. But the Bahá'í community also has immense concerns about the consequences of dispensing too quickly with this requirement. The Bahá'í Faith makes very serious claims and has a rich and complex history, but it is as yet a young religion whose precepts are not widely understood. It has been undergoing severe persecution in the land of its birth and is experiencing serious opposition in other places where its detractors have no compunction in misrepresenting its purposes. Until its history, teachings and practices are well known throughout the world, it will be necessary for the Bahá'í community to make efforts within itself to present correct information about the Faith in published material. This can and must be done without violating the principle of freedom of expression, which, according to the teachings of the Faith, is a vital right of all persons.

Even in the world of journalism where the most libertine excesses of expression are stoutly defended on the grounds of constitutional protection, as is the case in the United States, serious questions are being raised about the accuracy of non-fiction books being published these days. An article in a recent issue of "Columbia Journalism Review" (July / August 1991), that bastion of freedom of expression, devoted attention to such questions, querying the responsibility of publishers and editors and commenting on the sloppiness of some writers. It encourages reviewers of inaccurate books to take the publishers to task and to expose the authors' transgressions, pointing out, by quoting one such reviewer, that: "A newspaper can report one thing one day and revise or revoke the report the next day; a book makes a promise of much longer duration and far greater authority. The scale and presentation make a vital difference. But this has to do with review after publication. Among its suggestions for pre-publication solutions to inaccuracy, the article offers the following thought to publishers: "They could pay in-house or outside researchers to request documentation from the author, then judge its worthiness. At the very least, they could pay for a spot check, then decide whether a full-scale review is necessary".

The positions you have taken in the third paragraph of your letter indicate an over-reaction and a misconception of the real purpose of Bahá'í review. Is it not possible for Bahá'í academics to acknowledge the merit of the intention of this temporary requirement and, recognizing the sensitivity of

the matter in view of the attitudes of the academic community, assist themselves and the Bahá'í institutions to find a balance between both academic and Bahá'í expectations? Bahá'í review is not an exercise in censorship; it is in large measure a benefit offered to an author by the Bahá'í institutions, which are, in fact, the major repositories of the source materials that ordinarily constitute the wellspring of the author's work and are for other reasons the channels of elucidation for a wide range of obscure questions relating to the Faith. Certainly, a dispassionate exploration by Bahá'í scholars of the issues concerning both the academic community and the Bahá'í institutions in this matter could result in the formulation of a rationale appropriate to aiding understanding in academic circles as to the nature and necessity of Bahá'í review. Bahá'í academics, after all, are, first and foremost, believers in the Cause of God and upholders of divine law.

The House of Justice has acknowledged in the past that the process of review is often irksome, frequently takes far too long and is subject to many problems in implementation. Nevertheless, it is convinced that this is not the time to remove this temporary procedure. National Spiritual Assemblies responsible for administering the reviewing procedure have been urged to do all they can to improve and expedite its operation, and efforts are continually being made to this end. The House of Justice looks forward to the day when this requirement will be definitely removed; in the meantime it may well be modified as conditions change.

With regard to your particular concerns, there is nothing in the current regulations that would prevent a scholar who has written a work to recommend to the National Spiritual Assembly one or more individuals whom he would like to see included among the reviewers selected by the Assembly. This approach offers the author a way of satisfying himself that he has had a direct part in the arrangement for review, and he can take confidence that some measure of peer review has been invested in the procedure.

The House of Justice trusts that this procedure will reduce your concerns and assures you of its prayers on your behalf in the Holy Shrines.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
For Department of the Secretariat

SEVEN VALLEYS Pt. 01 SUPPLEMENT AND OTHER BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES NOTES.

Stephen Lambden

PROLEGOMENON 01 WITH SELECTED transliteration

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

[1] Praise be to God Who hath caused Being (*wujūd*) to be made manifest from non-being (*'adam*);^[2] inscribed upon the tablet of man [kind] (*lawh al-insān*) something of the timeless mysteries (*asrār al-qidam*)^[3] and taught him that which he knew not of the Exposition (*al-bayān*).^[4] He made Him a Perspicuous Book (*kitāb mubīn*)^[5] unto such as believed and surrendered themselves;^[6] caused Him to witness the creation of all things (*kull shay'*) in this black and ruinous age^[6] and to speak forth from the Apex of Eternal Subsistence (*qutb al-baqā'*) with a Wondrous Voice (*al-lahn al-badī'*) in the Illustrious Temple (*haykal al-mukarram*).^[7] This to the end that all may testify within themselves, through soulful experience (*fī nafsīhi bi-nafsīhi*) at the level (*fī maqām*) of the theophany of their Lord (*tajallī rabbīhi*), that there is none other God save Him.^[8] All souls may assuredly accomplish this and thus win their way to the Summit of Spiritual Realities (*dharwat al-haqā'iq*) such that none shall witness a single thing but that they shall see God therein.

In BSB 6:2-3 (February 1992) pp. 26-73, I set forth the first part of an annotated provisional translation of the *Seven Valleys* of Bahā'u'llāh -- the first part of the translation, with selected transliteration, is reproduced above. The paragraphs to follow supplement (again selectively) points previously made.

Firstly, much valuable material touching upon Rūmī's use of *'adam*, (translated "non-being" above) is contained in Annemarie Schimmel's important volume, *The Triumphal Sun, A Study of the Works of Jalāloddin Rumi* (London: Fine Books, 1978). Particularly worth quoting are the following paragraphs:¹

The central point in Rumi's view about creation is that of a *creatio ex nihilo* -- God has produced everything from *'adam*, 'nothingness' or 'non-existence'. Only in rare cases does he claim that *'adam* does not accept *hasti*, 'existence' -- but such a connection occurs, as far as I can see, only in an ethical sense, i.e., when you plant colocynth you cannot expect sugarcane to grow out of it.¹¹⁴ Mowlana has never tired of repeating that the Divine Creator and Beloved has brought forth man and everything for *'adam*:

'I' and 'We' were *'adam*, to which God, out of kindness granted the robe of honour 'I' and 'We'.¹¹⁵

¹ At Note 114 (p.449) Schimmel writes, "...About the concept of *'adam* cf. A. Bausani, *Persia Religiosa*, Milano 1959, p. 273f.; Ismail Hüsrev Tökin, *Mevlāna da yok oluş Felsefesi*, in: *Türk Yurdu*, Mevlana Özel Sayısı, Ankara 1965: Besides the instances mentioned in the notes, I counted more than sixty verses in the *Dīvān* (and there may be lines which have escaped my attention) in which *'adam* was used either as general contrast to *hasti* 'being' or *shay'* 'thing', as prerequisite of creation, or as final state of man. A detailed study of this central concept would be most welcome.

'*Adam* is like a box from which creatures are called ¹¹⁶ (we may think of 'Attar's parable of the puppet-player and his box from which he takes his puppets and then throws them back into it, as told in the *Oshtomama*):

Hundreds of thousands of birds fly nicely out of it, hundreds of thousands of arrows spring from that one bowl ¹¹⁷

Without the Divina Beloved, man is '*adam*, or even less than this, for '*adam* is capable of existentialization -- but without the beloved, man is not capable of existence at all. ¹¹⁸

The beloved gives birth to man from '*adam*, puts him on a throne, gives him a mirror. ¹¹⁹

Out of this '*adam* thousands of worlds come forth, ¹⁷⁰ and not a single drop can disappear and hide itself in '*adam* when God addresses it and calls it into existence. ¹²¹ Every leaf and every green tree in spring becomes, for Jalaluddin, a messenger from '*adam*, for they point to God's power to create lovely things from nothingness. ¹²²

'*Adam* is the treasure-house and mine from which God, as '*mubdi*', 'Originator' brings forth everything, producing the branch without the root, ¹²³ which is why everyone seeks not-being as prerequisite for being. ¹²⁴

You have bound our existence to absolute non-existence you have bound our will to the condition of having no will. ¹²⁵

The '*adam*, is the hidden ground which God has concealed under the veil of existence; it is the sea of which only the foam is visible, or the wind which can be perceived only through the movement of the stirred up dust. ¹²⁶ '*adam* is Solomon, and the creatures are like ants before it. ¹²⁷ The Koran has attested that God 'brings forth life from death', (Sura 6/95 etc.), and that means, in more scholarly language, that He produces being from not-being. ¹²⁸ He utters magical words upon '*adam* and transforms it, the poor 'nothing without eyes and ears', into beings, to call them back, by another magical word, into the second non-existence. ¹²⁹ Hundreds of thousands of hidden things are waiting in that '*adam* to spring forth by Divine grace, ¹³⁰ to come out in an intoxicated dance at the sound of the Divine word, and to grow into flowers and beauties, for

He has shown the joy of existence to non-existence. ¹³¹

In '*adam*, love, kindness, power and sight are hidden, and its agitated movements make existences appear like waves, ¹³² or make a hundred mills turn. ¹³³ Caravan after caravan comes out of '*adam* day after day so that the two contrasting manifestations -- being and not-being -- are always visible. ¹³⁴ One never knows whether the manifestations that are called out of the undifferentiated not-being will be good or evil with respect to what is created -- they may prove sugar for the one, but poison for another. ¹³⁵ But even if a thousand worlds were to appear out of '*adam*, they would not be more than a mole of His cheek. ¹³⁶

The deserts of not-being are filled with longing--the image of the caravan occurs once more at the very end of Rumi's life.¹³⁷ All those armies of the thought of the heart are one banner from the soldiers of *'adam*.¹³⁸

God knows all these forms which are still hidden in non-existence so that He can call them at the moment they are required.¹³⁹

There are still suns in *'adam*, and what appears here as sun, is there a tiny star like Canopus.¹⁴⁰

The lover, however, experiences *'adam* differently; he feels completely non-existent without the force of love¹⁴¹ which causes him really to exist:

O Prince of Beauty, make the eye smiling, grant existence to the handful of non-existence!¹⁴²

The image of non-existence, *'adam*, as a box, mine, or ocean could lead easily to the conclusion that creation consists in giving form to entities already existent at least in the Divine Knowledge. Rumi is not clear upon this point, but his whole approach shows rather the *'adam* as an unfathomable depth of nothingness which is endowed with existence only so far as God speaks to it and looks at it; he has certainly not pondered upon the philosophical implications of this imagery.

