

The Language of the Heart:

From Dream Language towards Understanding the Language of the Heart

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In this paper, an attempt is made to describe a new understanding of the heart and the way it is expressing itself. The assumption is made that what used to be called the human soul, is expressing itself in two different ways, using either the brain or the heart for this self-expression in the physical world. At the present time, usually the only acceptable way to study this is to ignore the heart and only talk about the brain's logical and rational way of expressing itself. That there is more to human self-understanding and self-expression to others is usual not even considered.

What is crucial in this investigation is the fact that we have awareness and self-consciousness only in the brain, i.e., we know that we think and what we think, we are aware of what happens, when we think and then talk or act. While this awareness is limited, and there are things that are happening in the brain, of which we are not aware, like how we balance our bicycle when we ride it; in general, we know when we think. Our thinking always can express itself in words or actions and we can communicate with others in that way.

What happens in the heart is usually not in our awareness. Different from the brain, the heart does not express itself in words, but in feelings only. We get angry, or loving, we feel disgust or annoyance etc. When these feelings become aware in the brain we know about them, but we still do not know what had happened in the heart to create these feeling. It is important that the heart expresses these feelings and they are expressed in body language, even before the brain becomes aware of it.

We all are familiar of the person who gets angry and who shows the anger so that others can see it. When they tell him, you are angry, he would scream back, "I am not angry," because his body shows the anger, but his brain was not yet aware of it. The conclusion of this event is evident, the feelings start in the heart, are expressed in the body first, and only later will the brain become aware of these feelings. Every good actor knows that the bodily expression must happen before the feelings are verbally expressed; otherwise, the acting looks wooden and artificial. Only when the bodily expression is prior to the verbal expression does the acting look natural. The same is true for a singer and we like dancing, because we can feel what the dancer expresses.

Another issue must be stated before the findings of this paper are described and correlated with the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith. When this writer presents his understanding of any statement of the Bahá'í Faith, i.e., of the Writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh or of their official interpreters, 'Abdu'l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi, he only expresses his personal understanding and does not in any way speak for the faith, leaving it always open to every reader to find other or different interpretations of the same Writings. It is hoped that the difference of opinions will find a conclusion, as in any true consultation, which is coming closer to the truth, and can be found helpful to others.

The ability to correlate the Bahá'í Revelation with modern thinking in science and philosophy was encouraged by Shoghi Effendi in several places like the following.

It is useful to review a number of statements written by Shoghi Effendi on this subject. To a believer who had completed advanced academic studies in a subject related to the Teachings the Guardian stated, in a letter written on his behalf:

It is hoped that all the Bahá'í students will follow the noble example you have set before them and will, henceforth, be led to investigate and analyze the principles of the Faith and to correlate them with the modern aspects of philosophy and science. Every intelligent and thoughtful young Bahá'í should always approach the Cause in this way, for therein lies the very essence of the principle of independent investigation of truth.¹

Returning to the theme of this article, there is a connection between the heart and the word. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that language is opening the box of the heart, which contains the heart's *mysteries and secrets*. Language is unlocking the heart so we can be aware and understand what is in the heart.

... the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. [PUP 60]

Bahá'u'lláh tells us in the *Seven Valleys* that the wayfarer in his mystical travel after having reached the Valley of Unity with the True One, experiences the new mystical life and asserts that this can only be communicated from heart to heart.

The tongue faileth in describing these three Valleys, and speech falleth short. The pen steppeth not into this

region; the ink leaveth only a blot. In these planes, the nightingale of the heart hath other songs and secrets, which make the heart to stir and the soul to clamor, but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, confided only from breast to breast. Only heart to heart can speak the bliss of mystic knowers... [SVFV 30]

Clearly language is not only connected with the heart, but there is a language of the heart, which is distinct from the regular logical and discursive language we call the language of the brain. In this paper we will look into this difference between the brain language and the heart language and will explore how they work together.

The heart in the Bahá'í Writings is given a special meaning; concepts like the city of the heart and the citadel of the heart are emphasizing the importance of the heart. The heart is described as possessing sensory capacities. Bahá'u'lláh talks about the “*eye of thine heart*” [KI 90], “*ear of his inmost heart*” [SLH 86], “*hearts have been sorely shaken*” [PM 12] and the “*wise and understanding heart*” [ESW 65] and suggests that one “*Ponder this in thine heart*” [ESW 74].

Bahá'u'lláh seems to speak about the senses of the heart, attributing to the heart sensual capacity like it exists in the sense of hearing.

The senses of hearing, of the heart, and the like, are similarly to be reckoned among the gifts with which the human body is endowed. [GWB 193]

Bahá'u'lláh's use of the concept of the heart as a metaphor is not scientifically or logically inconsistent with recent research on the heart as a physical organ. There is no necessary conflict between the two so in this paper I will demonstrate how the metaphorical and literal concepts of the heart can work together. In this writer's opinion, there is a new understanding

of the relationship between the material and the spiritual presented in the Bahá'í Writings, which is often expressed in statements about the seen and the unseen, or the manifest and the hidden of reality. Since this affects the understanding of the heart, it will be presented first, before we can talk about the language of the heart.

Based on this understanding, Bahá'u'lláh's statements can be correlated with the findings of modern neurocardiology, which describes the "little brain" of the heart possessing perception, memory and decision making ability.

Recent work in the relatively new field of Neurocardiology has firmly established that the heart is a sensory organ and a sophisticated information encoding and processing center. Its circuitry enables it to learn, remember, and make functional decisions independent of the cranial brain.²

Considering the role of the heart, the question raised in this presentation is about the form and style of the language of the heart. Another issue is the question, in what way is this language different from our normal language and thinking as it is developed in the human brain? There are about 2,000 heart transplants made in the USA annually, giving us a sufficiently large number to study what is in the physical heart and how the recipients of these transplants experience the new heart. There is evidence that dreams can be transplanted together with the heart from one person to another. Therefore, it can be concluded that the language of the heart is similar to the language of dreams.

Studying dream language the following distinction needs to be made.

The logic that we miss in the dream work is the syntactical logic of speech—the syntactical logic that is essential for the framing and testing of propositions and reasoning from them.³

Consequently, dreams express syntactical logic differently, for example, causality is expressed in terms of continuity, contradictions and conflicts are described by following pictures that are contradictory, as will be exemplified below.

Another conclusion is made by this author from seeing many patients with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Memories heavily loaded with emotions seem to be located in the heart and not in the brain; therefore, they can be transplanted with the heart and are difficult to remove and will disturb the patient for a long time. This sheds some light at some fundamental truth about the heart revealed in the Bahá'í Writings.

It can be stated that the therapy based on this idea was almost always successful in eliminating the disturbing intrusive memories and nightmares of these patients, suffering from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. When my patients wholeheartedly remembered, or actually re-lived the emotions connected with these disturbing memories, the feelings were released and the memories stopped being intrusive and disturbing. That this process happens in the heart is an assumption this psychologist made, because in regular memories, there is no connection of memory with strong and disturbing feelings, and placing feelings in the heart suggests that these memories need to be placed there too. Additionally, as will be explained below, heart transplants tell us that dreams, especially traumatic dreams, are transplanted with the heart to the recipient patient.

That there is more going on in the heart than previously known, is expressed by the Báb as well, because He has placed the ability to understand the middle way between extremes exclusively into the heart.

