q) I have been examining the injunction Not to weigh the book of God with standards current amongst men from within an explicitly Baháʼí horizon. However, before continuing I wish to digress and say a little about what a Baháʼí theological enterprise may entail. Also I want to focus on a particular problem area and offer the broad outline of a solution. This way I hope to show one of the important directions that Baháʼí theological work will take, and the role that philosophical analysis has in this direction.

r) It is clear that any theological work done by a Baháʼí will involve the two elements of participation in and reflection upon his or her faith in the Baháʼí horizon. It will issue in an expression of this faith in adequate language. I use the word 'adequate' purposely in place of 'rational' to highlight the syntactical variety of theological expression, for not all theology to be theology need conform to a logico-mathematical standard of strict implication and entailment. To be fair, of course, not all that is called rational is couched in such a mode, however, the tendency to associate 'rational' with logical entailment is prevalent. For example, a great deal of Chán and Zen Buddhist reflection would make the hair of some traditional Western logicians fall out, so the Cartesian quest for clear and distinct ideas and its corollary of certainty is by no means the only, nor, dare we say, ideal conceptuality for theology. Though the thematizing of our experience of faith in Baháʼuʼlláh should approach the perhaps ideal position where talking is blasphemy yet silence a lie, nevertheless, we do at present live in an age of plural views, or more importantly plural orientations. It is a situation in which many people think themselves to have perfectly good reasons for not being Baháʼís. Thus a theological (and philosophical) elaboration is essential at the present time.

s) I spoke above of such work being a function of participation in and reflection upon a person's faith in the Baháʼí horizon. The participative aspect of theology indicates the continuity of the theological enterprise with the act of faith, or the experience of faith, or the decision of faith, or the disposition of faith, however you want to put it; and how you put it may be crucial, for all these are discussable in theology. It (the theological enterprise) speaks in an explicit and reflexive manner from this standpoint of faith, and while the faith of the subject provides a momentum for all the subject's various activities, it becomes theology when it's (faith) data are subjected to reflection. When the believer, whilst undergoing the pure actuality of faith relocates himself or herself via

the concept and a selected syntax,he or she is in a sense taking a step back
from the immediate experience of faith and expressing it intentionally in a
form of discourse.Once this occurs the Bahá'í who writes theology (or philo-
-sophy) places himself/herself in the total intellectual endeavour of mankind
and must address himself/herself to whatever arises there.No need to say that
for Bahá'ís the task is massive.

t) The question of adequate conceptuality is one very important issue,and it is
not simply the question of whether there is to be one conceptuality expressing
Bahá'í experience in the way that ,for example,the categories of Thomistic -
Aristotelianism and Biblical imagery have vied with each other in the Western
Christian tradition.It is the much more significant aspect of this question of
how are we to understand and utilize the explanatory conceptualization of
Bahá'u'lláh and ᶜAbdu'l-Bahá, who,when speaking metaphysically,that is,apart
from spiritual exhortation and the call to the obedience of faith,do so in a
manner characteristic of the Islamic rationalists,Neo-Platonists and the Western
Scholastic tradition.This is no disparagement but simply an observation.The
categories of essence and existence, substance and attribute,matter and form,
potency and actuality,conversio ad phantasmata, quid sit and an sit occur again
and again in the writings.I think it is fair to say that these were once secular
categories and would surely have been considered one of the "..standards..current
amongst..men" (al-Kitáb al-Aqdas). One need however,only look at the Mahāyāna
Buddhist text the Mulamadhyamikakarika of Nagārjuna (fl.c.200.A.D.) and the
Theravāda Buddhist manual the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa to see another set of
categories (or in the case of the Mulamadhyamikakarika, non-categories).This is
the issue: if ᶜAbdu'l-Bahá is considered the moral and spiritual example of Bahá'ís
are his writings to be considered our conceptual example? ;if so,how,given the
historicity of this conceptuality?? I suggest that clarification of this issue will
be helped by contemporary philosophical analysis of meaning and lies in the direction
set by Wittgenstein in his Philosophical Investigations (Blackwells 1976 :paragraph
43) and in his earlier lecture notes The Blue Book and The Brown Book (Blackwells
1976,passim).There he criticized the view that meanings are Platonic objects already
existing prior to finding the words to designate them,and this grounded the move away
from the idea that words are construed as names.We thus move from the attractive
metaphor of words as pictures to the metaphor of words as tools.

