

ʻIrfán Colloquium

One Hundred-and-Twenty Third Session

*Question of Succession
and the Election of the
Universal House of Justice*



Program and Abstracts

Bosch Bahá'í School

Santa Cruz, California

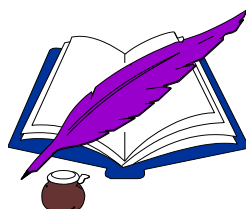
May 22 – 25, 2014

The Haj Mehdi Arjmand Memorial Fund was established in 1992 to honor Haj Mehdi Arjmand (1861-1941) and is dedicated to promoting the scholarly study of the Bahá'í Faith. Haj Mehdi Arjmand was a Persian scholar and teacher of the Bahá'í Faith who became well known in Iran for his profound knowledge of the Bible, Qur'an, and Bahá'í scriptures. The primary activity of the Fund is sponsoring `Irfán Colloquium and its publications.

In 2012, benefiting from the guidance received from the Universal House of Justice, a management board was appointed for this fund by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to function as a Bahá'í agency and sponsor `Irfán Colloquia, presently held in North America and Western Europe in English, Persian and German languages.

The `Irfán Colloquium aims at promoting and supporting systematic studies of fundamental principles of the Bahá'í beliefs, the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith, the interface of the Bahá'í Faith with intellectual schools of thought and religious traditions, and looking at current challenges in human society from the Bahá'í perspective. *`Irfán* is a Persian word referring to mystical, theological and spiritual knowledge.

As of October 2013 one hundred and twenty one sessions of colloquia have been held. Papers in English presented or received at the `Irfán Colloquia are annually published in a series of volumes of the *Lights of `Irfán*.



`Irfán Colloquium

One-Hundred-and-Twenty-Third Session

May 22-25, 2014

Thursday May 22, 2014

4: 00 PM – Registration

6: 00 PM – Dinner

7: 30 PM – 8:45 PM

Opening Prayers

Word of Welcome

School Administrator

Welcoming Remarks

Introducing Participants

`Irfán Colloquium: Program and Activities

Iraj Ayman

9:00 – 10:30 PM

Celebration of the Declaration of the Báb

10:30 – 11:00

Bookshop Café

11:00

Campus Closes

Friday, May 23, 2014

7:00 -7:30 AM

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Martha Root Hall

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 – 9:30 AM

Successorship and the Election of the Universal House of Justice, Part I

Ali Nakhjavani

9:30– 9:45 AM

Short Break

9:45 - 10:45 AM

Successorship and the Election of the Universal House of Justice, Part II

Ali Nakhjavani

10:45 – 11:00

Discussion

11: 00 – 11:30 AM

Break

11:30 – 12:15

Some New, Little-known, or Unstudied Writings of the Báb (1819-1850)

Stephen Lambdon

12:15 – 12:30 PM

Discussion

12:30 – 2:00 PM

Lunch and Free Time

2:00 – 2:45

The Concept of Politics in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s “*Treatise on Politics*”