But there is another point: *'adam* is not only the first and initial station which is the prerequisite for being -- it is likewise the final position and end of everything. In many cases one would like to substitute for *'adam* the term *fanā'*, 'annihilation', but in other cases *'adam* seems to lead even deeper. Just as the puppet-player in 'Attar's *Oshtomāma* puts the puppets back into the box of Unity, Rumi has at times expressed the feeling that *'adam* is the abyss of Divine Life which is beyond everything conceivable, even beyond the 'revealed God'. We may call it the *deus absconditus*, or the Positive Non-Being, or the sphere which is beyond everything and in which contrasts fall once more together.

If you could only know what is before you,
all existence would become *'adam!*¹⁴³

The 'desert of *'adam*' is equated, therefore with the *bagh-e Eram*,¹⁴⁴ the fascinating gardens described in the Koran. There is no end of poems which tell, often in dancing rhythms the beauty of *'adam* -- like these lines:

The moment I became annihilated through you, and became
what you know,
I seized the cup of *'adam*, and quaffed its wine cup by cup . . .
This moment, avery wink, give me the wine of *'adam*,
Since I entered into *'adam* I do not know the house from
the roof.
When your non-existence increases, the soul performs a
hundred prostrations before you,

O you, before whose *'adam* thousands of existences are slaves!
 Bring a wave up from *'adam*, so that it may carry me away --
 how long shall I go step by step on the shore of the sea? ¹⁴⁵

Rumi has once said that *'adam* is like the East, whereas the end (*ajal*) is like the West, man wandering between the two towards another, higher heaven. ¹⁴⁶ We may call this 'other heaven' the 'positive *'adam*' the last station of man on his way through the world:

Put your two eyes on *'adam* and see a wonderful thing --
 What marvellous hopes in hopelessness! ¹⁴⁷

It is this positive non-existence which is almost equated with the Divine Essence in the famous lines about the rising gamut of existence:

Then I became *'adam; 'adam*, like an organ speaks to me 'Verily unto God we are returning!' (Sura 2/156) ¹⁴⁸

This *'adam*

is a sea, we are the fishes, existence the net--
 the taste of the sea knows he who has left the net. ¹⁴⁹

In *'adam*, the caravan of souls wanders to graze every night on the hidden path which connects them with God; ¹⁵⁰ it is the place where the saints and lovers go -- they see a dream without dreaming, and enter *'adam* without a door. ¹⁵¹ In this *'adam* the lovers 'pitch their tents', united completely without distinction, ¹⁵² for it is the mine of the purified soul. ¹⁵³

Here, in the way of complete silence, man can become nonexistent (*ma'dum*), lost to himself, and in his silence, completely transformed into praise and laud. ¹⁵⁴ In *'adam* all 'knots' and complications are resolved. ¹⁵⁵ Rumi sings of the beauty of this state:

Thanks to that *'adam* which carried away our existence,
 Out of love for this *'adam* the world of the souls came into
 existence.
 Wherever *'adam* comes, existence diminishes,
 Well done, *'adam*; for, when it comes, existence increases!
 For years I took away existence from non-existence,
'adam took away with one single glance all this from me.
 It saved (me) from myself, and from before, and from the soul
 that thinks about death,
 It saved me from fear and hope, and saved me from wind (*bād*)
 and being (*bud*).
 The mountain 'existence' is like straw before the wind of
'adam;
 Which is the mountain that *'adam* did not carry away like
 straw ¹⁵⁶

We may perhaps see in Rumi's extended imagery of *'adam* -- which, in fact, is one of the central expressions in his whole poetical work -- an echo of Joneyd's theory, well known to all mystics, that man should eventually become as he was before being. One of Rumi's verses is a variant on a famous dictum of Joneyd:

Become nothing, nothing from selfishness, for there is no
sin worse than your existence.¹⁵⁷

For since *'adam* was the state of things when God addressed them with the words 'Am I not your Lord?' (Sura 7/171) then the goal of the mystic is to return once more to this very *'adam*, into the undifferentiated nothingness out of which everything existent jumped forth in joyful obedience to the Divine order.

But there is something higher and more comprehensive even than *'adam*, and that is Love:

Love has the ear of *'adam* in its hand, and Being and Non-
existence are dependent upon it.¹⁵⁸

NOTES

D = Divān-e kabir, ed. Furuzānfar

M = Mathnavi, edition of R.A. Nicholson

114. D1337/14140..

115. D 2824/29984.

116. D 1019/10753.

117. D 1122/11842.

118. D 1432/15143.

119. D 2436/25684.

120. M 1522; cf. the lovely R 1955.

121. M 11886.

122. D 451/4763.

123. MV 1023f.

124. M VI 1366 ff.; cf. D 873/9136 and often: for only when man has become nonexistent, God can make him anew.

125. D 2935/31 145.

126. MV 1026 f.

127. D 1902/20010.

128. MV 1018.

129. M 1 1448.

130. MV4213ff.

131. M1606f.

132. The Universe rests on this ocean like foam, or moves in it like a fish: D 1420/15027; cf. 1384/14649. 133. D 155/1773.

134. M 1 1889.

135. M V 4236f.

136. D 2234/23683.

137. M VI 2772 f.

138. D 435/4578 and previous verses.

139. M 11242 f.

140. M V 1016 f.

141. M1602f.

142. D 107/1216.

143. D 2501/26469; cf. 158/1814 that the *'adam* s are in degrees.

144. D 2373/25091.

145. D 1716/17968 73; other positive evaluations: D 709/7425; 1704/17834; 1769/18528; 2086/22027; 1585/16622; R 1306; 113;

- 673; 46; 1946; 16i2; 961.
 146. D 771/8051.
 147. D 2663/28250.
 148. M II1 3901 ff.
 149. D 734/7707. The whole poem deals with *'adam* in its different aspects.
 150. D 3032/ 32229 .
 151. M 1113552 ff.
 152. M 1113024; cf. 1821/19122 'make your nest in *'adam*':
 153. D 381.
 154. D 2628/27850.
 155. D 863/9015.
 156. D 950/10025ff.
 157. D 498/5294; for the verse cf. Hujwiri/Nicholson p. 297 (*hayāt* instead of the generally accepted *wajūd*).
 158. D 1019/10754 and previous lines.

Secondly, aspects of the opening following lines (01:2f) are partly paralleled in the opening of the following (partially translated) Arabic Tablet most likely dating from the early West Galilean / 'Akkā period -- printed in the volume *Alwāh-i Bahā'u'llāh. Sūrat al-haykal*. (1308/1890-91, pp. 258-261) -- in which Bahā'u'llāh celebrates his lofty claims in Sufistic fashion:

No God if there except Him, the Mighty, the Munificent
 In the Name of God, the Most-Holy, the All-Glorious
 This is a Mighty Book, the Archetype of the Temple of Man (*umm haykal al-insān*)
 in which the Pen of the All-Merciful (*qalam al-rahman*) hath inscribed something of the
 knowledge of what is and what hath been. Blessed be God, the Best of Creators [see
 Qur'ān 37:125]..."

In this Tablet Bahā'u'llāh is pictured (as in SV 01:3) as a personified "Book"; apparently the very "Archetypal [Mother] Book" within which is inscribed (*raqama*; same verb as in SV 01:2a) present and past knowledge (cf. SV 01:2-3). He is not a "Book" which walks along but one which, metaphorically speaking, is capable of "soaring aloft" (revealing verses?). This inasmuch as God endowed the "Book" (of his Divine Self), with motion (*harraka*) for the sake of the "progress of such as inhabit the heavens and the earth" (*li-haraka man fī 'l-samawāt wa 'l-ardīn*) (p.258). This personified "Book" (= Bahā'u'llāh), furthermore, is the "very Sovereign of books" (*sultān al-kutub*). As in SV 01:1ff it (the "Book") is basically synonymous with *al-insān* ("Man[kind]") for we read a few lines later (in this Tablet): "If thou sayest, 'He [the archetypal Book = Bahā'u'llāh] is *al-insān*' ['Man']. [Such is the case for] By My Beauty! He is assuredly the Apple of the Eye of the All-Merciful (*qurra' al-ayn al-rahmān*)" (ibid).

At SV 01:5 there is reference to "the creation of all things (*kull 'shay'*)" which is commented upon in BSB 6:2-3 pp.48-51 and in the appended translation of Goldziher's *The Relationship of the Bāb to Sūfī Teachers* (pp.62ff). The verse of Abu'l-'Atāhiya (d.826 CE) referred to as frequently cited by Ibn 'Arabī (p.63/66) can be found with comments in the Great Shaykh's *Kitāb al-ahadiyya*.²

² *Kitāb al-ahadīya* p.8 as printed in *Majmū'a al-rasā'il al-illāhiya li-Ibn 'Arabī*. (Beirut, 1412/1991; pp.5-21).