Such conclusive truth hath been revealed through the gaze of the heart, and not that of intellect. For intellect conceives not save limited things. Verily, bound by the realm of limitation, men are unable

to gaze upon things simultaneously in their manifold aspects. This it is perplexing for them to comprehend that lofty station. No one can recognize the truth of the Middle Way between the two extreme poles except after attaining unto the gate of the heart and beholding the realities of the worlds, visible and unseen. [Provisional translation by Nader Saiedi]⁴

When Bahá'u'lláh reveals that the heart is the seat of the Revelation, we need to consider that it is the human heart where this connection between the spiritual message and the physical experience happens and we need to understand the language of the heart to understand the Revelation as it is written in the books and scriptures:

Unlock, O people, the gates of the hearts of men with the keys of the remembrance of Him Who is the Remembrance of God and the Source of wisdom amongst you. He hath chosen out of the whole world the hearts of His servants, and made them each a seat for the revelation of His glory. [GWB 296]

In conclusion, it needs to be said that the faculty of reason, which is an endowment of the spiritual soul, uses different bodily instruments, i.e., the brain and the heart. They always need to work together, but they have different languages, so that spiritual truth has to be reasonable even in the logical linguistic sense, and the heart has to be pure in a moral sense. Otherwise, it will contaminate logical reason or even pervert it. Clearly we need both, a pure heart and clear mind to understand the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

The relationship between matter and spirit has occupied philosophers throughout history, from materialisms of Democritus to Hobbes' Leviathan and finally to Karl Marx and the dialectical materialism of Communism, as described by Stalin. There is the dualistic solution as presented by Descartes, which is dominating modern science and modern thinking, and

the conflict between Plato and Aristotle, about what is reality, the eternal ideas of Plato or the concrete reality as presented in the physics and metaphysics of Aristotle, which conflict has never really been resolved.

In recent times, Teilhard de Chardin has attempted a novel solution by stating that matter and spirit are fundamentally connected, are dependent on each other and are in a process of development that has come in our days to a significant solution. Teilhard does not see matter as very different from spirit; like Descartes, he acknowledges an essential connection between matter and spirit.

It [the spirit] in no way represents some entity, which is independent of matter or antagonistic to it, some force locked up in, or floating in, the physical world. By spirit I mean 'the spirit of synthesis and sublimation', in which is painfully concentrated, through endless attempts and setbacks, the potency of unity scattered throughout the universal multiple: spirit, which is born within, and as a function of matter.⁵

Here we have an understanding that matter can be described as diverse and multiple, while spirit presents unity and integration. Both spirit and matter are together born from each other in this description. The Bahá'í concept of Unity in Diversity can be applied to this description of matter and spirit as well. They need to be seen together and not separated. They are different and the same, as Bahá'u'lláh stated when describing the origin of the world.

*That which hath been in existence had existed before,
but not in the form thou seest today.*

*The world of existence came into being
through the heat generated from the interaction between
the active force and that which is its recipient.*

These two are the same, yet they are different.

Thus doth the Great Announcement inform thee about this glorious structure. Such as communicate the generating influence and such as receive its impact are indeed created through the irresistible Word of God which is the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof. Verily thy Lord is the Expounder, the All-Wise.
[TB 140]

This verse from the Tablet of Wisdom by Bahá'u'lláh was originally one paragraph and is here separated into its meaningful parts for better understanding. I will present here my personal understanding of this verse, Bahá'u'lláh calls a *glorious structure*. This certainly is not the only possible understanding of this verse, nor is it of any authority. Yet, it is the best I can present and it is open to critique. Needless to say, it follows the prompting of my heart and has become for me a guidance into the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Here is my understanding as related to the topic of this paper.

The reason, I think that this is an important statement is the fact that it is a change from the Worldview as presented in the Christian tradition towards a new worldview as presented in the Bahá'í Writings. For Christian philosophy, which follows the Platonic tradition, the spirit is good and the matter is bad, or at least less valuable. Dealing with the world is less valuable than going in the monastery and dedicating oneself to the contemplative life. Bahá'u'lláh told monks to leave the monastery and become active in the world. Work in the world is regarded by Him as equal to prayer if it is performed in the right intention. Consequently, both spirit and matter are created by God, are valuable and the difference is only that the heart should be pure and dedicated to God, while it is detached from everything that is worldly. The difference is in the ethic, in the direction of the life towards God not in the matter as such. The main obstacle for this is vain imagination that places our desire into something worldly and false.

Bahá'u'lláh, in this verse, responds to a question about the origin of this world. He speaks of two principles, *the active force and that which is its recipient*, in this description following seemingly the Aristotelian idea of form and primal matter. What differentiates this verse from Aristotle is clearly stated as well. For one, Bahá'u'lláh introduces heat into this understanding, somehow comparable with the idea of modern physics about the role of energy in the creation and in the development of the world.

Then He says something surprising, namely: *These two are the same, yet they are different*. Does that not mean they are different in one aspect and the same in another? When questioning how they are the same, Bahá'u'lláh answers this later when stating, *they are indeed created through the irresistible Word of God which is the Cause of the entire creation*, this means they are the same because they are equally created by God. Their difference is in their function of being polar opposites. Here again we have Unity in Diversity. Two opposite principles exist in Unity of being created.

Then Bahá'u'lláh describes further that all differences of reality are caused by these two principles, created by God's Word when stating *all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof*. This understanding fits well into the Bahá'í concept of inwardness versus outwardness, or hidden versus manifest, or seen versus unseen, which describe the external, material aspect of this world and the internal spiritual aspect of reality. The world is always both seen and unseen as in this Verse:

Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen! [SLH 25]

Bahá'u'lláh uses these words frequently and is always describing this created world in those terms as seen and unseen, as hidden and manifest. Concluding we must say that spirit and matter in the Bahá'í understanding are not separate, they rather

constitute a unity in their opposition. This understanding needs to be applied to the human person as well, because Bahá'u'lláh has stated

And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself...
[SVFV 27]

From this consideration, we should conclude that the heart is constituted in this inwardness and outwardness as well; so that the material heart is the seen aspect and what we may call the spiritual heart, is expressing the inwardness of the human reality. This is much more than a metaphor or an analogy combining the different use of the word heart. Therefore, Bahá'u'lláh stated that the heart *is one and undivided* [PB 52] and the direction of the heart needs to be as well one and undivided towards God and not towards the world.

In the following verse, Bahá'u'lláh describes the world in a specific way as “*the worlds of unity and diversity, of variation and oneness, of limitation and detachment.*” In my personal understanding of this Verse, Bahá'u'lláh appears to explain what He said in the other statement about the two aspects of creation, i.e., “*the active force and its recipient.*” Here as well always both sides are mentioned, the inner and outer side of reality.

Please God, that we avoid the land of denial, and advance into the ocean of acceptance, so that we may perceive, with an eye purged from all conflicting elements, the worlds of unity and diversity, of variation and oneness, of limitation and detachment, and wing our flight unto the highest and innermost sanctuary of the inner meaning of the Word of God. [KI 160]

The three statements about ‘Unity and Diversity’, ‘Variation and Oneness’, ‘Limitation and Detachment’ always speak about the same two reality principles in different words. Unity is in

polar opposition to Diversity, as Oneness is to Variation. The dynamic side of this opposition is explained in the next word, when Bahá'u'lláh speaks about Limitation and Detachment. The physical aspect of reality, expressed in variation and multiplicity, is the limited aspect of the world and needs to be treated with detachment, in order that we experience the Divine Unity and Oneness in the spiritual realm. This is indicated by the last sentence that we wing out flight in this process unto *“the highest and innermost sanctuary of the inner meaning of the Word of God.”* This Word of God is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh that is experienced in our heart.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains this twofold aspect of reality further when He is talking about physical atoms held together by love.

As we look upon the universe, we observe that all composite beings or existing phenomena are made up primarily of single elements bound together by a power of attraction. Through this power of attraction, cohesion has become manifest between atoms of these composing elements. The resultant being is a phenomenon of the lower contingent type. The power of cohesion expressed in the mineral kingdom is in reality love or affinity manifested in a low degree according to the exigencies of the mineral world. [FWU 88]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes that the power of connection in the physical world is the power of attraction, He leaves no doubt, that this is a spiritual power, when he said that it is actually love of a lower degree that has this effect. In other words, he claims that the universe is held together by a spiritual force, something that can be compared with the unseen aspect in Bahá'u'lláh's description of the world of existence.

Writing in *Star of the West*, an early Bahá'í, Mírzá ‘Abu’l-Faḍl, in a speech given to Mrs. Corinne True, in the summer of 1914, explained it this way and placed the human heart in the middle of this connection between spirit and matter. He

compared the world with the body of man, seeing the world as an organism, as a unity composed of spirit and matter and the heart as being the place where these two aspects connect.