Farhad Sabetan

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Discussion

3:00 – 3:15 PM

Break

3:15 – 3:30 PM

Musical Performance

3:30 – 4:15 PM

On the Existence and Qualities of Human Soul

Farjam Majd

4:15 - 4:30

Discussion

4:30 - 5:00 PM

Break

5:00 – 5:45

Scientific Insights into “Here Am I”: Consciousness and Space-Time

Mehrdad Ehsani

5:45 – 6:00

Discussion

6:00 – 8:00

Dinner and Free Time

8:00 – 9:00 PM

Memorial Program

9:00 – 10:00 PM

Bazm-e `Irfán

10:00 – 11:00 PM

Bookshop Café

11:00

Campus Closes

Saturday, May 24, 2014

7:00 – 7:30 AM

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Martha Root Hall

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 – 9:15 AM

The Tetrarchic Self

Wolfgang Klebel

9:15 – 9:30 AM

Discussion

9:30 – 9:45

Break

9:45 – 10:00

Musical Performance

10:00 – 10:45

Guardian's Use of Symbolism and Metaphor

Faris Badii

10:45 – 11:00 AM

Discussion

11:00– 11:30 AM

Break

11:30 – 12:15

**A Comparative Study of Various Meanings and Scopes of
`Irfán in the Works of Ibn `Arabí and in the Bahá'í
Writings**

Habib Riazati

12:15 - 12:30 PM

Discussion

12:30 – 2:00 PM

Taking Group Picture

Lunch and Free Time

2:00 – 2:45

**Major Debates and Disputations of Belief in
History and the Bahá'í Dispensation**

Faris Badii

2:45 – 3:00

Discussion

3:00 – 3:15

Break

3:15 – 3:30 PM

Musical Performance

3:30 – 4:15

**A Review of Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq Khavari's *Moházirát*
(a three volume book), Part I**

Muin Afnani

4:15 – 4:30 PM

Discussion

4:30 – 5:00 PM

Break

5:00 – 5:45 PM

**A Review of Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq Khavari's *Moházirát*
(a three volume book), Part II**

Muin Afnani

5:45 – 6:00

Discussion

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Dinner and Free Time

8:00 – 9:00 PM

Bazm-e `Irfán

9:00 – 10:00 PM

**New, Little-Known, or Unstudied Writings of the Báb
and Bahá'u'lláh**

Stephen Lambden

10:00 – 11:00 PM

Bookshop Café

11:00 p.m.

Campus Closes

Sunday, June 25, 2014

7:00 – 7:30 AM

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Martha Root Hall

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 – 9:15 AM

**Bábí-Bahá'í Scripture and Belief in E. G. Browne's *A
Year Amongst the Persians***

Sholeh Quinn

9:15 AM – 9:30 AM

Discussion

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Break

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Musical Performance

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

A Comparative Study of *Súriy-i-Sabr* and *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*, Clarification of References to: Calf, Sámiri, Satan, and Idol Worshipers

Foad Seddigh

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

Discussion

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Break

11:30 – 12:15 PM

Some New, Little-known, or Unstudied Writings of Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)

Stephen Lambden

12:15 – 12:30 PM

Discussion

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Lunch and free time



*End of the One Hundred and Twenty-Third
Session
of `Irfán Colloquium*

Program Coordinator:

Dr. Sholeh Quinn

Bazim-i `Irfan Coordinator:

Firooz Mohtadi

ABSTRACTS

*In Alphabetical Order of
Presenters' Surnames*



The Universal House of Justice 1963 – 2013

Ali Nakhjavani

The advent of the 50th Anniversary of the election of the Universal House of Justice is an appropriate time to recall the bewilderment of the Bahá'í world at the sudden passing of the beloved Guardian in November 1957, the pivotal role played by the Hands of the Cause of God, as Chief Stewards and Custodians of the Faith during the interregnum, the emergence of the Universal House of Justice, on the Hundredth Anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, and the holding of the Most Great Jubilee in London to mark the conclusion of Shoghi Effendi's monumental Ten Year Crusade.

The friends were on the one hand grieved because of the physical absence of the beloved Guardian, but, on the other, they were rejoicing at the victories won during the Crusade, and at the inception of an Institution ordained in the Most Holy Book and destined to become the "last refuge of a tottering civilization".

There was a need, however, for the friends to be assured that the year 1963 had been anticipated in our texts. They also wondered: Will there be new Teaching Plans? Will there be future Guardians?

Opposition to the Faith was clearly anticipated in the Writings. If the Administrative Order were to be attacked on the grounds that no living Guardian existed, as foreshadowed in the first section of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, how were the friends to respond? Was there any text to

indicate that the Guardianship will not be an on-going Institution throughout the Bahá'í Dispensation? Had Shoghi Effendi given any hints in his writings on the future leadership of the Faith after his passing?

