

True of Thyself

The Mystical Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Ken Wilber's system of integral philosophy

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Introduction

Who sees inside from outside?

*Who finds hundreds of mysteries even where minds are
deranged?*

See through his eyes what he sees.

Who then is looking out from his eyes?

Jalálu'd-Din Rúmi (1207-1273¹)

“To see inside from outside” is the topic of this essay. The Persian Sufi poet and mystic Rúmí, who was a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, stated in this poem the question that today arouses the interest of the philosopher again. For several centuries the inside remained unseen, the progress of science was focused exclusively on the outside of this world and all what could be counted and measured. Today it appears that the inside of things is in the process of being rediscovered by psychology, by philosophy and, yes, even by science.

The same thought has been fundamental to Phenomenology as a philosophical system explaining Personal-dialogic Thinking:

The study of human awareness as it is authentically revealed without assumptions and bias from abstract objectivity and one's own agenda. It implies the use of intelligent subjectivity by authentic individuals in an encounter that is primarily dialogic. Its importance lies in the issue that one can then attempt to “look through the eyes of the **other**” and then (ideally) experience the **other** with compassion and situated acceptance. The **other** then reflects back to us and we “come upon ourselves as stranger”. As with children looking in their parent's eyes, we see ourselves to learn, and to be gifted.² (bold in the original)

In this description, the origin of spirit is based on the dialogical nature of the human person. This spirit is given to the child looking in their parent's eyes. From this origin in the individual to the origin of human spirituality as a whole, this thinking of dialogic Personalism leads to the biblical tradition. This is expressed in John 1,1 "In the beginning was the word," directing the attentive reader back to Genesis 1:1-3 where it is stated: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said ..."

The inside is seen through, and in the eyes of the other, through and in the word of the other connecting the "I" and the "Thou" (you singular)³. In establishing the unity of the vision and of the inside, i.e., the spirit, R m  asks the question, who then is looking out from his eyes? In the mystic Sufi tradition, and in most other mystic traditions, what is seen in the inside is ultimately the Divine. Can we see the inside if we do not see that the individual is always part of a collective; that the position of the individual cannot be seen without seeing the collective in which this individual finds its place? So seen and unseen, or outside and inside is equally the topic of this paper as the individual and the collective as expressed in the inside and outside. The integration of the inside and outside, of the individual and collective, of being and awareness is at the core of the integral philosophy of Ken Wilber, whose writings will assist in this paper's quest to attain the "Truth of Thyself."

What is the Truth of the self, one could ask? How does the self relate to the internal and external, to the individual and to the collective? To rediscover this tradition of the self and to fortify it with modern science and the understanding of the development of the individual and of humanity brings about Wilber's integral philosophy that has become a new, a worldwide phenomenon as the translation of his books into 20 languages demonstrates. What is it that made him the most read thinker not only in USA, but popular also in countries such as Germany and Japan?

A note about popularity needs to be inserted here. Popularity is not a criterion of truth, in fact, it often is indicative of a lack of truth, or, as history has proven, it is an indication of what can be called "half-truth." Something becomes popular because it conveys some truth, but in an easy form, which often disguises the untruthful, but popular aspect of the statement. In the case of the Integral Philosophy of Ken Wilber this issue will be explored below.

This paper is concerned with a vision that will shape the future; it is trying to discover the way humanity sees itself and how it will try to solve the difficulties the future might bring. Can philosophy be

the answer, or does it take more than human understanding? This paper will bring together philosophical thinking of today and another source of knowledge and understanding, i.e., the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, (1817-1893), who is the founding prophet of the Bahá'í Faith, and regarded as the Manifestation of God for our age.

The comparison of Wilber's integral approach and Bahá'u'lláh's progressive Revelation will result in an attempt to formulate some principles of an integral and progressive theology, an attainment that can today only be envisioned in its outlines and that will have to be developed over time.⁴ This comparison could further suggest some ideas about the future Bahá'í commonwealth; and it will shed some light from the "Truth of Thyself" as expressed by Bahá'u'lláh towards the future of humankind.

Terry Culhane has made a connection between the philosophy of Ken Wilber and the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in the "integration of the tradition of liberalism with a genuine spirituality".⁵ In the chapter "Redeeming Modernity: Bahá'u'lláh and the Integral Philosophy of Ken Wilber", he compares Wilber's integral philosophy with the "life and work of Bahá'u'lláh" and finds that both have a rather corresponding understanding of the development of modernity, of its strength and pitfalls, and both come to similar conclusions.

This correlation can be noted, when looking at the tradition of liberalism, but the work and life of Bahá'u'lláh and especially His early mystical Writings go much farther than the philosophy of Wilber and are based on an understanding of the human predicament that transcends Wilber's ideas. Culhane is aware of this when discussing the concept of Irfan and the integration of the social practices in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

The present essay intends to continue this dialogue between Wilber and Bahá'u'lláh; it will extend it to a broader scope, including the cosmological aspects of both system; and will, furthermore, indicate in what special areas the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is not only corresponding, but also transforming and transcending Wilber's system of integral philosophy and psychology. Wilber's subtle individualism, his mystic-panteistic world view will be placed in the light of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, which transcends the philosophical speculation and psychological research of Wilber, as we will see.⁶

There is another topic, which needs to be raised. What is the connection of these two systems, one a Revelation, the other a philosophy, and both a century apart? We have to ask in what way can the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh be understood as the seminal ground on which the philosophy of Wilber grew? This question has been raised about other modern thinkers as well, for example Martin

Heidegger⁷ and, most of all, Teilhard de Chardin⁸, whose writings were a precursor of Wilber's thinking about the relationship of matter and spirit.

It is this writer's opinion that Bahá'u'lláh's ontological understanding of the universe corresponds, at least in some important points, with the ideas presented and explicated by Ken Wilber, who has most recently, i.e., more than a century after Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, described the structure and integration of being, in a potential "Theory of Everything." Such a theory must include all of reality in an abstract form and this is how Wilber describes this theory. He reverted to the Greek form of the word cosmos reintroducing the word "Kosmos," implying that by this spelling he means all reality or everything that is, not only the partial, external and materialistic aspects, which is researched by modern cosmology. He finds access to this Kosmos in an analysis of human consciousness and of its development, and explicates it in his theory of "all-quadrants" "all-levels", which will be explained below.⁹

Similarly, in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, it can be stated that the truth of this universe is revealed in "thyself", in you and me, in the human predicament. It consists of four states, of Firstness and Lastness, of Outwardness and Inwardness (the manifest and the hidden),¹⁰ or as expressed in the analogous terminology of Wilber in Individual and Collective, in Interior and Exterior states. For this investigation and this writer, these words of Bahá'u'lláh have become "mother words", in the sense as explicated by Him:

Every single letter proceeding out of the mouth of God is indeed a mother letter, and every word uttered by Him Who is the Well Spring of Divine Revelation is a mother word, and His Tablet a Mother Tablet. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth. (GWB 142)

In this paper these four "mother words" of Bahá'u'lláh, "First and Last", "Seen and Unseen", "that are true of thyself", will be analyzed and an attempt will be made to explicate some of the meaning contained in these terms. It is obvious that this attempt is rather limited by the ability and background of this writer; on the other hand, this limited perspective in combination with other interpretations in the sense of consultation can and should contribute to a better understanding of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh in the ongoing dialogue of Bahá'í scholarship.

