A Short Poem by "Darvísh" Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh: Sáqí az ghayb-i baqá burqa' bar afkan az 'idhár

An Introduction and Three Versions of Provisional English Translations

by Franklin D. Lewis

The corpus of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, all of which Bahá'ís regard as scripture, consists overwhelmingly of prose. These prose works assume a variety of forms and genres, often explicitly indicated by formal terms appearing in the titles given to the individual works, such as tablet (*lawh, súrih*), epistle (*risálih*), book (*kitáb*), etc. In the Arabic and Persian tradition, prose (*nathr*) can be simple (mursal) or adorned (*marsú'*), the most common type of adornment being *saj'*, collocations of parallel phrasings which observe rhyme. Many of the prayers and other writings of Bahá'u'lláh rely heavily upon *saj'*, and indeed, some of his compositions, such as "Halih, halih yá bisharát,"[1] observe some, but not all, of the rules of classical metrics and prosody. As such, they transcend the category of rhymed prose (*nathr-i musajjá*) and exhibit litany-like features that might be classed as a form of versification (*nazm*) or quasi-verse.

In addition to these prose works, there are also a number of poems (*shi'r*), which meet the classical conventions of Persian and Arabic verse, including meter and rhyme. Among these poems by Bahá'u'lláh, both the "Qasídiy-i Varqá'íyyih" (The Dove Ode) and "Rashh-i 'amá" (The Sprinkling of the Divine Cloud), were mentioned by Shoghi Effendi, and discussed by Adib Taherzadeh.[2] In recent decades, provisional translations of these two poems have appeared.[3] The longer "Mathnavíy-i Mubárak," first discussed by Adib Taherzadeh, has now also appeared in a provisional translation.[4]

In addition to the above, Bahá'u'lláh composed a number of shorter poems which he signed in the last or penultimate line with the nom de plume, or *takhallus*, of "Darvísh" (the Dervish). These shorter poems, which were apparently composed in the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih in Iraqi Kurdistan in the mid-1850s, conform to the traditional Persian verse forms of the *qasídih* (a longer ode) and *ghazal* (a shorter, sonnet-like, lyrical form), observing mono-rhyme, the conventional meters and other prosodic rules. Though they have been published at least once in the original,[5] they have not yet been studied, and remain as yet untranslated to English.

Many of the themes that appear in Bahá'u'lláh's longest poem, the *Mathnavíy-i mubárak*, which was evidently composed over a period of time, beginning perhaps as early as his retreat to Iraqi Kurdistan, and certainly by his time in Baghdad, but completed only after his arrival in Istanbul,[6] are already in evidence in these shorter poems of "Darvísh" (the Dervish) which apparently date from his retreat in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan. Bahá'u'lláh left Iran for Baghdad in the first half of the month of Rabí'u'th-thání, 1269 A.H., or more precisely on the first of Bahman,[7] corresponding to 21 January 1854. Very shortly after his arrival in Baghdad, it became clear that the dissensions and confusion within the Bábí community in the wake of the execution of the Báb, and the apparent appointment of Mírzá Yahyá as successor, threatened to fracture the community. Bahá'u'lláh, whose presence and eminence apparently constituted a threat to Yahyá, therefore decided to withdraw.

Shoghi Effendi tells us that on 12 Rajab 1270 A.H. (10 April 1854) Bahá'u'lláh set out on his own, leaving his family behind in Baghdad, accompanied only by a Muslim servant, Abu'l-Qásim of

Hamadan, who was soon killed by thieves. After this Bahá'u'lláh lived in seclusion in "the garb of a traveler;" since he was carrying a *kashkúl*, or alms-bowl, and had assumed the name Darvísh Muhammad,[8] he must have been living the life and wearing the clothes of a mendicant dervish or pious recluse, that is to say, a Sufi. As his son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, describes it:

> *During this period Bahá'u'lláh lived in poverty. His garments were those of the poor and needy. His food was that of the indigent and lowly....*[9]

Shoghi Effendi tells us that Bahá'u'lláh first lived on a mountain called Sar-Galú in a crude stone structure, and sometimes even in a cave. According to Bahá'u'lláh's own testimony in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, he often went without food or rest. During this period he composed many prose and verse "prayers and soliloquies" in both Arabic and Persian.[10] Subsequently, he was invited by Shaykh Ismá'íl of the Khálidíyyih Order, to reside in their Dervish Lodge (*takyih* or Turkish *tekke*) in Sulaymáníyyih; in addition, Bahá'u'lláh made personal contact with leaders of other Sufi orders, specifically Shaykh 'Uthmán of the Naqshbandí Order and Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahmán of the Qádirí order (to whom Bahá'u'lláh later addressed *The Four Valleys*).