This presentation will deal with such issues. Its main purpose is to help the friends in defending the Administrative Order in its present form. An important part of this presentation will deal with historical facts after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, the defection of Mirza Muhammad-Ali, the similarity of method and purpose in the application of the Law of Succession by Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá, the resolution of apparent problems arising from statements made by the Guardian in his "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", and the guarantees stipulated in the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice that the Covenant of God's Holy Cause will continue to be impregnable, unassailable and incorruptible till the end of the dispensation, when God's new Manifestation will appear, to Whom, in the words of the Constitution "will belong all authority and power".



`Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq Khávarí
Moházirát

Muin Afnani

One of the most interesting set of books that Mr. Abdul-Hamid Ishraq-khavari has authored in Persian is the three volumes of ***Moházirát*** (literally meaning Lectures, but more

appropriately perhaps could be called Dialogues). Two of the three volumes were published during his life time, and the third volume has been published recently. The books are portrayed as dialogues taking place among few Bahá'ís who gather on weekly basis to study and discuss different Bahá'í as well as other topics, but in reality the gatherings were imaginary; the author has chosen this mode of expression to present information.

This work is a repository of knowledge and information on various aspects mostly related to the study of the Bahá'í Faith. In this work, we come across a collection of Tablets and Letters from the Holy Figures of the Faith on various topics that the author transcribed from unpublished manuscripts, some of which have not been seen in any other published book. Additionally, the books offer research information on well over 200 themes, covering an amazing range of topics from history, literature, mystical Writings, theological concepts, historical and prominent figures, explanation of scriptures, and so forth. This presentation attempts to introduce these three volumes, and give a brief review of their important and informative contents.



Living the Bahá'í Way of Life ***(A Research Proposal)***

Iraj Ayman

“Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.”¹ Having knowledge of the Bahá'í way of life while necessary for

conducting life as recommended in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, does not, by itself, guarantee actualization of such knowledge in the daily life of individual believers. Bahá'í ethics, as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, includes recommended standards and guidelines for Bahá'í way of moral behavior. He also calls on the individual to bring himself to account each and every day before being called upon to give account for his/her deeds.ⁱⁱ This procedure requires quantifying quality of deeds on daily basis. Mastering moral conduct, as recommended in the Writings, is a process and not an event. It is the process of gradually habituating to desired behavior. Therefore, we need a method for daily measurement of the progress of our deeds towards the ideal behavior. In this presentation a research proposal will be discussed for achieving such a goal.

ⁱ Persian Hidden Words #5

ⁱⁱ Arabic Hidden Words #31



Life and Times of the Guardian Through His Writings and His Plans

Faris Badii

This presentation offers a new look at the events of the life of the Guardian as can be deciphered through His writings, messages and actions. Focus is given on short term vs. long term goals accomplished, or designed to be accomplished, by His decisions and instructions. From the very first of His significant decisions, namely translation of

the Will & Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá into English at the onset of His Guardianship in 1921, with the immediate goal of eradicating all opposition to His Guardianship, to His very last decision before His passing, and His final instructions to the Bahá'í world form the contents of this presentation.



Major Debates and Disputations of Belief in History and in the Bahá'í Dispensation

Faris Badii

Religious and scientific differences of views and opinions throughout human history have resulted in incalculable debates and disputations. Despite its short life, the Bahá'í history has also witnessed some major debates of its own. A brief survey of some of the most famous and important historical debates such as the disputation of Barcelona between the Jews and Christians, the debate between Galileo and ten cardinals representing Pope Urban VIII and the Oxford debate of 1860 on Darwinian evolution will be presented. Following this introduction, the presentation will focus on some major debates of the Bahá'í history including the Trial of the Báb in Tabriz, the debate between `Abdu'l-Bahá and Pastor Meunier in Paris, and the face to face encounter of a Bahá'í teacher with Muzaffaruddin-Shah.