This has been stated by Steve Birkland when he said: "The beauty of it is: the limitations are all characterized by the way our minds have been trained, so the view of a mathematician, the view of an artist, the view of a doctor, or the view of any particular person give shape and form to this interpretation." Furthermore "these words

would give rise through every individual's mind, according to their limitations and capacity, to things that we had no previous knowledge."¹¹

Since these four terms in this combination are used only in the early writings of Bahá'u'lláh, as far as they are published and available, the context of these terms needs to be elaborated and its correlation, as well as its distinguishing features, to Wilber's corresponding terms analyzed.

After a brief description of the concept of "individual and collective" of "interior and exterior" as used by Wilber, and clarifying these concepts in his philosophical system, the corresponding terms used by Bahá'u'lláh will be investigated and their place in the Seven Valleys will be evaluated.

Bahá'u'lláh describes them as being "conferred to thyself," as gift to every human individual and as descriptive of, not only, the human awareness but of the human ability to be conscious of everything, to reach out to the understanding of all that is. Traditionally, Aristotle has described this fact already, when stating that "the human mind (νοῦς) can somehow understand everything (τα πάντα)". This metaphysical line of thought leads us towards a better understanding of being, of what reality is and what humans actually can be and know. Ontology and epistemology, being and knowing, is both expressed in these structures of thinking.

Therefore, in the next part of this paper, these four categories of everything are being brought into the open and explained in their Biblical, Qur'anic and Bahá'í context. The explanation of these concepts will become further elucidated in Wilber's system of the Four Quadrants. Wilber's idea of "all levels" in this system can be found in the modern, and especially Teilhardian, concepts of progress and evolution, and in the Bahá'í principle of Progressive Revelation. It is an expression of the idea of the maturation of the individual and of mankind, both being basic concepts of the Bahá'í Revelation.

It needs to be pointed out here that this writer did not follow this line of thought in discovering this surprising correlation. In reading the Wilber terms and their explanation he felt that they were germane to the Bahá'í writings and Wilber's concept could be used to organize Bahá'í cosmology and provide a philosophical system for the writings. Therefore, he attempted to correlate Bahá'í principles with these Wilberian concepts and was in the process of writing a paper on that topic. Purely accidental, so it seems, this author was one evening reading the Seven Valleys and found to his total surprise

that Bahá'u'lláh uses terms, which Wilber has reproduced in his philosophical scheme.

More accurately, it must be stated, that Bahá'u'lláh's terms not only anticipate Wilber's understanding, but substantially improve on it, even though, they were written about a century prior. And what is even more surprising is the fact that they were written without the benefit of the philosophical and psychological development of the last century, on which Wilber's understanding is based. As will be pointed out below, one could wonder if the vision of Bahá'u'lláh was not the seminal ground, which gave rise to the development of the idea of a developmental psychology and integral philosophy, as is presented by Ken Wilber.

This discovery was unexpected and almost shocking. It is hoped that this paper will increase the understanding of these concepts and their correlation, as the work on this paper has already substantially improved the ideas on which this paper is based.

In fact, Bahá'u'lláh's terms can improve the understanding of Wilber's scheme and make it better fitting with other concepts of Wilber's Kosmology, especially the concept of Holon. As we will see later, while Wilber follows the Teilhardian concepts in describing the internal and external aspect of consciousness and being, Bahá'u'lláh's concepts of First and Last much better describe the other corresponding concepts of individual and collective used by Wilber.

Continuing this search we will attempt to delve into the range of these four concepts as presented in the Bahá'í writings. This excursion will assure that this investigation is in tune with the understanding of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. It further will bring to light the breadth and depth of this Revelation and how it relates to the most up to date understanding of this world as partially presented by Wilber. This marriage of philosophy and theology in understanding of this connection again will be indicative of our time, which is a time of disintegration and integration as indicated by Shoghi Effendi¹².

In a final section the now elaborated concepts of the four quadrants and of all the levels will conclude in a description of the ontological aspect of the Bahá'í revelation and will bring new light into the Wilber concepts of reality and awareness. This bringing together of theology and some philosophical concepts, as well as, psychology will impart more light into the Wilber metaphysical system, not only indicating the severe limitations of this system, but also its partial truth. This will open up the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to today's philosophical discourse encompassing the whole globe. The numerous translation and wide distribution of Wilber's books could assist in this development.

This paper, therefore, is an attempt to integrate two seemingly diverse systems of thought and to compare them to each other. What they have in common is the fact that both are in their particular way universal and integral, in what they differ is that one author is the prophet-founder of a world wide religion, spreading quickly all over the continents and the other is a philosophical and psychological thinker, who has found wide acceptance in the USA and has reached international recognition. Both are separated by more than a century, yet it does not appear that the later has been much aware of the former.

We will encounter the difficulty of trying to understand the unity that binds them together, the deeper meaning that is the basis of both of their ideas and we will have to make some effort to explain the relationship between them both. It would be too easy to just assume that the truth is always the same, no matter, who discovers it – that things hang together and that there is a causal relationship between different points of view and thoughts, which develop independently from each other, as long as they sound similar.

Or, one might think, all is just accidentally connected; just like in a heap of sand the different grains have nothing to do with each other, except their proximity and similarity. Another way to understand a coincidence of similar thoughts is to assume that either one has caused the other or that both have one or more common causes that connects their ideas together.

There are certainly two basic types of thinking about these kinds of relationships, as Teilhard de Chardin already noted:

However, it is just at this point, in fact, that we meet an initial split in the thinking mass of mankind.” And further: “Beneath an infinite number of secondary differentiation, caused by the diversity of social interests, of scientific investigation or religious faith, there are basically two types of minds, and only two: those who do not go beyond (and see no need to go beyond) perception of the multiple – however interlinked in itself the multiple may appear to be – and those for whom perception of this same multiple is necessarily completed in some unity. There are only, in fact, pluralists and monists: those who do not see, and those who do.¹³

Both the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and the integral philosophy of Ken Wilber seem to be connected by similar understanding and are sharing of a similar view, at least in some areas.

Shoghi Effendi, the official interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's writings describes the God's Plan, whose Author is Bahá'u'lláh, and whose

theater of operation is the entire planet¹⁴ in terms of integration¹⁵ and disintegration, of continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other.

Such simultaneous processes of rise and of fall, of integration and of disintegration, of order and chaos, with their continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other, are but aspects of a greater Plan, one and indivisible, whose Source is God, whose author is Baha'u'llah, the theater of whose operations is the entire planet, and whose ultimate objectives are the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind.

In the Bahá'í understanding of history it is clear that the rapid development of modern science and civilization is a response of the entire world to the message of Bahá'u'lláh, who stated that the world is pregnant of His Revelation.

The historicity of the Bahá'í worldview was portrayed by Saiedi as one of the specific new aspects of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. It is based on the principle of Progressive Revelation and the Maturity of mankind receiving this new message.¹⁶

This increasing integration of the world is described as well in Ken Wilber's Integral Philosophy, when he writes,

I sought a world philosophy. I sought an integral philosophy, one that would believably weave together the many pluralistic contexts of science, morals, aesthetics, Eastern as well as Western philosophy and the world's great wisdom traditions. Not on the level of details — that is finitely impossible; but on the level of orienting generalizations: a way to suggest that the world really is one, undivided, whole, and related to itself in every way: a holistic philosophy for a holistic Kosmos: a world philosophy, an integral philosophy.¹⁷

Wilber's Four Quadrants

Wilber organizes the structure of reality as well as of human consciousness in four quadrants, where the left two quadrants are depicting the inside of things and the right two sides the outside of things. The upper quadrants signify the individual aspect and the lower two quadrants the collective aspect of reality and consciousness.