MAN YUZHIRUHU'LLĀH AFTER MAN YUZHIRUHU'LLĀH

In the course of setting down some notes for an entry *Bābī-Bahā'ī Eschatology* in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Routledge & Kegan Paul/ Mazda Publications, 1985>; forthcoming fascicle) I remembered having several times read in manuscripts of the Bāb's writings references to future, cyclic, theophanies of *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* (= MA = "Him whom God will make manifest"). In Bābī scripture the originally Sufi phrase *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* is not the title of a single messianic figure. Rather, it is the designation of a succession of divine manifestations. As I could not recall exactly where these references were located, I began to examine anew various writings; including the Bāb's late (spring 1850) *Book of the Five Grades (Kitāb-i panj sha'n)*. Among the passages I rediscovered is the following,

"..all the Names are His Names even though for Him there is no Name. And all the characterizations are His characterizations (*al-na'īhi*) though for Him there is no characterization. His Interiority (*bātinīhi*) is His "Word" (*kalimatīhi*), "There is no god except God" (*lā ilāha illā Allāh*). His exteriority (*zāhirīhi*) in the *al-fur'qān* [= the Qur'ān] is Muḥammad, the Messenger of God; in the Bayān it is the Essence of the Seven Letters (= 'Alī [= 3 letters] + Muhammad [= 4 letters] = the Bāb); in the Gospel (*al-injīl*) it is Jesus (*'Isā*), the Spirit of God (*rūh Allāh*); in the Psalms (*al-zabūr*) it is David, the upright of God (*ṣafīy Allāh*); in the Torah (*lawrāt*) it is Moses (*Mūsā*) the One Who conversed with God (*kalīm Allāh*). And after the Bayān it is [1] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [1] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [2]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [2] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [3]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [3] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [4]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [4] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [5]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [5] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [6]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [6] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [7]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [7] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [8]; and after *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*, [8] *man yuzhiruhu'llāh* [9]

The implications of this passage (pp.314-5) would seem to be that there is no limit to the progressive and successive theophanies of MA. God alone is aware of the duration of progressive religious dispensations (*zuhūrs*) along with, that is, whomsoever He teaches the *'ilm al-jafr* (loosely, 'the science of occult prognostication.' p.315). More than once in the *Kitāb-i panj sha'n* the Bāb, in cryptic fashion, discusses the question of the varying lengths of the prophetic dispensations / theophanies (*zuhūr s*). Following his indication of the perpetuity of future Messiah figures the Shīrāzī Sayyid at one point states:

"But be assured that the [secret of the] differing lengths of the Dispensations ('Theophanies', *farq tul al-zuhūr illā zuhūr*) is known to none save God; apart, that is from such as God hath initiated into the qabbalistic sciences (*'ilm al-jafr*).." ³

³ In my unpublished doctoral thesis (chapter two) I have discussed in detail the chronology of the Bāb as it relates to the lengths of the pre-Bābī religions.

The Báb then, did not simply speak of one future appearance of MA but nine or more such theophanies. In fact, he did not limit the number of their successive and progressive Divine manifestations in the world. Despite this, the anti-Bahá'í Christian missionary William McElwee Miller, in his highly polemical *The Baha'í Faith, Its History and Teachings* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974), attempts to embarrass Bahá'ís by repeating a neo-Azalí argument. He refers to Persian Bayán 2:16 where a *terminus a quo* of 1511 years (= abjad of "the Most Assisting" *aghyath*) and a *terminus ad quem* of 2001 (= abjad "The One Invoked" *mustaghāth*) is set down and has it that Bahá'u'lláh,

"at first attempted to explain the words ghyath (1511) and mustaghath (2001 [see Persian Bayán, II, 16] in some way that would not conflict with his claims. However, near the end of his life in his Tablet O Creator of All Creation, Baha revoked his earlier interpretation and stated that "He who was named in the Bayan 'He-Who-Will-Appear' [that is, He-Whom-God Will-Manifest] shall in truth come in the Mustaghath with manifest power." He did not explain how it happened that he (Baha'u'llah) had come before the Mustaghath. Azal's Notes, pp. 256, 257, 1021-1023." (p. 108 fn.5).

Miller had a largely second-hand knowledge of Bábí and Bahá'í scripture and doctrine often deriving from the Azalí writer Jela' Azal (d.1971), a grandson of Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother Mīrzā Yahyā. He supposed that Bahá'u'lláh's later ('Akká' period ?) Tablet 'O Creator of All Creation' (not available to me) contradicted his earlier claims. This need not be the case. During the middle-Bábí period (loosely, 1850-1863) Bahá'u'lláh quite frequently referred to the futurity of the appearance of MA. Subsequently he explicitly claimed to be MA -- exactly how early is not entirely clear; probably at different times to different individuals. In, for example, a Tablet to Āqā Mīrzā Assad Allāh Nūrī, (date uncertain, early 1860's ?) Bahá'u'lláh clearly states, "I, verily, am the one promised in *al-mustagāth* [abjad 2001] with the name of *man yuzhiruhu'llāh*." (unpublished). He did not subsequently "revoke" this claim but supplemented it by referring to another future (a millennium or more after 1844 CE) advent of MA. That such was the case is indicated in a letter of Shoghi Effendi to the French orientalist and consular official, A. L. M. Nicholas (d. Tehran 1939) in which such terms as *mustagāth* [abjad 2001] are related to the time of a future Manifestation of God. Another pertinent letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi reads,

"The Báb said that whenever "He whom God will make manifest" appears, accept Him. He never said don't accept Him until after the lapse of 1000 years. Also Bahá'u'lláh says that in the year 9 of the Bábí Dispensation the time was ripe for the Revelation of 'He Whom God will make manifest'. As the Báb was not only a Manifestation but a Herald of this Bahá'í Faith, the interval between His revelation and that of Bahá'u'lláh was of shorter duration. His Dispensation in a sense will last as long as Bahá'u'lláh's lasts."⁴

⁴ From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India dated, December 27, 1941, cited *Dawn of a New Day, Messages to India 1923-1957* (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, n.d.) p.94

MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS AND NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: REVIEWS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MISCELLANY ¹

ASIAN RELIGIONS: HINDUISM, BUDDHISM, ZOROASTRIAN...

Friedhelm Hardy (Ed), *The World's Religions: The Religions of Asia* London: First published in 1988 as part of *The World's Religions* series reprinted by Routledge in 1988 and 1990. ISBN 0-415-05815-5 (PB) £16.99.

"The four volumes of *The World's Religions* series provide a new and authoritative account of the complex patterns of religious development, teaching and practice in (1) Islam, (2) The Religions of Asia, (3) Judaism and Christianity, and (4) Traditional Religions and New Religious Movements. Individual chapters are written in a scholarly but non-technical manner by internationally-recognised specialists and attempt to provide the 'inside view' so that each volume can present clearly the theological and philosophical basis of the beliefs covered, their history, expression and everyday practice." (Book Cover)

Contents

1. Introduction Friedhelm Hardy 2. Philosophical and Religious Taoism, Bulcsu Siklós, School of Oriental and African Studies [=SOAS.](10f)* 3. Mazdeism ('Zoroastrianism') Julian Beldick (20f)* 4. The Classical Religions of India, Friedhelm Hardy (37f) General Remarks on the Religious History of India (39f) Vedic Religion (43f) The Renouncer Traditions (50f) Epic and Pureanic Religion (72f) Mahayana Buddhism and Buddhist Philosophy (95f) Hindu Philosophies and Theologies (105f) Later Jainism (114f) The Esoteric Traditions and Antinomian Movements (117f)* 5. Śaivism and the Tentric Traditions, Alexis Sanderson, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford (128f)* 6. Modern Hinduism, Glyn Richards, University of Stirling (173f)* 7. Sikhism, C. Shackle, SOAS., University of London (182f)* 8. Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia, W.J. Johnson, Wolfson College, University of Oxford (194f)* 9. Buddhism and Hinduism in the Nepal Valley, David Gellner, St John's College, University of Oxford (207f)* 10. Buddhism in China, Bulcsu Siklós (224f)* 11. Buddhism in Japan Bulcsu Siklós (236f)* 12. The Religions of Tibet, Tadeusz Skorupski, SOAS., University of London (247f)* 13. Buddhism in Mongolia, Bulcsu Siklós (279f).

REVIEW

This is the second of four volumes comprising the series titled "The World's Religions" and is a welcome and leisurely exploration of the religions of Asia. Equate leisurely, however, with well-researched and we have the series of essays reflecting the pedigree of the authors – which can be taken in at a first glance from the book cover. A text of this nature has to juxtapose two major aspects of a religious tradition; what could be called, a) religious content i.e. beliefs, rituals, practices, conceptual elaboration, canonical placing, and b) historical development i.e. the growth of a tradition within other countries and contexts; acculturation, conceptual interaction and assimilation, etc. More often than not b) provides the material content for a), unless that is, one is committed to the theory of an "essence" of a religion prior to its temporal development. It is assumed that the contributors to this volume were not so committed.

¹ * Unless otherwise indicated all reviews are by the editor (Stephen Lambden = SL); [Collins] indicates William Collins, while the initials SF and RP indicate Seena Fazel and Robert Parry.

The editor of this text Friedhelm Hardy has been involved in the study of Eastern religions for a number of years. He is known for precision in his area of expertise: Hindu Studies. His short introduction -- however well-intentioned it may be in introducing an exciting anticipatory atmosphere of difference vis a vis Eastern religions -- contains passages that would be more at home in a manual of Scholastic metaphysics! One gets the feeling that he could have made his points a little less painfully and more clearly. This should not, however, detract from his optimistic though underestimated affirmation that a study of Asian religions provides "the possibility of interesting insights" (9).

The religions under discussion are Hinduism (note Hardy's corrective on page 8), Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Mazdaism (= Zoroastrianism) and religious and philosophical Taoism. It goes without saying that in this brief review, one cannot attempt a detailed analysis. Any minor problem areas which do not detract from the overall value of the text will not be discussed. Suffice it to say that, on the whole, these essays provide a very generous non-technical account of the Asian religious traditions for the general reader and the undergraduate in Religious and associated studies.

The juxtaposition mentioned earlier between the exhibition of beliefs and practices and their development through time is, however, a little patchy. In Alex Sanderson's otherwise excellent essay on "Śaivism and Tantric Traditions" one would have appreciated an overview (at least) of nineteenth and twentieth century developments. What, for example, is the current state of Śaivism? Does it have any spiritual and/or theoretical champions? Has it strengthened its self-definition, say vis a vis Vaiśnavism?

Glyn Richard's "Modern Hinduism" is a disappointingly standard exposition of the well-worn path of development from Rammohan Roy to Vinoba Bhava, with the obligatory branch-line to Sri Aurobindo. One would have expected, from a text published in 1988, brief accounts at least of various "modern" gurus: reference to such figures as Ramana Maharshi, Yukteshvar, Yogananda and Paramahansa, Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada, Sai Baba, Bhagwan Sri Rajneesh, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, et alia. Certainly Hinduism as an "export" should have been discussed.

Of great benefit to the reader is the treatment of the Buddhist tradition and its subsequent development in countries other than India. Buddhism alone of all the indigenous traditions of Asia, developed as a function of sustained missionary activity in foreign contexts. It is fascinating to see the phases of incremental change. The familiar dhyāna / jhāna-ch'an-zen route is well outlined by W.J. Johnson's essay "Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia" and Bulcsu Siklós' two essays "Buddhism in China", "Buddhism in Japan". Along with David Gallner's "Buddhism and Hinduism in the Nepal Valley" plus Bulcsu Siklós' further essay "Buddhism in Mongolia", noval ground is covered.