From Eternity to Here: Physical and Spiritual Consciousness (Scientific Insights into “Here Am I”)

Mehrdad Ehsani

In the Long Obligatory Prayer of Bahá'u'lláh there is a passage:

*... I entreat Thee by Thy footsteps in this wilderness and by the words ‘**Here am I, Here am I**’ which Thy chosen ones have uttered in this immensity ...*

We will use “Here Am I” as the gateway to a scientific investigation of the nature of consciousness and its significance in our spiritual development and in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Through a simple review of the special theory of relativity of Einstein and Lorentz transform equations, we will establish the relationship between consciousness and space-time. Further, we will show that there exists for every entity a privileged present moment of time and that the present moment has an almost magical nature, as it is only in the present moment that reality lives and things happen. All entities must exist only in the same present moment to be able to interact. This is the only place in time in which anything actually exists and has reality.

It will become apparent that there is clearly something incredibly mysterious that only this one instant actually exists. There is a present moment independent of clock time through which clock time flows, that this flow carries a sequence of seemingly connected 'experiences' that become real only as they pass through the present moment. This will lead us to the spiritual concept of “ancient-eternal”, “domain of eternity”, and seeing “the end and the beginning as one” according to Bahá’u’lláh’s *Seven Valleys*.

We will use this physical insight as a stepping stone into spiritual approach to “consciousness”, “enlightenment”, and the state of “Absolute Nothingness”, as described by Bahá’u’lláh in the *Seven Valleys*.

The talk will end with describing some of the attributes and consequences of human enlightenment, how this is the purpose of our being, and the greatest obstacle to its realization: the human ego. The topics of ego and liberation from “self and passion” will then be the subject of follow up talks in this conference or future conferences.



The Tetrarchic Self: Correlating Freud’s Transference with the Four States of Bahá’u’lláh

Wolfgang Klebel

In *Lights of ‘Irfán*, Book 6, 2005, (presented in Bosch 2003), this writer has taken the statement of Bahá’u’lláh in

the *Seven Valleys* as the “Mother Verse,” and further developed this idea in most of his later papers. Bahá’u’lláh explains that this formulation is added here so “*that the full meaning may be manifest*” and then follows with “*And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself, ...*” Building on this, and correlating it with Niels Bohr’s concept of “Complementarity”, Romano Guardini’s idea of “Gegensatz” (Polar Oppositeness), Ken Wilber’s “Quadrants” and Karl Wucherer’s “Integral Whole,” Ferdinand Ebner’s and Martin Buber’s “I-Thou” relationship and some findings of neurocardiology, means developing this statement of Bahá’u’lláh into a tetrarchic structure, all of which could be called a Bahá’í Theological Analysis.

Following this development, this paper will look at the Freudian concept of Transference (Carry-over) of the initial relationship between the child and the mothering-one, which is transferred into analysis and all other relationships. What is carried over is the relationship between parent and child, where several things happen during the early years.

The instinctual needs of the child are taken care of by the mother, who with verbal and non-verbal communications brings spiritual values and meanings into this relation. Providing food expresses mother’s love for the child and cleanliness becomes the symbol of being beautiful and acceptable to the child. It can be stated that Freud’s transference concept understood in this way provides the bridge between the spiritual and the biological, the nurture and the nature of man. Additionally, this concept demonstrates how this relationship is carried over from one generation to the next. This is what Freud meant when saying that “the mother teaches the child to love.”

Long before that, this author has demonstrated in his Dissertation (1976) that Freud was unable to understand the spiritual aspect of transference, because of his deterministic and reductionistic world view. Yet, when analyzing his patients in therapy, Freud observed and studied transference and reported it. On the other hand, he never could combine anything he said about culture with the transference concept, and never used these two words in the same book together, in spite of his understanding that both are essential in all human relationships.

If the transference concept is understood in a wider sense – Freud always insisted that transference occurs in all human relationships – it becomes a very useful idea bringing the spiritual and material aspects of all human relationships into focus. Both pairs of opposites described in the Valley of Unity of the *Seven Valleys* – “*Inwardness and Outwardness, Firstness and Lastness*” – will then be supported and correlated with the idea of this carry-over, this transference of the original relationship between the child and the mother, connecting and uniting the four poles of the tetrarchy.