So for example,when ᶜAbdu'l-Bahá speaks of man having a 'mind','soul' and 'spirit'
the meanings of the terms are not some frozen Platonic entities to be only eternally
and properly expressed in one way. Neither are they names operating with a one to one
relationship like 'chair','liver','cumulo-nimbus' or 'Edward',where 'chair' refers to
'this chair','liver' to that organ, 'cumulo-nimbus' to this type of cloud or 'Edward'
to my friend.The metaphor of words as tools highlights the role that words play in

our practical lives.Tools are to be used and require,if they are to be used
properly,a spontaneous co-ordination between tool and tool-user.There is a
marvellous passage by the Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu on the relationship
between a skilled butcher and his knife which brings this spontaneity out
(Chuang Tzu tr. Burton Watson Columbia University Press 1974). Thus, if
'mind','soul' and 'spirit' are not considered as names nor the expression
of crystallised meanings then their role is not so much theoretical as
practical;their meaning or meanings are made clear as a person actualises
himself/herself throughout his/her life.If 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit'
designate anything it is the as yet unrealised future possibilities of a
person.They do not however,refer to them in the way I would simply name or
describe what I am going to eat tonight; they somehow bring about these future
possibilities and I would suggest that 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit' operate a
little like performative statements (cf. J.Austin, How to Do Things with Words
Oxford University Press 1962). Statements of this type are not reports of
activities nor descriptions of states of affairs but the occasion for bringing
about activities or states of affairs. Without going into too much detail Austin
contrasted performative statements with constative statements,though he did
replace this distinction with a more general theory.Nevertheless the earlier
distinction throws some light on what I want to say.Austin uses the term
constative in his own way to cover those statements which are broadly descript-
-ive.However,it is the performative statement that is interesting to us.When a
person names a ship or bequeaths something (as in a will) or bets ,or,I
suggest,utters the Bahá'í marriage vow all in the appropriate circumstances
he/she is not describing what they should be said to be doing in the above
situations,nor stating that they are doing it: they are doing it.So a state of
affairs or activity is brought about in the relationship between a person and
a proposition or statement.With a constative statement,on the other hand,a
person somehow resides 'outside'the referent of the statement. Other examples
of performative statements isolated by Austin (ibid, Lecture VII) include
'I apologise', 'I criticise','I censure','I approve' and 'I bid you welcome'.
I admit that a lot more work has to be done on this ,but the isolation of the
performative statement highlights the complexity of language and a variety of
roles it has in our lives.A person who truly understands the meanings of the
terms 'mind','soul' and 'spirit' ,and I have no idea what this would be like,
is no longer the same person; he/she has not simply acquired new and extra
information. So it is possible given this perspective for a person to say
'Yes, man has a 'mind','soul' and 'spirit'' and be wrong!

u) My tentative suggestion has been to see another dimension to the meaning of metaphysical terms and statements as they occur in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and ᶜAbdu'l-Bahá. Not to see them as simple indicatives sharing the same features as descriptive statements, but to see them from the standpoint of their role in the formation of our Bahá'í lives.The terms 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit' certainly refer to realities of human existence but not in the same straightfoward way that ' corner' picks out a feature of a room or 'game' a feature of some human activit--ies. Furthermore, the relating of 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit' to human future possibilities ties such terms to other realities such as the apprehension of values. In seeing the metaphysical categories in this way ,that is,not as designations of Platonic meanings neither as simple descriptions, both of which go some way towards ' freezing' the whole of reality in some particular fashion,but as linguistic expressions tied to possibilities of spiritual transformation,then alternative conceptualities are not necessarily wrong descriptions of reality but other ways of talking about spiritual change.