The likeness of the world is like the body of man; the likeness of God is like the spirit in the body. As the spirit pervades and controls the whole body, so likewise God pervades and controls the whole universe. As none of the limbs on the body of man are in communication with the spirit in the body of man and not one of the five senses can ever feel the spirit, therefore, God has created the heart in man to be the central ruler and has endowed it with two phases, spiritual and material. Through its spiritual phase the heart absorbs the commandments of the spirit, and then through its material phase it transmits them to all parts of the body through the agency of the organs, veins, arteries, muscles, etc.⁶

Historically, it needs to be remembered here, that philosophy until recently has never understood this unity in diversity of matter and spirit, in this way. Only in the Bahá'í writings, and much later in the writings of Teilhard Chardin, this rather new and revolutionary idea was presented. Therefore, in this paper we will not make the conventional separation of the heart as a physical concept, and the word "heart" used in a metaphorical sense for the spiritual aspect of man, following the statement quoted above: "God has created the heart in man to be the central ruler and has endowed it with two phases, spiritual and material."

These statements seem to be based on a description of the sympathetic nervous system by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who answered a question about the autonomous nervous system with a brief but interesting statement about this connection in the autonomic nervous system that is connected in the heart.

The powers of the sympathetic nerve are neither entirely physical nor spiritual, but are between the two. The

nerve is connected with both. Its phenomena shall be perfect when its spiritual and physical relations are normal.

When the material world and the divine world are well co-related, when the hearts become heavenly and the aspirations grow pure and divine, perfect connection shall take place. Then shall this power produce a perfect manifestation. Physical and spiritual diseases will then receive absolute healing.

The exposition is brief. Ponder and thou shalt understand the meaning. Although, on account of lack of time, the answer is short, by close reflection it shall be made long. [TAB 308]⁷

These and similar statements seem to be based on the following statement of Bahá'u'lláh, Who in my opinion, attributes to the heart all the spiritual qualities, seemingly not distinguishing what we today call the spiritual concept of heart as a metaphor, which is taken from the physical heart. Obviously, when he describes the heart as the seat of His Revelation or when He stated that God regards the human heart as His possession, this can only be attributed to the spiritual aspect of the heart, yet as Bahá'u'lláh said, *the seen and the unseen are the same and are different* which we here apply to the heart as well.

In my opinion this is expressed by Bahá'u'lláh in the following quote, where He states that the spirit, mind, soul, is one single reality which uses the body faculties and senses as its instruments. Does that not mean that the human body, being an instrument of the spirit, is directly connected with this spiritual power, which makes us do and act according to our will?

Say: Spirit, mind, soul, and the powers of sight and hearing are but one single reality, which hath manifold expressions owing to the diversity of its instruments. As

thou dost observe, man's power to comprehend, move, speak, hear, and see all derive from this sign of his Lord within him. It is single in its essence, yet manifold through the diversity of its instruments. This, verily, is a certain truth. [SLH 235]

Here again Bahá'u'lláh seems to use the concept of unity in diversity, when He said *It is single in its essence, yet manifold through the diversity of its instruments*. What must not be forgotten, in my opinion, is the fact that this unity of the spirit and diversity of the bodily instruments needs to be seen together or better it must be seen one in the other and not artificially separated as modern thinking usually does. When in the following the heart is mentioned we need to look into the instrumentality of the heart as defined by neurocardiology and make the conclusion towards the spirituality, which is using this instrument for its spiritual purpose.

It needs to be explained how the science of quantum physics can contribute to the understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's statement that the spirit or the soul uses the body, in our case the heart and the brain as an instrument. The dualism of Descartes cannot really explain this instrumentality of the body towards the spiritual in the human person.

Descartes suggested that the body works like a machine, that it has material properties. The mind (or soul), on the other hand, was described as a nonmaterial and does not follow the laws of nature. Descartes argued that the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland. Leibniz introduced the monad, a preprogrammed entity where this interaction occurred more or less by itself. Neither of these solutions really solved the problem.

In the interpretation of quantum mechanics, a new solution to this problem seems to be presented. There, the possibility is described that the nerve connections, the synapses in the brain are so small, that quantum effects are happening. By definition,

quantum effects are not physically determined, but are determined by human consciousness, actually by the instrument that forces one or the other complementary effects to become observable. Since the instruments are manmade, it is the human consciousness that causes these effects. Depending on the instrument, light shows its wave aspect or its particle aspect. This is called complementarity; the two aspects are complementary.

When this is applied to the quantum effects in the nerve endings, in the synapses, than it appears possible that the human consciousness makes the difference and therefor it can be said that the human spirit or will does influence the quantum mechanical effects in the brain and similarly in the little brain of the heart to cause the body to do what the spirit wants. If this idea is carried to its conclusions, then this would be the mechanism by which the mind directs the body. This way, it is explained how the body becomes an instrument of the spirit as stated by Bahá'u'lláh.

This is described by Evan Harris Walker in his book *The Physics of Consciousness, The Quantum Mind and the Meaning of Life*.⁸

Consciousness is the collation of potentialities that develop as these electrons and these structures of the brain interact (as quantum elements). By creating the possibilities, that we experience as consciousness, and by selecting—by willing—which synapse will fire, mind brings into reality each moment's thoughts, experiences and actions.

Correlating this interpretation of quantum mechanics with the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh about the instrumentality of the body gives a deeper understanding to theses scientific findings. On the other hand, it is suggested here, that this explanation can be helpful in understanding what Bahá'u'lláh stated, that the mind uses the body as an instrument. The transition from the

spiritual mind to the physical brain becomes understandable, when we assume that there are quantum effects involved. This makes sense, because quantum effects even in physical experiments, are not physically determined, but are caused by human conscious decisions. In these physical experiments, it is the human consciousness that causes one or the other of the complimentary aspects of reality to become evident.

As I understand this, and this is my personal opinion, without any authority, the following can be stated. An instrument shapes what it does according to the shape of the instrument. The physical shape of an instrument is certainly in relation with its function and use. Therefore, the physical quality of the instrument is important and needs to be related to its use.

Unfortunately, today, people see the spiritual and the material as separated and the connection is only in the fact that the material provides the metaphor to express the spiritual. The following monograph about the heart is based on this outdated understanding.

As the muscle which is the original source of these metaphorical applications brings life to the whole body, so heart refers to the core-force of personality at the center of its life. Because we do not want to limit the self with the name of intellect alone, or will alone, or feeling alone, nor to see these as separate, we have invented the sensibly opaque name of heart for the identifying core of our agency.⁹

A new and fundamentally different understanding of reality is what is guiding me in this and other papers about the heart and I have developed this understanding when trying to understand the Bahá'í Writings. Therefore, the metaphorical use of the concept heart is actually based on more than external similarity; it is based on a real essential connection between the

seen and the unseen, the spiritual and the material as the fundamental principles of reality.

From this very specific point of view, I have tried to understand what the different instrumentality of the heart is, as compared with that of the brain. The following findings are to be understood in this way and the formulation of the language of the heart is based on this difference. This difference between the heart and the brain becomes apparent in the little child and in dreams where the brain does not play an important role, because it is shut down in sleep and yet undeveloped in the child.

The heart does not sleep and is fully functioning when the child is born; so we now turn our attention to the language of the dream and the little child. Michael Robinson, in analyzing Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, comes to a new understanding of the primary process thinking as it is expressed in dreams. He finds that the primary process thinking is essentially different from the secondary or normal process of reasoning. Freud had developed the understanding that there is a difference between primary process thinking, which is the thinking of the little child and which is present in dreams as well and secondary thinking, which is the logical discursive thinking of the adult.