The information in *God Passes By* seems to suggest that these poems signed "Dervish" date to the earlier phase of Bahá'u'lláh's residence at Sar-Galú, probably some time between the Spring of 1854 and the Winter of 1854–55. However, we cannot yet completely rule out the possibility that they were composed later, while at the Khálidí lodge in Sulaymáníyyih, or perhaps even in the period shortly after his return to Baghdad. The *Kitáb-i-Íqán* addresses itself to specific matters of Shiite and Bábí theology and represents a break with the Sufi and gnostic vocabulary of Bahá'u'lláh's earlier poems and of his *Seven Valleys* and *Four Valleys*. Though it dates to a period prior to Bahá'u'lláh's announcement of his claim to be the advent of "Him whom God will make manifest," the *Íqán* strongly suggests its status as divine revelation and explicitly claims authorship for Bahá'u'lláh.[11]

By contrast, the poems of "Dervish Muhammad" do not speak openly with the voice of Bahá'u'lláh, and do not explicitly lay claim to revelation. Although they do broach messianic themes which, viewed in the light of Bahá'u'lláh's later claims, can be seen as veiled allusions to the eventual public proclamation of his claims in April 1863, the context of Sufi poetry would have made it quite easy to discount any implication that Bahá'u'lláh was laying claim to a special station.

As to the authorial voice in the early poems of Bahá'u'lláh, they were composed under a sobriquet, "Darvísh," or Dervish. The conventions of the ghazal and, to a lesser extent, the *qasídih*, called for the author to adopt a poetic persona, which is evoked by name (*takhallus*) in the body of the poem (e.g., "O Hâfez..."). The *takhallus* is the poet's adopted stage name, by which he is generally known (Sádi, 'Attâr, Sanâ'i, etc.). In a ghazal, an apostrophe to his stage persona usually occurs in the last line, sometimes in the penultimate, or more rarely in the first line of the poem. In the particular case of Bahá'u'lláh, "Dervish" apparently served not only a poetic pen name, but also as the name he assumed, "Dervish Muhammad," while living incognito in Sulaymáníyyih. This moniker "Dervish" appears as the *takhallus* in the final line of at least eight poems of Bahá'u'lláh.[12]

The first poem of Báha'u'lláh, dating to his incarceration in the Siyáh Chál and known by its opening words as "Rashh-i 'amâ," employs "Bahá" as *takhallus* in the penultimate line:

ranniy-i nâ'í bín k-az kilk-i Bahá mí-rízad.

See how the lamentations of the reed piper
pour forth through the reed pen of Bahâ[13]

Bahá'u'lláh also alludes to himself with the pen name "Bahá" in his *Mathnaví*, which was apparently the last formal poem he composed. In the poem translated below, there is also a reference to Bahá, though it does not appear in the position of the *takhallus*. If composed or circulated among Naqshbandi or Khalidi Sufis,[14] in whose company Bahá'u'lláh was known as Dervish Muhammad, the word *Bahá* would not have been understood as an allusion to himself. Most probably, it would have been understood as an homage to the eponymous founder of the Naqshbandi order, Bahá al-Din Naqshband (717–791 A.H./

1317-1389 A.D.). However, "Dervish," which occurs in the final line, the traditional place for the poet's *takhallus*, would have been understood as the "signature" of the poet, in this case, "Darvish Muhammad," if he shared any of these Persian poems with the people in Sulaymáníyyih, and it seems likely that he did, since he composed the "Qasídiy-i Varqá'iyyih" at the request of the Sufis he met there.