v) Another aspect of my construel of these metaphysical categories lies in seeing again,for example, the terms 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit' as concepts which contain within themselves an objective dynamic element of referral.These concepts can then be seen as limited expressions of an awareness that is in itself implicit,unexpres--sed and pre-conceptual. They aim to express in a limited manner this non-conceptual state or states of affairs,and through this we become aware of the final inadequacy of the concept. This,moreover,presupposes the important point that we do have a non-conceptual dimension to our experience in which the concept has the value of a definite reference to a reality which is, however,not grasped by it. Given this non-conceptual aspect to our conceptual knowledge,I suggest that the concepts 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit' indicate the direction in which the reality of these is found. Their abstract conceptual content indicates a definite direction without naming or describing whatever is meant by 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit'.

w) I fully realise that this needs a lot more analysis and I do not necessarily fully agree with the thesis.Nevertheless, it does go towards lessening the tension between alternate religious conceptualities. The wise will say that I have not gone far in tentative suggestion concerning the conceptuality of Bahá'u'lláh and ᶜAbdu'l-Bahá, and that all I have done is transfer the problem from the arena of descriptive statements to the more ambiguous arena of the possibilities of spiritual transform--ation. Perhaps! But so much the better for discussion.Actually, a lot of what ᶜAbdu'l-Bahá says,for example, about the soul (cf. Tablet to Dr. Forel)seems to indicate that it is an entity of some complex sort designated by the word 'soul'. However,I feel an argument could be made for seeing the relationship between the word 'soul' and the reality of the soul as not one of simple reference (cf. Bahá'u'lláh, 1st Taráz of the Tablet of Tarázát) as said before there is a lot to be done on this.

x) In the first set of discussion notes (Bahá'í Studies Bulletin,Vol.1.No.1 pp.24-26) I equated the Book of God with the unanalysed term Revelation, and attempted in a cursory fashion to see what kind of relationship could be said to exist between Revelation and current standards. These latter I design--ated as universes of discourse (u.d.) to bring out the role of language in the maintainance of these standards.A universe of discourse (u.d.) is a form a grammar intertwined with certain methodological procedures.Thus, economics and psychology, for example,constitute a complex of various methodological procedures which enter into a dialectical relationship with specifically modified grammars.Natural science in its various aspects exemplifies another u.d. A person can move from one u.d. to another,and we all of us spend our lives in at least one or two or more.David Hume the radical philosophical sceptic is a classic example of a man who oscillated from the u.d. of the common-sense world to that u.d. of his philosophical consciousness; he felt quite uneasy in both.

y) Each u.d. provides standards which are more or less adequate to the sector of experienceable reality that is their domain.These standards or criteria operate as data selectivity systems allowing propositions,which are assertions within the u.d.,to coherently fit in with what is by consensus the proper subject matter of the u.d. The act of suceesfully bringing a proposition within the blurred parameters of the u.d. ,that is, bringing the standards of the u.d. ' up against' the propos--ition is called verification.

z) I spoke of verification in terms of the truth or falsity,possibility,impossibility or necessity of a proposition or set of propositions and said that from the point of view of the Revelation verification through the u.d. is not viable.

a¹) I used the word Revelation without saying what i meant by it. I hinted that it had a non-propositional aspect as well as a propositional one (refer, 'i') and would say that this is tied to a pre-conceptual response on the part of the subject, but not totally insofar as the life of Bahá'u'lláh considered from the standpoint of its actual enactment is a non-propositional presence. The propositional aspect is clearer and constitutes the sum-total of certified assertions in the Bahá'í canon. So when I speak of Revelation I refer to a pre-conceptual,non-propositional experience in the life of the believer,the non-conceptual,non-propositional presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and the propositional content of our texts.I said in the first set of notes (refer, 'i') it is the non-propositional aspect which makes the process· of verification (in relation to the u.d.) problematic, though we must also take account of those propositions that refer to super-sensible realities and future events.