Beginning with Freud, a number of authors have attempted to articulate the grammatical or syntactic structure of dreaming, and there is general agreement that it is qualitatively distinctive from that of ordinary language. Dream language depicts causality in terms of sequence or contiguity, and contradiction, contrast, or conflict in terms of such things as difference in imagery or pace of action. There seems to be no way to depict time or to distinguish the past and memory from the present. In other words, dream language lacks the abstract, reflective, comparative, multilevel, or parallel-processing quality of ordinary language that enables such

things as conflict, ambivalence, simultaneous conscious and unconscious thought past and present tense, action and contemplation. French and Fromm (1964) summarize this distinctive feature of dream language as follows: “The logic that we miss in the dream work is the syntactical logic of speech—the syntactical logic that is essential for the framing and testing of propositions and reasoning from them.”¹⁰

Let us follow up on this consideration that primary process thinking is found in dreams and in little children. In both cases, the thinking is concentrated in the heart. The brain of the little child is not much developed before the age of two and the development of higher logical thinking is possible only after the age of twelve, according to Piaget. A similar situation is found in dreams, when the brain is sleeping, but the heart is still working normally.

As stated before, according to modern neurocardiology there is a “little brain” of the heart, which has perception, memory and decision making ability.

Recent work in the relatively new field of Neurocardiology has firmly established that the heart is a sensory organ and a sophisticated information encoding and processing center. Its circuitry enables it to learn, remember, and make functional decisions independent of the cranial brain.¹¹

The question we need to ask here is the following: Is this “little brain” of the heart involved in dreaming? We must ask because from evidence gathered from heart transplant patients we know that some of them dream dreams of the previous owner of the heart. This cannot be explained any other way than by assuming that the dream memory was transplanted with the heart. One especially significant case is reported in a book by Paul Pearsall:

The Heart That Found Its Body's Killer

I recently spoke to an international group of psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers meeting in Houston, Texas. I spoke to them about my ideas about the central role of the heart in our psychological and spiritual life, and following my presentation, a psychiatrist came to the microphone during the question and answer session to ask me about one of her patients whose experience seemed to substantiate my ideas about cellular memories and a thinking heart. The case disturbed her so much that she struggled to speak through her tears.

Sobbing to the point that the audience and I had difficulty understanding her, she said, I have a patient, an eight-year-old little girl who received the heart of a murdered ten-year-old girl. Her mother brought her to me when she started screaming at night about her dreams of the man who had murdered her donor; she said her daughter knew who he was. After several sessions, I just could not deny the reality of what this child was telling me. Her mother and I finally decided to call the police and, using the descriptions from the little girl they found the murderer. He was easily convicted with evidence my patient provided. The time, the weapon, the place, the clothes he wore, what the little girl had said to him... everything the little heart transplant recipient reported was completely accurate.

As the therapist returned to her seat; the audience of scientifically trained and clinically experienced professionals sat in silence.... The very real possibility of a heart that remembers seemed to touch all of us in our own hearts.¹²

The fact that the heart after a transplant can remember dreams, and details of traumatic events, as reported in several other cases of this book as well,¹³ seems proof that the memories located in the heart can be remembered as dreams. It is reported in this book that a heart transplant patient had “surprisingly accurate dreams about her donor” together with other changes, such as food tastes, music preferences, and emotional states, which these patients never experienced before.

In contrast to normal memories that are probably located in the brain and can be reached by association, memories which happened under severe emotional stress are located in the heart and remembered in dreams or in intrusive memories, as is known in the Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Having treated many patients with this disorder, the explanation that traumatic memories are in the heart seems to explain best what could be observed in their treatment. That is what happened to the girl in question. She remembered the traumatic experience of the previous owner of the heart in her dreams, just like this girl would have remembered it if she was not killed. The heart survived and did the same what it would have done in the other girl, i.e., remembering the traumatic experience in recurring nightmares.

If this is the case, then we have to conclude that the dream-work that produces the dream is located in the “little brain of the heart” also or better, that the heart is used by the mind of the dreamer, when she is dreaming. That means that dreams are not made up and remembered by using the brain but the heart, they are following the primary process of thinking, not the normal secondary process. Yet, when dreams are remembered, they are remembered in the brain and translated into the normal language of the brain, which makes it difficult to interpret them. Therefore, the conclusion seems to be convincing that they are originally not in the brain, but in the heart.

An example of this primary process dream thinking can be presented by a communication from a patient to this

psychologist. Here a conditional situation is presented in two opposing dreams following immediately each other. The patient reported several experiences where she had dreamed about the future death of family members, with the details of the time and the circumstances of their death.

Then she reported another situation, where she had dreamed about the death of her son, who was a teenager and involved at the time in gang violence and one time was almost killed. She reported that she had two dreams about him; one was that her son is being killed and in the immediately following dream, her son was being placed in detention. Following this dream message, she reported to the therapist that she called daily the police about her son's illegal activities until the police arrested him and placed him into custody.

She further told this psychologist that her son did well after that and is now a responsible adult with a nice family. Interestingly enough, she reported that her son never forgave her for putting him into prison. She, on the other hand, understood the message of her heart given her in the dream as correct and never regretted what she needed to do.

Another dream told by a Bahá'í friend tells another way how a dream can solve a problem of the dreamer not in logical explanations but in presenting an action, which is solving the problem. This Bahá'í friend reported that as child she was the only Bahá'í in school and could not understand why nobody understood the truth about religion. She blamed Christ who had not educated Christians well enough so they could understand. Many years later, she had the following dream:

First, she was at the sermon of the mount, and tried to get close to Christ and tell him of her concern, but could not get near to him to tell him. This picture depicts her frustration about Christ not having informed Christians well about the fact of progressive revelation.

In the next picture she was at the Garden of Ridván, the place near Bagdad where Bahá'u'lláh announced his prophetic claims to his followers. She was at the entrance wall near a door, hoping to see Bahá'u'lláh in the tent in the midst of the Garden. Suddenly Christ came and walked into the garden and then turned into the Tent where Bahá'u'lláh was.

So she understood that Christ and Bahá'u'lláh in their Divine station, are the same person, like all the other Manifestations of God as Bahá'u'lláh has stated, describing progressive revelation:

Viewed in this light, they are all but Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim, "I am the Seal of the Prophets," they, verily, utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they all are but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. [GWB 53]

The unity of all Divine Manifestations is presented in this dream by the fact that wanting to see Bahá'u'lláh she only observed Christ going to where she expected Bahá'u'lláh to be.

These dreams explain that in the primary process thinking, conditional thoughts and complex relationships cannot be expressed directly, except, like in this case, as describing one event or a complex relationship in two opposing or different pictures, following immediately after each other. In the first situation the dreamer decided in her heart that her son needs to be in custody, otherwise, he would be killed, and she followed this extremely difficult decision, as soon she has become aware of it during the remembering of her dream.

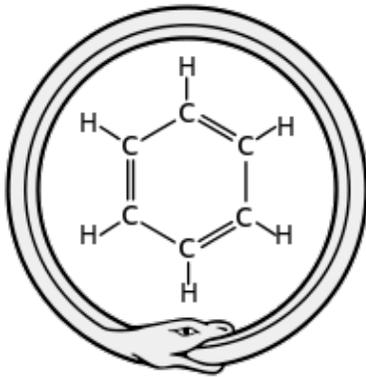
In the dream of the Bahá'í lady, one Manifestation going into the tent of another Manifestation expressed the fact that they are in their divine station one, as is described in the Bahá'í Writings. Both these dreams tell us how dream language expresses thoughts that are difficult to understand in the logical discursive way of thinking, but can also be presented in a

language using pictures and events expressing the same truth. This way of understanding is deeper and afterwards may be expressed and available to the logical mind. The implications of these pictures are that they have a higher degree of understanding and certitude, which logical discursive language and thinking cannot give.

When considering these two ways of thinking as a *Gegensatz* or Polar Opposites, we must realize that in human thinking always both ways are present in a balanced but always changing mixture. This fact gives human thinking a quality that is not only deeper than computer logic, but also able to reach into areas of reality where logic alone cannot go very far, especially into the spiritual realm where the deepest truths about man and reality are considered. Most Westerners are raised in the scientific way of thinking, which generally does not regard the human heart as more than a blood-pump and uses simple deductions and logical structures, unable to go deeper and listen to the heart.