There is increasing importance and "conceptual" significance for Bahā'ī scholars (involved in serious Philosophy and Fundamental Theology) in the recent growth in appreciation for Tibetan Buddhism. This tradition is to some degree shrouded in mystery; partly due no doubt to geographical inaccessibility, political isolation, voluminous scriptural canons -- and perhaps because of a daunting transliterative schema! It has, nevertheless, emerged through patient scholarship and, surely more importantly, through the formation of monastic centres in the West (in the last twenty years or so) as a viable object of study. There is no doubt also that the educative and political activities of the present Dalai Lama have been of tremendous significance in bringing peoples attention to this Northern enclave of Buddhism. Tadeusz Skorupski's essay "The Religions of Tibet" is an excellent non-technical review of Buddhism in a Tibetan context. It highlights the complex interaction of Tantric and philosophical aspects of Buddhism with the indigenous Bon religion.

The "conceptual" significance for Bahā'ī scholars of a philosophically theological bent, lies primarily in Tibetan Buddhism's Mādhyamike philosophical underpinning. With careful reading it can provide a relatively coherent analytical pathway "between" deconstructive tendencies intrinsic to metaphysical language ¹ and the foundationalist tendencies of epistemological discourse. ² The purist and rigorous philosophy of the dGe-lugs-pa "school" of Tibetan Buddhism could well be a valuable sounding-board for groundwork in the development of a viable Bahā'ī account of the metaphysics of experience – likewise, epistemology and the analysis of language in its literal and tropic senses.

Julian Baldick's brief essay on Mazdaism (= Zoroastrianism) is valuable, not least for its attempt at securing an academically adequate naming for this tradition. He is surely correct in seeing the term "Zoroastrianism" as a piece of archaic linguistic ethnocentrism on a par with "Mahometanism" for Islam (21). A more controversial (for 'Zoroastrians'/ Mazdaeists [!] and Bahā'īs) point though, is his agnosticism concerning the historicity of Zoroaster (= Zarathushtra); tied strongly to a critique of western scholarship on the subject. In fact, if Baldick is correct in what he says, then scholars are, by and large, unclear as to the semantic nature of the written sources. This coupled with his assertion that Zarathushtra is probably an archetypal priest (25), we have an interesting theological problem; a problem wider perhaps than the Mazdaean context! There is obviously room for more analysis. Mary Boyce, the renowned scholar of Mazdaism, comes in for rather facetious criticism. It will be interesting to see whether a rejoinder has been placed in an appropriate journal. As with Sanderson's essay on Śaivism one would have liked Baldick to expand on contemporary aspects of Mazdaism. Finally, of minor interest, is the reference to conversions to the Bahā'ī Faith (35).

Perhaps the weakest essay in the volume is C. Shackle's "Sikhism". It is quite frankly too programmatic. One would have expected more on the teachings of the various Gurus; to provide a greater symmetry with the other more detailed contributions – specifically in the areas of personal and corporate eschatology and the nature of God.

All in all... *The Religions of Asia*.. is highly recommended; its non-technical style makes it accessible to the non-specialist. It is certainly a valuable resource for Bahā'ī academics engaging academically with Asian religions for the first time. (RP)

Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism, The doctrinal foundations* (London and New York : Routledge, 1989/1991) xii+317pp. ISBN 0-415-02536-2. (HB) / ISBN 0-415-02537-0 £11.99 (PBk.)

Paul Williams is the Lecturer in Indo-Tibetan Studies at the University of Bristol (U.K.). "This book is intended as an introduction to the ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and also to some of the recent scholarly

¹ The, by now, classic texts of Deconstruction are by Jacques Derrida. For a serious engagement with this philosopher careful (and often mentally draining) but vitally rewarding reading of the following is recommended, *Of Grammatology*. (trans. Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore, Md: John Hopkins University Press), 1977.; *Writing and Difference*. (trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1978.; *Margins of Philosophy* (trans. Alan Bass. Chicago Ill: University of Chicago Press), 1982. As indicated these are extremely difficult works. A prospective reader would do well to ease into a series of interviews with Derrida entitled, *Positions*. (trans. Alan Bass, London: Athlone Press), 1981.

² The literature on Foundationalism and Anti-Foundationalism in Epistemology is voluminous. The reader is directed to the writings of W. Sellars, W.O. Quine, D. Davidson and Richard Rorty.

work in the field. It presupposes that the reader already has an idea who the Buddha was, and what his basic teachings were. In writing, I have had in mind university undergraduates and college students, although I hope very much that others will also be able to benefit from what I have written." (From the Preface p.xi). Among other fascinating material, chapter 10, 'Faith and devotion: the cults of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas' contains valuable discussion of Maitreya (228f), Avalokiteśvara, Tārā and, among others, Amitābha / Amitāyus – It is stated on p.251 that "The most widespread of the cults devoted to Buddhas is that of Amitābha or Amitāyus." This is an important, thoroughly researched volume. Knowledge of its contents, of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is fundamental for Buddhist-Bahā'ī dialogues / theology.

SEMITIC/JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN-ISLAMIC AND RELATED RELIGIONS

JUDAISM

Rachel Biale, *Women & Jewish Law, An Exploration of Women's Issues in Halakhic Sources*. New York: Schocken Books, 1984 x+293 pp. £5.95 (?) ISBN 0-8052-0810-0.

The author of this volume, Rachel Biale "grew up on a Kibbutz Ruppin in Israel. She earned an M.A. in Jewish history at U.C.L.A. and an M.S.W. at Yeshiva University. She recently completed advanced training in family and child psychotherapy at the Thallans Mental Health Center of Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles." This useful volume combines a selection of original Jewish halakhic ("legalistic") sources and the question of women's role and status in Jewish society along with a modern feminist viewpoint.

"Women have been traditionally exempted from the study of Jewish law – the Talmud with its commentaries and subsequent codes and responsa. This book makes some of the central halakhic sources on women accessible to contemporary readers. This essential sourcebook covers such topics as marriage, divorce, woman's participation in public worship, the laws regarding the menstruant, contraception, abortion, and rape. Biale demonstrates that Jewish law has always been characterized by dynamic mechanisms of change, adaptations to new realities, controversy, and dissent.

With the imminent publication of the Bahā'ī "Most Holy Book" (*Kitāb-i aqdas*), the Bahā'ī comparative study of religious legalism will doubtless become important. This relatively straightforward volume is an interesting introduction to selected aspects of Jewish legal opinion touching upon women.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992, xviii+201 pp. ISBN 0-225-66683-9 (PBk) £8.99.

The Catholic scholar J. A. Fitzmyer, is Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. He has authored and edited important volumes in the field of Biblical Studies; being, for example, a co-editor of the recent second edition of the [New] Jerome *Biblical Commentary* and wrote the commentary on the *Gospel According to Luke* in the Anchor Bible Series. He, furthermore, as a

"... member of the international team that was formed to study and publish the scrolls, provides us with a thorough explanation of all aspects of these invaluable documents, from the discovery of the first cave in 1947 through the excitement of finding further scrolls in ten other Qumran caves, down to the controversies and debates that

surrounded their publication. He provides superb clarification of their impact on the study of the Old Testament, ancient Judaism, the New Testament, and early Christianity."
(Book cover)

Fitzmyer's academically sound replies to 101 questions about the Dead Sea Scrolls provide an excellent introduction to an ancient Jewish faction. There is also a useful (though rather too brief) select and annotated bibliography relating to the Dead Sea Scrolls (pp.171-3) -- upon which, unfortunately, all manner of fanciful theories are legion. A taste of this inexpensive and clearly written volume might be illustrated by citing its opening question and response,

*1. What are the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The term "Dead Sea Scrolls" is used today in two senses, one generic and one specific.

In the generic sense, "Dead Sea Scrolls" refers to texts, not retrieved from the Dead Sea, but discovered in caves along the northwest shore of that Sea between the years 1947 and 1956. These "scrolls" are sometimes complete, but the vast majority of them are fragmentary texts or documents of various sorts that date roughly from the end of the third century B.C. to the seventh or eighth century A.D. They are not all related to one another, but have been found in caves or holes in seven different localities on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. In this generic sense they include even some discovered at the end of the last century in a genizah ("hideaway" used for the deposit of old or worn-out Jewish scrolls and books) of the Synagogue of Ezra in Old Cairo in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The sites along the Dead Sea include Qumran, Masada, Wadi Murabba'at, Nahal Hever, Nahal Se'elim, Nahal Mishmar, and Khirbet Mird. Some people at times include in this generic sense even texts found at Wadi ed-Daliyeh, a site in Transjordan to the northeast of the Dead Sea. But it is questionable whether they should be included under the designation "Dead Sea Scrolls" even in the wide sense, because they are totally unrelated and come from a different area and from a much earlier period in history.

In the specific sense, "Dead Sea Scrolls" is used of the scrolls and fragments found in eleven caves in the area of Qumran. DSS is thus used of the Qumran Scrolls because of the great number of the texts from these caves and because of the nature and importance of the documents that have come from them. Though about 273 holes and caves in the cliffs along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, from Hajar el-'Asbah (= Hebrew 'Eben habbohen, or "the stone of Bohan," Josh 15:6) to Ras Feshkha, a stretch of about eight kilometers, were scoured by archaeologists (10-29 March 1952), artifacts showing habitation of the caves were found in only 39 of them; of these, 25 caves had artifacts and pottery similar to that found in Cave 1 and at the community center. But only eleven caves in the vicinity of Qumran yielded written material, and today these are the numbered caves, Cave 1 to Cave 11. From these eleven caves came the DSS, which have been hailed as "the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times" (W. F. Albright)."

CHRISTIANITY

Keith W. Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher, Pioneer of Modern Theology* London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1987 281pp. ISBN 0-00-599980-4 £7.95 (?).

A useful selection of translated extracts from the writings of the German pioneer theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834).

Donald W. Musser & Joseph L. Price (Eds), *A New Handbook of Christian Theology* Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1992, 525pp. ISBN 0-7188-2871-2 (PBk) £13.95.

An indispensable reference volume which contains numerous key entries; including for example, Allegory; Atonement; Black Theology; Creation Science; Epistemology; Eschatology; Feminist Theology; Insight; Narrative Theology; Paradox; Phenomenology; Philosophical Theology; Post-Modern Theology; Pluralism; Sin; Soul/Body; Suffering; Vatican II.