The meter of the poem, like the "Mathnavíy-i Mubárak," is *Ramal*, though the measure here is octameter Ramal (*ramal-i muthamman*), as opposed to the shorter hexameter Ramal (*ramal-i musaddas*) of the Mathnaví. The Ramal meter is based upon a repetition of the basic four-syllable foot | - 4 - - | (where [-] represents a long syllable and [⏑] a short syllable), according to quantitative (not accentual) measure. One line, or stich (*bayt*), of octameter Ramal consists of eight such feet, divided into two equal and symmetrical hemistichs (*misrá'*) divided by a caesura. In this particular poem, the fourth and eighth foot of each line are truncated to three syllables | - ⏑ - |, and described prosodically as catalectic (*mahdhúf*). The full pattern of one line of catalectic octameter Ramal, or *Ramal-i muthamman-i mahdhúf*, would therefore look like this:

Foot: 1 2 3 4 a 5 6 7 8 a

| - ⏑ - - | - ⏑ - - | - ⏑ - - | - ⏑ - || - ⏑ - - | - ⏑ - - | - ⏑ - - | - ⏑ - |

In the first line of a ghazal or qasídih, the final syllable before the caesura and the final syllable of the line rhyme with one another. Thereafter throughout the poem this same mono-rhyme repeats as the final syllable of each line, in the pattern *aabacada*, etc.[15]

Interestingly, the hemistich (*misrá'*) in which the *takhallus* "Darvísh" appears in this particular poem (the first half of line 15) does not follow the same meter as the rest of the poem. Rather this half-line conforms to an entirely different meter, pentameter *Hazaj-i akhrab-i makfúf*, which happens to contain three more syllables than the rest of the lines, as follows:

- - ⏑ | ⏑ - - ⏑ | ⏑ - - ⏑ | ⏑ - - ⏑ | ⏑ - - ||

This is a violation of traditional metrics, as a poem should follow the same meter throughout. This isolated variation here might suggest that this hemistich has been quoted from another poem and embedded here (*tadmín*), or perhaps added at another time as an after-thought. However, this is not the only instance in which the meters appear to change within a given poem of Bahá'u'lláh. For example, the poem *mastand bulbulán zi naghmiy-i Yá Hú-yi ú* begins in the first line with a meter not conventionally recognized as prosodically acceptable (*mustaf'ilun mafá'ilun fáilátun fáal*: - - ⏑ - ⏑ - ⏑ ⏑ - - ⏑ -), but shifts after that to Ramal.[16]

Several of the poems signed "Dervish" utilize the conventional wine imagery of classical Persian poetry, involving a call to the Sáqí, or cupbearer, to pour out a round of wine. In some settings, such as the royal wine poem, the scene is one of merry carousal and wassailing. In other settings, wine is drunk as a palliative to drown out the sorrows of the world. In yet other contexts, wine is symbolic of the intoxication brought about when in the presence of the numinous, or of the *mysterium tremendum*; it can also symbolize the overriding of rational perception that the gnostic feels in his overpowering love for God. Clearly, the wine in Bahá'u'lláh's poems stands in this tradition of mystical inebriation, as is made clear in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. This symbolism also appears in the Seven Valleys, to which the poem we are presently considering bears a certain resemblance in enumerating some of the stages along the path of the spiritual quest (see line 4-5, where the stages of Love and Poverty are alluded to, and lines 5 and 8, which explicitly speak of the path).

Here then is a provisional prose translation of one of the ghazals of Bahá'u'lláh, Sáqí az *ghayb-i-baqá*, which is signed in the voice of Dervish Muhammad.[17] As has been argued elsewhere, because Shoghi Effendi never translated any of the formal poetry of Bahá'u'lláh, we have no authoritative models for the translation of the poems of Bahá'u'lláh. I have therefore attempted to render this poem in three different versions, to provide examples of the options available to us in translating scripture, which is originally in the form of verse.

Bahá'u'lláh's poem *Sáqí az ghayb-e baqá burqá bar afkan az 'idhár*

1. A Provisional Prose Translation

This translation seeks to state in clear idiomatic English, without, however, being overly literal and without explanatory interpolations, the meaning of the poem. Each hemistich of the original poem is translated on a separate line. This, then, is a lineated prose version of the poem; the lines are numbered for easy reference.