	Inside	Outside
Individual	I Intentional	It Behavioral
Collective	We Cultural	Its Social

Figure 1: Wilbur's Four Quadrants

He further indicates that the philosophical tradition for several thousand years, in East and West, has seen the structure of being in similar ways, talking about the area of the "I" as the Beautiful, about the area of "We" as the Good and about the right sight (the "it and its") as the area of the True. Combining the tradition and the modern understanding of consciousness he added another aspect to this structure, that of the levels. With this concept he introduces into the structure of the perennial philosophy the modern idea of historicity, of evolution and progress.

In this Wilbur follows the view of Teilhard de Chardin and others, who had indicated that the evolutionary aspect of reality was a new understanding. Additionally, they had also described this evolution not only in a biological Darwinian sense, but also much more in an ontological sense, ascribing this concept of evolution to the world and the reality of being. Teilhard had developed his view from the scientific understanding of the human phenomenon, since then many studies of psychology and philosophy have built a rather substantial understanding of the progressive character of the universe.

In Figure 2 (next page), the development of the individual consciousness is shown as starting at the center and moving towards the corners in a continuous evolution of awareness, of behavior, social and cultural understanding. The same is true for the reality and development of the universe, starting in the center with the big bang and developing upwards and towards the corners in all four directions.

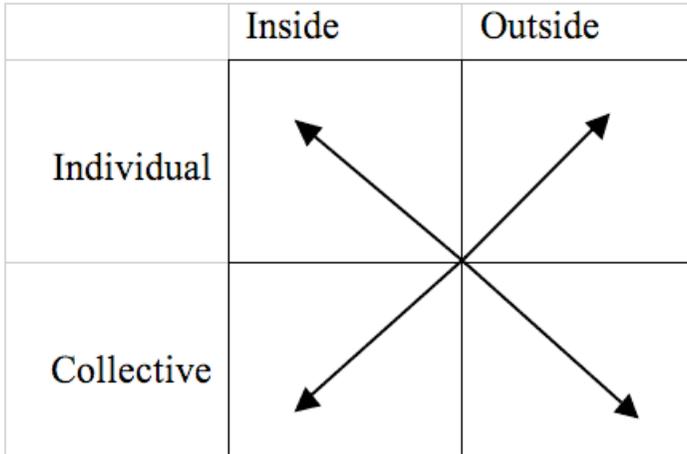


Figure 2: Development of Individual Consciousness

What should never be overlooked is the fact that this development is not happening in four different directions, but that these four quadrants are integrated and corresponding aspects of one and the same reality. Whatever develops or changes in one quadrant has effects in all the others, and happens at the same level in all four quadrants. This is cogently demonstrated in an overview of the modern understanding of developmental psychology and is demonstrated in the history of mankind as well.

Figure 3 (next page) is a graph of the four Quadrants from the books of Wilber (SES 198, SP 26). Obviously, this scheme presupposes the understanding that awareness is present at all levels of development of the universe. The reader is invited to seek the explanation for this understanding of awareness and the history of this ontological and epistemological idea in the writings of Wilber. Wilber describes the development of the universe in three spheres: The understanding, development and integration of physiosphere (matter), biosphere (living organisms) and noosphere (a Teilhardian concept, meaning the sphere of the mind), is presupposed in this scheme.

Wilber's Holons

There is another Wilberian concept (originally coined by Arthur Koestler) that is important for the understanding of this metaphysical concept of integration, which again places Wilber in the center of modern thinking and demonstrates that all of his concepts are thoroughly integrated with the most modern understanding of science. This is his concept of the Holon. This Greek term stands in for the word whole but in a very specific sense.

area of consciousness, this principle is continued. There is no end in either direction. The reality consists of these Holons, which gradually developed into ever-higher wholes.

We will encounter this concept again when attempting to understand the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the Seven Valleys. And we will see, it is hoped, that this understanding from the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh gives the concept of Holon a new and increased theological and cosmological meaning. This new meaning transcends the Wilberian concept, in a similar way as Bahá'u'lláh's mystical writings transcend the Sufi mystical tradition, by incorporating what is good into His revelation and elevating it to a new level of integration.

Towards a Bahá'í Theology

Wilber describes evolution, which proceeds by separation and following integration. When the separation becomes dissociation, the evolution becomes pathological and integration cannot follow. We will recognize these and other structures of the Wilberian system later in the writing of Bahá'u'lláh. It should not surprise us that the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh did not only anticipate the Wilberian concepts, but that it further integrates them and transcends them towards a more complete understanding of the Divine. Additionally, it will become clear in this paper that this development can today be more easily understood, after Wilber has developed his system of integral philosophy and in this specific way, the theological development depends on the level of philosophical understanding. Here again we encounter the principle of progressive revelation.

To say it concisely following in the Bahá'í understanding of this relationship, the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and its influence into the world has made the philosophical progress possible, as seen in Wilber's system. And that system in turn prepares us to a deeper understanding of the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation. In this sense, and in this sense only is a progressive Bahá'í theology possible. This influence of the Revelation to philosophy was expressed in the statement of Bahá'u'lláh:

The essence and the fundamentals of philosophy have emanated from the Prophets. That the people differ concerning the inner meanings and mysteries thereof is to be attributed to the divergence of their views and minds.
(TB 145)

This progressive and historical principle does distinguish Bahá'í theology from all previous unhistorical and static forms of theology, which ended up in dogmatic constructs, philosophical speculations

and/or in a simple adaptation to the thinking of the times. With the understanding that the world is “pregnant with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh,” Bahá'í theology tries to trace the emerging thinking of this New Order in all contemporaneously developments of the noosphere, and then apply these findings to the Writings for better understanding of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Therefore, it is postulated in this paper that Bahá'í theology will remain dynamic, up to date or “au currant” as the Guardian had recommended and at the same time bound by the Covenant to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. It can remain at the zenith of modern thought, without deviating from its origin in the Scriptures and without losing its dynamic and progressive force, as long as it remains integrated into the progressive revelation of God.

After this short excursion into the philosophic system of Wilber, we will now turn our attention towards the early mystical writings of Bahá'u'lláh, especially the Seven and Four Valleys.

Structure and Purpose of the Seven Valleys

The Seven Valleys of Bahá'u'lláh “was written in response to questions of Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din, the judge of Kháníqín, a town near the Persian border northeast of Baghdad. The judge was evidently a student of Súfí philosophy, a variety of mysticism that developed as a movement within Islam.”¹⁸ As it will become clear in the following sections, we can, therefore, understand these writings as an introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation for all adherents of mysticism in general and especially Sufi mysticism. In this paper, we will attempt to use these mystical writings of Bahá'u'lláh in the same sense of integration and transcendence towards the integral philosophy of Ken Wilber, who includes Eastern and Western mysticism into his view of the Kosmos.

The formal structure of this mystical composition is patterned after the writings of the twelfth century Persian Súfí, Farídu'd-Din 'Attár, called Mantiq'u't-Tayr (*Language of the Birds*). Bahá'u'lláh changed the structure of this composition slightly, and the reason for this change is one of the points of analysis presented in this paper.

Quite clearly Bahá'u'lláh places the Valley of Unity in the center of this text, and organizes the three Valleys before and after around this Valley. The first three Valleys are the spatial approach towards the beloved, which is reached in the Valley of Unity. The next three Valleys are more an explanation of the Valley of Unity than new progressive steps beyond unity. This corresponds to the importance of Unity in His Revelation. The other changes are following this

change, placing the idea of detachment into the last Valley as True Poverty and adding Contentment in Place of Unification.