When people first read the Bahá'í Writings, they are difficult to understand until one opens the heart and follows the language of the heart; usually then understanding follows and the Writings become valuable and personally meaningful. The same is true about other religious writings like the Bible or the Qur'an. This issue needs much more investigation and scientific verification, but is here mentioned because it opens up the issue of consciousness and of different ways of thinking that underlie some of the Bahá'í Writings.

Another understanding of this way of thinking and of its importance is the story of scientific inventions being made in dreams, like the following story of the invention of the chemical formula of benzene by Kekulé in the so-called ouroboros dream as described in Wikipedia under the name Kekulé:



The new understanding of benzene, and hence of all aromatic compounds, proved to be so important for both pure and applied chemistry after 1865 that in 1890 the German Chemical Society organized an elaborate appreciation in Kekulé's honor, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of his first benzene paper. Here Kekulé spoke of the creation of the theory. He said that he had discovered the ring shape of the benzene molecule after having a reverie or day-dream of a snake seizing its own tail (this is an ancient symbol known as the ouroboros.) This vision, he said, came to him after years of studying the nature of carbon-carbon bonds.¹⁴

In this picture, we can see the heart's way of thinking in the primary process in the picture of the snake swallowing her own tail, which Kekulé then translated into the secondary or logical secondary process of thinking as the solution of a chemical formula organized in a circular way as a ring.

Here we encounter again the issue of the difference between the heart as a biological organ with what is called "the little brain of the heart" and the distinct existence of a mind, in this case using the heart and not the brain to express itself. This different instrument of the mind seems to result in a different kind of language that is called primary process thinking in the psychoanalytic theory. The reason to place this thinking into the heart has to do with findings from heart transplants, where dreams, which could only belong to the original owner of the heart, are dreamt by the person who received the heart transplant.

We need to assume that the memory of dreams is in the heart, so it stands to reason that the actual dream work is done by the

heart as well, but can only become aware in the mind. The mind using the brain then understands the dream that originally is expressed in primary process thinking now in secondary process thinking. In fact, that is the theme of the article of Michael Robins. Placing all of this thinking of the heart as the instrument of primary process thinking, solves this problem and explains how this thinking that happens outside of awareness is eventually translated into the normal thinking and language in using the brain.

In this understanding, we use the mind or consciousness as encompassing two different styles of thinking, i.e. the primary process of dream thinking and the normal secondary process of logical thinking. What makes this understanding so difficult is the fact that consciousness or awareness is only present in the normal or secondary process thinking and we have only indirect access to the primary process thinking if it is translated into secondary process thinking.

Correlating this to the Bahá'í Writings we can make the assumption that the special way of understanding that is placed in the heart has to do with this difference. It further can be assumed that the primary process thinking of the heart, as evident in dreams, might not totally describe all what is happening when the mind uses the heart's way of thinking.

The following statement is the epistemological explanation of why there are different meanings possible of the same statement. The answer is clear: because of the different ways of understanding. In a one-dimensional world, only one meaning is possible, if there are more than one dimensions or levels of understandings of the world then more than one meaning is possible, which relate to the different dimensions of the world and of the understanding of the world.

The German Theologian Romano Guardini at the end of his book *Der Gegensatz*¹⁵ presents another interesting consideration about the way concrete reality is understood. He distinguishes three levels of understanding: rational, trans-rational and super-

rational (in German: “Rational,” “Außer-Rational” and “Über-Rational”).

This consideration is essential to the topic of this paper. It is the self, it is the human consciousness that attempts to understand the reality of this world, the method of this understanding is part and partial of what reality is all about. Strangely enough, most scientific inquiries into the issue about reality do not seem even to consider this question.

When science excludes anything besides materiality from investigation, when the mind is understood as a function of physical nerves and their interaction, then such questions can be avoided totally. This gives us the classical understanding of reality as organized like a machine, no wholeness, no meaning, just efficient cause and effect. This picture is then applied to the mind; the way they understand reality and consciousness becomes an epiphenomenon of the nervous system, but has no reality other than a material, which can then be described as functioning strictly in a causal sense, excluding free will and purpose, meaning and beauty from serious considerations. Man is nothing more than a reacting physical entity, reacting to stimuli like the pigeon in the Skinner box or like a mechanical machine to the forces impinging on it in the environment.

In contrast to this so-called “scientific” understanding and its corresponding epistemology, Guardini describes three ways of understanding reality. The first is the rational understanding forming concepts, which abstracts from the concrete individual reality and forms a general idea. In order to individualize we have to give this thing, this animal or person a name or indicate that we mean this house and not the other house next to it. Fortunately, houses have numbers and people and pets have names, otherwise we could not speak about an individual person without describing some features that are specific to that individual, or pointing to that individual, like in criminal court.

Guardini describes another way of understanding, which he calls intuition. This way of understanding Guardini calls trans-

rational (“Außer-Rational”), which he describes as a clear and normal way of understanding. Additionally, he places these two ways of understanding in polar opposition, so that the conceptual, abstract way of understanding can never be totally separated from the intuitive concrete way of understanding.

Whenever we think of a general abstract concept, like that of “cat”, or felineity, we somehow have the concrete experience and picture of a specific individual cat or cats in mind. Only that makes the abstract thought possible and meaningful.

And whenever we think or talk about an individual cat, for example, the abstract concept of cat is in the horizon of our understanding as well, because we know always both, the focus and concentration may be on the individual or on the abstract concept, but both cannot be thought about without the other side, i.e., its opposite being included and in some way this defines the idea of either a particular animal or person or, on the other hand, the idea of animal-ness, or humanness which is considered. Even if we invent a fictitious animal, like the unicorn, we have to make a picture of it in our mind, and this picture will be concrete of such an animal and not abstract as the concept of unicorn-ness would be.

We can say that these two ways of understanding are complementary. The word intuition is used in the German language and in English in the same way, as defined in dictionaries and as presented here from Wikipedia.

Intuition, a phenomenon of the mind, describes the ability to acquire knowledge without inference or the use of reason. The word “intuition” comes from Latin verb ‘intueri’ translated as consider or from late Middle English word intuit, “to contemplate”. Intuition is often interpreted with varied meaning from intuition being glimpses of greater knowledge to only a function of mind; however, processes by which and why they happen

typically remain mostly unknown to the thinker, as opposed to the view of rational thinking.

After that discussion, the third way of understanding is mentioned by Guardini with some caution. He claims that the mystery of the living is not in the intuitive versus the rational understanding, but in this third way of understanding that he calls super-rational. It is a higher understanding than reason or intuition, it is the understanding of the whole, of the unity of reality and it is achieved in the tension between rational and intuitive understanding. It is not a Hegelian synthesis, which abolishes the other ways of understanding; it is an original, a first and essential understanding, which is actually very simple in its complicatedness. Any attempt to define this logically, is bound to fail. The core and the mystery of the concrete reality can only be understood in an act of knowing, that has the same structure as the reality, and this is what Guardini calls vision (*Anschauung*):

To understand the core of the living reality and to approach its mystery is not a nebulous imagination, it rather takes vision (*Anschauung*), which is possible only in the tension, and in respect of the mystery, which requires discipline and self-control.¹⁶

Guardini describes further this concept and indicates that any one-sidedness destroys this tension of understanding reality; that it leads to erroneous simplifications, and to false explications and failure to understand truthfully. Only the oppositeness of this relationship allows the human mind to grasp the whole and to use rational understanding and intuitive perception in a scientific and philosophically correct way in approaching reality. Rationalism and intellectualism, if used one-sidedly, will be opposed by Intuitionism, or Romanticism and Mysticism and both will fail to understand reality as it really is.

Three quarters of a century before Guardini described the three ways of understanding reality, Bahá'u'lláh had talked about *three differing planes* of understanding in the *Seven Valleys*. In the following these statements of Bahá'u'lláh and Guardini will be correlated with each other to better understand both, even though these two statements have been made in different centuries.

Here is the statement of Bahá'u'lláh:

Thus, for that they move on these three differing planes, the understanding and the words of the wayfarers have differed; and hence the sign of conflict doth continually appear on earth.

