

NOTES, REVIEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Letter of Shoghi Effendi to Dr. J.E.Esslemont dated 17th Feb. 1921.

Junior Common Room

Balliol College
Oxford

17.2.21.

Dear Doctor,

I Have received your letter enclosing the essay which you have so carefully and wisely corrected. I feel much indebted to you for all the suggestions you have made and the minute corrections which you have so fully effected.

I have sent a copy to the Master and shall see what his comments will be before any attempt at publication. I have been requested by the Oxford University Asiatic Society which is representative of some twelve different nationalities and of which I am a member to send a paper on the Baha'i Movement. I have gladly accepted and have a long, comprehensive and elaborate paper which I hope to read this Monday. It is the custom of the Society to invite at every meeting an official of the University or an outsider who will be fully acquainted with the subject under discussion and who will address the society after or before the discussion is made on the paper.

I understand that the Society has requested Dr. Estlin Carpenter to act as their distinguished visitor on that occasion but he seems to have been unable to respond to their invitation. They have now written to Prof. Browne and presumably they have intimated to him the nature of the subject and the name of the speaker. I presume he will be present but notwithstanding the attitude he will probably take in the discussion I have decided not to modify the tone of my speech and have preserved my quotations of his account when he visited Baha'u'llah in Acre. I don't know what will ensue in the meeting and what will be the atmosphere of the discussion in his presence. It is quite an unexpected turn and we hope for the best.

I hope your book will be soon received by the Master and I do not think you will have any difficulty in disposing of the volumes to be printed as the demand for such a magnificent work is bound to be wide and lasting.

My sister is not satisfied with her stay at Scotland and she is feeling depressed and again disappointed.

I don't know whether I have sent you with my essay some of the Hidden Words which I have translated. If not tell me that I may send them to you.

Lovingly

Shoghi

That the Doctor addressed by Shoghi Effendi in this letter is Dr. J.E. Esslemont is clear from the mention of his book, namely, Baha'u'llah and the New Era which he was writing at this time. A photocopy of the original letter of Shoghi Effendi in his own hand is in my possession (Ed).

2. Extract from a letter of (or written on behalf of) Shoghi Effendi to Emerica Sala dated Feb.19th 1947 concerning future Guardians and abrogation.

"Future Guardians...cannot 'abrogate' the interpretations of former Guardians,as this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them; however,they can elaborate and elucidate former interpretations,and can certainly abrogate some former ruling laid down as a temporary necessity by a former Guardian."

3. Extracts from letters of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice on birth control and related subjects.

A. Birth Control

"As to the problem of birth control,neither Baha'u'llah nor 'Abdu'l-Baha have revealed anything direct or explicit regarding this question. But the Baha'i Teachings, when carefully studied imply that such current conceptions like birth control,if not necessarily wrong and immoral in principle,have nevertheless to be discarded as constituting a real danger to the very foundation of our social life.For Baha'u'llah explicitly reveals in His Book of laws that the very purpose of marriage is the procreation of children who,when grown up,will be able to know God and to recognize and observe His Commandments and Laws as revealed through His Messengers.Marriage is thus,according to the Baha'i Teachings, primarily a social and moral act.It has a purpose which transcends the immediate personal needs and interests of the parties.Birth control, except in exceptional cases,is therefore not permissible." (From a letter dated October 14,1935 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer).

"The Guardian has...given careful consideration to your question regarding the Baha'i view of birth control.

...there is no reference whatsoever in the Writings on this subject.The utmost we can say is by way of reference from what Baha'u'llah has revealed regarding the nature,purpose and character of marriage.We,as Baha'is,are not therefore in a position either to condemn the practise of birth control or to confirm it.

Birth control,however,when exercised in order to deliberately prevent the procreation of any children is against the Spirit of the Law of Baha'u'llah,which defines the primary purpose of marriage to be the rearing of children and their spiritual training in the Cause.The Universal House of Justice will have to consider this issue and give its verdict upon it." (From a letter dated February 4,1937 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer).

"The Universal House of Justice feels that the time has not yet arrived for legislation on this matter,and that these instructions provide sufficient guidance for the friends for the time being." (From a letter dated July 13,1967,written by the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly).

B. Abortion

" The practise of abortion-which is absolutely criminal as it involves deliberate destruction of human life- is forbidden in the Cause." (From a letter dated August 25th,1939,written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer).

"The practise of abortion merely for the purpose of getting rid of unwanted children is absolutely prohibited in the Faith. However, circumstances might exist in which abortion could be justified. Such a situation is not dealt with in the Sacred Text and the Universal House of Justice does not wish to legislate upon it at present, individual believers needing to make such a decision will have to be guided by the general principle stated above, the best professional advise available to them, and their own consciences." (From a letter dated May 5, 1971, written by the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly).

C. Sterilization

"... when the beloved Guardian was asked by an individual believer whether it was permissible to effect a surgical operation on the mother of a number of children to prevent further conception, the Guardian stated that such action is not permissible and renders the person that commits it responsible before God." (From a letter written August 14, 1967 by the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly).

" Regarding your question of whether you should have more children or not, the Guardian feels that this is a matter for you and your husband to decide. However, we must always bear in mind that God will protect His own, and that Baha'i children are the future servants of mankind who will help to carry the world forward into the glorious New Order which Baha'u'llah has prepared for it in this day of days. We should not face the future with fear, but with glad and assured hearts."

[Communicated by Loni Bramson-Leache]

4. Miscellaneous Letters of the Universal House of Justice to individual Baha'is.

A. Letter from the Universal House of Justice dated 11 May 1982 to Mr. Peter T. Terry Jr. of Bridgton, Maine, USA.

Dear Baha'i Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has instructed us to thank you for your letter of 17 March 1982 and to send you the following comments.

There is definitely a grey area between publication on the one hand and the sharing of notes and manuscripts between friends and fellow-scholars on the other. Recognizing this distinction the House of Justice has made several decisions over the years which have a bearing on your question.

1. It has been decided that doctoral theses and similar treatises submitted to institutions of learning for the obtaining of a degree and not subject to Baha'i review unless they are to be published more widely than is required for the degree in question.
2. A Believer who wrote and circulated to a number of believers a treatise he had written giving his views on an obscure and delicate matter relating to the Covenant was told that, whereas he is fully entitled to hold and express his views on the subject, he should not be circulating treatises on it, since it would merely serve to foster contention among the friends to no good purpose.

3. A study group which was holding meetings where many views were strongly expressed, some revealing a serious lack of understanding of the Teachings, was circulating notes of its discussions far and wide. It was told that it should circulate these notes only to those who had been present at the discussions and who would be fully familiar with the background.

Thus, while the exchange of information and manuscripts among friends is entirely permissible, the House of Justice feels that a dissemination as wide as the one you are engaged in constitutes publication and that you should not include on your lists documents by Baha'is which have not been reviewed. For example, some of the items you list, such as Fareed's translation of the *Lawn-i-Aqdas*, are old translations which have been superseded; some, such as Cole's translation of the "Ode of the Nightingale" are new translations which have not yet been approved for publication; others are books or pamphlets on the Faith written by Baha'is but not yet passed for publication by a reviewing committee; others show such a lack of grasp of the essential teachings of the Faith that they present a serious distortion of both its history and nature. You should certainly not promote the circulation of books by avowed enemies of the Faith, such as William Miller. Among the items on your list are undoubtedly some, such as Nicholas's translation of the Persian *Bayan*, that are published but out of print, and that Baha'is would be glad to have access to.

The House of Justice notes that you are now aware of the problem of copyright. This is important. Violation of these laws, depriving authors of their due royalties, could possibly incur opprobrium for the Faith and the good name of Baha'i scholarship.

The final problem concerns the consent of authors of unpublished manuscripts. Some may have strong objections to the circulation of their works in this manner. The House of Justice therefore requests you, if you wish to continue to give this service, to weed out from your lists all those items which are of doubtful character or are unreviewed manuscripts by Baha'is, and to be sure to obtain clearance for copyright and royalty payments where applicable for those which remain.

with loving Baha'i greetings,

[signed _____]

For Dept of Secretariat.

B. Letter from the Universal House of Justice dated 1 July 1982 to Mr. Peter T. Terry Jr.

Dear Baha'i Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 25 May 1982, and notes that you have decided to stop circulating your entire list of titles since most fail to satisfy the conditions expressed in the letter of 11 May 1982. So that there shall be no misunderstanding, the House of Justice asks us to emphasize that it was not its intention to prevent your circulating lists altogether, and therefore if you should find items which do qualify and which you feel it would be valuable to share, you need not hesitate to circulate them.

The House of Justice warmly appreciates the loyalty of your response. There are great fields of the history and teachings of the Faith open before Baha'i scholars and almost unlimited areas of research the surface of which has been barely scratched...."

with loving Baha'i greetings,

[signed _____]

For Dept of Secretariat.

C. Extract from a letter of the Universal House of Justice to Mr. Steven Scholl dated March 4th 1979.

" The Research Department at the World Centre has not come across any text calling on the friends not to make use of Nicolas's French translation of the Bayán, and there is no objection to your doing so."

D. Letter of the Universal House of Justice to Mr. Steven Scholl dated May 30th 1980.

" Dear Baha'i Friend,

We have been asked by the Universal House of Justice to respond to your letter of 22 February 1980 to the Research Department and to convey the following comments to you.

There is nothing explicit in the writings to support the view that the high praise given by Baha'u'llah to the Imams may be regarded as having been actually directed by Him only to a handful of them. In one of His Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms that all of them were divine luminaries, and Shoghi Effendi, in his "Dispensation of Baha'u'lláh", clearly states that the institution of the Imamate continued for a period of 260 years to be the recipient of God's guidance. You have yourself quoted this passage in your thesis, copy of which has just been received.

The picture on page 83 of William Miller's book is a portrait of Baha'u'llah, but different from the one displayed in the International Archives.