Attar's Language of the Birds		Bahá'u'lláh's Seven Valleys		Bahá'u'lláh's Four Valleys	
Journey of the Soul		Journey of the Soul		Journey of the Soul	
1.	Search	1.	Search	1.	Intended One
2.	Love	2.	Love	2.	Praiseworthy One
3.	Knowledge	3.	Knowledge	3.	Attracting One
4.	Detachment	4.	UNITY	4.	Beloved One
5.	Unification	5.	Contentment		
6.	Bewilderment	6.	Wonderment		
7.	Annihilation	7.	True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness		

Figure 4: Valleys of Attar and Bahá'u'lláh

It is remarkable that the Four Valleys of Bahá'u'lláh have the same structure as the Seven Valleys, but conclude with the Valley of Unity, in which all of the three further Valleys are mentioned.¹⁹

The length of the different description of the Valleys gives us another clue to the importance of the Valley of Unity. The Valley of Unity is about triple the length of the other valleys. According to Nader Saiedi, “Not a single word used by Bahá'u'lláh is arbitrary, cosmetic, or unnecessary. His dynamic poetics unveils the beauty of His mystical text.”²⁰ Saiedi further comments that there are “at least four fundamental principles that distinguish Bahá'u'lláh’s writings from previous expressions of mysticism in general and Sufism in particular.” First the principle of “absolute divine transcendence;” secondly the “the idea of the spiritual journey is historicized;” thirdly Bahá'u'lláh insists on, “harmony, not contradiction, between mysticism and religious law, social teaching and institutions;” and finally “mysticism is inseparably linked to the principle of the unity of humankind as the ultimate goal of Bahá'u'lláh’s mission.”²¹

In this change we can already recognize the method Bahá'u'lláh uses in order to friendly and positively accept all what is valuable in the Sufi philosophy, yet carefully and gently moving the focus and the conclusion towards His quite different philosophy as expressed in His mystical writings. In the same manner He will explain in the last Valley the total difference between Sufi philosophy and Bahá'í mystic, stating that the Seven Valleys can be passed in one breath and only after that the city of the heart opens up the seeker to the

beloved. It is necessary to thoroughly analyze the writings in order not to overlook this tendency, which is common in all the early writings of Bahá'u'lláh and which was clearly stated by Him:

Were all the things that lie enshrined within the heart of Baha, and which the Lord, His God, the Lord of all names, hath taught Him, to be unveiled to mankind, every man on earth would be dumbfounded.

How great the multitude of truths, which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusions can be made! How manifold are the truths, which must remain unuttered until the appointed time is come! Even as it hath been said: "Not everything that a man knoweth, can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it."

Of these truths some can be disclosed only to the extent of the capacity of the repositories of the light of Our knowledge, and the recipients of Our hidden grace. (GWB 176)

It has been demonstrated that this process is pervading the whole structure of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation,²² especially in His early Writings and we will, throughout the Seven Valleys, observe this principle of disclosure of truth according to the capacity of the recipients. This is actually nothing else than a direct application of the Bahá'í principle of Progressive Revelation; any Revelation of God is adjusted to the capacity of the people at that time and therefore, there will be a next revelation, as soon as humanity is ready for it. In other words, God, through His Manifestations, gives successive Revelations to humanity according to their ability and progress. As explained above this principle does permeate the development of the study and understanding of the Bahá'í Revelation as well, even beyond the time of the actual revelation until the time of the next revelation.

"That the Full Meaning may be Manifest"

A note will here be inserted as to the process of developing this paper. After studying Wilber and recognizing his internal correlation with the Bahá'í Scriptures this writer attempted to demonstrate this correspondence by explaining the Wilber scheme of Four Quadrants with Bahá'í texts and placed the principles of prayer, work, order and unity into them.

	Inside	Outside
Individual	I Intentional PRAYER	It Behavioral WORK
Collective	We Cultural UNITY	Its Social ORDER

Figure 5

These four Bahá'í principles (Figure 5) seem to fit perfectly into this scheme and explain how the Bahá'í life is organized and regulated in the individual and collective sense. While this process of understanding was in progress, this writer, seemingly accidentally, read one evening the Seven Valleys and encountered the following paragraph in the Valley of Unity:

Although a brief example hath been given concerning the beginning and ending of the relative world, the world of attributes, yet a second illustration is now added, that the full meaning may be manifest. For instance, let thine Eminence consider his own self; thou art first in relation to thy son, last in relation to thy father. In thine outward appearance, thou tellest of the appearance of power in the realms of divine creation; in thine inward being thou revealest the hidden mysteries, which are the divine trust deposited within thee. And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself, that in these four states conferred upon thee thou shouldst comprehend the four divine states, and that the nightingale of thine heart on all the branches of the rose-tree of existence, whether visible or concealed, should cry out: "He is the first and the last, the Seen and the Hidden...." [Q 57:3] (SVFV 26-7)

The first thought that struck this writer, were the concepts of outwardness and inwardness, of which was stated that they are "true to thyself" and "conferred upon thee", clearly indicating that the self is seen by Bahá'u'lláh in the same way as by Wilber, i.e., having an outward side and an inward side. Without doubt there was more to

this statement. It took some days and nights with increasing excitement to understand the rest of the statement.

The first and the last created the next hurdle, until the explanation of Bahá'u'lláh was carefully studied. This statement became clear when the text was considered, which said: "let thine Eminence consider his own self; thou art first in relation to thy son, last in relation to thy father."

That can only mean that everyone is first and last, depending on the context and that everyone is always both, first and last. Towards a higher unit, like the family of origin, one is last, one is a member; in respect to the lower unit, like the family one starts, one is first, the father is representing the whole. Consequently, when this is understood metaphysically, the term first can be replaced by the term whole and the term last can be replaced by the term part.

Another and even more meaningful explanation of first and last is the social one. A person is an individual in respect to subordinated units; he is at the same time a member, or a part of any higher collective unit, such as family, state and humanity. As a matter of fact, when the Wilber terms of individual and collective are replaced by first and last, the dynamics of this relationship is better expressed and the concept of Holon immediately comes to mind.

A Holon is, as shown before, always a whole towards its subordinated parts, and at the same time always a part towards the higher wholes, in which it is included. And everything that is, and especially man, is a Holon, every structure is hierarchically organized in this tension between being the whole and the part, at the same time and in a constant process of integration, the first and the last. This is "true of thyself" as Bahá'u'lláh clearly states, this is, as one could say, the essence of being human. This way of existing is "conferred upon thee" for a specific purpose, i.e., "to comprehend the four divine states." This purpose elevates this structure into the religious, it is the necessary condition of being able to comprehend the divine and in that sense it is the structure of man created in the image of God, as stated in the first book of the Bible.

What is given to us in creation, what is our true self, what is conferred to us, is the potential ability to recognize the Divine states. The Valley of Unity will further explain, how this is possible and in other early writings, Bahá'u'lláh will explain that these Divine states are the Manifestations of God in His Messengers. God the unknowable manifests himself as the First and the Last, the Seen (manifest) and Unseen (hidden) in His prophets, the theological meaning of this will be explicated further in another Chapter.

	Inwardness	Outwardness
First	I Intentional PRAYER	It Behavioral WORK
Last	We Cultural UNITY	Its Social ORDER

Figure 6

The “Human Gestalt:” First and Last – Outward and Inward

Internal and external²³ as seen by Wilber is only one aspect of the human consciousness and reality; the other is individual and collective. The internal and external aspects are expressed as well in the opposition between spirit and matter. These are not separate or exclusive categories of being, neither is one dependent of the other, nor can they stand alone and make the other dependent on the first. They are mutually interdependent of each other. Teilhard de Chardin has expressed that in many places, like in this quote:

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.*²⁴

The consequence of this understanding of the relationship between spirit and matter is clearly demonstrated in Wilber’s opus, where both are expressions of the Four Quadrants, the left handed side is the spiritual or inner side of beings, the right handed side exemplifies matter or the outside of things. The influence of this thinking disavows the modern materialistic understanding of the world, which was created by scientism defining being as matter and reality as only that which can be measured and operationally defined.