For some there are who dwell upon the plane of oneness and speak of that world, and some inhabit the realms of limitation, and some the grades of self, while others are completely veiled. [SVFV 20]

This chart shows how the statements of Guardini can be correlated with the Verse from the *Seven Valleys* of Bahá'u'lláh. This correlation actually is seen in the arrangement here, in spite of the fact that

Epistemological Correlation

| Guardini | Bahá'u'lláh |
|---|--|
| Rational: Logical/Abstract | <i>"Inhabit the Realms of Limitation"</i> |
| Trans-Rational: Concrete/Intuitional | <i>"Inhabit the Grades of Self"</i> |
| Super-Rational: Unifying/Transcendent "Anschauung"/Vision | <i>"Dwelt on the Plane of Oneness" "Most Sublime Vision"</i> |

the order of description is different and Guardini orders the first two ways of understanding different from Bahá'u'lláh's planes of understanding. Since these two ways of understanding are polar opposites, they can be seen from one side or the other.

The third way of understanding of Guardini, and the first in Bahá'u'lláh's description is described by Bahá'u'lláh as used by

those who *dwell on the Plane of Oneness*. According to the Bahá'í Faith, this oneness or unity is understood as 'Unity in Diversity' [WOB 41] and the better and deeper we understand this concept the more and deeper we are dwelling upon the *plane of oneness*.

Finally, it is described by Bahá'u'lláh what this vision or this way of understanding actually produces, it sees the unity in the polar opposites so that this paragraph concludes in the statement: "*Then what life have words, on such a plane, that 'first' and 'last' or other than these be seen or mentioned! In this realm, the first is the last itself, and the last is but the first.*" This can be correlated with what Guardini's epistemology describes as "Anschauung" or Vision.

The next not transcendent and more limited plane or mode of understanding is, according to Bahá'u'lláh, that "*some inhabit the realms of limitation.*" This is the realm of rational and logical thinking, where understanding is based on abstractions from the concrete. Therefore, this understanding is limited; abstraction meaning limiting the understanding from the concrete to the less concrete and more abstract. Guardini calls this Rational Understanding; it is the rational understanding and the area of discursive logic.

Another plane described by Bahá'u'lláh is by "*some [inhabit] the grades of self*" including those who use concrete intuition of the reality, which is based on the understanding self and is not the full understanding of oneness. In Guardini's epistemology, this grade is similarly called Trans-Rational or Intuitional.

Not much has to be said about those who are "completely veiled." This would include the strict materialists, who ignore anything except the material that can be counted and used in mathematics. They do not see reality-as-it-is—material and spiritual—at all.

It needs to be noted that this text from the *Seven Valleys* by Bahá'u'lláh was written almost hundred years before Guardini independently found a similar understanding in contemplating reality, seen in the light of Catholic Philosophical Theology. Nevertheless, the correlation is astonishing. It is important to consider that Bahá'u'lláh talks about three differing planes of understanding and Guardini calls all of them rational, even though he distinguishes between rational, trans-rational and super-rational, none of these ways of knowing are irrational and the rational faculty of man encompasses all three of these capabilities.

This Vision is necessary to understand the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh; it is the understanding of Spirituality, of Unity and Oneness, as being revealed in the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith. In the following verse, Bahá'u'lláh is praying for his followers to acquire this vision, so they can understand His Revelation.

I beg of Thee, O my Lord, by Thine eye that sleepeth not, to guard mine eyes from beholding aught beside Thee. Strengthen, then, their vision that they may discern Thy signs, and behold the Horizon of Thy Revelation.

[PM 263]

This adds a new understanding to these polar opposite concepts of *Inwardness* and *Outwardness*, as presented in the *Seven Valleys* of Bahá'u'lláh, [SVFV 27] an understanding that perceives these concepts from the point of Oneness and brings the Unity of these concepts to light. In this paragraph, more is said about the wayfarers who find this new understanding of reality. In any logical description and graphical presentation of this unity in diversity, this essential unity is not shown and has to be introduced by the observer, because the opposite terms are in and through each other, are in unity and not separated.

The wayfarers observing this situation are described by Bahá'u'lláh as “*those personages who in a single step have passed over the world of the relative and the limited, and dwelt*

on the fair plane of the Absolute, and pitched their tent in the worlds of authority and command.” Here the transcendence of this understanding is stressed from the relative and limited, logical and rational understanding to the understanding of the absolute and to an understanding that is based on authority and command. This seems to indicate the authority of the Revelation and the command of the Manifestation.

The process of this endeavor is described by Bahá’u’lláh as having “*burned away these relativities with a single spark, and blotted out these words with a drop of dew*” [SVFV 27]. In fact, this process of violently burning away something is contrasted in the next picture of blotting it out with a drop of dew, a rather quiet and insignificant activity, so we can conclude that Bahá’u’lláh indicates that this process is mild and insignificant as well as violent and drastic, a polar opposite of processes directing our intention into a higher level of action, a level that can be called mystical or spiritual, which transcends the polar oppositeness of burning versus blotting out with a drop of dew.

In this context, it needs to be noted that even Guardini in similar ways mentioned that this vision requires a special effort, when he states that this “is possible only in the tension, and in respect of the mystery, which requires discipline and self-control.”

Bahá’u’lláh further asserts, that “*they swim in the sea of the spirit, and soar in the holy air of light*” [SVFV 27]. This clearly indicates that this approach to knowing is a spiritual effort and presupposes an understanding of the spiritual aspect of reality, which is expressed in the vision of unity of the polar concepts of Inwardness versus Outwardness.

Whenever this concept is mentioned this transcendent understanding, this vision of unity of the modes of understanding, needs to be always kept in mind. When the polar opposite concepts that form this structure are considered in this way, their unity is actually the spiritual understanding of reality.

Depending on how we look at the self, we see different and opposing aspects, which have to be understood as potential aspects of the one reality, or modes of how reality can be perceived. The principal unity of this reality of the self or of the physical reality should never be overlooked and has always to be considered in order to see the whole. In other words, we cannot understand the whole of reality in our rational mind, we have to see these different modes and perceive them as complementary in order to see the whole, to see reality as it actually is. Similarly, Guardini said this vision takes discipline and self-control, and this process is compared by Bahá'u'lláh as burning away the differences and blotting out the oppositeness of created reality.

It needs to be considered that this approach is not irrational; it is super-rational as Guardini called it and it exists in the tension between the rational and trans-rational, i.e., between the abstracting rational mind and the intuitional concrete understanding of reality. It adds a third dimension to the human rationality, a dimension that is open to understanding the super-rational, the ultimate reality, which is the mystery of the world. How the mind and the heart are involved in this process has been described above, so the Bahá'í understanding of the heart can be compared with the new science of neuroradiology and quantum mechanics, where a new correlation between these two understanding of the function of the heart are developed.

Bahá'u'lláh describes this primary process thinking of the heart as the thinking of unity or oneness, or the thinking of those who “*swim in the sea of the spirit, and soar in the holy air of light*” or the thinking of those who “*have passed over the world of the relative and the limited, and dwelt on the fair plane of the Absolute*” [SVFV 27]. Placing this kind of thinking into the heart makes good sense because the Writing of the Báb and of Bahá'u'lláh seem to do just that. In conclusion, it can be stated that the heart has a different way of thinking, as is known from our interpretation of dreams, but that dream thinking is only part of heart thinking, which includes the

thinking of oneness or of the spirit, as the Bahá'í Writings claim.

The two aspects of the spiritual and physical or the seen and unseen is the topic of several of Bahá'u'lláh statements like this.

I beseech Thee, by Thy Cause that hath encompassed the world of being, and by Thy Name wherewith Thou hast subjected the seen and unseen, to adorn the peoples of the earth with the light of Thy justice, and to illuminate their hearts with the brightness of Thy knowledge. [ESW 37]

First Bahá'u'lláh seems to state here that His Cause is encompassing *the world of being*, which he then describes as the *seen and the unseen*, and then he states that His believers have to *illuminate their hearts with the brightness of Thy knowledge*. This new knowledge of the Bahá'í Revelation seems to be this very new understanding of the world as *seen and unseen*, as spiritual and material.