The psychoanalytic Object Relation Theory has further developed the transference concept of the mother-child relationship. In this relationship the child develops his sense of self, actually becomes a self in relation with the other – the mother – and Winnicott has developed this idea into the cultural realm. The transference concept seems to be correlated with the statement of Bahá’u’lláh that “*Inwardness and Outwardness, Firstness and Lastness are ... true of thyself,*” given us a psychological understanding of what is “*true of thyself.*” How the child acquires her first “God Representation” in the process of becoming a self at age 3 was documented by Ana Maria Rizutto MD and will be correlated with the Bahá’í Writings as well, considering

the understanding that the Manifestation is the One “*Who representeth the Godhead.*”

In a sense all the prior papers of this writer come to a closure by using transference in developing some basic ideas of a future Bahá’í philosophy and psychology, originally based on the “Mother Word” of Bahá’u’lláh in the *Seven Valleys*.



Some New, Little-known, or Unstudied Writing of Bahá’u’lláh (1817-1892 CE)

Stephen Lambden



Tablet of Baha'u'llah in His own handwriting



Tablet revealed by Baha'u'llah at the time when the Purest Branch was being prepared for the grave in His presence



A Tablet of Baha'u'llah addressed to 'Abdu'l-Baha

“God testifieth unto His Own Self, through His Own Self (li nafsī bi-nafsī) that I, verily, am One that liveth in the Abhá Horizon (bi innani ana hayy fī al ufuq al abha). Wherefore doth He cry out from the Light of the Horizon in all things (min al-ufuq al-nur fī kull shay’), ‘I verily am God, no God is there except Me, the Powerful (al-muqtadir), the Transcendent (al-muta`ālī), the Help in Peril (al- muhaymin), the Mighty (al-`aziz), the Wondrous (al-badi`)” (From one of the seals of Bahá’u’lláh, BW V: 4 + RB1:78x).

“This wondrous, supremely generative Sun rises up from the Dawn of Eternity and crieth out betwixt earth and heaven with the melody of "I, verily, am the One that liveth in the Most Splendid [Abhā] Horizon" (innāni anā hayy fī ufuq al abhā) (Bahá’u’lláh in Lawh-i Sarraj in *Mā'idih*, VII:89).

“One of the bounties specified for this Manifestation is that every soul who hath turned towards the Dawning-Place of the Cause [of God] shall have both parents - even though they did not attain unto faith in this Manifestation – enveloped by a radiant beam from the Sun of the Divine Providence. Such is indeed among the bounties unto His friends. So be thou thankful and numbered among such as give praise” (Untitled Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh in *Ma'ida*, IV: 172).

“On my God! O my God! I ask Thee by the blood of thy chosen ones through which the countenances of the Supreme Concourse and the Companions of the Crimson Ark have been dyed crimson, to make of me to be one who crieth out in Thy Name and is steadfast in Thy Cause. Thou verily art the All-Powerful, the

All-Knowing, the All-Wise” (Prayer of Bahá’u’lláh from an Untitled Tablet).

Like the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh wrote or revealed much in Persian and Arabic whilst resident or imprisoned within the Persian, then Ottoman dominions of (now) Iraq, Turkey and Palestine. This was during a more than forty year period (1852-1892 CE). Both these aforementioned sacred languages are viewed as languages of revelation somewhat like the two main biblical languages, Hebrew (a Semitic language) and Greek (an Indo-European language). The few passages translated above from Persian and Arabic are among many, many thousands of texts of theological, personal and devotional importance. It would take more than a lifetime to translate and study them all.

In many of the bulky volumes entitled *The Bahá’í World* which were published under the guidance and supervision of Shoghi Effendi, there are lists of various titled Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh from all the major periods of his lifetime. A few hundred titles are listed though this was never intended to set forth a complete listing. Very many, if not most scriptural writings of Bahá’u’lláh have no designated title. Sometimes Bahá’ís have themselves proffered titles.