First and Last is the other dynamic that describes humanity, humankind is stretched out between these two poles of existence. Individual humans are always being the last in relation to humankind and in this lastness they become the first, in relation to themselves and to what belong to them. This can be reversed, only being able to be the first, being an individual; one can equally accept the lastness of one's existence. This understanding is expressed in the concept of service to humanity.

This truth was expressed in the Gospels, where the first will be the last and the last be the first, where the individual grain has to die, before it can bring fruit in the many. This Qur'anic term, of first and last, as used and expanded by Bahá'u'lláh provides new and improved understanding of the Wilberian terms individual and collective.

So we have to ask, what happens when the Wilberian term of individual and collective is replaced by Bahá'u'lláh's terms of first and last? Placing these terms from the Valley of Unity and introducing it into the Wilber scheme makes this structure more dynamic and the concepts used more appropriate, as will be shown below.

While it is clear to Wilber that internal and external must be understood in their mutual relationship, the relationship of individual and collective becomes clearer when the mutually related concepts of first and last are used to describe these quadrants. Wilber²⁵ points out that ignoring the internal aspect of the human condition was the mark of modern scientism, or materialistic scientific understanding of the world. This view of the Kosmos declares that only matter exists, and all ideas related to the internal aspect of man are nothing but fairytales, like Santa Claus.

A similar point can be made in regard to individual and collective and it is the prevalent meaning of these two concepts. In this understanding the individual is absolute, as it can be located in space and time, counted and materially measured. The individual's relationship to the collective of humankind becomes negligible and, in the Western world at least, could be ignored for all practical purposes. The individual person has material reality, the collective of people is usually seen only as an aggregate, a heap or a summation of individuals and has no attached meaning or importance in this materialistic and scientific (i.e., based on scientism not on science) understanding of the world, as is prevalent in modern times. This is basically the ideology of Western Individualism and Capitalism, where everyone is for himself, is number one and has to take care of others only to protect the self. This ideology assumed that the natural selfishness of the individual would, if used rationally, provide

the perfect state for humanity, where everyone, out of selfishness, will work for improving the fate of all.

Following this understanding, one can, and one often has understood the term “individual” as a self-standing concept, as the whole and independent essence of man. In common use the word individual can stand for human being, for men or women. Saying that someone is an “individual” gives that person special standing and value in society. Modern Individualism has actually placed this idea of the individual as an original descriptive term for the human person, relegating any higher unit as a secondary element in the human condition.

Liberal Individualism, which ignored or downgraded the collective and social aspect of man, and its social consequence Capitalism historically found its opposition in collective and materialistic Communism and Socialism, which following the same logic in a reversed way, ignored the individual and its value. Karl Marx called this change from idealism to materialism a fundamental reversal and transferred it from individualism to collectivism.

All of these ideologies are only partial conceptions of what human beings are, and this partial and deficient vision of man has caused the eminently destructive and devastating forces during the last century. In fact, Bahá'u'lláh predicted this, when He warned the leaders and all of humanity that ignoring His message will have devastating consequences for humanity. Only in the tension and relationship between first and last, inwardness and outwardness, and in recognizing the divine states, can humanity exist and prosper.

Not recognizing the true states of man, not accepting in pride that humans are the first as well as the last, created a devastating force in this world that almost destroyed humanity and even today could be causing ecological catastrophes.

First and Last in Bible and Qur'án

This section will be an overview over the passages that present the concept of first and last in the Scriptures of the Jewish, Christian and Muslims faith from Genesis to Qur'án.²⁶ What it mainly shows is the dynamic force of these words that were originally attributed to God and than to God's prophets. This process of attribution is completed in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, especially in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, the Book of Certitude, written by Bahá'u'lláh during the same period the Seven Valleys were revealed. In this book the circle is completed, from God to His Prophets, and to the believer, so the meaning of this descending and ascending circle is recognized by the

faithful, as described in the Valley of Unity, because these four states are “conferred upon thee”, to “comprehend the four divine states.”

Nader Saiedi has described this ontological circle, this *arc of descent and ascent* in *Logos and Civilization*²⁷, with special attention to the Neoplatonic, Sufi and Islamic origins of these concepts and their new interpretation in the Bahá'í writings.

Above all, one important feature strongly distinguishes the Bahá'í concept of the ontological circle from typical Sufi or Neoplatonic ideas. In the Bahá'í writings, the stations of creation in the arc of descent do not start from the divine Essence itself but from the realm of the divine Will. Likewise, the arc of ascent – or the spiritual journey – terminates not in union with the Essence of God, but in union with the Will of God.... The Primal Will is also referred to as the Command (*amr*) or Word of God and, as such, refers to the common reality or essence of the Manifestations of God. (page 55)

As the below quoted passages from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures demonstrate, this understanding was prepared in these scriptures using the concept of first and last and of beginning and end.

From the Scriptures of the Old Testament:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1)

Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he. (Isaiah 41:4)

Here the concepts of first and last²⁸ are attributed to God, the Lord of Israel. And the beginning is the creation of heaven and earth by God. This direct relationship between God and his Creation as described in Genesis is only possible in an early and primitive understanding of this world. Evolutionary this is the message as presented to a culture that is in the archaic or magical state of development of human consciousness.²⁹

Nevertheless, that does not mean that this description is wrong or does not reveal truth, it just indicates the form in which the truth is revealed. It further does not mean that people with higher developed consciousness could not understand this message correctly, since any higher level of consciousness includes, and elevate the lower levels in a true dialectical process, as Wilber has described in most of his books.

Another point needs to be made here, the fact that Isaiah mentions the beginning and then speaks the words of God, who is

the first and with the last, who is He. Being the creator makes God the first and the last and much could be said about this understanding of the Bible, but a more complete exegesis of these texts cannot be presented here.

From the Scriptures of the New Testament

The letters of Paul were historically the first written documents of the Christian Canon. Therefore, we present them first in the description of the concepts of first and last.

1 Corinthians: 15:45:

And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Colossians. 1:15-20 Hymn about Christ, the head of all creation:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature?

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by him, and for him:

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.³⁰

About the seen and the unseen Paul has the following to say:

For the things, which are seen, are temporal; but the thing, which are not seen, are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

The letters of the Apostle Paul were the first written documents about Jesus. Jesus is called the Last Adam and put together with the first Adam. Further, what can be seen with the natural eyes is the temporal world, the outside existence of Jesus, what cannot be seen this way is the eternal meaning of Jesus, who is described by Paul as being before all things and through his cross he will reconcile all things unto himself, in that sense he is the last. In Jesus the circle is completed that originated in the first Adam in creation and ends in the last Adam, who will reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be in earth or in heaven. This allusion to the Lord's Prayer and

to the Return of Christ expresses the completion of the ascending arc in Jesus, the Christ.

The same idea is expressed in the Gospel that was written as the last of the Gospels. Christ is the Word, in the beginning.