As mentioned before, the Báb proposes how such conflicting, yet complementary attributes of the same thing or idea are to be unified only in the heart when He said:

Such conclusive truth hath been revealed through the gaze of the heart, and not that of intellect. For intellect conceives not save limited things.

Verily, bound by the realm of limitation, men are unable to gaze upon things simultaneously in their manifold aspects. This it is perplexing for them to comprehend that lofty station.

*No one can recognize the truth of the Middle Way between the two extreme poles except after attaining unto the gate of the heart and beholding the realities of the worlds, visible and unseen. (translated by Saiedi, *ibid.*)¹⁷*

What the Báb calls here the middle way of understanding is called the understanding of oneness by Bahá'u'lláh and this vision of reality needs to be placed in the heart according to the Báb. This is expressed by Bahá'u'lláh as the heart being the seat of the Revelation. In our thinking of the language of the heart we have to add another consideration.

As the rational process in the heart is without awareness, we only know about this process if we become aware of it in the thinking, which is based on the brain. In other words, this vision of the unity of reality is unconscious and has to become conscious in the brain on the level of the rational and intuitional thinking process; therefore, it takes effort and experience to do this, in fact the ongoing reading of the Bahá'í Revelation will produce this effect, as this Revelation needs to be understood in the heart and will eventually become aware in the brain in a logical and discursive manner.

It seems to be the specific ability of the heart to see the unity in any oppositional statements. There is an interesting consequence to all these considerations. The importance of the heart over the brain, which seems to be expressed in the Bahá'í Writings, is based on the fact that both are necessary but emotionally and spiritually the heart—when pure and under the influence of the Divine Spirit—is the seat of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh:

Unlock, O people, the gates of the hearts of men with the keys of the remembrance of Him Who is the Remembrance of God and the Source of wisdom amongst you. He hath chosen out of the whole world the hearts of His servants, and made them each a seat for the revelation of His glory. [GWB 296-297]

It must be understood here that the language of the heart is not the same as the language of the brain and needs translation to be understood. This means several things. Poetry, for example, is originated in the heart and then translated into the

brain language, which makes it an art and, therefore, it speaks to the heart of the reader. The same process underlies the poetic aspect of the revelation; hence the special language of any revelation has this poetic style and needs to be understood by the heart. It speaks directly to the heart but needs to be understood by the brain; or rather, it needs to be internally translated to the logical and intuitional ability of the human brain to be fully understood.

This is a process that can be observed in anybody that at first is presented by the Bahá'í Revelation. When I became a Bahá'í at first I could not really understand what it meant, but enjoyed the poetic style and was convinced of its truth. Only when I became more deepened in the Writings, the meaning and structure became apparent, a process that does not end so that new meaning is forthcoming, whenever a text of the Revelation is read again or a new text is approached.

It is not easy to describe this process, but most Bahá'ís go through this development. The fact that Bahá'u'lláh asks us to daily read his Writings is based on this need to practice this process, to learn more and more how to translate from the heart to the mind and ever deeper step into the Ocean of His Revelation.

Interpreting the biblical concept of the New Heaven and New Earth Bahá'u'lláh revealed that here heaven means the Divine Revelation and earth the Understanding of man of this Revelation.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. [Revelation 21:1]

In the following verse, He speaks of the earth of the heart of the believer, indicating that their hearts understand His Revelation and its *divine knowledge and wisdom*.

Know thou, that upon whatever hearts the bountiful showers of mercy, raining from the "heaven" of divine Revelation, have fallen, the earth of those hearts hath verily been changed into the earth of divine knowledge and wisdom. [KI 45]

The process of translating the language of the heart into the language of the brain is used frequently when interpreting dreams. In a letter 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives an example of dream interpretation.

O thou handmaid of God! In this day, to thank God for His bounties consisteth in possessing a radiant heart, and a soul open to the promptings of the spirit....

As for that mighty solar orb which thou didst behold in thy dream, that was the Promised One, and its spreading rays were His bounties, and the translucent surface of the mass of water signifieth hearts that are undefiled and pure, while the surging waves denote the great excitement of those hearts and the fact that they were shaken and deeply moved, that is, the waves are the stirrings of the spirit and holy intimations of the soul. Praise thou God that in the world of the dream thou hast witnessed such disclosures. [SWAB 179]

In the introduction, he remarks that the writer of the letter to him is a person with a *radiant heart* and a *soul open to the prompting of the spirit*. This is allowing interpreting the dream and finding the mystical meaning of this dream.

We can conclude that what in brain thinking is called opposition, or conditional thinking, is seen by heart as thinking in unity or in spiritual unification. This appears to be a *Gegensatz* in the sense of Guardini, or the specific way of human thinking that always includes sides, the brain-thinking and the heart-thinking, with the emphasis on thinking when awake on the brain, and in dream thinking on the heart, because

the brain is asleep. This seems to be what distinguishes human thinking from the work of the computer, were only the logical thinking of the brain is introduced into the machine. In the human mind, there is always the *Gegensatz*, the polar opposition of brain and heart present, in a more or less intensive connection. Only in the dream, when the brain is excluded by sleep, the heart thinking is present, but, when we wake up, that kind of thinking has to be translated by the brain into the normal style of thinking to become aware and to be possibly understood.

When it is understood that the human rational understanding of reality is a limited understanding, it becomes clear that there must be another understanding that transcends this understanding and is more adequate to understand reality. This higher understanding is described by Bahá'u'lláh as the *Dwelling on the Plane of Oneness and they swim in the sea of the spirit, and soar in the holy air of light*. The correlation of this statement with the idea of vision, as presented by Guardini, seems to expand what Guardini said and helps us to understand the vision of oneness as is presented in the above quoted verse.

These considerations are based on the understanding of the Bahá'í Writings that the mind or the soul, with its rational faculty, is using the body, in this case the brain and the heart, as instruments of their action. When the mind is active, most of the time both, the brain and the heart are used as instruments, yet, not all what is in the mind can be in the brain or heart, like for example a typewriter has all the letters of the writing and brings them to paper, without having any understanding of what the writings communicate.

The fact that in all rational thought both, the primary process thinking of the heart and the logical discursive thinking of the brain are involved makes reason essentially different from computer logic of a machine. Using Guardini's epistemology as correlated with the Bahá'í Writings, we find that the brain thinking consists in a polar opposite between

rational and intuitive thinking. Transcending this way of thinking of the brain is the thinking of the heart, which is expressed in primary process thinking, which we called vision.

Rationalism, therefore, must always be understood as open to the different way of thinking of the heart. Both of these two ways of thinking, the one that uses the brain i.e. rationalism and the other that uses the heart as an instrument, we can call mysticism, must be open and interpreted by the rational brain. The problems involved into this relationship have activated the history of philosophy and it could be conceived that placing the mystical or primary process thinking into the heart, as the Bahá'í Writings seem to do, could be a new and heuristic valuable way of seeing this issue of the human rational faculty, which is usually understood under the concept of the human mind using the brain.

The respective quotes from the Bahá'í Writing will follow here. It is clearly stated that both the heart and the brain must work together to find the truth, especially the truth about religion.

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion must be in conformity with science and reason, so that it may influence the hearts of men. The foundation must be solid and must not consist of imitations. [SWAB 299]

One of the most distinguishing differences between the brain and the heart is the fact that the brain is divided into a right and left hemisphere and how they work together in logical and discursive though is not yet fully understood. In opposition to this is the fact that the little brain of the heart does not have this distinction or separation and seems to be undivided as expressed in this statement by Bahá'u'lláh. This has ethical or moral consequences, which are important to notice especially when considering the understanding of the Divine Revelation.

And as the human heart, as fashioned by God, is one and undivided, it behoveth thee to take heed that its affections be, also, one and undivided. Cleave thou, therefore, with the whole affection of thine heart, unto His love, and withdraw it from the love of any one besides Him, that He may aid thee to immerse thyself in the ocean of His unity, and enable thee to become a true upholder of His oneness. [PB 52]

This issue needs much further investigation, but is here mentioned because it opens up the issue of consciousness and of different ways of thinking that underlie some of the understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation.