Today many Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh remain uncatalogued and unstudied being precious among believing families and others from Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East but generally unknown. Currently in excess of 10,000 Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh are known to exist. They vary in length from a few words, sentences or paragraphs to weighty communications and apologetic treatises such as the *Lawh-i Sarraj* and *Kitāb-i Badi`*. The writings of Bahá’u’lláh are still being discovered and collected today. This gradual, ongoing task was foreseen by Bahá’u’lláh himself. Families who have come to reject the faith or become estranged from it for one

reason or another, often possess quantities of Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh. They sometimes give them to individual Bahá'ís, the World Centre, deposit them in university or other libraries. Some try to sell them for a lot of money.

While the Báb divided up his writings into five modes or categories (five being the abjad numerical value of the title Báb; $2+1+2 = 5$), Bahá'u'lláh divided his revelatory output into nine modes or categories; nine being the abjad numerical value of the word Baha' ($=2+5+1+1$). It is as if the founder Figures personify their revelations; the categorized totality of their revealed words forming the 'Temple' of their being. A few Bahá'ís have attempted to list the nine modes of Bahá'u'lláh's revelations, though there are duplications, omissions and idiosyncrasies. The literary forms of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh often correspond closely to those of the Báb (given in my other abstract). Some tentative glimpses into little known writings deriving from Bahá'u'lláh will be attempted in this presentation.



Some Thoughts on New, Little-known, or Unstudied Writings of the Báb (1819-1850)

Stephen Lambden

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْأَبِيِّ الْأَبِيِّ

بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ الْبَهِيَّ الْبَهِيَّ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْأَبِيُّ الْأَبِيُّ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَبْتَهَى الْمَبْتَهَى اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَبِيَّ الْمَبِيَّ

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْبَهِيَّانُ وَاللَّهُ بَهِيَّ بَهِيَّانٍ بَهَاءِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَاللَّهُ بَهَاءِ بَاهِيَّ بَهِيَّ

In the Name of God,

the All-Glorious (al-abha), the Most Beautiful (al-abha).

In God is God, the Luminous (al-bahiyy), the Splendid (al-bahiyy). God, no God is there except Him, the All-Glorious (al-abha), the Most Beautiful (al-abha). In God is God, the Luminous (al-bahiyy), the Splendid (al-bahiyy). God, no God is there except Him, (One) Radiating Splendor (al-mubtaha), (One) Manifesting Glory (al-mubtaha). God, no God is there except Him, the Beauteous (al-mubahiyy) the Beauteous (al-mubahiyy). God, no God is there except Him, the One (al-wāhid), the Glorification (al-buhyān). And unto God is the Luminosity (al-bahiyy) of the Glorification (al-buhyān) of His Glory (al-bahā') throughout the heavens and the earth and whatsoever lieth between them. And unto God belongs the Splendour (al-bahā') of the Glorification (al-buhyān) of the Glory (al-bahā') of the heavens and the earth and whatsoever lieth between them. God is [indeed] the Glory of the Glorifying of the Luminous Glory (baha' al-bāhiyy al-bahiyy)....(KPS:138f)

As is well-known, the Báb wrote, dictated or revealed many thousands of Arabic and Persian verses. The roughly 500 page Islamic holy book, the Arabic Qur'ān, contains just over 6,200 verses. In various of his writings, the Báb himself has stated that he bequeathed to humanity in excess of 200,000 (or as much as 500,000) verses. This is over 100 times the magnitude of the Qur'ān and many times the length of the whole of the Bible. Studying the writings of the Báb and their place in history is a lifetime's obligation for the Bahá'í seeking comprehensive knowledge.

Many of these sacred writings of the Báb remain little known and unstudied. In several of his scriptural writings the Báb divided his writings into five or six categories as is evident, for example, in the title of his book *The Kitāb-i Panj Sha'n* (Book of the Five Modes [of Revelation]) : (1) Ayat = Arabic verses; (2) Munajat = Devotional pieces, prayers, supplications; (3) Khutbas = Literary Sermons, Orations or Homilies; (4a) Suwar-i 'ilmiyya = Surahs expressive of divine knowledge"; (4b) Tafasir [sing. Tafsir] = Scriptural Commentaries and (5) Farsi = Persian language revelations.