ISLĀMIC STUDIES

Ian Richard Netton, *A Popular Dictionary of Islam* London: Curzon Press 1992. ISBN 0 7007 0233 4 / £9.99 (PBk) Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, ISBN 0 391 03756 0

Dr. Ian R. Netton, Reader in Arabic and Islāmic Civilization and Thought in the University of Exeter (England), is the author of a number of volumes, including, *Middle East Materials in United Kingdom and Irish Libraries; A Directory; Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Safā')* and *Allah Transcendent: Studies in the Structure and Semiotics of Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Cosmology*. Conscious of the fact that "The quality of the books which deal with Islam, in both the West and the East, is ... various, embracing the good and the bad, the profoundly bigoted and the devoutly sympathetic" (p.5), the author has produced an excellent, academically sound and informative dictionary. The word "popular" in the title can be misleading. The volume does not contain trite generalizations; rather, there are a good deal of entries that are quite specialist -- though frequently useful in Bābī-Bahā'ī studies (i.e. Atomism, Daqyā'ī, Nātiq, Nass, al-Zaqqūm). It, "aims to be an inexpensive, yet profusely cross-referenced, literary tool and source book which may be of use to layman, student and scholar alike, both Muslim and non-Muslim, surveying and introducing as it does diverse aspects of Islam's religion, ritual, theology, philosophy, law, history, art and architecture plus many others." There are entries for all of the 114 chapters (sūres) of the Qur'ān, listed under their Arabic titles. In view of its excellence one wishes that Netton's *Dictionary* were much larger; superseding, by virtue of its comprehensiveness and academic status, the now very dated (though still useful) *Dictionary of Islam* by T. P. Hughes (1st Ed. 1885 and many subsequent printings). In his preface Netton writes, "For the sake of completeness, and because of their Islamic origins, entries are included for subjects like Bēbism, the Bahā'īs and the Druze. I am aware that some will dispute the right of such entries to appear in a Dictionary dealing with Islam" (p.6). The author is quite right to include brief Bābī-Behā'ī entries in view of the Islāmic background of these religions -- a background which Bahā'īs should be pleased to highlight. The Bābī and Bahā'ī religions are not (as is frequently incorrectly the case) represented as merely heretical sects of Islām; under Behā'ī (p.49) we read that Bahā'īs are, "Members of a new religion". The entries Bābism, Bahā'īs and Bahā'ullāh are succinct and accurate. Bahā'īs anxious to acquire an introductory *Dictionary of Islām* would be well-advised to purchase this useful work.

Al-Ghazālī, *INVOCATIONS & SUPPLICATIONS, Kitāb al-adhkār wa'l-da'awāt BOOK IX OF THE REVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS SCIENCES Ihyā' ulum al-dīn translated with an INTRODUCTION & Notes by K. NAKAMURA*, Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1990 xliii+131pp ISBN 0 946621 12 8 (HB), ISBN 0 946621 14 4 (PB) £9.95 (Translation Copyright © K Nakamura, 1973 Revised Edition © The Islamic Texts Society, 1990).

"In preparing this text for republication as part of the Islamic Texts Society's series of translations from the *Ihyā'*, a number of modifications to the Tokyo edition of 1973 have been carried out. The *hadīth* material has been identified, with the able assistance of Muhammad 'Abd el-Latīf and Muhsin al-Nejjār of Cairo, and is now referenced in notes at the end of the book, which also include the more important

variant readings. Professor Nakamura's biographies of the personalities cited in the text have been assembled in alphabetical order as a new Appendix. A short excursus which appeared as Appendices I and II in the Tokyo edition has been omitted, while the Bibliography has been restructured and somewhat abbreviated. Finally, the translation itself has been amended in a few places, to bring it into greater conformity with the style adopted for the other works of this Series.

Professor Nakamura has lately been appointed Head of the Islamic Studies Department at Tokyo University, and the concomitant workload has made it impossible for him to carry out the above restructuring himself. It has, however, benefited from his full support and encouragement." (p.vii Editor's Note)

An excellent English translation of the ninth book of the important 40 book *Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn* of al-Ghazālī (1058-1111 CE). It was originally part of Nakamura's doctoral dissertation on al-Ghazālī submitted to Harvard University in 1970. The translation is based upon four texts including that published by 'Īsā al-Bābī al-Halabī (Cairo, n.d., with an introduction [dated 1379 AH/1957 CE] by Badawī Tabbāna, 4 vols.) and the text published by the Lajna Nashr al-Thaqafa al-Islāmīya (Cairo, 1356-57 AH, 5 vols.) The variants in the texts are shown in the footnotes.

SHĪ'Ī ISLĀM & IRANICA

John Walbridge, *The Science of Mystic Lights, Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the Illuminationist Tradition in Islamic Philosophy* (= HARVARD MIDDLE EASTERN MONOGRAPHS XXVI Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992, 296pp. ISBN 0-932885-06-3.

This significant volume by a learned Bahā'ī scholar and Islamicist, is undoubtedly an insightful contribution to the understanding of the person and work of Qutb al-Dīn, 'Allāma Shīrāzī (1236-1311 CE) and his illuminationist metaphysics. Walbridge opens his preface as follows, "I began this study interested in the influence of mysticism on Islamic philosophy, which, it seemed to me, found its distinctive form only when its Greek prototype had been thoroughly infused with Sufī ideas. I was especially curious about how Ibn 'Arabī's ideas had been incorporated into later philosophical systems. This eventually led me to Qutb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (634/1236 to 710/1311). He was trained by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tusī, the leading follower of Avicenna in his generation, and wrote the best known commentary on Suhrawardī's *The Philosophy of Illumination*. For a time, at least, he was a student of Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, Ibn 'Arabī's closest disciple. Thus, modern historians have credited Qutb al-Dīn with being the first to unite the three traditions that were to be the dominant influences on later Islamic philosophy: the "Peripatetic" philosophy of Avicenna, the illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī, and the doctrine of the unity of existence of Ibn 'Arabī. Unfortunately, this theory of Qutb al-Dīn's significance was based on external bio-bibliographical information, not on a reading of his works. There the main frame of reference was clearly the system of Avicenna. I could find no internal evidence of a link with Ibn 'Arabī, apart from two quotations. The most interesting problem turned out to be his connection with Suhrawardī's illuminationist philosophy." (p.xiii)

Walbridge's lucid and informative work consists of a preface (xiiff) followed by a section entitled 'Qutb al-Dīn's life and times' (1ff). Another section is headed, 'Suhrawardī's Science of Lights' (27-78). The third and fourth major sections are, 'Illuminationist elements in Qutb al-Dīn's The Pearly Crown' (79-123) and 'The Career of the Soul and the Soul and the World of Image' (126-159). In his conclusion (160-165) Walbridge estimates the value of this philosophy (164). While he reckons Suhrawardī "obviously a pivotal figure in Islamic philosophy", Qutb al-Dīn is thought "a philosopher of second rank". It is presupposed that Suhrawardī "was the most important influence on Qutb al-Dīn" (p.160). There are six useful Appendixes. Included is one on sources for Qutb al-Dīn's life (A. 169ff) and another on Qutb al-Dīn's works (C. 175ff; 55 items listed and annotated under various headings). Another of the appendixes is

about 'Qutb al-Dīn and Ibn 'Arabī' (D. 192ff). Appendix F. consists of an edition and translation of "An Epistle of the 'Allāma al-Shīrāzī ascertaining the reality of the world of Image and answers to the questions of a certain scholar (= *Risāla fī Tahqīq 'Ālam al-Mithāl wa Ajwibāt As'īlat Ba'd al-Fudalā'* [written in 1022 AH/ 1613 CE])" (196ff).

Mangol Bayat, *Shī'ism in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909* Oxford: OUP, 1992 384pp. ISBN 0-19-506822-X £40.

A detailed history of the constitutional revolution of 1905-9 (which led to Iran's first parliamentary democracy) by the lecturer in Islamic Civilization and Culture, MIT.

Edward Ingram, *Britain's Persian Connection 1798-1828, Prelude to the Great Game in Asia*, OUP: 1992, 374pp (6 maps) ISBN 0-19-820243-1 £40.

"Edward Ingram, Professor of History, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia.

In 1801 and again in 1809 the British made a treaty with the Qajar regime of Persia. The two treaties and the attempts to define and to protect Great Britain's interests in the Middle East were known at the time as the Persian Connection. Edward Ingram's extensively researched study shows how the British expected the Persian connection to help them win the Napoleonic Wars and to enable them to enjoy the fruits of empire in India." (Publisher's note).

J. B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf 1795-1880* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991 (Reissue) 928pp. (2 maps) ISBN 0-19-821360-3 £75.

"Since its original publication, this work has remained the standard authority on the history of British relations with the countries of the Persian Gulf during the nineteenth century. Its range is considerably wider than the shores of the Gulf alone: it deals with such major topics as the repercussions of the Napoleonic Wars on the Middle East, the Eastern Crisis of 1839-41, the Anglo-Persian War, and the reassertion of Turkish authority in Arabia. Written by one of the leading historians of relations between the Gulf states and the West, the book is based upon the records of the old India Office and Foreign Office, upon the private records of nineteenth-century statesman, and upon contemporary journals of travellers in Arabia." (Publisher's advertisement).

RELIGIOUS STUDIES MISCELLANY & NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Ursula King (Ed.), *Turning Points in Religious Studies. Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Parrinder*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990 x+330pp. ISBN 0-567-09564-9 £19.95.

Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol, Ursula King has edited this important survey of the contemporary state, and various 'turning points' in Religious Studies. The twenty-eight essays contained in this volume -- dedicated to Geoffrey Parrinder whose eightieth birthday was in 1990 -- are divided into three parts. They are designed to "provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the history of Religious Studies, the turning points it faces and the new directions it may take in the future." **Part One** "represents a succinct case study of the historical development of Religious Studies in Britain". **Part Two** takes a worldwide perspective on subjects and themes in Religious Studies, including Hinduism; Buddhism; Sikhism; 'traditional' African religions; Christianity, Islam, and new religious movements in Africa; the study of truth and dialogue in religion; science and the rediscovery of religious experience and mysticism. **Part three** "looks to future developments, in particular at religion in

relation to the arts, gender, information technology, and to Religious Studies in a global perspectiva." Among the many brief essays of particular interest to Bahá'ís, is Ursula King's 'Religion and Gender'(275f) and the concluding reflections, 'Religious studies in Global Perspective' by Ninian Smart (299f). An bibliography of Geoffrey Parrinder's publications forms an appendix (309ff).