The Gospel of John 1:1-8:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

And in the last book of the Christian Canon, in the Book of Revelation 22:13

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

In this last book of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures the circle is completed. Christ is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. In Christ's final return God's Kingdom has come "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)

From the Qur'án

All that is in heaven and earth gives glory to God, He is the Mighty, the Wise One. It is He that has sovereignty over the heavens and the earth. He ordains life and death, and has power over all things. He is the First and the Last, the Seen and the Unseen. He has knowledge of all things. It was He who created the heavens and the earth... (Q 57:1-3)

In the Bahá'í Writings

In the passage from the Valley of Unity Bahá'u'lláh quotes this verse from the Qur'án. The Manifestation as the First and the Last and the Seen and the Unseen is one of the topics of the Kitáb-i-Íqán as in the following passage:

Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: "I am God!" He verily speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His name and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. Thus, He hath revealed: "Those shafts were God's, not Thine!" (Qur'án, 8:17) And also He saith: "In truth, they who plighted fealty unto thee, really plighted that fealty unto God." (Qur'án 48:10) And were any of them to voice the utterance: "I am the Messenger of God," He also speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. Even as He saith: "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God." (Qur'án 33:40) 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 are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the "Beginning" and the "End," the "First" and the "Last," the "Seen" and "Hidden"³¹ – all of which pertain to Him Who is the innermost Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences. (KI 178-9)

What He had indicated in the Seven Valleys, Bahá'u'lláh has spelled out more directly in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, about the different Manifestations and their unity and what it means to follow them:

Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the "Presence of God" Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. Attainment unto such presence is possible only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation. (KI 142-3)

The concept of Manifestation rounds up the circle of Creation and Return, the arc of descent and ascent becomes closed in the recognition of the Manifestation, who was in the beginning and is the end of history. The progressive revelation and the return of the Manifestations in every historical Prophet makes this circle the circle of history, and it has a beginning without beginning and an end without end, in other words this process of revelation transcends the concept of time.

Wilber's Kosmos versus Bahá'í Commonwealth

It is important that we do not only point out the similarity between Wilber's philosophy and the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the Seven Valleys but also the fundamental difference. The main difference is in the Worldview as presented by Wilber and in the understanding of Reality as presented in the Bahá'í Writings. How they overlap and how they diverge can be shown in the two figures below, which were taken from a PowerPoint presentation of the same topic. The first figure is taken from advertising to Wilber's Integral Institute and only augmented with statements indicating Wilber's understanding of God,³² which is strictly pantheistic and monistic, strongly influence by Tibetan Buddhism.

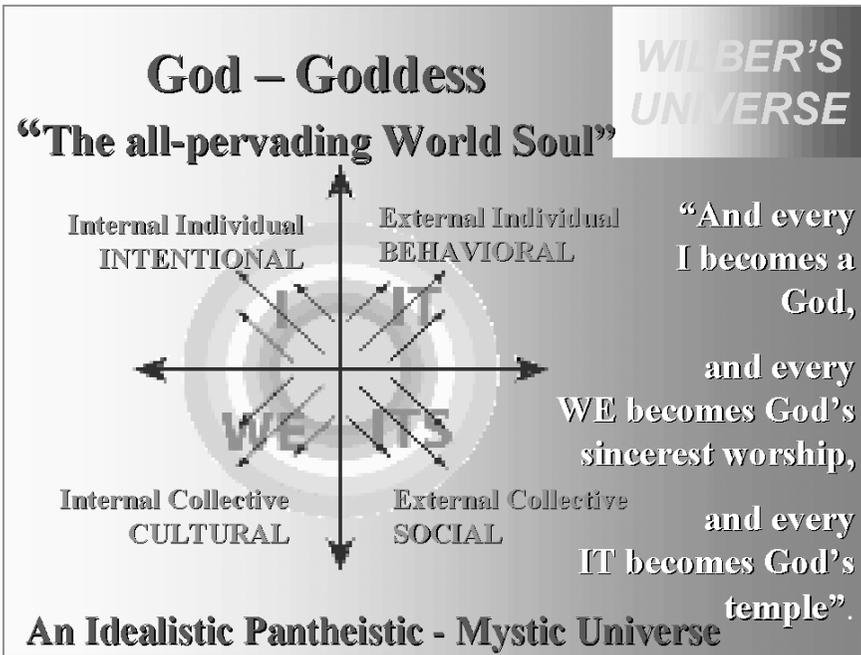


Figure 7

He follows the main tradition of the mystics of the East and the West and the critique Bahá'u'lláh applies to the Sufi mystic does apply directly here also. Saiedi stated:

Some of the Bahá'í writings employ mystical symbols and discourse, including, as in the Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys, quotations from classics of Sufi literature. At the same time, Bahá'u'lláh strongly criticizes particular premises, doctrines and practices.

Bahá'u'lláh's explicit rule on the assessment of others' statements is to be sympathetic and open minded in approaching them. Therefore, He tends to emphasize the positive aspects and the acceptable meanings that can be found in those statements.³³

A similar approach is attempted in this paper, where both the positive aspects and the critique of Wilber's philosophy must be presented.

Wilber, talking about religions, states:³⁴

The "great World Religions" (Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc.) that still exist today (...) all arose in the general area of *mythic-imperialism* and all of them remain clothed to some degree in surface structures (and ethics) that are the two major technological epochs behind the times. None of those religions (nor the previous tribal religions) arose from within a global culture, and thus, none of them can (or will) speak to the rising world culture, however important their specific spiritual practices are (and will remain).

And he continues talking about a new global religion, without considering the possibility that this new religion might be already present!

No, the new global religion(s) will come from within the new global culture and will not be anything simply grafted on from the past.

Wilber, in this statement, follows the modern understanding that religion is a superstructure of a culture and caused by the culture, he cannot perceive of the possibility that it is not the global culture that will bring forth a global religion, but that it could be the opposite, a global religion that is now bringing forth a global culture. He expects the global religion to come from within the new global culture, while it is this writer's conviction that the new global religion has laid the spiritual fundament of today's global consciousness.

The fact that the previous religions were presented in a different cultural milieu, fits well in the Bahá'í concept of progressive revelation, i.e., the religion is presented to the people in their understanding, in their cultural awareness.

When the Bahá'í Universe is schematically depicted in the figure below, the crucial difference is the position of the Manifestation, a central aspect of the Bahá'í Worldview and understanding of Reality. There is no monistic World Soul but the unknowable Essence of God. All human striving and understanding directed toward God is towards the Manifestation who manifests God to the world. This follows the Biblical and Qur'anic tradition, as pointed

out above. The global aspect of the new religion, the unity of the world is in fact the fundament of the Bahá'í religion, and that 150 years before global consciousness has become a cultural idea today.

In the figure below (next page), several aspects need to be pointed out: The direction toward the top is ending in the "Word of God" in the biblical sense or the "Will of God" as the origin of the Manifestation according to Bahá'í theology. God remains the unknowable Essence and therefore Bahá'u'lláh talks about absolute nothingness as the endpoint of the journey in the Seven Valleys. The terms individual and collective are replaced by Bahá'u'lláh terms of first and last, inward and outward. These four terms are conferred as states to every human being, are described by Bahá'u'lláh to comprehend the divine states:

And thus Firstness and Lastness, Outwardness and Inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself, that in these four states conferred upon thee thou shouldst comprehend the four divine states.

Furthermore Bahá'u'lláh identified the same concepts with the Manifestations of God, the founders of all world religions, whose unity in their historical appearance is the basis of all human unity and global understanding, and He describes that this is the Manifestation of the same concepts as they have been applied to God in the scriptures:

They are all the manifestation of the "Beginning" and the "End," the "First" and the "Last," the "Seen" and "Hidden" - all of which pertain to Him Who is the innermost Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences.

The scheme of the Bahá'í Universe that is presented here (see Figure 8) includes Wilber's Four Quadrant, but elevates and transcends them in the light of the Bahá'í Revelation and indicates in the sideline that Biblical referents to that understanding. In this picture, these four terms of Bahá'u'lláh, the First and the Last, the Outwardness and Inwardness are the means for humanity to "comprehend the four divine states." The same terms are again used by Bahá'u'lláh to indicate how the Manifestations in their unity "pertain to Him Who is the innermost Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences".