Cupbearer, from the cheeks of the unseen immortal realm cast aside the veil	a
That I may sip the eternal wine from the beauty of the Maker	1b
That which you have in the wine jugs will not break the bile[18] of love	2a
From that wine of inner meaning, Cupbearer, bring forth an ocean	2b
That this veiled, love-frenzied one[19] may begin to shout	3a
That this divinely drunk one may be roused from stupor	3b
Light up a fire of love, incinerate the entirety of existing things	4a
Then lift a foot and step into the precincts of the lovers[20]	4b
Until you are effaced of all attributes of creation, man of the path,[21]	5a
How will you taste eternal wine from that Idol's succulent ruby lips	5b
Set foot on the top of the realm, then enter Poverty's sheltering shade—[22]	6a
and now you may see the Eternal realm on every side	6b
If the thought of life preoccupies your heart, do not come here	7a
If you have a heart and soul to scatter, come forth and proffer it	7b
This is the custom of the path, if you've a hope of joining with Bahá[23]	8a
If you are not the man for this path, be off and trouble me no more!	8b
If you wish to be apprised of the mysteries of love	9a
Open the eye of admonition, close the paths to pride[24]	9b
That you may see Moses' Mountain circumambulate right here	10a
That you may see the spirit of Jesus restless in its love of him[25]	10b
That you may find the tablet[26] affirming the Divine Unity in the two braids of the Friend	11a
That you may read the scroll[27] sanctifying God's Essence[28] in the two cheeks of the Beloved	11b
Here, quaff the wine of joy from the vivifying fount of love	12a
That you may victoriously cast your head at the feet of the Friend	12b
In this assemblage they are dead in the path of the Friend	13a
O Messiah of the age, inspire us with a warm reviving breath	13b
That the birds of existence may soar beyond the body's prison	14a
Unto the placeless atmosphere beneath the sheltering shade of He Who holds Power	14b
Dervish! The world's consumed by the divine, soul-incinerating flame[29]	15a
It's time for you to bring it to life with this melodious lament	15b

2. A Provisional Free Verse Version

In the English version that follows, I have attempted to give a more literary form to the poem. Unlike the Persian, it is in free verse, with no pre-determined meter and no effort to rhyme. I have also allowed for greater freedom in rendering the English, breaking the lines to create rhythmic phrasing or to highlight the meaning. Those who have translated literary works will recognize that the translator is often compelled to make an idea or metaphor or phrase that was suggestive or ambiguous in the original language, more determined in translation, because ambiguity and suggestive language cannot always be transferred. Where the original metaphors seemed vague or suggestive, I have allowed some leeway in searching for a poetic equivalent in this translation; these divergences will be apparent by comparison with the previous translation. The line numbers are included to facilitate comparison between the two versions.

You,
who tend and pour the wine!
Let the veil slip off the cheeks
        that have been cloaked
                in the Unseen immortal realm 1a
Let me sip that everlasting vintage
                of the Beauty
                of the Fashioner 1b
The stuff you keep in wine jugs
Could never break love's debilitating bile 2a
so pour out an ocean's measure
of the wine of inner meaning 2b
Make this veiled and frenzied one begin to shout 3a
Rouse this Lordly drunkard from intoxicated stupor 3b
Light up a fire of love
incinerate the entirety of every existence 4a
Come forward step by step onto the lovers' turf. 4b
You who quest!
Until you are
        effaced
of all traces of the universe 5a
you can never sip the wine
of that Idol's
succulent ruby lips 5b
Climb onto the apex of this realm
then enter Poverty's sheltering shade 6a
from here your vantage all around
will be the Realm Eternal 6b
Do not tread here
        if your heart's preoccupied with care for life 7a
but if you have a heart and soul to scatter,
come forward with your offering 7b
—such is the custom of the quest
                if you long for union with Bahá, 8a
                but if you are not man enough for such a path
be off and trouble me no more! 8b

Now,
if you want to know the mysteries
of mystic love 9a
open the eye of admonition
and close the door to pride 9b
Then you may see the very Mount of Moses move
and circumambulate around us here 10a
Then you may see the spirit of Jesus
breathless in its love of him 10b
Then you may read the tablet
affirming God's Unicity
in the two braids of the Friend 11a
Then you may read the scroll
sanctifying God's Essence
in the two cheeks of the Beloved 11b