b^1) I said that one role which the u.d. had in relation to Revelation was of recognizing that the judgement Revelation made upon itself is in order.This involved the important distinction between deciding that a truth-claim is made and deciding upon the validity of a truth-claim.The u.d.,I suggested,performed the former function.I also noted that the u.d. (refer, 'b') might involve itself in the latter,that is,it may wish to bring,for example,a proposition or set of propositions from the Revelation within the general interpretive thrust of their respective enterprises.Some u.d. might then attempt a total interpretation of Revelation in all its aspects.

c^1) What might then happen is that the u.d. may create a cleavage between what is said and what is meant. Revelation would provide the elements of what is said and the particular u.d. would penetrate to what is actually meant.

d^1) I want to move away from the problem of reduction; it can be discussed again. From the standpoint of the Revelation however,there is no problem.The u.d. are simply not available for such a reductive procedure.

e^1) A person engaged in the u.d. who comes across the Revelation may well try to subsume it under the auspices of the u.d. But as I hope I showed with the example of the u.d. of Logical Positivism, working through a set of criteria with a definite stance towards,say,religious language,one may notice features that elude the selectivity of the criteria.Thus as I said,a proper enactment of the u.d. directed at the Revelation lay bare the nature and scope of the Revelation,allowing its own characteristics to be seen as irreducible occasions for change in human experience and not simply moments in a process of reinterpretation.

f^1) The u.d. and Revelation were situated in the context of a question and answer model.I implied that the u.d. constitute reflexive and thematic questions comprising the human situation which Revelation claims to answer.

g^1) Obviously this does not mean that Revelation answers the question as to what, for example,is the error in the Newtonian calculation of the perihelion of Mercury,or whether there are three successive sevens in the decimal determination of π , or even how many lemmings there are in Spitzbergen.

h^1) I would say that Revelation answers the question of the general and overall point, thrust or trend of the u.d. in which these particular problems reside.Therefore Revelation answers the question of the meaning (as significance) of the u.d. seen as empirically interrelated wholes.

i^1) This might go towards seeing Revelation as answering the question constituted by the u.d.,in other words the u.d. comprise one question,namely their meaning-as-significance.

j^1) Since it is human beings which enact the u.d. might we not say that insofar as the u.d. are seen by Revelation from the standpoint of their meaning-as-significance,

and this because they are seen as interrelated wholes,we are in the position noted by Heidegger (cf. Being and Time) of the questioner behind the questions?

h^1) In other words, the primary question that Revelation answers is that posed by the u.d. participant in his/her u.d. activities.Thus we are moving away from the distinctive propositional content of the u.d. to the person'behind'the propositions, or rather bringing the person into the picture,so to speak.

l^1) Thus could we say that Revelation answers the question which the person himself/ herself is ? ; that person-hood itself comprises a question,or the question(perhaps I am moving too quickly).

m^1) This puts one new perspective on the injunction not to weigh the Book of God.It may not be a simple disparagement of the u.d. in relation to the Revelation in terms of human arrogance or folly or pride, but an existential directive,a therapeutic strategy, advice or a realization that the u.d. are rooted in the mystery of person-hood,of being a subject,and that an abstract,extrinsic or formal application of the u.d. which does not seriously take account of this rooted-ness totally misses the fundamental relationship between Revelation and subject and hence is a 'hindrance' to a proper engagement between person and the Book of God.

n^1) U.d. which arise out of the mystery of person-hood and make this origin reflexive and thematic go up to make the human situation to which Revelation claims to be the answer,the total interpretive element.

— to be continued.

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