Rúhí Afnán's behaviour towards the Covenant was described by Shoghi Effendi as "rebelliousness" and "disobedience", and he referred to him as "treacherous Rúhí Afnán" who was "misrepresenting the teachings" of the Faith, "deliberately causing confusion", and "claiming to be its exponent". The friends may of course regard Rúhí's writings prior to his becoming a Covenant-breaker as free from the effects of his subsequent rebellious spirit, but the book he published after his expulsion should be considered with caution, in the light of Shoghi Effendi's statement about his misrepresentations of the teachings of the Faith. For more details about Rúhí's activities as a Covenant-breaker, you are referred to "Messages to the Baha'i World, 1950-1957", pp. 16 and 48.

Like other Departments at the World Centre, the Research Department consists of a body of staff workers residing in the Holy Land and serving under a Committee of members of the House of Justice. If work can be accomplished for the Department, such as indexing and translation, by friends elsewhere, these projects are referred to designated individuals living outside the Holy Land.

.....

with loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed _____]

For Dept of the Secretariat.

E. Extract from a letter of the Universal House of Justice to Mr. Richard Hollinger dated 21st June 1982.

"As to the material you have requested from the archival files at the World Centre, although there are a few documents of the kind you have described in your letter, you will appreciate the fact that it would not be fitting for letters reflecting the personal relationships of individual believers to 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi to be made generally available to the friends or to the public. If these friends had kept copies of their letters in their personal files, the use of these in writing a book or an article about them would be left to the discretion of the persons or institutions in whose custody such papers are held. Even under such circumstances, careful consideration should be given to the fact that the information, if disclosed, should not inadvertently harm the interests of the Faith.."

F. Letter of the Universal House of Justice to Mr. Richard Hollinger dated 23 March 1983.

Dear Baha'i Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has instructed us to acknowledge your letter of 11 January 1983 and to send you the following reply.

The House of Justice notes that some of your statements about anomalies in review are inaccurate; for example it is assured that "To Move the World" was fully reviewed. However, it agrees with you 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 or modify this temporary restriction on the freedom of Baha'i authors to publish whatever they wish about the Faith and its teachings. National Assemblies responsible for administering the reviewing procedure have been urged to do all they can to improve and expedite its operation, and efforts are being continually made to this end.

Three different categories of publications are subject to different procedures. Manuscripts written by Baha'is about the Faith or its teachings are subject to review. Translations of Baha'i books that have already passed review are subject to checking to ensure that the translation is accurate and of proper quality. The publication of a historical document, such as the Salmani memoirs, requires review of the entire book to ensure that the document is properly presented and is supplemented, where necessary, by accurate and adequate annotations and commentary, and, when appropriate, the translation of the document itself must be checked. In this last category, moreover, questions of wisdom and timeliness are of prime importance.

There is a basic difference between a document's being published by a non-Baha'i agency and its publication by Baha'is. Baha'is owe it, in loyalty to Baha'u'llah, to present the material in a manner that will neither distort the true character of His Faith nor the truth of the historical record. There are many historical documents, some in the possession of the Faith and some not. Much highly meritorious research is being done by Baha'i scholars in tracing material relating to the early history of the Faith in government archives, public libraries, private collections etc. This is extremely important because the dangers facing mankind cause one to fear that much of this material could be irretrievably lost if not located and copied now. The archives of the Faith at the World Centre and in Iran, and indeed in most national communities, are as yet in no condition to permit access to just anyone who wishes to study them. Most of these archives still need to be studied, sorted,

preserved and catalogued by competent archivists so that vital historical evidence is not lost and so that easy access will be possible in future.

Since it is impossible for researches to have access to all the historical material at the present time, the question arises as to which portions of that material in the possession of the Faith should be made available, when, and in what form. Up till now the House of Justice has not hesitated to make facsimilies of original documents available to Baha'i scholars in whom it has confidence, for their use in research work. Thus extracts which have been published have been presented in their proper settings.

Decisions to withhold the publication of certain documents, or to publish only excerpts initially, for the protection of the Faith and the believers have numerous precedents. For example, as is mentioned on pages 3 and 4 of the Introduction to the "Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas", Baha'u'llah Himself withheld the Most Holy Book for some time after its revelation before sending it to the friends in Iran. This, He explained, was because it contained the Law of Huququ'llah. The Guardian, moreover, after the passing of the Master, at first published translations of only excerpts of the Will and Testament. It lies with the Head of the Faith at any period to make such decisions, for the Cause of God is surrounded by dangers of many different kinds which only the World Centre can correctly evaluate. Nor should this be a strange concept to Baha'is, for did not Baha'u'llah quote with approval the statement that "Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it."

The House of Justice feels that Baha'i scholars must beware of the temptations of intellectual pride. 'Abdu'l-Baha has warned the friends in the West that they would be subjected to intellectual tests, and the Guardian reminded them of this warning. There are many aspects of western thinking which have been exalted to a status of unassailable principle in the general mind, that time may well show to have been erroneous or, at least, only partially true. Any Baha'i who rises to eminence in academic circles will be exposed to the powerful influence of such thinking. One of the problems of modern times is the degree to which different disciplines have become specialized and isolated from one another. Thinkers are now faced with a challenge to achieve a synthesis, or at least a coherent correlation of the vast amount of knowledge that has been acquired during the past century. The Baha'is must be aware of this factor and of the moderation and all-embracing nature of this Revelation. In a letter written on 5 July 1947 to an individual believer the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf:

"One might liken Baha'u'llah's teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them. We believe in balance in all things; we believe in moderation in all things- we must not be too emotional, not cut and dried and lacking in feeling, we must not be so liberal as to cease to preserve the character and unity of our Baha'i system, not fanatical and dogmatic."

In the application of the Social laws of the Faith, most of the difficulties can be seen to arise not only from outright disobedience, but also from the actions of those who, while careful to observe the letter of the law, try to go as far as it will permit them away from the spirit which lies at its heart. A similar tendency can be noted among some Baha'i scholars. The great advances in knowledge and understanding in the vital field of Baha'i scholarship will be made by those who, while well versed in their subjects and adhering to the principles of research, are also thoroughly imbued with love for the Faith and the determination to grow in the comprehension of its teaching:

with loving Baha'i greetings,
[signed _____]
For Dept of Secretariat.

5. Extracts from two letters of the Universal House of Justice written in connection with the publication of the memoirs of Ustād Muhammad ^ḤAlī-yi Salmānī [ET. Marzieh Gail, My Memories of Baha'ū'llah, Kalimat Press, Los Angeles, 1982].

- A. Extract from a letter of the Universal House of Justice to Kalimat Press dated December 2nd 1982.

Dear Baha'i Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has instructed us to thank you for your letter of 1 October 1982 and the copy of "My Memories of Baha'u'llah", as well as the copy of correspondence that you had on this matter. As was expressed in the letter written on its behalf on 20th September 1982, the House of Justice greatly regrets the confusion which unfortunately arose over the publication of this book and the problems that have been caused to your firm through no fault of yours.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter written to Mr. Juan Cole [see below] on the instructions of the Universal House of Justice. From this you will see why the House of Justice feels that the publication of such a manuscript in such a form is untimely and unwise. It is sensitive to these points. Indeed it is apparent that you yourselves misconstrued the reasons behind the ad hoc committee's requests for the deletion of certain passages.

In view of this experience the House of Justice has decided that it will have to review all such documents itself in future before permitting them to be published.

Since the English translation of the Salmani memoirs is already in print, the House of Justice has decided that it may remain so, but in any reprinting you should not re-introduce any of the passages that you have omitted. The House of Justice does not wish the Persian text to be published at this time. However a well written version of the text would be useful at the World Centre and therefore the House of Justice will be glad to purchase from you, for the price you are paying, the calligraphic version that you have commissioned.

....

with loving Baha'i greetings

[signed _____]

For Dept. of the Secretariat.

- B. Extracts from a Letter of the Universal House of Justice to Mr. Juan Ricardo Cole dated 2 December 2nd 1982.

Dear Baha'i Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has now been able to compare the published edition of the Salmani memoirs with the Persian manuscript and to consider the passages which the ad hoc committee had marked for deletion... The House of Justice has instructed us to send you the following comments on the points raised in your letter of 13 August 1982.

When the early correspondence took place between the World Centre and Kalimat Press concerning this publication, the House of Justice was relying on the discretion of the appropriate committee in the United States to check not only the normal review aspects, but also the

timeliness and wisdom of such a publication. It did not itself check the manuscript. If it had done so it now concludes that it would not have given permission for its publication or translation at this time, for reasons which will be explained below.

In June 1982, concern was expressed to the Universal House of Justice about the possible publication in full, in Persian, of these memoirs, and action was taken in July, in great haste, to eliminate the most harmful passages so that the publication of the book, which was already at the press, could proceed. Unfortunately at that time the ad hoc committee was unaware of the earlier correspondence and of the fact that certain passages had already been quoted in translation in books by Mr. Hasan Balyuzi and Mr. Adib Taherzadeh.

Kalimât Press, in its turn, knowing of the prior publication of these passages, and not understanding the reasons for the proposed deletions, has, in fact, retained the larger part of the objectionable passages. The publication is a fait accompli and the House of Justice has therefore decided to permit it to stand, but not to permit the publication of the Persian text which, in fact, would be more damaging than the English version.

To the points of substance which you have raised concerning the publication of historical texts, the House of Justice instructs us to explain the following.

In order to preserve basic information and historical materials for the use of future historians, the beloved Guardian instructed the communities throughout Iran to record the history of the Faith in their localities, and also gave instructions for the memoirs of a number of early believers to be written down and preserved. This was not a new advice and many friends, eyewitnesses of certain events in the lives of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had already committed their reminiscences to writing. The memoirs of Ustád Muḥammad-'Alí-i-Salmání are among these and were written down from his spoken recollections in his old age. There is no question whatsoever of suppressing such records - on the contrary, the whole purpose of having them made was to preserve them, and they have been made available to Bahá'í historians such as Mr. Balyuzi and Mr. Taherzadeh for use in their work. When excerpts are translated and published in such works, they are placed in context, related to other records and, where necessary, annotated and commented on. You will readily agree that such a use is not the same as publication in full, even if supplementary footnotes are added, and does not carry the same implications.