As mentioned before, the Báb proposes how such conflicting, yet complementary attributes of the same thing or idea are to be unified only in the heart. It seems to be the specific ability of the heart, or better, of the mind using the heart as his instrument of expression to be able to see the unity in any oppositional statements. There is an interesting consequence to all these considerations. The importance of the heart over the brain which seems to be expressed in the Bahá'í Writings is based on the fact that both are necessary but emotionally and spiritually the heart—when pure and under the influence of the Divine Spirit—is what gives peace and certitude to human understanding as stated here by Bahá'u'lláh and as has been found in the study of the heart by the HeartMath Institute.

God shall bestow upon his heart a divine tranquillity and cause him to be of them that are at peace with themselves. [GDM 23]

Another conclusion of this paper is the understanding that the revelatory writings of all religions are actually speaking to the heart more than to the brain. Nevertheless, the brain is not neglected either because it must be used in order to make the language of the heart come to awareness in the brain and be interpreted in the logical way of the brain. To approach any

Revelation with this understanding can explain the specific style of all revelatory scriptures and will further explain, why it is difficult to understand these writings in the beginning, until the mind gets used to this approach and learns to use the heart in the process of understanding. It explains further, how these writings can be misunderstood and called irrational and not meaningful by persons, who do not use their heart or by people who have a morally corrupted heart and do not want to understand.

That the heart has an important function in understanding Divine Revelation is stressed by Bahá'u'lláh who insists that to understand revelation the heart must be pure. Further He frequently states that the heart is the seat of revelation and that His words have to be pondered in the heart.

Do thou ponder these momentous happenings in thy heart, so that thou mayest apprehend the greatness of this Revelation, and perceive its stupendous glory. [KI 236]

The affinity revelatory writings have with poetry and the fact that some of them even take the form of poetry can be explained by the fact that poetry speaks primarily to the heart and only secondarily can be understood by the brain. This is true also for revelations, they are understood by the heart and only after that are scrutinized and evaluated by the logical mind. It could be said that the language of the heart is not only the language of dreams but also the language of poesy; it is how spiritual values and understandings are expressed. Ultimately, it can be stated that the language of the heart is the language of Divine Revelation.

The difficulty of this way of distinguishing between language of the heart and of the brain is in the fact that we can understand the language of the heart only with the mind, using the logical brain for this process, so we always have to do with a translation from the heart to the brain and have no awareness in

the heart itself, except its feelings, to become aware of what goes on in the heart, we can only use the logical mind.

The awareness of the heart is in its feelings, in other words, when the heart responds, there are responding feelings of which we are aware. That might be the reason why ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often asked Bahá’ís, “are you happy?” which happiness would be indicating the positive response of the heart.

Most Westerners are well trained in using the brain and have little access to their understanding heart. They have to overcome this brain training in order to understand better the writings of revelation. This can only be done when one immerses oneself into these writings and slowly learns to understand them.

In conclusion, the following can be stated:

1. There are three ways of seeing reality, according to Guardini and as revealed more deeply before by Bahá’u’lláh in the *Seven Valleys*.
2. The first is the abstract and limited logical thinking; the second is the intuitive and concrete thinking, which both always are present as polar opposites of thinking.
3. There is a third ways of understanding reality, which was called ‘vision’ (Anschauung) by Guardini and thinking *on the plane of oneness* by Bahá’u’lláh, which can be called the mystical way of understanding reality.
4. This third way of thinking seems to be happening in the “little brain of the heart” and follows the rules of “primary process” thinking as described in psychoanalysis.
5. Since there is no awareness in the heart, heart language must be interpreted by the brain in order to become aware to the self of the person experiencing it, be it in dreams or in vision.
6. The same problem is present in the understanding of revelation. The part of the revelation, which is speaking to

the heart must be interpreted and translated from “heart language” to “brain language”, from primary process thinking to secondary process thinking, in order to become aware to the thinker.

7. All Divine Revelations can only be fully understood when the third way of thinking is used, therefore, they are often written in poetic or mystical language and speak primarily to the heart.
8. This process of translating mystical or heart language into rational or brain language or thinking is needed to understand revelatory writings.
9. Only a pure heart as Bahá'u'lláh stated or as it is said in the Gospel of Matthew [5:8] “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*” is able to understand this, which becomes an issue of the ethical behavior of the reader, and which is a precondition of understanding the Word of God in any revelation.

These conclusions shed light on some issues of revelation and personal communication between people. It is the need to consider the language of the heart and the requirement of the heart to be pure in order to see God and understand His revelation. This ethical requirement for the acceptance of a revelation needs to be further explored, especially as it affects the heart and the ability to develop a vision that can understand revelation.

It appears that one must get seriously involved in the writings of any revelation to understand them; especially modern man who is trained only in the rational understanding and often has lost the ability to understand mystical writings that speak to the heart. The moral condition that the heart must be pure to understand such writings is a prerequisite, which needs to be considered in any deeper understanding of truth, truth that is revealed by a Manifestation of God, or even is revealed between people in fully understanding each other. The

psychological condition of the state of a pure heart could be a special topic for further investigations.

This condition was stated by Bahá'u'lláh in His Arabic Hidden Words:

1. O SON OF SPIRIT!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting. [HW Ar. #1]

NOTES

¹ The Universal House of Justice, 1997 July 20, "Scholarship and Related Subjects"

² Rollin McCray, Ph.D. and Doc Childre, *The Appreciative Heart, The Psychophysiology of Positive Emotions and Optimal Functioning*, Published by the Institute of HeartMath, Boulder Creek, CA, www.HeartMath.org

³ Michael Robins, "Another Look at Dreaming: Disentangling Freud's Primary and Secondary Process Theories, in *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 2004, 52, pp.361-362

⁴ Nader Saiedi, provisional translation in *Gate of the Heart, Understanding the Writings of the Báb*, Association for Bahá'í Studies and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Canada 2008, p. 177

⁵ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution* A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, 1969, pp. 107-108

⁶ *Star of the West* X:7, 13 July 1919, page 115

⁷ This e-text is based on *Tablets of Abdul-Bahá Abbas* (Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1930), p. 308—a provisional translation.

⁸ Evan Harris Walker "The Physics of Consciousness, The Quantum Mind and the Meaning of Life" Basic Books, Perseus Books Group, New York 200 p. 237. Compare Wolfgang A. Klebel, *Revelation of Unity, Unity of Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh's Most Sublime Vision*, 'Irfán Colloquia Publications 2009, where the ideas of Walker are explained more thoroughly.

⁹ Thomas Taaffe, in *Cross Currents*, Fall 95, Vo. 45, Issue 3, "Education of the Heart" p. 380-392, It needs to be stressed that Taaffe in his article

contributes very important aspects to the “Heart”, even if this definition seems to limit him.

- ¹⁰ Michael Robins, “Another Look at Dreaming: Disentangling Freud’s Primary and Secondary Process Theories, in *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 2004, 52, pp. 361-362
- ¹¹ Rollin McCray, Ph.D. and Doc Childre, *The Appreciative Heart, The Psychophysiology of Positive Emotions and Optimal Functioning*, Institute of HeartMath, Boulder Creek, CA, www.heartmath.org.
- ¹² Paul Pearsall, Ph.D., *The Heart’s Code, Tapping the Wisdom and Power of Our Heart Energy, The New Findings About Cellular Memories and Their Role in the Mind / Body / Spirit Connection*, Broadway Books, New York 1998, p. 7
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 77, 88
- ¹⁴ Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_Kekulé.
- ¹⁵ Romano Guardini *Der Gegensatz, Versuch zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten*, (Polar oppositeness, an attempt towards a philosophy of the living-concrete) Matthias-Grünwald Verlag, Mainz, fourth edition 1998, “page 161-175 While many of the theological and pastoral books of Guardini have been translated into English, this book, unfortunately, has not yet found a translator.
- ¹⁶ Guardini *ibid.* p.174 *passim*
- ¹⁷ Nader Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart, Understanding the Writings of the Báb*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press (Bahá’í Study Series), 2008, p. 177