Here!
quaff the wine of bliss
from the vivifying fount of love 12a
that you may cast your head
in victory
at the feet of the Friend 12b
They are dead in this assemblage
in the path of the Friend 13a
O Messiah of the age!
Inspire us, quick,
with your warm reviving breath 13b
That the birds of existence may soar
beyond the body's prison 14a
in the placeless space above
to the shelter
of Him
who holds the power in His hands 14b

Dervish!
The flames of this divine soul-conflagration
have consumed the world 15a
It's now time
for you to bring it back to life
with this melodious lament 15b

3. An experimental version in Double-Sonnet Form

In translating, if one submits to the constraints of meter and rhyme, one must inevitably sacrifice some degree of precision of the meaning. Whether or not the intangible benefits of sonorous and patterned speech will atone for the loss of literalness is in large part determined by the nature and objectives of the original text. In the various translations of the poetry of Rumi,[30] who is said to be the best-selling poet in North America, one may observe two rather contrasting paradigms: those whose aim it is to preserve the precise meaning of what Jalálu'd-Dín is teaching in his verse, and those who feel that the poetry of how those ideas are expressed is of equal importance to the content of what is being said.

What follows is a rendition of the poem into an adaptation of a traditional English verse form, the sonnet, a stanza of fourteen pentameter lines observing a rhyme pattern of ababcdcdefef gg and a meter that is roughly iambic. Bahá'u'lláh's poem in the original Persian has fifteen lines of thirty syllables, or

about 450 syllables. An English pentameter sonnet consists of fourteen lines of approximately ten syllables each, for a total of roughly 140 syllables. Obviously, therefore, a single sonnet cannot convey the entire line-by-line meaning of this poem. Although Shoghi Effendi has, in some cases, chosen to leave out parts of tablets he translated (for example, the final sentences of the Tablet of Ahmad, which give instructions to convey greetings to various individuals, and do not really contribute to the meaning of the prayer), it seemed to me that this poem should be translated without altering its narrative progression or excising any of the matters it covers.

I have attempted to do so in the sonnet doublet that follows: two sonnets joined together by a final couplet, for a total of thirty lines. A more capable poet might produce better results, but this will at least provide the reader with a comparand for the two preceding versions, to illustrate by example what might be gained, as well as what is lost, in choosing to translate a traditional Persian verse form into a traditional English verse form.

Cupbearer, rend the Ever Unseen's veil—
  and let me quaff the Maker's wine celestial
With what you keep in kegs, love's bile won't heal
pour out a sea of Spirit's vintage special
  to make this frenzied but concealed one stir,
  to rouse him from divine inebriation!
  Light up a blaze of love, burn up the world
  then enter in the lovers' habitation.
You must first die to attributes this-worldly
to taste that Idol's wine-drenched ruby lips.
Pass earthly realms and enter Poverty
    whose refuge over realms eternal looks.
If your heart loves dear life, step no farther;
But come on if you've life and heart to offer!

Such is the custom of the path that joins
Bahá; be off if you can't take the pain.
But if to learn Love's secrets your heart pines
—turn back from pride with eyes to wisdom open
then you may see Mount Sinai circling round
and feel Christ's spirit spiring for the Friend
    whose tresses spell God's Unity as found
    on cheeks like pages sanctified from sin
From love's life-giving spring drink blissful wine
And cast your head in victory at his feet
Inspire these folk, Messiah of the Time,
    who tread so lifeless down the Friend's own street ,
with living breath, to break the body's cage
and soar like birds to God's abiding place

Dervish, divine fire's scorched all souls, burnt worlds!
Revive them now with this lament of yours...

Notes

1) A provisional translation of "Halih, halih yá bishárát" was offered by Stephen Lambden in *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin* 2:3 (December 1983): 105-112. A revised version of this now appears at www.bahai-library.org/provisionals/hallelujah.html, along with another (more metrical) version by Sen McGlinn. Most of Bahá'u'lláh's prayers observe some degree of rhymed prose (*saj'*), but he also authored a number of heavily cadenced, rhyming, litany-like prayers, such as "The Tablet of the Holy Mariner," the Long Healing Prayer (*'Anta'l-Káfí Anta'sh-Sháfí*), or "Bulbul al-firáq" (which has been translated by Juan Cole as "Nightingale of Separation" at http://www.bahai-library.org/provisionals/nightingale.separation.html).