In time entire collections of early documents of the Faith will be published in scholarly editions for general use. An initial step in such a process is Dr. Moojan Momen's admirable book "The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944 - Some Contemporary Western Accounts". Additional considerations, however, have to be weighed in publishing texts by Bahá'í writers.

At the present time the general public, even if it has heard of the Faith, is largely uninformed or misinformed. An increasing amount of misinformation is continually being disseminated by opponents of the Faith, both in the east and in the west. The principal task of the Bahá'ís at the present time - and especially of Bahá'í scholars - is to present a true picture of the Faith to the general public and to relate the Bahá'í teachings to the concerns and problems of mankind. When a Bahá'í publishing house issues a translation of a document such as Salmání's memoirs, the implication to an average reader is that the Bahá'ís consider this

particular account worthy of publication, and, in the absence of adequate footnotes or commentary to the contrary, the reader will assume that Salmānī's actions and statements are approved by Bahá'ís and are accurate portrayals of the Faith. After all, Salmānī was a close companion of Bahá'u'lláh, comparable in the eyes of a Christian reader with one of the early disciples of Christ.

Viewed in this light, certain of Salmānī's accounts are misleading or unworthy and, apart from distorting the Faith for the average reader can provide material for the enemies of the Faith who at the present time are seizing every opportunity to attack the Cause and blacken its reputation.

To take a few examples from the passages queried by the ad hoc committee:

1. p.17. There is a brief account of some believers from Sulṭánábád saying to Bahá'u'lláh "You being God, Uncle, why do You give us such a hard row to hoe?" It is an old accusation against the Bahá'ís, especially from Muslims, that we regard Bahá'u'lláh as God. To print such a story without an appropriate commentary gives fuel to our Muslim enemies and makes the Faith look ridiculous to a western reader. Unfortunately Kalimát Press, not realizing the reason for the objection, let the objectionable part stand and deleted a parenthetical comment "The Shí'ís, however, were very hostile", which is entirely innocuous.
2. p.30. There are some virtually incomprehensible comments about Mírzá Áqá Ján's head, which are of no historical importance but are unpleasant and unworthy.
3. pp.31-34. There are three unpleasant stories recounted by Salmānī to illustrate Azal's gluttony. Shoghi Effendi was always very careful in his accounts of Azal to confine his strictures to his truly infamous conduct. He never stooped to making personal criticisms of such a nature, which are unworthy. Publication of such stories in the context of an annotated edition of a historical document for scholarly study is one thing; publication in a book for the general reader is quite another. Again, unfortunately, Kalimát Press did not appreciate the reason for the committee's objection and published the whole passage apart from a couple of brief deletions which were of no significance.
4. p.34. There is the account of a disagreement between Bahá'u'lláh and Azal over the shaving of Azal's son's head--another unworthy story, the point of which is obscure.

There are others of a similar character.

The passages which have already been published in translation, such as Azal's attempt to persuade Salmānī to murder Bahá'u'lláh, provide striking examples of the profound difference between publication in the context of a properly balanced historical exposition, and publication as unadorned parts of a narrative.

In sum, to a knowledgeable Bahá'í reader, Salmānī's memoirs are a graphic illustration of the overwhelming problems with which Bahá'u'lláh had to deal both from His enemies and because of the actions of some of His own faithful followers; but to an uninformed reader they give a misleading and distorted picture of the Faith and of Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[Signed _____]

For Dept. of the Secretariat.

WEST AFRICAN CENTRE FOR BAHAI STUDIES

The West African Centre for Baha'i Studies has been recently founded by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Nigeria. The following are extracts from its constitution:

Purpose: The general purpose of the Centre shall be to contribute to the establishment of world unity and international cooperation through the fostering, in the light of the Baha'i teachings, of paradigms appropriate for world civilization.

Affiliation:

- 1) Categories of affiliation shall consist of regular affiliation, student affiliation, and institutional affiliation, and any other categories the Board shall see fit.
- 2) Regular affiliation is open to practising academics, graduate students, or others of recognised scholarly interest, ability and experience. Other affiliations shall be open to individuals as the Board shall see fit.
- 3) The rights of regular affiliates shall be listed in the Directory of the Centre, to receive the Directory, to receive Centre Newsletters, and to be invited to participate in Centre activities. The rights of other categories of affiliates shall be as the Board shall see fit.

Objectives:

- to prepare a Directory of Affiliates
- to establish and administer a lecture bureau and programme
- to publish a Newsletter and Journal
- to encourage and coordinate research and its publication
- to organize conferences, study groups, seminars, and workshops
- to encourage and coordinate the development of curricula and educational material
- to create consultative and cooperative association with institutions of related interest.

The address of the Centre is: P.O.Box 2029, Lagos, Nigeria.

The rate of regular affiliation for people outside of Africa will be approximately US \$ 20 (this includes airmail postage for all Centre communications). Applications may be obtained from the above address. Please note that the Centre especially wishes to encourage non-Baha'is to join.

[Communicated by Loni Bramson-Lerche]

BAHA'I STUDIES SEMINARS AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER

1977 - 1980

From 1977 until 1980 (16-17 April 1977; 15-16 April 1978; 7-8 April 1979; 11-13 April 1980), the Departments of Religious Studies and of Sociology at the University of Lancaster lent their support to a succession of four annual Baha'i Studies Seminars held under the convenership of Peter Smith, then a post-graduate student in the Department of Sociology. Designed to further academic research into the Babi and Baha'i religions, these seminars afforded opportunity for a number of post-graduates from Europe and America to present and discuss papers on various aspects of "Baha'i Studies". Most of the substantive papers presented at the seminars have since found their way into print or been incorporated into the participants' doctoral theses.

The papers presented were as follows:

Bramson, Loni (Louvain)

(1979) Internal opposition to ^cAbdu'l-Baha's Will and Testament and the establishment of the Guardianship.

- See Bramson's Ph.D. thesis, "The Baha'i Faith and Its Evolution in the United States and Canada from 1922 to 1936" (Université Catholique de Louvain, 1980).

Cole, Juan Ricardo (U.C.L.A.)

(1980) Rashid Ridá on the Bahá'í Faith in Egypt, 1897 - 1921.

Lambden, Stephen (Newcastle)

(1980) Divine splendour motifs in the Bible and writings of Bahá'u'lláh: Kábód in the Old Testament, Doxa in the New Testament and aspects of the 'theology of Bahá' and the Sinai epiphany motif in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Lee, Anthony (U.C.L.A.)

(1978) The Bahá'í community of ^cIshqábád from the beginnings to the Russian Revolution.

- Published in slightly revised form as "The rise of the Bahá'í community of ^cIshqábád". Bahá'í Studies 5 (1979):1-13.

MacEoin, Denis (Cambridge, 1977-79; Fez, 1979-80)

(1977) The late eighteenth century reformation in Shi^cism: Its background and influence.

(1978) The Shaykhí reaction to Babism in the early period

- To be published in Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History, ed. M. Momen (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1983).

- For both the 1977 and 1978 papers see MacEoin's Ph.D. thesis, "From Shaykhism to Babism: A Study of Charismatic Renewal in Shi^cí Islam" (University of Cambridge, 1979).

- (1979) The concept of jihád in the Bábí and Bahá'í movements.
- Published in part as "The Babi concept of holy war". Religion 12 (1982):93-129.
- (1980) Ritual and semi-ritual observances in Babism and Baha'ism.
- Momen, Moojan
(1977) Some problems connected with the Yazd episode of 1850.
- See pp.106-13 in Momen, The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts (Oxford: George Ronald, 1981).
- (1978) Early contact between Bahá'ís and Christian missionaries.
- To be published in Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History, ed. M. Momen (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1983).
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- Mossop, Denise
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- (1978) The American Bahá'í community, 1894-1917.
- To be published in expanded form in Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History, ed. M. Momen (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1983).
- See also Smith's Ph.D. thesis, "A Sociological Study of the Babi and Baha'i Religions" (University of Lancaster, 1982).
- (1979) Millenarianism in the Bábí and Bahá'í religions.
- Published in amended form as "Millennialism in the Babi and Baha'i religions", pp.231-83 in Millennialism and Charisma, ed. R. Wallis (Belfast: The Queen's University, 1982).

For short accounts of the Seminars see the following: For the 1977 and 1978 Seminars, the United Kingdom Bahá'í Journal 245 (June 1978):16-17 (See also the erratum in issue no.248 (Jan. 1979):11); for the 1979 Seminar, the Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies 6 (1979):119-23.

Report of the Baha'i Studies Seminar on Baha'i Scholarship .
held at the Momen residence, 26-27 January 1983.

An informal seminar, loosely oriented around Baha'i scholarship , was held at the home of Moojan and Wendy Momen in Biggleswade (Beds.England) over the weekend of January 26-27 1983.The participants were-:

Dr.Moojan Momen (MM)	Robert Parry (RP)
Dr.Wendy Momen (WM)	Stephen Lambden (SL)
Todd Lawson (TL)	Viva Tomlin (VT)
James Taylor (JT)	
Harry Docherty (HD)	

Session 1 (Saturday morning).