As far as their literary forms go, the writings of the Báb are found in a variety of Abrahamic or Islamic scriptural forms. Such categories include (alphabetically listed):

- Bayan (= “Exposition”, “Clarification”), most notably the Arabic and Persian Bayans as well as other materials given this general classification.
- Dala'il (pl. sing. Dalīl) “Testimonia” or “Proof” text of the kind commonly collected in Istdilaliyya writings ...
- Haykal (pl. hayakil), “Temple”, “Body” and associated esoteric or *jafir* related and talismanic texts.
- Khutba (pl. khutub), “Literary Sermons”, “Homilies”, “Discourses” ...
- Kitab (pl. kutub) meaning books or letters including, for example, the Kitab al-ruh (Book of the Spirit)
- Lawh (pl. alwah) indicating a scriptural "Tablet", letter or other literary communication in Persian, Arabic or both.
- Sahifah (pl. suhuf) ‘Epistle’, ‘tract’ ...
- Salat, Du‘a, Munajat ... ‘Prayers’, ‘Supplications’, ‘Devotionals’ ...
- Suras (pl. suwar) meaning sūrahs (lit. ‘unit’, ‘section’, “chapter”); there are 111 two to six page surahs in the Qayyum al-asma’ or “Commentary on the Surah of Joseph (Q. 12).
- Tafsīr (pl. tafasir), a "commentary" often on the Qur’ān, a Hadīth text or part of examples of Islamic sacred writings.
- Ziyarah ("Visitation"): A commemorative prayer or devotional meditation usually to be recited on visitation to the grave or shrine of a twelver Imam or an elevated Bábí or other individual figure or group.

In this presentation a few examples of lesser known and untranslated writings of the Báb falling under each of the above categories will be surveyed.



On Existence and Qualities of the Human Soul

Farjam Majd

In comparing animals and humans, or as put more modernly, comparing humans with *other* animals, the questions of the existence, nature, and necessity of a human soul often come up.

The question of existence of the human soul may be explored from different perspectives. For example, this question may be posed as "is there a human soul?" If so, what is it? Why do we need a soul? Why not just the brain? Is it needed to explain something, such as "continuation of life after physical death?" If so, is it just a contrivance to answer such peripheral questions?

To attempt a rational treatment of these questions, a two-phase approach is adopted: first, a rational foundation is laid out, and second, the principles established as part of this rational foundation are applied to specific questions, such as those posed above. The overall argument is the result of a modern treatment and integration of several diverse concepts Proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh and explained by `Abdu'l-Bahá. These diverse concepts are presented aided by various quotes from the Bahá'í sacred Writings.

In the first phase, science and rationality are compared and their relationship established. A principle of primacy of logic and rationality is developed that includes science as a subset. Relationships are categorized into two broad classes: material and rational. A model of thought, human or otherwise, is developed to precisely define what it means to think. The central role of analogy to cognitive activities is described. The physical world is defined as a realm where the fundamental dimensions of time and space govern over all that is contained therein. Further, a number of realms of existence, or "Kingdoms," including mineral, plant, animal, and human Kingdoms are described.

In the second phase, a part scientific and part rational methodology is employed to specifically answer the direct and indirect questions about the existence of the human soul. It is argued that no physical system, including the human brain, can comprehend rational relationships because the rational and material realms do not overlap. This aspect differentiates man from animal. One aspect of spirituality is described as the ability to comprehend rational relationship. However, since computers clearly represent and process rational relationships, additional explanations are appropriate, and indeed, required. Comprehension of rational relationships is not the same as their representation or processing. Comprehension of an abstract rational relationship is realized only if it is analogically related and successfully applied to a different domain from the one in which it was discovered, when the two domains are materially disjoint.