□ THE BĀBĪ & BAHĀ'Ī RELIGIONS

Irán Furútan Muhájir, *Dr Muhájir, Hand of the Cause of God Knight of Bahá'u'lláh* London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1992 686pp. ISBN 1870989 25 2 (HB) ISBN 1870989 26 0 (paper)

A lengthy biography of the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muḥájir (1923-1979) written by his widow, Irán Furútan Muhájir. The volume was "Published 28 May 1992, to commemorate the placing of the scroll bearing the Roll of Honour of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh at the entrance door of the inner Sanctuary of the Most Holy Shrine."

Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia and National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia (Comp.), *The Mission of Bahá'u'lláh, A Compilation from the Bahá'í Writings* n.p. [Australia]: n.d. [1990?] 54pp. £1.75 A Compilation of largely well-known passages from Bahá'í scriptural writings under various headings.i.e. 'An Overview of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh'; 'The Spiritualization of Mankind'; 'Let the Religions Agree'; 'The Advent of Divine Justice'.

David Hofman, *Bahá'u'lláh the Prince of Peace a Portrait*, Oxford: George Ronald 1992, 200pp. ISBN 0-85398-338-0 (HB) £10.95 ISBN 0-85398-340-2 (PBk) £4.95.

Gayle Woolson, *Divine Symphony Comparative Study of Religions* New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust First Edition 1971, Second Edition 1976, Third Revised and Abridged Edition, 1988 137pp. ISBN 81-85091-44-7 £1.50

Contains a dedication "to the magnificent universal ideal of a new unified, harmonious and spiritualized humanity and to this progressive global-age that has dawned upon the earth...", a Prologue (1-8), and chapters oriented around those figures Bahá'ís generally consider Manifestations of God; namely, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, the Buddha, Jesus Christ, The Báb, Bahá'u'lláh. (pp. 9-77). There follows Part Two (pp.77ff) which consists of short chapters entitled "Highlights of the Life of _____" (= the aforementioned prophet figures), a 'Bibliography of the Cited Texts' (p.125) and an Epilogue (p.131). The end of the volume consists of 'Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings' and 'Some Biographical Data About the Author of "Divine Symphony"' (134f). Though the basic pattern of this book is excellent, the sources of information used about the central figures of major world religions are frequently dated and, from the modern academic point of view, inaccurate. Where a good source is used (e.g. J.H. Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*) it is not used correctly. e.g. The 2nd century BCE Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs' is cited as a "compilation" (sic.) reflecting the "teachings of Abraham" (p.16)! Other errors in the history of religions are numerous.

George W. Adams, *The Dawning Points of God*, Naturegraph Publishers, Inc./ AMECAP Corporation Nashua, New Hampshire 1987 41pp. £2.00

This brief text is illustrative of 'progressive revelation' as popularly understood by Bahā'īs, "...It is intended .. that the contents of this essay convey as simply as possible, God's plan in spiritually educating the minds and souls of mankind, in a progressive manner, through His divine Teachers such as Moses, Jesus, and Bahá'u'lláh, Whom He sends to us at various periods of time, in an ever-advancing civilization. (From the Foreword).

William Sears, *Prince of Peace* Bahá'í Publishing Trust: New Delhi 1986 First Print, December 1986 Second Print with Corrections, 1988 318pp. £4.50 ISBN 81-85091-10-2 (Pbk).

Published in the "form" of a "Christmas present", this Bahá'í "Christmas story" (see the introduction by Robert Quigley dated "December 25th, Today") is partly inspired by Isaiah 9:6. For many Christians this 'prophetic' text is read at Christmas time and related to Jesus. William Sears however, understands it to imply the possibility of mankind's establishing -- during the last century -- an enduring, self-perpetuating, world peace. Isaiah 9:6 is taken literally; as prophetic and "true". Loosely speaking, the book is an "inspirational" (non-academic) pastiche of the interpretation of Biblical prophecy revolving around Bahá'í fulfilment. Various Biblical texts are cited throughout the book.

William Sears, *Run to Glory*, Naturegraph Publishers, Inc., Happy Camp, California, 1989. 380pp. ISBN 0-87961-194-4 (HB) ISBN 0-87961-195-2 (Pbk) \$9.95.

The last and a loosely autobiographical, semi-humorous book of William Sears. It does not contain any reference to the Bahá'í Faith.

Lowell Johnson, *The Eternal Covenant*, Johannesburg: NSA of the Bahá'ís of South Africa 1986/1989² ISBN 0 908420 897 262pp.

Henry A. Weil, *Closer than Your Life Vein*, NSA of the Bahá'ís of Alaska Inc. 1978 114pp.

Mahnaz Afshin, *The Beloved Master*, Klang, Malaysia: Bahá'í Publishing Trust Committee, 1986 vii+94pp. Contains thirty-four brief chapters covering the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. \$6

Inger Strang, *Jesu Återkomst i Baha'í*, Åbo: Åbo Akademi Religionshistoria, 1992. 86pp. ISBN 951-650-009-9 [Price unknown]

A Finnish Bahá'í book about Christian prophecy and Bahá'í fulfilment in seven chapters.

1. Profetians uppfyllelse som ett historiskt händelseförlopp; 2. Religionsepoken i symboler; 3. Religionernas förening i en fall; 4. Jesu återkomst på moln; 5. Johannes-evangeliets profetior om Anden 6. Jesu död och uppståndelse; 7. Avslutning

Marrs, Texe. *Texe Marrs Book of New Age Cults & Religions*. Austin, Tex.: Lighthouse Mission Press, 1990. "Baháism": pp. 140-146. [Coll.]

Robinson, Judith. *The Hearsts: An American Dynasty*. Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press; London; Toronto: Associated University Press, 1991. 441 pages. Contains (pp. 311-312, 367) reference to the Bahá'í activities of Phoebe Hearst [Coll.]

Ehlke, Roland Cap. *Christianity, Cults, and World Religions: A Bible Class Course for Adults*. Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992. Note: "Baha'i": pp. 45-50. Christian polemic. Includes photograph of Bahá'u'lláh taken from William McElwee Miller's *The Bahá'í Faith*. [Collins].

Warburg, Margit. 'The Circle, the Brotherhood, and the Ecclesiastical Body: Baha'i in Denmark, 1925-1987.' In: *Religion, Tradition, and Renewal*. Amin W. Geertz; Jeppe Sinding Jensen, editors. Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press. 1991. pp. 201-221. [Coll.]

Ullman, Chana. "Psychological Well-Being Among Converts in Traditional and Nontraditional Religious Groups, *Psychiatry* (New York), v.51 (Aug. 1988), pp.312-322. (Bahá'í Faith: pp. 313, 314, 316, 317, 328). [Coll.]

□ THE COLLINS BIBLIOGRAPHY 1844 -> 1985, DESIDERATA: FROM A LIST OF ADDITIONS BY W. COLLINS ¹

Chenoweth, Ben. "Bahais and Their Teachings", *Missionary Review* (Sydney, N.S.W.), v.67 no.5 (Dec. 1958), pp.6.

Du Bose, Horace M. "The Star of the Bab", *The Methodist Review* (Nashville, Tenn.), v.65 no.2 (Apr. 1916), pp.211-221. Attack on the Bahá'í Faith, partly based upon Samuel Graham Wilson's *Bahatism and Its Claims*.

'The Babi or the Bahai Religion, 1', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.6 no.5 (May 1907). pp. 171-177.

'The Babi Religion II: The Sects of Babiism', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.6 no.9 (Sept. 1907), pp. 314-325.

¹ Material supplementary to the William P. Collins, *Bibliography of English-Language Works on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths 1844-1985* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1990). Various Bahá'í scholars are aware of desiderata – English language items missing – from this important volume. While it should not be deduced that a call is going out for every occurrence of 'the Báb' or 'Bahá'u'lláh'/'Bábí' or 'Bahá'í' [or archaic transliterations], in every conceivable non-academic source, academically useful desiderata would be gratefully received. Additions/desiderata communicated by William Collins himself are reproduced below. It should be noted that under this heading in a previous BSB (6:2-3 p. 115f), the following work was listed, Rattlingen, W. H., "Babism", *London Quarterly Review* 92 (1988) p. 291. Collins has pointed out that this is erroneous. Having checked in the Library of Congress, he found that at this reference there occurs a review by W. H. Rattigan of various books about Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism. There is no reference to "Babism."

'The Babi Religion III: The Law Promulgated by Bahauulla', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.6 no.10 (Oct. 1907), pp. 351-857 [i.e. 357]

'The Babi Religion IV: The Claims of Bahauulla', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.6 no.11 (Nov. 1907), pp. 387-404.

'The Babi Religion V: Proof of the Revelation of Bab and Bahauulla'. *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.6 no.12 (Dec. 1907), pp. 427-442.

'Babism - The Latest Revolt from Islam', *The Missionary Review of the World* (Princeton, N.J.), v.21 no.10 o.s., v.11 no.10 n.s. (Oct. 1898), pp. 761-764. "Described as being from a paper read by Rev. A. H. McKinney."

'Bahauism', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.14 no.1 (Nov. 1915), pp. 433-439. [Coll] "Large portion of the article is said to be from an article by Mr. Charles Remington in *The Truth-Seeker*."

'Court Ruling on Bahais', *The Christian Century* (Chicago), v.98 no.17 (May 13, 1981), p. 537.

'The Fate of a Babi Prophet', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.9 no.6 (June 1910), pp. 259-262. "About Henry Clayton Thompson, an early American Bahá'í who claimed revelatory experiences."

Goeze, M. Y. de. 'The Babis of Persia', *The Missionary Review of the World* (Princeton, N.J.), v.17 no.5 o.s., v.7 n.5 n.s. (May 1894), p. 362.

Johnson, Chris. 'The Lifestyle and Social Order of the Baha'i Faith: A Participant Observer Study'. *Darshana International* (Yoradabad, India), v.22 no.1 (Jan. 1982). pp. 1-7.