This first session was oriented around Dr.Denis MacEoin's paper Problems of scholarship in a Baha'i Context in Baha'i Studies Bulletin Vol.1.No.3. (December 1982),pp.44-68. MM opened the discussion by summarizing his own feelings about MacEoin's perspectives.These he has written up for this issue of the Bulletin (see below,pp57 - 65)and need not be set down again here. Lively discussion followed MM's preliminary remarks about MacEoin's paper. Several participants felt that MacEoin so elevated occidental academicism as to leave little room for the 'theological' or 'intuitive' side of Baha'i scholarship.The question of the Baha'i reviewing process was then briefly discussed.Reference was made to Shoghi Effendi's words in The World Order of Baha'u'llah (2nd Rev.Ed.Wilmette,Illinois, 1974),p.9, " I need not enlarge at the present moment upon what I have stated in the past..that the present restrictions imposed on the publication of Baha'i literature will be definitely abolished"(written Feb. 27th., 1929).This passage,it was felt, indicated a future move away from authoritarianism.MacEoin's pessimism about future Baha'i 'totalitarianism' was thought to be extreme.WM pointed out that the attitude towards review in this country (UK) had become more liberal in recent times. JT spoke of the changing attitudes within society towards sex and of the embryonic nature of the Baha'i Cause-- there will,he felt,be a move towards greater liberalism.TL wondered just when this move towards greater liberalism would be made: 'When will the review process be abolished?' .There will be a stagnation if there is not soon a greater liberalism.MM then commented, ' The administration does not exist for the benefit of scholars but for the whole Baha'i community.Scholars must bide their time for the benefit of the community'. WM added that the progressive scholarly element within the Baha'i community 'drags the administration along' and pointed out the great

service Denis MacEoin had done in this respect. He was referred to as a 'key liberalizing factor' and one who has helped to widen the attitudes of the British NSA. TL then stated that 'other NSA's do not have this liberal attitude'. MM responded by setting forth his view that scholars should not 'kick against the administration' but 'approach it positively in such a way as to enlighten the whole community.' 'But when?' TL asked, 'will the present attitude towards (Baha'i) review pass away?' MM replied by saying that 'It is already passing' and argued that it has to do with the evolution of the Baha'i community from 'sect' to 'church'. TL then observed that many Baha'is have 'strong personalities' and that 'totalitarian attitudes' should not be simply 'put up with'. MM again responded by arguing that too much liberality within the Baha'i community-- which might lead to a 'loss of control'-- would not be healthy. That some people leave the Baha'i community as a result of supposed 'totalitarianism' is inevitable.

The 'Baha'i principle' of the 'independent investigation of truth' was next briefly discussed. It was felt that this 'principle' applied particularly to the spiritual search for the Manifestation of God.

The nature of Shoghi Effendi's history writing called forth several comments at this point. It was generally agreed that a greater awareness of the non-infallibility of Shoghi Effendi in this area should be fostered in a tactful manner. HD thought this would be difficult to achieve in the light of 'ingrained ideas' about the infallibility of Shoghi Effendi. MM noted that the Universal House of Justice had pointed out the non-infallibility of Shoghi Effendi in the sphere of history and mentioned that it would take time for the community to learn about and come to terms with this 'established fact'. Scholars however, should be careful about the way they correct certain historical errors in say God Passes By. There is no evidence for 'intentional fabrication'.

MacEoin's assertion that Avarih's Kawākib.. was dropped by Baha'is was criticised. It has been available in Iran and elsewhere after his excommunication. Shoghi Effendi's use of 'covenant breaker sources' was also mentioned in passing as was his alleged failure to set forth in his God Passes By the militant nature of Babi jihād. Several participants felt that Shoghi Effendi had not radically toned down Babi militancy.

In connection with textual authority and 'absolute truth' RP asserted that it is the 'truth underlying things' that is important for many Baha'is. VT also drew attention to the centrality of the Baha'i experience and the theological dimension of the content of revelation. SL though, argued that the

Baha'i Faith is a 'religion of the Book' and that the experience of it cannot be divorced from the content of revelation.

Session 2 (Saturday afternoon)

This session consisted of a discussion of points made by MM in his unpublished paper, Scholarship and the Baha'i Community.

The inability of rational scholarship to penetrate the 'heart of religion' was underlined by several participants. Whether or not 'concepts' mirror the 'heart of religion' was debated. RP pointed out that faith has a non-conceptual aspect which scholarship cannot reach. MacEoin criticises Baha'i propositions and 'leaves out' the 'experiential element'. MM in this light argued that the publication of Baha'u'llah's al-Kitab al-Aqdas would not result in a 'mass apostasy' inasmuch as 'most Baha'is do not relate to their Faith in terms of doctrine'. RP then added that religious truth is essentially something to be 'lived in time' and not a 'frozen reality'; 'concepts do not capture what religion is all about'. There must be an awareness of the 'limitations of concepts'. SL again expressed the opinion that the concrete conceptual dimension of the Baha'i Faith cannot be spirited away in the hope of solving concrete doctrinal problems. The Baha'i experience is partly an experience of concepts or doctrines.

In connection with the 'dangers of Baha'i scholarship' mention was made of the need for humility and spirituality. The Baha'i scholar should not consider himself superior to his fellow believers. An academic knowledge of the Baha'i Faith, it was felt by most participants, should be accompanied by that spiritual knowledge and confirmation that is a result of meditative deepening. A distinction was made between academic study and deepening. VP however, held that her academic theological work was not divorced from spirituality. SL agreed that academic study might at times foster spiritual insights or lead to spiritual experiences. RP stated that there can be a 'concept experience'. MM stressed the need for academic study to be supplemented by spiritual reflection on the Baha'i Faith. Time should be set aside for prayer, meditation and deepening. JT stated that the simple believer is often more spiritual than the accomplished scholar and TL referred to the example of Abu al-Fadl Gulpaygani who is said to have been converted by a simple Baha'i but who yet attained great humility. The point was also made by TL that since 'work is worship' academic research is also a form of worship. MM added that it must be 'work performed in the spirit of service'.

The problem of scholars losing a balanced perspective of the Baha'i Faith in its wholeness was next discussed in the light of the scholarly focus on doctrinal details. An introverted and abstracted focus on detailed

problematic issues can lead to a loss of Baha'i perspectives. HD thought that scholars who had this problem were like people who take a clock apart but forget how to put it back together. Association with other Baha'i scholars would be a safeguard against this danger of loss of perspective. MM asked, 'Is this the problem?' and RP asserted that it is a problem and referred to the fact that there are very few if any references to Buddha or Krishna 'in the Tablets'. There are concrete problematic issues which need to be considered by Baha'i apologists.

Session 3 (Sunday morning)

A number of issues relating to Baha'i scholarship were discussed in this session. The question of 'Baha'i bias' in scholarly work and the appropriate Baha'i approach to scholarship were considered. Then, in connection with what constitutes the 'field of Baha'i scholarship', some remarks were made about what topics might at this stage be usefully studied. Reference was made to the history of the Baha'i Faith in Russia (TL) and to the importance of an analysis of the mystical aspects of the Baha'i revelation (MM) as well as to the need for a study of the Baha'i Faith and Eastern religions - Hinduism and Buddhism (RP). It was felt that a seminar on the mystical dimension of the Baha'i Faith would be useful; perhaps oriented around Baha'u'llah's Seven Valleys.

Session 4 (Sunday afternoon)

The relationship between the Baha'i scholar and the Baha'i community was discussed in this final session. MM opened the session by proposing that the Baha'i community has the responsibility of allowing the scholar the freedom to undertake research and providing him with a 'spiritually encouraging environment'. Baha'i scholarly activities are relevant to the community and must therefore be encouraged. WM added that it is an obligation of the Baha'i administration to provide a forum for legitimate discussion. TL spoke of the problems of the relationship between Baha'i scholars and the Baha'i administration outside the UK where a more liberal atmosphere prevails. He felt that Baha'i scholars should not be too passive towards administrative institutions which attempt to suppress Baha'i scholarship in an unreasonable manner. WM noted that the administrative bodies are traditionally conservative and should be 'stimulated' by Baha'i scholars.

This session ended with a lengthy debate about the importance of the Baha'i scholar keeping in touch with and leading an active Baha'i community life as a safeguard against scholarly introversion and loss of faith. It was agreed that the Baha'i scholar should lead a balanced Baha'i life. The Baha'i engaged in academic research should be both a scholar and a Baha'i.

Stephen Lambden.

The Baha'i Societies Conference on the 'Academic Study of the
Baha'i Faith.'

The University of Warwick (Coventry,
England), February 19-20th. 1983.

A number of Baha'is engaged in the academic study of their faith were invited by the British National (University) Baha'i Societies Committee to speak about their work at the University of Warwick over the weekend February 19-20th 1983. In all five lengthy sessions were held each being followed by questions and discussion:-

(1) Dr. Moojan Momen (Saturday morning) spoke on the history of the academic study of the Baha'i Faith and certain methodological and historical issues arising from such study. He spoke of 'two spheres' of the 'academic study' of the Babi-Baha'i religions, the oriental and the occidental, and made a distinction between the Baha'i and the non-Baha'i scholar in organizing his speech. In his review of the oriental academic or scholarly tradition Dr. Momen first spoke about the kind of training undergone in 19th century Iran and noted that the Babi-Baha'i 'academic tradition' is rooted in Shaykhism: most of the 'Letters of the Living' were former Shaykhis. The Bab wrote commentaries on certain suras of the Qur'an-though their form and style are illustrative of a break with the Islamic tradition-and some Babis composed polemical works in defense of the Babi Faith (around 1848-9)-these being the first-fruits of the Babi-Baha'i 'academic' or learned tradition.

Dr. Momen, in speaking of the oriental Baha'i scholarly tradition, noted its Islamic roots and spoke briefly about Nabil-i Akbar, Abu al-Fadl Gulpaygani, Fadil-i Mazandarani and Ishraq Khavari. The apologetic orientation of the works of these learned Baha'is was underlined and distinguished from modern western academic study. Their learned writings remain however, highly important sources of information of great value to future generations of scholars. Had they not put pen to paper valuable information would have been lost. They put highly important questions to Baha'u'llah and ^cAbdu'l-Baha and were the recipients of illuminating Tablets. In this respect their Islamic learning has yielded great benefits.

With respect to 'non-Babi[-Baha'i]' writing among orientals in the above connection Dr. Momen mentioned its polemical nature and thought it unworthy of detailed mention since he felt that it contributed little or nothing to the scholarly study of the Babi-Baha'i religions. Such polemic remains a 'growth industry' in present-day Iran.