"Halih, halih yá bishárát" seems a closer approximation than these of what would traditionally have been categorized as verse (*nazm*). We might even choose to see it as an example of experimentation with the traditional verse foot, similar in some respects to the *mustazád* form, to the *tasnífs* of the Constitutional period, or even to the mixed and truncated meters of Nímá Yúshíj, who is usually credited as the father of the modern free verse forms which have developed since the 1920s.

2) Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944), pp. 123 and 121, respectively. See also Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Baghdad, 1853-63*, vol. 1, 3rd rev. ed., (Oxford: George Ronald, 1976), pp. 45–6 (*Rashh-iAmá*), and 62–64 (*Qasídih*).

3) A provisional rhyming translation of the "Qasídiy-i Varqá'íyyih" has been undertaken by Juan R. Cole (see http://bahai-library.org/provisionals/ode.dove.html); Brian Miller offers an unrhymed free verse translation in his Ph.D. dissertation (U.C. Berkeley, 2000). "Rashh-i-'amá" was translated by Stephen Lambden in *Bahá'í Studies Bulletin* 3:2 (1984).

4) Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: Adrianople, 1863-68*, vol. 2 (Oxford: George Ronald, 1977), pp. 29–54. A provisional blank verse translation with annotations of Bahá'u'lláh's *Mathnavíy-i mubárak* appears in *Bahá'í Studies Review* 9 (1999–2000): 126–157.

5) In the multi-volume anthology of the writings of the "Central Figures" of the Bahá'í Faith *Má'idiy-i ásmání*, ed., 'Abd al-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí ([Tehran]: Mu'assisiy-i Millíy-i Matbú'át-i Amrí, 129 B.E. / 1972 A.D.), v. 4, pp. 176–211. Excerpts from the Mathnavíy-i Mubárak and other poems of Bahá'u'lláh are given by Fadil Mazandarani in his *Zuhúr al-Haqq*, v. 4, pp. 139–43, which is available in facsimile on the web at http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/ bahai/arabic/vol2/tzh4/tzh4.htm (I am grateful to Juan Cole for pointing out this reference in response to a query I posted on the Tarjuman discussion list).

6) See my introduction to and provisional verse translation of Bahá'u'lláh's *Mathnavíy-i Mubárak* in "Poetry as Revelation" in *Bahá'í Studies Review* 9 (1999–2000): 101–157. Mazandarani in *Zuhúr al-Haqq*, (op. cit.), v. 4, pp. 139–41, apparently dates the Mathnaví to the Sulaymániyyih period.

7) Mazandarani, *Zuhúr al-Haqq*, (op. cit.), 4:117.

8) *God Passes By*, 120.

9) *God Passes By*, 124. It might be pointed out that etymologically, the word darvísh means "poor person."

10) *God Passes By*, 120.

11) The colophon, which appears to have been added when the book was originally composed, uses the terms *nuzzila* and *manzúl*, Koranic terms for revelation "sent down" by God. It also states that it was revealed by the Bá and Há, an allusion to the letters of Bahá. The introductory paragraph in Arabic to the *Hidden Words* (*Kalimát-i maknúnih*), also uses this Koranic vocabulary of revelation (*nuzzila*, what was sent down of old).

12) Ishráq-Khávarí, ed., *Má'idiy-i ásmání*, 4: 178, 180, 184, 187, 192, 194, 196 and 210.

13) This motif of Bahá'u'lláh as the flutist blowing through the reed pipe is developed more fully later towards the end of his *Mathnavíy-i Mubárak*, where it alludes to the opening lines of Jalál al-Dín Rúmí's *Mathnavíy-i Mánaví*. The pen in pre-modern times was also cut from bamboo reed, like the flute, and carved on one end into a nib, which was dipped in ink. Hence, the pen and the pipe are both made of a hollow reed.

