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# Lights of 'Irfán

Papers Presented at the  
'Irfán Colloquia and Seminars



Book II

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## Lights of 'Irfán

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*J*mmerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause — a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established.

—Bahá'u'lláh

*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 326*

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### Preface

'Irfán\* Colloquium completed its eighth year of activities in the year 2000. During these eight years a total of 32 sessions of the colloquium were held in Europe and North America. 'Irfán colloquia and seminars are held separately in the English and Persian languages. During the year 2000 a total of 103 presentations on various aspects of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and on topics related to fundamental principles of the Bahá'í beliefs or comparative studies of religions were made at these gatherings.

The main aims and objectives of 'Irfán Colloquium activities and seminars are to promote better understanding of the fundamental principles of the Bahá'í beliefs, systematic and deeper study of the Bahá'í holy texts, and comparative studies of world religions in relation to the Bahá'í Faith.

Since its inception in 1993, 'Irfán Colloquium has been supported mainly by the Haj Mehdi Arjmand\*\* Memorial Fund, which is administered through the Bahá'í National Center's Office of the Treasurer in the United States. In 1998 a scholarship fund donated in memory of Nadia Saadat\*\*\* was initiated to facilitate the participation of youth and people from financially less privileged countries.

*Lights of 'Irfán, Book II* contains texts of papers presented at the 'Irfán Colloquia and Seminars in the year 2000 that were received for publication by the end of that year. Four of the papers in this volume were presented at the 'Irfán Seminar and deal with the Bahá'í holy texts: "An Introduction to the Súratu'l-Haykal (Discourse of the Temple)" by Mohammad Ghasem Bayat; "Tablet of Unity (Lawḥ-i-Ittiḥád)—A Provisional Translation" by Moojan Momen; "A Short Poem by 'Darvish' Muḥammad, Bahá'u'lláh: Sáqí az ghayb-i-baqá burqa' bar afkan az 'idhár" by Frank Lewis; and "'Abdu'l-Bahá's Commentary on the Quránic Verses Concerning the Overthrow of the Byzantine: The Stages of the Soul" by Moojan Momen.

A second group of papers are related to various topics dealing with mysticism and the Bahá'í Faith: "The Mystic Cup: The Essential Mystical Nature of the Bahá'í Faith" by LeRoy Jones; "'What I Want to Say is Wordless': Mystical Language, Revelation and Scholarship" by Ismael Velasco; "The Firm Cord of Servitude" by Theo Cope; and "The Human Intellect: A Bahá'í-Inspired Perspective" by Adrian John Davis.

The last three papers deal with various subjects related to the principles of Bahá'í beliefs and the Faith's relationship with other world religions: "The Chain of Prophecy: Progressive Revelation as a Theory of Relativity" by Zaid Lundberg; "Perception Into Faith: A Radical Discontinuity Within Unity" by William Barnes; and "Keys to the Proper Understanding of Islám in The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" by Brian Wittman.

Beginning with this volume a new section, titled ELUCIDATIONS has been added, containing information and explanatory notes and comments. The first item published in this section is "'Points' and 'Letters' in the Writings of the Báb" by Muhammad Afnan. We look forward to receiving additional submissions for this section in the future.

These papers present the views and understandings of their authors. The texts of the papers are published as provided by the authors without further editing; therefore, they do not follow the same styles or scholarly approaches. They are published in this volume according to the alphabetical order of the names of the authors. Abstracts of all the presentations made at the colloquia and seminars are published in separate booklets.

Iraj Ayman  
Chicago, March 2001

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\* 'Irfán is a Persian-Arabic word referring to mystical, theological, and spiritual recognition and knowledge.

\*\* Haj Mehdi Arjmand (1861-1941) was a distinguished Bahá'í scholar of the Biblical studies and a prominent teacher of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran.

\*\*\* Nadia Saadat (1956-1994) was a young Bahá'í deeply devoted to studies in the Bahá'í Faith and promotion of the Bahá'í teachings.