In reviewing the history of western non-Baha'i study of the Babi-Baha'i movements Dr. Momen singled out Dr. Austin H. Wright's article, 'Bab und seine Secte in Persien (ZIMG, Leipzig, 1851) as the first article to appear in an academic journal. He went on to speak of the work of Gobineau, Les Religions. (Paris, 1865), Mirza Kazem-Beg, Bab i Babidui. (St. Petersburg 1865 + Journal Asiatique Paris, 1866) and others. The work of E.G. Browne was regarded as being 'more accurate' especially inasmuch as Browne 'revealed' the Baha'i dimension of the supposedly monolithic Babi phenomenon. He carried out important work in correctly identifying manuscripts and was the first to write about Baha'u'llah. A.L.M. Nicholas' efforts in translating certain of the Bab's major works was mentioned along with the fact that Shoghi Effendi thought highly of them. The work of such Russian scholars as A. Tumansky and V. Rosen is of importance and interest especially inasmuch as they were working with Baha'i materials. Tumansky, Dr. Momen stated, had not only translated Baha'u'llah's al-Kitab al-Aqdas into Russian but had written 'the best academic account of the Baha'i Faith to this day'.

Dr. Momen expressed the view that scholarship on the Babi-Baha'i religions 'died out' in the 1920's but spoke of a rebirth of interest among non-Baha'i scholars in the last '2-3 years'.

Next Dr. Momen spoke briefly about western Baha'i scholarship. He noted the difficulty of sorting out what might be considered 'teaching material' and what 'academic study' and went on to say a few words about the scholarly essays of the French Baha'i writer Hippolyte Dreyfus. The late Hand of the Cause Mr. Hasan Balyuzi was described as the first really scholarly writer since E.G. Browne. His important work has served to inspire a new generation of Baha'i scholars. In Dr. Momen's opinion the Canadian based Association for Baha'i Studies carries out important work but has shifted from its earlier more academic orientation. Many people are now engaged in Babi-Baha'i studies. Some have gained their Ph.D. It will however, take 5 years or more before academic Baha'i studies begins to be more widely known and bears its fruits. There are signs of maturity and of a move from the writing of purely polemical or 'teaching' materials to more objective scholarship. This though is not to say that there is not much to be done in presenting the Baha'i Faith to the thinking world and making it truly relevant to the age in which we live. The thinking world will not be content with simplistic answers. Scholars must take the lead through their detailed study of the Baha'i writings.

Having sketched and commented on the history of the study of the Babi-Baha'i religions Dr. Momen spoke on some aspects of his view of the meaning of Baha'i scholarship. He first underlined the importance of Baha'i scholars breaking away from the notion that learning implies spiritual superiority. This false notion which has 'infiltrated the Faith as well' is pronounced in Christian and Islamic circles. 'In Islam', it was stated, 'learning made people focal points of imitation' (cf. the marja'-i taqlid in Shi^Ci Islam) such that respect was given to people purely as a result of their learning. Corruption, lust for leadership, power, wealth, etc., often resulted. Baha'u'llah has warned his followers to avoid these pitfalls though knowledge and learning are not condemned. It is service that is important. Individuals are often influenced by their environment. Any sense of 'spiritual superiority' must be absent from the Baha'i scholar. Respect for the learned has its place but should not be overdone. There are dangers in showing the learned too much respect. There is likewise, Dr. Momen continued, a danger in being antagonistic to learning out of a 'fear of the unknown'. This might lead to a retreat into unbalanced fundamentalism. If it is said, 'We have the writings, that is enough' there are 'dangers' in this attitude.

Dr. Momen finally turned his attention to the tensions which may result from Baha'is working within the western academic tradition. He felt unhappy with anti-religious reductionist approaches and mentioned the serious consequences this may have upon faith. Though he did not feel that the academic study of the Baha'i Faith should be discouraged he did exhort his hearers to think carefully about the pitfalls involved in such study. The university undergraduate should 'absorb the discipline' and the postgraduate student 'learn the methods of research'. It would, he stated, be better not to do postgraduate research into the Faith. The postgraduate student is 'not a free agent'. His findings will not be taken seriously in that he has not made a reputation for himself and may be unduly influenced by his supervisor. Baha'i scholars studying in universities would be well advised to do research in a discipline 'parallel to the Faith' and thereby establish their reputations in a field in which they will not be accused of bias. Later the field of Baha'i studies might be entered into. Those engaged in Baha'i studies it was also mentioned, have, as Baha'is, the duty to live the Baha'i life by attending feasts, etc., and keeping in touch with community activities. Doing this would prevent many problems. The values of the academic world are not the same as Baha'i values.

(2) Peter Smith (Saturday afternoon) spoke about certain aspects of methodology and commented on issues arising from a sociological approach to Babi-Baha'i studies. He began by referring to the important question of the relationship between religious authority or religious claims and 'scientific knowledge'. The 'crucial issue'

of the relationship between 'revelation' and 'reason', 'science' and 'religion' is highly problematic and will not be solved by merely repeating the Baha'i principle of their 'essential harmony'. There are no easy answers. The 'reason' 'revelation' clash or relationship will not be solved by Baha'is alone. The question of 'religious authority' concerns members of all religious movements.

Smith went on to mention some of the 'ultimate sources of reference'. He referred in connection with the Bab's claims, to the notion that the power to reveal verses constitutes a proof apart from knowledge and the fulfillment of prophecies. In the Qur'an similarly, the claim is made that neither men nor jinn are capable of producing its like or of bringing a sura like it. Then there is the claim to be capable of working miracles. The miracle is again divorced from proof claims connected with knowledge. Such proofs or truth claims tend to make the rational approach to religion irrelevant. If authority resides in the 'fact of revelation' or the working of miracles it can be said that it 'doesn't matter whether or not authority clashes with reason'. In this way some of the problems involved in the 'revelation' - 'reason' relationship were highlighted.

Having said this— and much more besides—Peter Smith observed that within the 'paradigm religion' the claim to authority is central resulting in a tension with other sources of knowledge and authority. Baha'is should not blandly assume that this tension has been resolved for it is 'unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future'. They should be cautious in claiming that their Faith is a 'scientific religion'.

Peter Smith next turned his attention to the various 'approaches to Baha'i studies'. He mentioned—: (1) Detached positivism in which it is thought that man's apprehension of the world enables him to come to a 'single and unambiguous knowledge of things'. This approach was criticised. Scientific knowledge is not exactly cumulative but establishes itself through a series of 'scientific revolutions'. Though some sociologists have such a positivistic approach others have criticized it. (2) The humanistic hermeneutic approach. Here the observer or researcher attempts to understand the object of his enquiry with 'an eye to understanding the perspectives of the people involved'. (3) Honest polemic in which there is an awareness of 'scientific problems' and faith perspectives are not deliberately distorted. (4) Uninformed or mis-informed polemic which is of little value and often counter-productive. There are thus, it was added, two kinds of attacks on the Baha'i Faith, 'honest attacks' and 'dishonest attacks'. Covenant breaker material is largely 'dishonest polemic'.

At this point Smith turned his attention to issues central to the sociology of religion. At one time it was noted, in contrasting modern scientific knowledge with 'medieval religious concerns', religious thinkers claimed authoritative knowledge in all spheres. Then came the tension caused by the emergence of 'secular knowledge'. Gradually Christians abandoned the claim to be able to make scientific statements about the physical universe. The church 'lost out'. With the removal of the monopoly on knowledge came competing theories of knowledge. Religionists responded in a variety of ways. Some 'joined in' or became secularized-- religion could be explained away in terms of psychological or sociological theories. Others reaffirmed traditional authority in defiance of secular theories, etc. i.e. certain Catholic thinkers or American fundamentalists. When the traditional world crumbles some insist that what was always believed is right. They turn their back on the modern world. A third category of people attempt to retrieve and uncover what exists in the religious tradition. The question 'What is it that I can accept?' arises. In a Baha'i context such questions are important or will have important consequences. There could be 'Baha'i fundamentalists' and those who are ready to 'bargain away' a part of religious knowledge or tradition. Many will ask the question, 'What elements of tradition need to be uncovered and retrieved?' In the Baha'i context it might be said that the essential element is the 'response to the existential call of religion' -- the change of one's self.

The 'issue of the Baha'i Faith in the West' was also raised by Peter Smith. It was pointed out that the way in which people respond to religion is related to their 'social location' and the 19th century development of European and American 'control over the rest of the world' was outlined. In the 1890's the 'economic unification of the world' found realization and was accompanied by political and cultural domination. Around the same time religious teachers or missionaries from the orient, including Baha'is and Ahmadis, came to the West. The response to this western domination varied. Some tribal peoples looked for the eschatological overthrow of the 'whites' and rebelled. In Africa and elsewhere in the middle East a plethora of Mahdis appeared. Babism however, cannot be adequately explained as a response to Western impact in 19th century Iran as by N. Keddie. It is essentially a religious phenomenon. Yet the Baha'i Faith is related to European impact in Iran and the middle East in general. It represents, in part, a response to the question of the West and traditional religious values. The Baha'i Faith in late 19th century Iran was able to accommodate both deeply religious individuals and others who were greatly influenced by European values..

In response to a comment from a Baha'i present to the effect that people become Baha'is as a result of a 'heartfelt attraction' Peter Smith pointed out that most Baha'is are not profoundly religious--though there are a small minority who are deeply religious. Relatively few are 'converted' for religious reasons alone.

The question of persecution and violent actions against Baha'is was raised. In this connection Peter Smith mentioned that Iranian 'religious fanaticism' is not just 'religious fanaticism' but has a social and economic dimension.

In conclusion Peter Smith said a few words about the future of the Baha'i Faith, though he declined to suggest -- in response to a question-- what 'changes would make people accept the Faith in Europe'. He did though, suggest that the future of the Faith lie in the 'third world'.