14) For further information about these Sufi orders in Iraq, see my "Bahá'u'lláh's *Mathnavíy-i Mubárak*: introduction and provisional verse translation" in *Bahá'í Studies Review* 9 (1999/2000), 109–110, which in turn draws upon Juan R. Cole, "Bahá'u'lláh and the Naqshbandi Sufis in Iraq, 1854–56 in J. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds., *From Iran East and West: Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1984), pp 1-28, and the articles "Bahâ al-Dîn Naqshband" and "Baghdadi, Mawlânâ Khâlid Ziâ al-Dîn" by Hamid Algar in *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

15) In poems with a refrain (*radíf*), the rhyme appears as the final syllable in each line just prior to the repeated refrain.

16) *Má'idiy-i ásmání*, 4:194–6. This first line would appear to be a combination of feet from the *mudári'* and *mujtaththh* (or possibly *sarí'*) meters, but does not conform to one of the accepted meters.

17) The text comes from *Má'idiy-i ásmání*, 4: 209–10.

18) *Safrá'*, or yellow bile, is one the four humors in traditional Galenic medicine. Love sickness was believed to result in an excess of this bile, which would turn the pining lover's face pale or jaundiced. One of the other humors, *sawdá'*, or black bile, is also associated with the melancholia of love sickness.

19) *Mastúr-i shaydá'í* might be understood as one veiled/hidden and mad (with love), or it might be understood as one veiled by the madness of love.

20) The theme and wording of this line is similar to the sentence in which the wayfarer enters into the Valley of Love in Bahá'u'lláh's *Seven Valleys*. *Fawran bi vádíy-i 'ishq qadam gudhárad va az nár-i 'ishq bi-gudázad*, and a bit further on, *nár-i 'ishq bar afrúzad*, which in the translation of Marzieh Gail and Ali Kuli Khan, *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1945), p. 8, reads, "...he shall straightaway step into the valley of Love and be dissolved in the fire of love," and "the fire of love is ablaze."

21) *Mard-i ráh* suggests a traveler on the Sufi path, one on the spiritual or even mystic quest.

22) *Faqr* (poverty—being poor in the things of the self and of this world) is a station along the Sufi path; Bahá'u'lláh includes it as the seventh and final station in his *Seven Valleys*, as *Faqr-i haqíqí va faná-yi aslí*, "True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness" in the Gail and Khan translation, *Seven Valleys*, p. 36. Line five alludes to the need to become *fání*, usually translated in western works on Sufism as "annihilated," but which Gail/Khan rendered in its noun form *faná* as "nothingness." It may be more accurate to describe this state as effacement of the individual personality in the Godhead.

23) The word Bahá here would probably have been taken in Sulaymaníyyih as an allusion to Bahá al-Dín Naqshband, as

noted above, since Bahá'u'lláh was living there incognito as "Dervish Muhammad." However, when shared with a Bábí audience, as they later must have been in Baghdad, this would certainly have been seen as a reference to Bahá'u'lláh.

24) See the similar theme of opening one eye and closing the other in the *Hidden Words*, Persian #12.

25) "Him" would appear to allude to the divine "Friend," who has until now been veiled in the Unseen Realm.

26) *Daftar* means an album or small book, but seems to suggest a sacred writing here, hence "Tablet," though the words usually so translated by Shoghi Effendi are *lawh* or *súrih*.

27) *Mushaf* is actually a codex, or a manuscript book, but it has a particular association with the Koran or sacred scripture, and is not the typical word for book (*kitáb*). In English, scroll seems to better suggest the sacred book (through its association with the Torah).

28) Bahá'u'lláh here juxtaposes two terms from Islamic theology, *tawhíd* (the affirmation of the absolute unity of God; here translated as "affirming the Divine Unity"), and *tajríd* (sanctification of God from all attributes, and contemplation of the abstract divine essence; here translated as "God's sanctified Essence"). Bahá'u'lláh pairs these two words in the rhyming position in line 63 of his *Mathnavíy-i Mubárak*.

29) In this hemistich, the meter of the poem changes to | - - □ | □ - - □ | □ - - □ | □ - - □ | □. As noted above, the classical rules of prosody do not allow for this variation.

30) Caveat lector: Many, perhaps even most, of those who have published "translations" of Rumi actually know no Persian; they rework the translations already done by others into a particular vision and version of what is poetically successful. It stands to reason that those who, out of ignorance, do not feel the constraints and ambiguities of the original language are less apt to feel this tension between fidelity and poetic beauty.