Bahá'u'lláh explains further:

Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the "Presence of God" Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life.

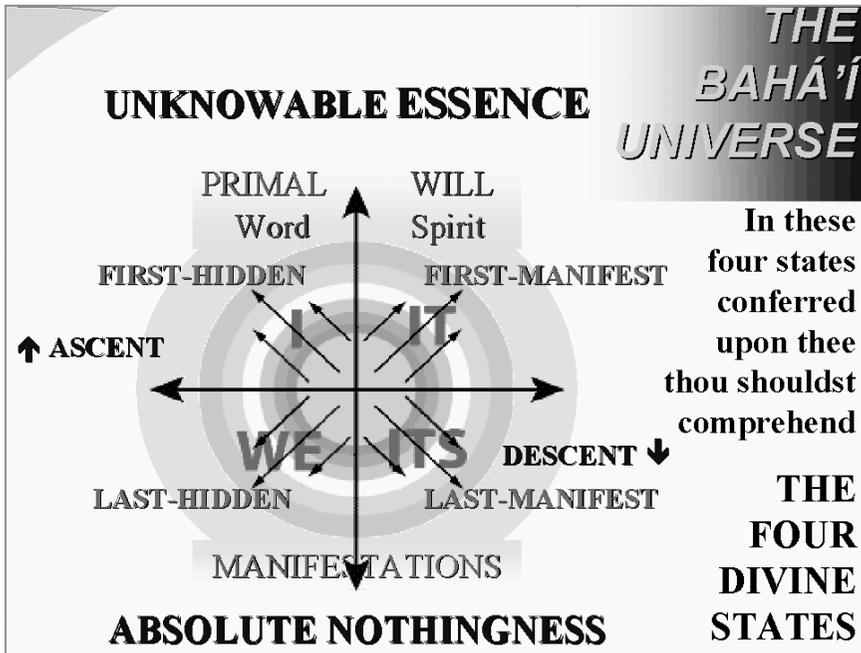


Figure 8

To this writer it appears rather convincing that the four states described by Bahá'u'lláh are nothing else than a modern explication of the words of Genesis that God created man in His image.

Concluding it could be stated that the integral philosophical understanding of Wilber and his reasoning has helped to clarify the words of Bahá'u'lláh in the Seven Valleys which He introduces with the important statement "that the full meaning may be manifest." In the Valley of the Search Bahá'u'lláh encourages the reader to identify with the traveler when He states:

On this journey, the traveler abideth in every land and dwelleth in every region. In every face, he seeketh the beauty of the Friend; in every country he looketh for the Beloved. He joineth every company, and seeketh fellowship with every soul, that haply in some mind he may uncover the secret of the Friend, or in some face he may behold the beauty of the Loved One. (SVFV 7)

Could it be that in fellowship with a philosophical seeker of our age and in the mind of influential thinkers in our days, we can uncover the secrets of the Friend? This writer had the experience of this meeting of the mind and has written these lines in the hope to assist others on the way to the Friend, the loved One, on a journey that is just a beginning.

Postscript



Figure 9: The Four States

The presented structure can further be developed and the four quadrants can be used to organize an integral Bahá'í worldview. Additionally, the Bahá'í writings seem to organically fit into these structures, which idea has been presented by this writer in several deepenings and firesides. This exemplification will not be presented here and can be attempted by any student of the Writings. Under the four ideas of “prayer and mystical journey,” of “work and advancing civilization,” of “administrative order and consultation” and finally under the “unity of the world” all Bahá'í principles can be organized and related to each other so “that the full meaning may be manifest.” (SVFV 27)

The four states, as presented in Figure 9 above, are organized to describe thyself and the whole cosmos, they are not only present in man, they are the structure of all that is, or as 'Abdu'l-Baha stated in a Prayer for the first School of Bahá'í Studies, they are embedded in the heart of all that is:

Lord, help thou thy loved ones to acquire knowledge and the sciences and arts, And to unravel the secrets that are treasured up in the inmost reality of all created things. Make them to hear the hidden truths that are written and embedded in the heart of all that is.

NOTES

¹ *The Essential Rumi*, translated by Coleman Barks, Castelbooks, Edison, New Jersey 1995, page 94. Rumi was born in Afghanistan, but his family fled from the Mongols to contemporary Turkey, where he became a brilliant scholar and teacher. Rumi lived in precarious times when the Mongols from the East and the Christians Crusaders from the West attacked Islam. Bahá'u'lláh quotes him frequently throughout the Seven Valleys as presenting Sufi mysticism.

² This quote is from a description of phenomenology on the internet, which can be found on the following address: <http://www.human-inquiry.com/SpInasDiBe.htm>

³ This relationship of the I and the Thou expressed in the word or the logos of the Gospel of John is the topic of the book of Augustinus Karl Wucherer-Huldenfeld, *Personales Sein und Wort, Einführung in den Grundgedanken Ferdinand Ebners*, (Personal Being and Word, Introduction in the fundamental Principle of Ferdiand Ebener 1882-1931) Herman Bölau, Vienna Austria 1985

⁴ At the completion of this paper, this writer is researching the wider context of Bahá'u'lláh's statement in the Seven Valleys (see below) in modern philosophy, especially in the light of the dialogical thinking of Martin Buber and Ferdinand Ebner as presented in the above quoted book by Augustinus Karl Wucherer Huldenfeld and others of his writings as well as in the book by Bernhard Casper *Das Dialogische Denken, Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinand Ebner und Martin Buber (The dialogical thinking)* Verlag Karl Albert, Freiburg, München, 2002. It is hoped that this revised and extended edition of this paper can be presented at an Irfan Colloquium in Germany. This will hopefully shed some additional light on the value and the limitation of Wilber's thinking.

⁵ Terry Culhane, *I Beheld a Maiden: The Bahá'í Faith and the Life of the Spirit*, Kalimat Press, Los Angeles, 2000, Chapter 4, page 111.

⁶ Wilber's psychological and philosophical system is based on the Psychology of Transpersonalism. In an extensive and internal critique of this philosophy, which places Wilber in a modern and Western Buddhist tradition, Toegel has called Wilber's position "Spiritual Materialism." Johannes Toegel, *Eine Theologie des Zeitgeistes, Darstellung und Kritik am Beispiel der Transpersonalen Psychology (A theology of the spirit of the time, a presentation and critique using the example of transpersonal psychology)*; Dissertation (28,684); University of Vienna, 1991. Toegel reports that for three years he had tried the same approach, while living in a cave in Tibet, where he eventually met a true master and realized that true mystical experiences consist in trust and acceptance and not in striving to higher transpersonal techniques.

In a forthcoming paper this writer intends to explicate this concept of Spiritual Materialism in relation to the Tablet of Wisdom of Bahá'u'lláh.

⁷ How Heidegger's philosophy can be used to formulate a "Bahá'í Existentialism" was demonstrated by Ian Kluge in *The Call Into Being: An Introduction to a Baha'i Existentialism*; email iankluge@netbistro.com.

⁸ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Harper & Row, New York, 1965. *Towards the Future*, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, New York, London 1975 and *Christianity and Evolution*, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, New York, London, 1974.