(3) Stephen Lambden (Saturday afternoon) spoke on the subject of 'Deepening and the academic study of Baha'i doctrine'. He began by asserting that, like say Judaism and Islam, the Baha'i religion may be characterized as a "religion of the Book" in the sense that the locus of Baha'i doctrine is contained in scripture believed to be divinely inspired. The attempt to understand and experience the Baha'i sacred writings may be said to lie at the heart of the Baha'i concept of spirituality. Reference was made in this connection to passages in the *Kitab-i Iqan* and *al-Kitab al-Aqdas*. Yet, despite the importance of scripture in the Baha'i Faith, the scholarly study of the Baha'i writings has hardly begun. Many issues are raised by the academic study of Baha'i doctrine which are not commonly raised in the 'deepening situation' as usually experienced or indulged in by Baha'is.

After such preliminary remarks Lambden attempted to indicate some of the issues raised by the scholarly study of Baha'i scripture at the same time mentioning certain scholarly tasks which have yet to be carried out.

Textual criticism, it was first remarked, has hardly begun. Critical editions of the writings of the Bab and Baha'u'llah have not appeared. The nature (i.e. autograph or otherwise) and MSS source(s) lying behind printed editions is not usually indicated. No critical apparatus indicating variant readings -- bearing in mind the fact that Baha'u'llah not infrequently quotes himself in a different way--is set out. Much work needs to be done in collecting and collating MSS and expert knowledge of the handwriting and style of the Bab, Baha'u'llah, ^CAbdu'l-Baha and their scribes or secretaries needs to be developed. This is important in connection with the establishment of the authenticity or otherwise of Babi-Baha'i literature along with its dating, etc. Then also, there is the task of finding the original texts of many letters of Abdu'l-Baha, for example, that exist in English (or German, etc) translation.

In the deepening situation awareness of the nature of English translation, Lambden continued, is seldom present. Meanings are sometimes derived from the translation which are not indicated in the original Persian or Arabic. Reference by way of example was made to the line in Some Answered Questions (London, nd.p. 113), "Adam signifies the spirit of Adam (روح آدم) and Eve his soul (نفس)". That Eve symbolizes the "soul" of Adam might be thought to mean that Eve represents Adam's immortal higher nature. A more accurate translation of nafs though, implies that Eve represents Adam's (man's) lower or possibly carnal nature which induced him (mankind) to 'fall' or enter the realm of materiality. Karim Khan Kirmani, the "third Shaykh" and an enemy of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, wrote a book entitled Kitāb-i Nusrat al-Dīn in 1266.A.H./1849-50.A.D. in which he, in the course of commenting on Gen 2:21f, states that woman (زن) is the nafs of man (مرد) in the archetypal world of humanity. That woman was created from the "left side" of man means that woman should be obedient to man as the intellect operating in the "right side" of truth should control the lower nafs of man (pp.18-19).

Brief mention was then made of the sometimes paraphrastic nature of Shoghi Effendi's translations. The fact that for Baba'is his translations represent interpretation was compared with the Targum of the Jews and the Greek LXX (Septuagint) translation adopted and believed to be divinely inspired by early Christians (along with the Massoretic text—received Hebrew text). The point was then made that good translation requires an overall knowledge of many aspects of Babi-Baha'i history and doctrine and of its background, etc. As an example of a faulty translation borne of inadequate knowledge Lambden referred to a German translation of a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Baha to Ethel Rosenberg on the chronology of the Lawh-i Hikmat of Baha'u'llah (original text printed in Ishraq Khavari, Ed. Māida-yi Āsmānī Vol.2 pp.64-7). 'Abdu'l-Baha refers to the divergent chronologies in the various texts of the Pentateuch (Torah)—: (1) the Massoretic text, (2) the Septuagint (Greek, LXX), and (3) the Samaritan Pentateuch. The German translation has, not "Samaritan Pentateuch" (for تورات سامری) but "Sumerische Pentateuch" or non-existent "Sumerian Pentateuch". In the same Tablet there is reference to a certain هنری اسکات (apparently at first sight Henry Scott) who wrote a commentary (tafsīr) on the Torah. This person may in fact be two persons or a reference to an edition of the Bible Commentary of Matthew Henry (1662-1714) and Thomas Scott (1747-1821) which went through many 19th century editions.*

* This Commentary was probably known to 'Abdu'l-Baha through the writings of Maulana Rahmat Allāh Kairānawī (1818-1890) the author of the well known Izhār al-Haqq though this same writer also mentions the Pentateuchal commentary of the great Henry Wescott () and I am now inclined to think that the reference in 'Abdu'l-Baha's Tablet to E. Rosenberg is to his Commentary. (Ed).

In the deepening situation, Lambden continued, little attention is paid to the chronology and Sitz -im-Leben ('setting in life') of the Babi-Baha'i Scriptures knowledge of which is essential in academic study. The meaning of certain Tablets is not at all clear outside a knowledge of the circumstances of its revelation, to whom it was addressed, and its place in the chronology of the writings of its author. The task of arranging the Tablets of Baba'u'llah in chronological order has not yet been achieved save in its barest outline. It is not always clear whether a certain Tablet belongs to the Baghdad, Adrianople or Akka periods or to which subdivision of these periods. The chronological order of Baha'u'llah's 'Tablets to the Kings' has not yet been worked out in detail. Much study of historical events and persons alluded to or mentioned in these Tablets needs to be carried out. In dating Baha'i scripture both internal and external data should be taken into consideration. Different Baha'i scholars have assigned certain Tablets to different periods. i.e. A. Taherzadeh in his The Revelation of Baha'u'llah and Ishraq Khavari in his Ganj-i Shaygan. The more detailed working out of the chronology of the writings of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and ^CAbdu'l-Baha as well as Shoghi Effendi will enable the developments in a 'progressively revealed' Baha'i Scripture to be studied and influences upon the minds of its authors to be registered. Divine Revelation, it was argued in passing, may be seen as a creative interaction between the authors of 'divine revelation' and 'interpretation' and their intellectual and social Sitz-im-Leben. The central figures of the Baha'i religion all read books and sometimes drew on the insights of their followers. Baha'u'llah for example, read the Bible in Arabic translation—probably a Christian version—quoting it in his Javahir al-Asrar (c.1860?) and a number of subsequent writings.

In the academic study of the Babi-Baha'i writings the background, historical context and general milieu must be considered. Shoghi Effendi called Baha'is to pay special attention to the Islamic roots of their Faith in order that they might gain an adequate understanding of its message. For the scholar attention should not only be paid to the 'orthodox' Shi^Ci roots of the Faith along with the Shaykhi influences but also to the possible impact of Sufi, Hurufi, ^CAli Ilahi, Isma'ili and Druze ideas. Both Babi and Baha'i terminology it was pointed out shows the influence of Islamic movements generally labelled 'extremist'. Liberal Arabic thought in the modern liberal age as diffused throughout the Ottoman Empire as well as Iranian modernist thought and more direct Western influence upon the thought of Baha'u'llah and ^CAbdu'l-Baha should be investigated. Such study shows that care must be taken in claiming that certain seemingly modern 20th century perspectives were first voiced by the central figures of

the Faith. Before 'Abdu'l-Baha, it was pointed out, spoke of the need for universal education and its being the same for boys and girls, a certain Rifā'a Badawī Rāfi' al-Tahtāwī (1801-73) of the first generation of Egyptian modernists had made the same points in his al-Murshid al-Amin li'l-Banāt wa'l-Banīn (Cairo, 1289, A.H./1872-3, pp. 62ff, 104, 128, 148). Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Baha was well read in such literature. It is possible to trace the origins of certain stories and ideas he mentions in his Tablets— he himself occasionally mentions their source. The "story of the dead dog" told of Jesus and his disciples by 'Abdu'l-Baha, Lambden further asserted, is found in a poem of the Persian poet Nizami (he devoted a whole poem to the story) and in Ibn al-'Arabi's 'Meccan Revelations'—which was known to Baha'u'llah and probably 'Abdu'l-Baha also. Source criticism is an important scholarly task. The knowledge of the sources of certain themes and motifs in the Baha'i writings often throws considerable light on their meaning. It is not an 'heretical task' which is contrary to a belief in 'divine revelation'. Even a knowledge of the history or nature and development of literary forms can help in understanding the Baha'i Revelation. The form of the '7 valleys', as is well known, was much used by Sufi mystics and 'Attar's 'Conference of the Birds' throws light on the meaning of Baha'u'llah's 'Seven Valleys'. But, more interestingly, the form of the individual 'Hidden Words' is that of the 'Divine Saying' or Hadith Qudsi in Islam some of which were collected together and called 'The Hidden Book of Fatimah' by Shi'ci Muslims the 'Hidden Words' once being so designated.

In concluding his lecture Stephen Lambden mentioned a few of the differences between 'deepening' and academic study—: (1) Deepening tends to revolve around well known and familiar or oft repeated themes and passages of scripture while academic study necessitates the study of lesser known— and often extremely important— or neglected topics and texts; (2) Deepening or those involved in it often consciously or unconsciously attempt to avoid deeper or controversial issues which cannot be ignored in academic study; (3) Deepening often fails to raise questions which academic study necessitates asking. i.e. obscure passages in texts such as the Kitab-i Iqan cannot be simply passed over in silence in academic study; (4) Academic study must concern itself with historical context or Sitz im Leben and 'source criticism', etc, though deepening need or often does not. Deepening though, need not be academically oriented but it would be better if its present level were improved.

(4) Todd Lawson (Sunday morning) from Montreal Canada who was visiting England in connection with his proposed post-graduate study of the Bab's writings, agreed to speak for a short while— without preparation— on the subject of

Tafēir (Islamic Qur'ānic commentary) on which he had already undertaken post-graduate research with particular reference to the Qur'anic account of Jesus' crucifixion.