Sell, Edward. 'The Bábís'. *The Church Missionary Intelligencer* (London), v.47 (n.s. v.21) (May 1896). pp. 324-335.

'The Teachings of Abbas Effendi', *The Review of Religions* (Qadian, India), v.7 no.2 (Feb. 1908). pp. 66-84. "Partly based on Myron Phelps's book."

□ EXTRACTS FROM THE FORTHCOMING COLLINS SUPPLEMENT, 1986-1989 ²

Abdul Hannan, Shah. 'Ruling of OIC Fiqh Academy on Bahai Faith', *Al-Islam* (Dhaka, Bangladesh), v.4 n.12 (Dec. 1988), pp. 2-3. "Recommends that Islamic institutions resist this 'heretical trend aimed at impairing Islam'".

² Items under this heading were communicated by Collins. They will eventually be published as a supplement to his *Bibliography*. (1986-90, Section 11.).

- Allen, Paul D. 'The Baha'is of Iran: A Proposal for Enforcement of International Human Rights Standards', *Cornell International Law Journal* (Ithaca, N.Y.), v.20 no.2 (Summer 1987), pp. 337-361.
- Beckwith, Francis. 'Baha'i-Christian Dialogue: Some Key Issues Considered', *Christian Research Journal* (San Juan Capistrano, Calif.), (Winter/Spring 1989), pp. 15-19.
- Beveridge, Kent D. 'Worthy Representative of Europe : Anton Graf Prokesch von Osten.' *Meitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchiv* (Vienna). Sonderdruck 41 (1990). pp. 138-155.
- Bjorling, Joel. 'Iran's Persecution of Baha'is'. *Middle East and Mediterranean Outlook* (London). (May 1987), p.3.
- 'The Path of Suffering: The Baha'i Faith'. *Unification News*. (July 1990). pp. 16, 18.
- Chaszar, Edward. 'International Protection of Minorities in the Middle East', *Middle East Review* (New Brunswick, N.J.), v.18 no.3 (Spring 1986), pp. 37-48; Bahá'í, pp. 37, 38, 41-42, 43, 44, 46.
- Cherry, Laurence. 'The World Must Not Forget Us', *Reader's Digest* (Montreal, P.Q.). (Dec. 1986), pp. 49-53, Iranian persecution.
- Collins, William P. 'Effects of Computerization Requirements on the Bahá'í Classification Scheme in Use at the Bahá'í World Centre', *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* (Binghamton, N.Y.), v. 11 no.2 (1990), pp. 69-83.
- Danesh, Ali. 'The Bahá'í Administrative Order'. *Future Times* (Wellington, N.Z.). (Winter 1988). p. 11. "Iran's Bahais Facing a Bleak Prospect: Ali Danesh Describes the Persecution of the Baha'is in Iran and Warns That Ayatollah Khomeini's Death May Increase the Repression', *New Zealand International Review* (Wellington), v.13 no.2 (Mar./Apr. 1988), pp. 2-8.
- Djoneidi, Maziar. 'Reflections on the Baha'i Holy Scriptures', *Ecumenism*, no.97 (Mar. 1990), pp. 28-30.
- Hassall, Graham. 'The Failure of the Tommy Kabu Movement: A Reassessment of the Evidence', *Pacific Studies*, v.14 no.2 (Mar. 1991), pp. 29-51. Bahá'í. pp. 42-44. 51n.
- "Tom Kabu of Papua New Guinea began a movement in the 1940s to raise the living standards of the Purari society from which he had come. His efforts failed, not only because of hostility from or ineptitude of parts of the Australian colonial administration, but also the opposition to his aspirations exhibited by personnel of the London Missionary Society. Tom Kabu became, in 1965, the first Papuan Bahá'í".
[Collins]
- Lederer, György. "Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Budapest: Overture and Zenith of Bahá'í Activities In Hungary', *La Transmission du Savoir dans le Monde Musulman Périphérique: Lettre d'Information* (France), no.9 (fév. 1989). pp. 13-25.

Najafiyân, Sa'îd. 'Baha'ism: A Study in Pseudo-Religion', *Al-Tawhid* (Tehran). v.4 no.4 (Shawwâl-Dhû al-Hijjah 1409 = May/July 1989), pp. 157-179. "A laudatory English-language review of Siyyid Muhammad Bâqir Najaff's Persian language anti-Bahá'í volume entitled *Bahá'iyân*." [Collins]

Semenoff, Paul. 'An Interview with Paul J. Semenoff'. *Iskra* (Grand Forks, B.C.), no.1699 (Nov. 29, 1989), pp. 21-35, 46-60.

Worsfold, Adrian. 'Peace, Liberalism end Otherwise in the Babi-Baha'i Faiths', *Faith and Freedom* (Oxford, U.K.), v.42 pt.I, no.124 (Spring 1989), pp. 40-44. "Considers the Bahá'í attitude to covenant-breakers (excommunicants) as evidence of authoritarianism that inhibits freedom of expression and thought." [Collins]

□ THE JOURNAL OF BAHÁ'Í STUDIES, VOL 3:4 (December 1990-March 1991)
CONTENTS

Julie Oeming Badiee end Heshmatollah Badiee, *The Calligraphy of Mishkín-Qalam* 1f.

Christopher Buck, *Bahá'u'lláh as "World Reformer"* 23f.

Nasser Sabel, *An Introduction to the Kitáb-Hqán* p.71.

Commentaries

Nancy Lease, *Response to Linda O'Neil, "Commentary on 'The Equality of Women: The Bahá'í Principle of Complementarity'"* p. 77

Tony Michel, *The Evolution of Reality* p. 79

□ THE BAHÁ'Í STUDIES REVIEW (BSR)

The BSR is a Publication of the *Association For Bahá'í Studies English-Speaking Europe* edited by Seena Fezel, a Bahá'í medical student resident in Edinburgh (Scotland) and a member of the ABS-ESE committee. The contents of the first two issues are listed below.

BSR 1:1 (1991).

Peter Hulme, *Community in Diversity: the New Man*

Stephen Lambden, *Muhammad and the Qur'an: Some Introductory Notes*

Moojan Momen, *The Study of Religion: Some Comments on the Methodology of Studying Religion*

John Parris, *Scholarship end the Bahá'í Community*

Phillip R. Smith, *The Bahá'í Faith and Religious Diversity*.

Michael W. Sours, *Seeing with the Eye of God: Relationships between Theology and Interpretation*

Europe: a Compilation from the Bahá'í Writings Compiled by the Research Department of the Baha'í World Centre

BSR 2:1 (1992)

Seena Fezel and Khazeh Fananapazir, *Some Interpretive Principles in the Bahá'í Writings*

Moojan Momen, *A Review of Fundamentalism end Liberalism: Towards en Understanding of the Dichotomy*

Udo Schaefer, *Challenges to Bahá'í Scholarship*
Robert Stockman, *Jesus Christ in the Bahá'í Writings*

Special Supplement on Apologetics:

Extracts concerning opposition, From letters written on behalf of The Universal House of Justice.

Shahriar Razavi and Khazeh Fananapazir, *Some Observations on Boykin's 'The Baha'í Faith': (part I) Underlying Principles and Approach for a Bahá'í Response*

Mohsen Enáyat, *A Commentary on Azhar's Statement regarding 'Baha'is and Baha'ism'*

BOOK REVIEWS by Kishan Manocha and Nazila Ghanea-Hercock

□ PERSIAN & ARABIC PUBLICATIONS

Shoghi Effendi, *Nazm-i Jahānī-i Bahā'ī... / The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*. translated and adapted by Hushmand Fatheazam, Dundas Ont., Canada: Persian Institute of Bahá'í Studies, Qudrat 146 B.E. Novambar 1989, 211pp.

W.S. Hatcher & G.D. Martin, *The Baha'í Faith, The Emerging Global Religion* translated by Parivash Samandari and Roohollah Khoshbin, Dundas Ont., Canada: Persian Institute of Bahá'í Studies, n.d., 272+57 pp.

Hadrat-i Bahá'u'lláh / A Statement prepared by The Bahá'í International Community, Office of Public Information, New York (London, 1992) 86pp. ISBN 1-870989-36-8. Translated from the English text Bahá'u'lláh (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991, ISBN 1-870989/ Sydney: Ambassador Press, 1991, ISBN 0-909991 51 0; etc).

Majmū'a-yi az nasūs mubāraka darbāra-i 'Ahd va Mithāq.. THE COVENANT... (Dundas Ont., Canada: Persian Institute of Bahá'í Studies, n.d.) 28pp. The original Persian and Arabic texts assembled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice; first published in English in December 1987 as *The Covenant*.

al-Hayāt al-Bahā'īya.. [Living the Life, A Compilation], National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ethiopia. n.d. 104pp. The Arabic version.

Farāmīn-i tablīghī hadrat-i 'Abdu'l-Bahā / Tablets of the Divine Plan. Wilmette, Illinois: The Persian/American Affairs Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 1985/87. 92pp.

Yazdani, M.R., *Sharh-i isāhī pāyam-i sulh-i Hadrat-i 'Abdu'l-Bahā / Seventy Years of Service of Ahmad Yazdani*. Dundas, Ontario, Canada : Persian Institute of Bahá'í Studies, Ridvan 147 B.E. / April 1990. 81pp. £4.95. Contains, among other things, the Persian text (composed December 17th, 1919; pp. 23-41) and account of the post-WWI, transmission of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's Tablet to 'The Central Organization For A Durable Peace at The Hague'. Mīrzā Ahmad Khān Yazdānī Kasrawī (= Ahmad Yazdānī, 1891-1977) along with the Hand of the Cause Mīrzā 'Alī Muhammad Ibn-i Asdaq (1850-1928) ultimately presented the Tablet.

□ TWO RECENT BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES SEMINARS OF THE ABS-ESE., RELIGIOUS STUDIES SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP.

As during the last decade or so, two Bahā'ī Studies seminars of the ABS-ESE Religious Studies (special interest) Group were held at the Bahā'ī Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne in 1992 — one between Friday July 3 and Sunday July 6, and a second between Friday December 11 and Sunday December 13. Around thirty Bahā'īs were present, from the U.K. and abroad; including Canada and the USA.