This correspondence was presented at the Irfan Colloquium in Bosch, May 3, 2003 by this author with the title *Unity and Progressive Revelation, Comparing Bahá'í Principles with the Basic Concepts of Teilhard de Chardin* and will be published in the next number of *Lights of Irfan*

⁹ Ken Wilber's books are quoted in this paper by their abbreviation, **MS, IP, SES, ES, TE**; i.e. **MS** for *The Marriage of Sense and Soul, Integrating Science and Religion*, Broadway Books, New York, originally published by Random House, New York, 1998. **IP** for *Integral Psychology, Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*, Shambhala, Boston & London 2001; **SES** for *Sex Ecology, Spirituality, The spirit of Evolution*, Shambhala Boston & London, 2000; and **ES** for *The Eye of Spirit, An integral Vision for a World Slightly Mad*, Shambhala Boston & London, 2001; **TE**, *A Theory of Everything, An integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality*, Shambhala, Boston, 2001.

So I would like to introduce the term "Kosmos. The Kosmos contains the cosmos (or physiosphere), the bios (or biosphere), nous (the noosphere), and theos (the theosphere or divine domain)." SES, page 45 and "The endeavor to honor and embrace every legitimate aspect of human consciousness is the goal of an *integral psychology*." IP, page 2 (italics in the original) and "A truly integral psychology, I have suggested, would involve the very best of premodernity (the Great Nest), modernity (the differentiation of the value spheres), and postmodernity (their integration across all levels of the Great Nest) – "all-level, all-quadrant. IP 87

¹⁰ SVFV 27. The respective terms in Arabic are *batini* (inwardness, hidden or unseen) and *zahari* (outwardness, manifests or seen). As in this translation the terms seen and unseen are used in accordance of the Qur'án quotation, manifest and hidden is used in other Baháí translation by Shoghi Effendi, Inwardness and Outwardness is used in this translation. In this paper the translation of Shoghi Effendi will be placed in parenthesis, when needed to clarify the original terms.

¹¹ This investigation into these "mother words" of Bahá'u'lláh need to be understood in the sense as it was described at the meeting of the American Bahá'í Studies (2003) in a talk by Steve Birkland: presented by

Susan Maneck at <http://list.jccc.edu/read/?forum=bridges> July 16, 2004:

But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that God’s grace is like the rain: when it falls to the earth, as it’s falling it has no shape or form or limitations – it’s unrestricted. But the minute the rain hits the earth, it takes on the shape of whatever container or place it falls into: in a square pool it becomes a square; and in a round pool a circle, and so on. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that it’s the same with humans, that the Word of God is unlimited and unrestricted, but when it goes through our perceptual screen it takes on limitations. Whatever we offer in terms of our view, our perspective of the Word of God is limited. Previously unconfined, previously unlimited, now it takes on limitations. The beauty of it is: the limitations are all characterized by the way our minds have been trained, so the view of a mathematician, the view of an artist, the view of a doctor, or the view of any particular person give shape and form to this interpretation.

I want to ask you to consider this as a challenge – that maybe all of us, as a contribution to the development of scholarship in Bahá’í Studies, even in the next few months, could think of one word from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh that we could meditate on. Because then, He said, these words would give rise through every individual’s mind, according to their limitations and capacity, to things that we had no previous knowledge of. I want to finish by asking you to consider the value that those of you engaged in scholarly pursuits have right now, in my estimation.

¹² See below, endnote 15.

¹³ Teilhard, “How I believe,” page 101 in *Christianity and Evolution*, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, New York, London 1969,

¹⁴ *Likewise, reflect upon the perfection of man’s creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him. Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form, When within thee the universe is folded? (‘Alí) (SVFV 34)*

How can I claim to have known Thee, when the entire creation is bewildered by Thy mystery, and how can I confess not to have known Thee, when, lo, the whole universe proclaimeth Thy Presence and testifieth to Thy truth? (GWB 63)

¹⁵ ADJ 72-73

¹⁶ What is in Christian and Muslim interpretation the end of the world, (i.e., the Return of Christ,) becomes “transformed into the doctrine of historicity and historical consciousness,” (Nadir Saiedi, *Logos and Civilization*, University Press of Maryland, 2000, page 68) This idea of the evolution of mankind, as a theological concept, was previously presented in a Christian context by Teilhard de Chardin who spoke of a God of Evolution and of Christ the Evolver, (*Christianity and Evolution*, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego, New York, London,

1971, especially in the papers on “Christ the Evolve, page 138, r, Christology and Evolution, page 76 and The God of Evolution page 237). In his work Teilhard describes the necessity to understand religion in the context of historicity or evolution. This topic will be resumed in a later part of this paper.

¹⁷ Wilber TE, page 38

¹⁸ From the Preface (by Robert L. Gulick, Jr. 1975) to SVFV (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, USA, 1991)

¹⁹ The relationship of these two texts needs further study, but to this writer it seems obvious that the selection of Four and Seven Valleys cannot be two different types of mystical discourse, rather they are two different descriptions and the Seven Valleys follow closer to the historical tradition, while the Four Valleys focus on the essential of the message presented.

²⁰ Nader Saiedi, *Logos and Civilization, Spirit, History, and Order in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, University Press of Maryland, 2000, page 83

²¹ Saiedi, *ibid.* page 62

²² This issue was elaborated by Nader Saiedi in his book: *Logos and Civilization, Spirit, History, and Order in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, University Press of Maryland, 2000, page 351, *passim*, where he discusses the issues of authority and democratic principles expressed in the letter to the Kings.

²³ Internal and external is used here in the same sense as all the other corresponding antonyms such as: inward and outward, hidden and manifest, seen and unseen, evident and immanent. In this paper we will use these concepts as exchangeable, except where the context indicates a special difference in meaning.

²⁴ Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution* page 107-108

²⁵ See among others Wilber in MS, page 15:

The wonderful differentiations of modernity went too far into actual dissociation, fragmentation, alienation. Dignity became disaster. The growth became a cancer. As the value spheres began to dissociate, this allowed a powerful and aggressive science to begin to invade and dominate the other spheres, crowding art and morals out of any serious consideration in approaching 'reality'. Science became scientism – scientific materialism and scientific imperialism – which soon became the dominant 'official' worldview of modernity.

²⁶ There are certainly many correlates of these terms in the Eastern Tradition of Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as in Confucian traditions, unfortunately this author is not able to describe them in this paper.

²⁷ *Logos and Civilization* page 53-78

²⁸ It needs to be mentioned here that in the book of Chronicle the term first and last are used in another not totally unrelated sense, meaning

the whole of a life, for example in: 1Chron: 29:29: “Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.”

²⁹ See Wilber SES 608, note 44

³⁰ *The Jerusalem Bible*, Doubleday & Company; Inc, New York 1966, a modern critical translation of the bible by the Dominican Biblical School in Jerusalem. It has the following footnote to this passage (page 345), which is very close to the understanding of Christ in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, who would fully agree with the description of Christ as the visible manifestation of God:

The subject of this poem is the pre-existent Christ, but considered only insofar as he was manifest in the unique historical person that is the Son of God made man (cf. Phil, 2:5-11) It is as the incarnate God that Jesus is the ‘image of God’ i.e., his human nature the was the visible manifestation of God who is invisible (cf. Romans 8:29-39) and it is as such, in this concrete human nature, and as part of creation, that Jesus is called the ‘first-born of creation’-not in the temporal sense of having been born first, but in the sense of having been given the first place of honor.

This and similar Pauline statements about Christ have been the foundation of Teilhard’s theology of evolution as expressed in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution*, Harcourt Brace & Company, New York, 1969, see index under Christ, Pauline Attributes, page 248, which books seemed to have been available to Ken Wilbur.

³¹ page 143-144

³² SES, in the Chapter “The Unpacking of God”, Pages 520-551

³³ *Logos and Civilization*, *ibid.*, page 73, with reference to GWB 329

³⁴ SES, page 608, note 44