After outlining the history and nature of Islamic Qur'anic commentary, Lawson noted that Muelime have, on the whole, denied that Jesus was crucified or died on the cross (refer, Qur'an 4:155-162). Baha'is on the other hand, assert— and this is remarkable—the historicity of Jesus' crucifixion. Coming from a non-Muslim background western Baha'is are seldom aware of the innovatory nature and importance of the Baha'i position with respect to the crucifixion of Jesus

Qur'an 4:155f is quite ambiguous about the crucifixion and could be translated in various ways, the phrase shubbiha lahum being at the centre of the controversy. Early Muslim story tellers such as accompanied the invading Muslim armies attempted to make these verses meaningful to their hearers who wanted to be entertained with a good story. Qur'anic stories and verses were sometimes made meaningful by the 'on the spot' invention of expository tales. Addressing a Christian audience to which the Qur'anic verses and the phrase shubbiha lahum had to be made meaningful such story tellers seem to have taught that it only "appeared to them" (the Jews) that Jesus had been crucified and died on the cross. Some asserted that Jesus had not been crucified but that one of his disciples took on his appearance and was crucified in his stead. Quite fanciful stories were concocted. Yet, in the Qur'anic passage in question it is stated that "God raised him (Jesus) unto Himself". This created a problem and a story was invented to the effect that God raised Jesus up to heaven from a house before the crucifixion of another in his stead. These stories about Jesus' non-crucifixion became popular and may have their roots in the Christian gnostic tradition. They became crystallised in the Hadith literature though they are not always traced back to the Prophet Muhammad himself. The Qur'an commentator Tabari, after recording and discussing various traditions about Jesus' crucifixion, ends by saying 'And God knows best how it was'. By the 19th century however, it was practically an article of faith that Jesus was not himself crucified on the cross.

The first major Qur'anic commentator to look beyond the various traditions back to what the Qur'an itself says was Zamakhshari (12th century A.D.). He argued that the grammar of the Qur'an does not support the substitution theories found in the Hadith literature.

The following is an extract of a Tablet of ^CAbdu'l-Baha to Mr. Thornton Chase translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab on June 8th 1911 referring to Qur'an 4:155f:

"In regard to the verse, which is revealed in the Koran, that His Highness Christ, was not killed and was not crucified, by this is meant the Reality of Christ. Although they crucified this elemental body, yet the merciful reality and the heavenly existence remain eternal and undying, and it was protected from the oppression and persecution of the enemies, for Christ is Eternal and Ever-lasting. How can he die? The death and crucifixion was imposed on the physical body of Christ, and not upon the Spirit of Christ." (Star of the West 2:7/8. p.13) (Ed).

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī also discarded the crude substitution theories. He argued that if God operated in this way Muslims could not be sure even of the fundamentals of their Faith. His views were however, forgotten or ignored though, Lawson also noted, the Brethren of Purity affirmed Jesus' crucifixion or the reality of his death on the cross.

Finally in connection with the subject of Jesus' crucifixion, Lawson raised the question as to why Muslims came to deny this event. He proposed that the denial of Jesus' death on the cross originated among the early Muslim story tellers in view of its 'entertainment value'. In the course of time it was understood to be the Muslim view by Christian writers such as John of Damascus and in the course of Muslim-Christian dialogue became the standard Muslim position. Soteriological concerns such as are entertained by Christians in connection with the death of Jesus were not uppermost in the minds of Muslims.

In concluding his brief talk Lawson referred to the Bab's commentaries on the Qur'an noting that tafsir is the 'most Muslim of all literary pursuits'. He stated that it is important to determine where the Bab stands in this tradition in view of the fact that the Bab often gives qabbalistic interpretations to Qur'anic texts--in, for example his commentary on the Surat al-Kawthar-- and that his tafsir is not exactly commentary as commonly understood, i.e. not exactly 'exoteric' or historically oriented commentary.

(5) Viva Tomlin (Sunday afternoon) introduced those present to the theological dimension of Baha'i studies. She read a paper designed to raise the kinds of questions which the student might encounter or should ask on the 'long journey' towards understanding the 'theology of the Baha'i Faith'. What, she asked, does it mean when it is said that we were created 'to know and to worship God'; does this involve the intellect? The emotions? Adoration? Why were we created to know God? Does this statement make sense? Is there a God?..etc. How do I find out about God? Many such questions were raised in the first part of Tomlin's paper.

'What is theology?' was also a question that was raised and discussed. Theology, Viva Tomlin pointed out, is vast and many-faceted. Classical theologians study the 'Word of God' which has been identified with Christ who has been identified with or represents the Godhead. They consider what God said 'in Christ' and the 'being of Christ' all of which has implications for man, etc. In the Baha'i Faith though, the central figure is not Christ but the 'Glory of God'. In the light of this we must ask many questions: 'Who is man?' 'Why was he created?', etc. The theologian may also ask why man and the creation

exist. Why? What is it all for? What is the reason behind the universe? Is life random or has it a purpose? If we make God our starting point for theological reflection then the questions arise; 'What is God like'? If God is transcendent how can we understand him and his purpose? What questions should we ask? Does the problem of God's transcendence mean that theology is a 'cry to the unknown' or an attempt to read an 'unreadable Book'? The theologian tries to read the 'Book' as God wishes it to be read. The 'Why?', and 'What?' and other questions are asked about God and man as well as questions about the future destiny of things.

Theology once embraced all spheres of learning offering authoritative answers to questions about God the universe and man. A primary source of affirmation was that God had made Himself known in history. Again though, 'What does this mean?' 'What does it mean to be a believing creature?', etc.

At several points in her paper Tomlin referred to herself as a 'liturgical theologian' or 'liturgical theologian / philo-theologian of liturgically derived doxology' which implies a love for the 'Word of God' in connection with worship and glorification. She also commented upon and listed many questions which the theologian might ask in connection with Baha'u'llah's 'Short Obligatory Prayer': What does 'I bear witness' mean? Does 'my God' refer to a personal God? If so what does 'to know and to worship' Him mean? What are the implications of 'to know and to worship (God)'?

Some attention was also given to asking questions about the source of authority implicit in or lying behind such texts as the 'Short Obligatory Prayer'. By what authority does the individual know that these are authoritative statements? Where are the manuscripts? etc...etc.. The 'Short Obligatory Prayer' originates with Baha'u'llah... These questions are important though the 'philo-theologian of liturgically derived doxology' is concerned primarily with the implications of belief or 'what is believed'.

In the course of the discussion following Tomlin's paper-- which I have only barely outlined here--the question of religious doubting arose. It was felt that doubts should be expressed openly and regarded as stepping stones to spiritual maturity. Much more attention should be paid to the open-minded consideration of and grappling with doubts.

Concluding note

This report only represents my own recollection of some of the ground covered and statements made by the speakers who addressed what turned out to be a wholly Baha'i audience of perhaps 50-100 persons. I may well have misrepresented the speakers at certain points or failed to record important statements. The event was, I think, successful. A comforting maturity and openness was shown by those present. Many thoughtful questions were asked only

a few of which are mentioned above. The organization was good and several persons expressed the desire for more such communication between those engaged in Baha'i studies and the Baha'i community at large.

Stephen Lambden

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORTHCOMING BAHAI STUDIES SEMINAR

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

DEPT. OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES.*

SAT. 17th AND SUN. 18th SEPT.

1983.

It is hoped that at this forthcoming Baha'i Studies Seminar papers will be read which fall into one of the following four (obviously-loosely defined) categories:-

- 1) The study of Babi-Baha'i texts;
- 2) The study of Babi-Baha'i history;
- 3) The study of Babi-Baha'i doctrine;
- 4) The study of the Babi-Baha'i movements.

Offers of papers and enquiries should be addressed to either Dr. Denis MacEoin, Dept. of Religious Studies, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, NEL 7RU, England, U.K., or Stephen Lambden (same address).

* Venue and sponsorship subject to confirmation.

Letter to the Editor: A Note by Christopher Buck on Jesus' Cry
From the Cross.

Exemplary for Baha'i scholarship is Lambden's treatment of Mark 15:34. In making full use of critical apparatus available to him, Lambden has been able to test a scriptural "emendation" such as Backwell (and possibly the Master) has hazarded. Though I do not have Lambden's linguistic command, perhaps I might try to evolve the methodology he has trailblazed, by introducing iconographic as well as a few further textual and extra-biblical considerations.

E.R. Goodenough has stated that " religious symbols remain as the greatest unexplored body of historical data." ¹. The late Cardinal Danielou in his Primitive Christian Symbols reviews the important archaeological data surrounding the symbolism of the Cross, which I shall not reduplicate here. If trust may be placed in Danielou's digestion of the unearthed symbols, his conclusion could prove crucial to Lambden's discussion: " The conclusion reached by our inquiry is this. The sign of the cross is seen to have its origin, not in an allusion to Christ's passion, but as a signification of his divine glory." ².

I submit that one's Christological persuasion in primitive times did, to a remarkable extent, condition tradition. Jesus says not only what vibrated the air but also what oral and written tradition redactionally filtered. Let us ponder the fact that the tradition of Mark 15:34 has only Matthew 27:46 as a parallel, which means that in the New Testament alone, these words were accepted by only 50% of the fourfold evangelists who transmitted traditions of Christ's life. The other Christian traditions, as evidenced by archaeological data, wished to convey the consciousness of the glory of martyrdom, how can we be so certain that Jesus was not audibly elated during the final moments of his unthinkably painful exaltation, as were so many of our Baha'i martyrs, who afford us a "phenomenological" parallel?

John the Evangelist is a case in point: he presents no close parallel for Mark 15:34, yet obliquely (to hire Lambden's word) " rewrites" the verse or at least its purport, to conform to the idea that Jesus was conscious of the glory of martyrdom. Since the Johannine Jesus is so laconic upon the Cross, one might wonder if John has not in fact dislocated the saying, transferred it to chapter 12 and conflated it with the Voice from heaven in verse 28 ! After all, patristic exegesis is not unanimous in ascribing the utterance of Mark 15:34 to Jesus: Origen, among if not the first of Christian scholars, is anxious to avoid this idea of utter angst in loss of faith on Jesus' part, and insists that when Matthew and Mark report a "loud" or "great" voice, they are referring to the "divine voice" by which the cry was augmented. ³.