The July seminar again benefited much from the presence of Dr. Robert Stockman who is currently director of the Research Office of the American Bahā'ī National Centre. Present at the December seminar was the Canadian Bahā'ī Islamicist Dr. Todd Lawson -- currently lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto (Canada) and one about to lecture to undergraduates on Bahā'ī Studies in the department of Religious Studies of the same university. Seven papers were presented and discussed over the weekend of the summer seminar. They will here merely be listed with a brief summary of their contents.

After general discussion on the Friday evening, the Saturday morning sessions opened when Moojan Momen (Northill, Beds.) presented his survey *"Covenant Breakers" and the Phenomenon of "Covenant-Breaking"*. At the beginning of this paper it was pointed out that "the phenomenon of opposition to the established head of the [Bahā'ī] religion from within the ranks of the Bahā'īs has recurred in every generation since the founding of the religion over 100 years ago." It was stated that a "cardinal factor" in defining covenant-breaking was considered by 'Abdu'l-Bahā to be "conscious opposition to the divine will as manifested in the Covenant." Momen's paper was followed by Robert Stockman's carrying forward chronologically a paper delivered at a 1991 seminar, his *The American Bahā'ī Community from 1921 until the present*. It was indicated that this period has been very little studied. A preliminary overview of selected sociological issues was lucidly presented with something of a prophetic conclusion, "The impact of the Bahā'ī Faith on America seems destined to increase in the future. It's membership continues to grow, at a rate that is strongly influenced by social trends. The ability of the Bahā'īs to articulate the teachings of their religion in a way that is relevant to social needs has been improving. The American Bahā'ī community is highly diverse -- far more diverse than American society as a whole -- and may prove a significant laboratory for the creation of values essential to an increasingly pluralistic society."

Jack McLean (Canada) then presented his pioneering essay, *Prolegomena to a Bahā'ī Theology* in which (among other things) the legitimacy of the Bahā'ī use of the term "theology" was presupposed and convincingly argued. It was reckoned that contemporary Bahā'īs live in the period of the genesis of [exegetically rooted] 'Bahā'ī Systematic Theology'. On the Sunday morning Stephen Lambden (Newcastle upon Tyne) in his *Doxophany: The Eschatological Manifestation of the Divine Glory in the Person of Bahā'u'llāh*, illustrated how the founder of the Bahā'ī Faith not infrequently expressed his manifestation as a "latter day" doxophany. A manifestation, in other words, of the Divine doxa = Greek "glory" through certain of his uses of the Arabic word majd which translates doxa in Matt 24:30b -- and

synoptic parallels -- in various Arabic Bible translations and Bahā'ī scriptural Tablets. In his paper *Immanence and Transcendence in Theophanic Symbolism*, Michael Sours (Oxford) examined certain Biblical antecedents relating to Bahā'u'llāh's claim to Divinity and associated symbols i.e. anthropomorphic scriptural language.

Seena Fazel, in presenting *Some Aspects of Inter-Religious Dialogue*, supplemented an earlier paper on 'Religious Pluralism' by examining the Bahā'ī justification for 'Inter-Religious Dialogue [IRD]'. Six types of IRD were examined, as well as the prospects for a Bahā'ī IRD in the light of Bahā'ī teaching activity. Having recovered from illness in time to present his paper on Sunday, John Danesh (U.K./ New Zealand) presented a version of his insightful paper -- originally published in the Bahā'ī magazine 'World Order' -- *Four Religious Peace Messages 1983-85*. The following religious peace messages were compared and contrasted: [1] The World Council of Churches, Peace and Disarmament (between 1983 and 1985), [2] World Methodist Council, Peace for One and All - the Message (July 1985), [3] Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace -- to the Peoples of the World (October 1985) [4] The Vatican, Peace Is a Value with No Frontiers North-South, East-West: Only One Peace (December 1985).

In addition to these papers, wide-ranging discussions took place on certain aspects of effectively carrying out Bahā'ī scholarship. The importance of young Bahā'īs doing Religious Studies, Theology or Islamic Studies/ Arabic and Persian degrees (at an academic level) was highlighted. Such studies can be spiritually and intellectually stimulating and would enable the individual carrying them out to be of service to the Faith. The need for academically trained Bahā'ī scholars is fundamental.

Apart from a brief open forum discussion on aspects of Bahā'ī scholarship, the December seminar commenced on Friday evening with a presentation by Stephen Lambden which was essentially an elaboration upon an entry for the *Encyclopedia Iranica* entitled *Bābī-Bahā'ī eschatology*: the Bābī and Bahā'ī understanding of the "last things". Among other things, it was pointed out that the appearance of the Bābī messiah figure *Man yuzhiruhu'llāh* ("Him whom God will make manifest") was a progressive and cyclic phenomenon -- at one point in his *Book of the Five Grades (Kitāb-i-panj sha'n*; 1850) the Bāb mentions nine successive theophanies of *Man yuzhiruhu'llāh*.

On the Saturday morning two papers touching upon aspects of feminist theology were presented; firstly, Lil Abdo [London], *Female Representation of the Holy Spirit in Bahā'ī and Christian Writings* which examined certain of the historical evidence for a female Holy Spirit -- especially in early Syrian writings -- and feminist arguments relating to this in the light of Bahā'ī Maid of Heaven and related symbols. Secondly, Michael Sours, *Bahā'ī Cosmological Symbolism and the Ecofeminist's Critique*, dwelt upon the relationships and Biblical antecedents of such cosmologically related notions as dualism, hierarchy and anthropocentrism which have, in recent years, come under severe criticism by environmental ethicists and feminist theologians. The paper explores correlations between Bahā'ī teachings and the custodianship interpretation of Genesis, makes a distinction between the divine and

fallen cosmic order, and argues that, rather than abandoning such cosmological symbolism, it is possible to see that in practical reality and symbolic understanding, the cosmic order can be restored through Bahā'u'llāh's teachings.

After lunch, Todd Lawson commented on the significance of what is perhaps the earliest work of the Bāb, the *Risāla fī sulūk*, a mystical "Treatise on the Search" (late 1843?). It was pointed out that this very brief Arabic essay, among other things, interprets certain Qur'ānic phrases including the "Face of God" (*wajh allāh*; cf. Qur'ān 2:115; 28:88) and contains a reference to Seyyid Kāzīm Rashtī (d.1844 CE). There followed Robert Parry's (Reeding) ground-breaking paper, *Philosophical Theology and Bahā'ī Scholarship*, which analyzed two major aspects of an emergent Bahā'ī Theology (Philosophical and Rhetorical Theology), through a study of sources, methods, foundations and language. The concepts of meaning, rationality and truth were outlined, as was an historical and philosophical study of the 'raw materials' of Theology. Alongside proposing a programme for Philosophical Theology, the paper strongly emphasised the study of language, over and above its descriptive and referential aspects.

The opening Sunday morning session involved Lambden's and Momen's presentation of various Research Notes. The former spoke briefly about certain usages of the word *Bahā'* and the identity of the early Greek figure "Martos" (an erroneous transliteration) mentioned in the *Tablet of Wisdom (Lawh-i-Hikmat)*. The latter reviewed some aspects of (largely post-1844) Shaykhī history and geographical diffusion. A joint paper by Seena Fazel and Khazeh Fenenapazir (both of Edinburgh) expounded and clarified, *A Bahā'ī Approach to the Claim of Finality in Islam: the Question of the "Seal of the Prophets" (khātam al-nabbiyīn) in the Qur'ān and in Islām* – the importance of the Bahā'ī understanding of Qur'ān 33:40 and post-qur'ānic Islāmic expressions of the finality of prophethood. Existing Bahā'ī material expounding Qur'ān 33:40 in eastern and western languages was surveyed. It was further noted, for example, that the Prophet Muhammed was referred as the "seal of the prophets" by the Bēb and Bahē'u'llāh. The paper included a discussion of the terms *nabī* ("prophet") and *rasūl* ("Messenger").

Peter Brooke, [France/Wales] In his *Scholarship and the Renewal of Religion*, outlined a number of trends which have inhibited the rise of a scholarship based on an appreciation of value as a structural feature of reality. Utilizing a wide range of examples from literature and art, and making reference to the names of the Bahā'ī months, a realist notion of values was affirmed. In the final paper of the weekend - also presented at Manchester University – *The Islamic Apocalypse and The Qur'ān Commentary of the Bāb*, Todd Lawson argued that the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (1844) can be viewed as an example of the admittedly hazy literary genre of apocalyptic. As an "unusual Qur'ān commentary" it functions, in other words, as a sort of Islamicate apocalypse. Concluding his paper Lawson states, "... the Bāb's apocalypse owes something to the previous success of the Safavid apocalypse. In both cases strong social and political forces were key..".

In addition to the abovementioned papers discussion took place at these seminars, for example, about Bahā'ī Review (R. Stockmen), Bahā'ī Publications East end West (Wendi Momen et al.), Tools of Bahā'ī Scholarship: Computer Hardware & Software (Momen & Lambden) Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin (Lambden) and Dimensions of Bahā'ī Theology and the importance of Philosophical Awareness.

Stephen Lambden

A FORTHCOMING BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES SEMINAR OF THE ABS-ESE., RELIGIOUS STUDIES SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, ENGLAND, U.K. JULY 2-4 1993.

Details are given above of the forthcoming Religious Studies, Special Interest Group Seminar to be held at the Bahā'ī Centre, 30 Victoria Square, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne. The theme of the seminar will largely revolve around papers relating to the exegesis of the *Kitāb-i aqdas*. Enquiries to Gillien & Stephen Lambden, 44 Queens Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, England, U.K. Tel+ Fax. 091 2818597 [UK]; 44. 912818597 [Oversees].

Limited local Bahā'ī accommodation is available. Please, if desired, request this very early. Bed & Breefast / Hotel accommodation is plentiful. Enquiries to the Lambdens (see above).

ERRATA TO BSB 6:4-7:2

A few scanning and other errors of pagination exist in certain early copies of this BSB (6:4-7:2). The following selected errata may be present.

The month given on the cover of this BSB should be December not October.

There is no page 17; the text jumps from p.16 to p.18.

There is an unnumbered page between p.112 and 113.

p.113 for 'messgae', read message and for 'appalloing' read eppalling

p.118 for 'invisible' read invisible.