But if the Cry of Dereliction was indeed evocative of Psalm 22, the Cry need not have been one of abandonment at all, but rather a Cry of Victory. This is quite probably what was reflected in the Ebionite Christian tradition, for the Ebionite scholar Symmachus entitles the Psalm, "A Song of Victory"; while Theodotion (whom Jerome identifies also as an Ebionite) offers the heading, "To the Victory," with Jerome closely following with "To the Victor". ⁴.

Refer S. Lambden, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" or "My God, my God, how thou hast glorified me!" ? in Baha'i Studies Bulletin Vol. 1. No. 1. (June 1982), pp. 27-42. cf. also Baha'i Studies Bulletin Vol. 1. No. 3. (Dec. 1982), pp. 81-2.

Thus we can see indications that even if Backwell's/'Abdu'l-Baha's emendation is without textual foundation, it is certainly not without iconographic or exegetically-textual foundation. We see of course St. Peter in Acts 3:13 proclaiming the crucifixion in terms of glorification. The two events of crucifixion and glorification may even be unified as simultaneous in an extra-biblical verb, Palestinian Aramaic izd^eqéf, which could signify "to be glorified" as well as "to be crucified".

Apart from Matthew 28:19, no other evangelical saying of Jesus may be so capable of variation. Not statistically in terms of manuscript witnesses necessarily, but in terms of the entire tradition itself. For variants to Mark 15:34 were first introduced by the very eyewitnesses of the Crucifixion, who could not all agree on just what Jesus has said!

In addition to the textual variants which Lambden lists, several more come to the fore:

k (Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae) = maledixisti ("taunted")
 c (Codex Colbertinus) = maledixisti ("taunted")
 i (Codex Vindobonensis) = maledixisti ("taunted")
 Porphyry (Macarius Magnes, Apocriticus) = "reproached"
 Peshitta New Testament = ("spared")
 Other witnesses (not specified by NEB) = ("shamed").

These variants are significant to the discussion only in that, though they do not confirm "glorified" as a reading, neither do they confirm "forsaken". Thus the whole thing is still a relatively open question.

Among the theological debates I have cursorily followed, Schreiber stands out as the foremost exponent of the view that the so-called Cry of Dereliction was in fact a cry of Triumph. Schreiber argues that the Cry was one of exaltation or glorification and that this is demonstrated by the response in verse 39 of the centurion, who ironically is the symbol of earthly might and power. That the centurion interprets the cry in terms of glorification is more intriguing since the Markan text states that the centurion saw the Cry of Jesus. Some manuscripts of Mark omit heard his cry, and I wonder if Schreiber's arguments should be seen and heard by Mr. Lambden.

I have so far offered no textual ground for arguing the possibility that Jesus might have uttered something other than what the majority of the Greek manuscripts transmit. This has been a weakness in my argument, just as the lack of any real redaction criticism has posed its own "Christological difficulty" in Mr. Lambden's argument. But recently with perfect timeliness, I have come across a textual argument for the reading of šabbāhtānī ("praised") in Rabbi Cohn-Sherbok's "Jesus' Cry on the Cross: an Alternative View", (in Expository Times 93/7 (1982), pp. 215-217).

The Rabbi at University of Kent at Canterbury states that, assuming Jesus spoke Aramaic, it is possible to construe the words of Jesus, not as an Aramaic translation of Ps 22:1 (š'baqtānī), but rather as the rhetorical question, "My God, My God why have you praised me?" (šabbāhtānī) which is transliterated into Greek in exactly the identical way as the rendering of Ps 22:1. This linguistic possibility has sparked in me a further memory of 'Abdu'l-Baha's reported textual emendation which I myself had read several years ago, but at the time did not write down: The Master was reported to have said that through the change of one single letter, the text was altered to read "forsaken" instead of "glorified". I distinctly remember this sequence of textual basis for the Master's reported emendation, which Mr. Lambden does not transmit in his paper.

Cohn-Sherbock concludes: "Given this interpretation, Jesus' words should not be understood as a cry of... desolation..., but rather as a prayer for the dawning of the reign of God. Hanging on the cross, Jesus would have seen his life as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 52-53)... Thus in the cry 'elahi' elahi lammah sabbahtani Jesus would have invoked the image of the glorified servant of the Lord who, despite his suffering, is 'full of God's spirit', 'honoured in the eyes of God', 'exalted', and 'lifted up high' (Isa 42, 49, 52)."

Naturally the manuscripts to which Mr. Lambden refers cannot be summoned as impartial witnesses against the reading of "praised" or "glorified", since the manuscripts themselves come into existence and attest to a primarily canonical tradition! The destruction of rival gospel traditions is a sad fact of Christian history, so the real variants are simply not extant. And how can appeal to patristic writings, which Mr. Lambden makes, hope to give us any independent textual witness?

I wish to state that, has 'Abdu'l-Baha actually proposed such an emendation of Mark 15:34, I would hope that Baha'i scholars would seriously entertain the idea that he may well have been right, as a working hypothesis to test out, rather than the opposite, no matter how many manuscripts may at first be invoked as cards stacked against him. Although the evidence presented here is slender and tentative, the theology, if not the text, is not lacking in order to support the conjecture that Mark 15:34 may indeed have yielded a sense of glorification alongside a very real Promethean passion.

Christopher Buck
Bellingham Washington
20th March 1983.

Notes

1. E.R. Goodenough, "Symbols as Historical Evidence" in Diogenes 44(1963), pp. 19-32.
2. J. Danielou, Primitive Christian Symbols (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), "The Taw Sign", p. 145.
3. Origen, Commentary on Matthew, 135., cited Robert M. Grant The Earliest Lives of Jesus (N.Y.: Harper, 1961), p. 97.
4. cited by L. Paul Trudinger, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani: A Cry of Dereliction? or Victory?" in Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 17(1974), pp. 235-38.
5. X. Leon-Dufour, Dictionary of the New Testament (Harper and Row, 1980), p. 152.
6. J. Schreiber, Theologie des Vertrauens (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag H. Rennebach K.G., 1967), pp. 24-49, 66-82; cited T.J. Weeden, Mark--Traditions in Conflict (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 146, 166-7.

A Brief response to Christopher Buck's Note...

I am grateful to Chris Buck for taking the trouble to respond to my article on Jesus' cry from the cross and for drawing attention to some further interesting articles on this theme. When I wrote my original article I was fully aware of the post-Markan understanding of crucifixion as exaltation and glorification which tradition it was not my intention to minimize or deny. It is debatable however, whether this understanding of Jesus' crucifixion or the proposed reading sabbahtani can be made to overrule the Marcan note of forsakeness. Though Buck seems to think that the Baha'i theological position must deny Jesus' uttering a cry of dereliction -- which is difficult text critically to maintain -- passages within the Baha'i writings by no means demand this. He indirectly accuses me of taking a position opposite to that of 'Abdu'l-Baha's supposed interpretation (his last paragraph above which was not in fact my intention at all. In my original article I quote 'Abdu'l-Baha (and a pilgrim note recording Shoghi Effendi's words) to the effect that Jesus did utter a cry of forsakeness during his last moments on the cross.

S. Lambden.

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- John Boylain, The Baha'i Faith, Madison,WI: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1982.pp.32.
- Well written Christian Fundamentalist anti-Baha'i polemic pamphlet on sale in this country for 30.p. [Peter Smith].
- "Baha'i", a 12.pp. cyclostyled anti-Baha'i polemic produced by the "Jesus People USA", 4431 N.Paulina,Chicago Illin. 60640 and distributed in this country by "Deo Gloria Outreach" (formerly "Christian Information Centre: Cults/Spiritual Counterfeits"),7 London Rd. Bromley,Kent, BRI 1BY. [Peter Smith].
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Behnaz Abadi, The World into One nation: World Peace and the Baha'i Faith
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"Abadi presents a basic history of the Baha'i Faith and devotes most of the thesis to promoting the principles of the Faith through various quotations from the Baha'i Writings and the words of admirers of the Faith—quoted extensively from the Baha'i World volumes. Shows little originality." [R. Stauffer].

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Radiant Living, Spiritual Keys to Vital, Happy and Successful Living, AP. 1970. pp. 310.

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Request for Turkish Newspapers.

Can anyone send to Dr. Kent D. Beveridge, Beethovenstrasse 68/1/4 A-2380 Perchtoldsdorf, Austria, copies of one or more of the following 'Turkish newspapers' which

contain articles regarding Babi persecutions and the exile of Baha'u'llah from Adrianople to Akka-:

- 1) Journal Du Constantinopel, Oct/Nov 1855+ August 1868.
- 2) Journal D' Orient detto
- 3) Courrier D'Orient detto
- 4) Levant Times and Shipping Journal detto

Request for miscellaneous Baha'i publications

I should be most grateful is anyone could loan or supply me with photocopies (cost obviously refunded) of any of the following items-:

- 1) Arthur Pilebury Dodge, The New Holy City, A Notable Seventh[sic] Day Pilgrimage, Mutual Publishing Company, New York, 190__? .
- 2) Wilhelm Herrigel, Die Zeichen unserer Zeit im Lichte der Bibel und der Baha'u'llah, Stuttgart.1916.
- 3) Shaykh Muhammad(^cAbd al-) Husayn Tihraⁿī, Fād^l-i Tihraⁿī, Kitāb-i Mūnadarāt al-Dīniyya, Cairō, nd.
- 4) The Bāb, Letter in reply to questions of Mīrzā Muhammad Sa'īd Ardistaⁿī in Iran National Baha'i Archives, Private Publications Vol.No.69.around p.420ff.
- 5) Sahifa fī Sharh Du^cāhī fī Zamān al-Ghayba, in Iran National Baha'i Archives, Private Publications, Vol.98, pp.87-94.
- 6) Hasan Fu'ādī Bushrū'ī, Tārīkh-i Amrī-yi Khurasan (MSS).
- 7) Baha'u'llah, Kitāb-i Badī^c, np.nd.

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Change of address

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