It is concluded that the mere fact of comprehension of abstract rational relationships necessitates the existence and assistance of a non-physical entity, the human soul, which

provides the power of rational comprehension from outside the physical realm. The Kingdoms of existence further explain how the human soul fits in a unified world of God.



Bábí-Bahá'í Scripture and Belief in E. G. Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*

Sholeh Quinn

E. G. Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians* has long been hailed as a classic in nineteenth century travel literature. Leaving his native England in 1887, Browne spent a year traveling in Iran, meeting diverse peoples in cities and towns including Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd, and Kirman. While considerable scholarly attention has been paid to Browne himself within the context of this book and his travels, less research has been done on the Bábís and Bahá'ís themselves whom Browne met, and the information this text gives us about the nature of Bábí-Bahá'í belief. What were the Bábís and Bahá'ís that Browne met reading? What was their self-understanding of their faith? Browne's narrative provides a unique perspective and insight regarding these questions.



The Comparative Study of the Various Meanings and the Scope of `Irfán in the Works of Ibn Arabi and the Writings of the Bahá'í Central Figures

Habib Riazati

The purpose of this presentation is to provide a comprehensive study of the concept of `Irfán and its various stages in the works of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi born in Murcia, Al-Andalus, in 1165 as is compared with the same concepts in the works of Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith. In particular we will examine the themes such as Vahadat al-Wajud, `Irfán Afaghí as is compared with `Irfán Anfusií, Insán-i- Kámel , the interpretation of the tradition 'Man `Arafá Nafsah `Arafá Rabbeh' and the meaning of " *It is He who is revealed in every face, sought in every sign, gazed upon by every eye, worshipped in every object of worship, and pursued in the unseen and the visible. Not a single one of His creatures can fail to find Him in its primordial and original nature*" (Futûhât al-Makkiyya)



Explorations in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s “*Treatise on Politics*”

Farhad Sabetan

This presentation aims at exploring ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s “*Treatise on Politics*”, which was written in the latter part of

the 19th century. Circumstances leading to the writing of this treatise are examined and various themes discussed therein are explored. In particular, the presentation focuses on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s clear enunciation of the separation of church and state and its implications. An attempt is made to examine the historical context to which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá makes reference in support of the main theme of the treatise. Moreover, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s philosophical foundations of this principle are examined. Based on the topics covered in this treatise, the meaning and implications of the principle of non-involvement in politics is thoroughly investigated, especially as it relates to other authorities Bahá’í writings expounding on the same theme. It is concluded that the principle of non-involvement in politics has essentially remained the same between the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá up to more current elucidations and guidance of the Universal House of Justice.



A Comparative Study of the Súriy-i-Sabr and Qayyúmu’l-Asmá, Clarification of References to: Calf, Sámirí, Satan, and Idol Worshipers

Foad Seddigh

This paper takes a closer look at Súriy-i-Sabr (Surih Sabr) - a significant Tablet which is sometimes referred to by other names, and was revealed on the first day of Ridván 1863. In order to better understand the contents of this Tablet, the events in the life of Bahá’u’lláh during the last few weeks prior to his exile to Istanbul (Constantinople) and Adrianople (Edirne) are reviewed. Sabr is an Arabic word

meaning patience, and Súriy-i-Sabr (Surih Sabr) derives its name from the attribute of 'patience' which is the starting theme of this Tablet. Ayyúb (Job) is one of the prophets of Israel who exhibited these qualities, having lived a life synonymous with patience. Ayyúb is also a name conferred by Bahá'u'lláh on an individual who showed the attribute of patience in the path of God and was steadfast in allegiance to his Lord, the Báb. This paper examines the significance of the devotion and heroic acts of Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí, Vahíd, and events of Nayríz.

The Tablet covers a range of topics including Seal of the Prophets, Beholding the Countenance of God, Appearance of God in the Shelter of the Clouds, attaining the presence of God, Great Announcement, the Hour, Day of Resurrection, the Trumpet Call, and clarification of other puzzling references in past scriptures, particularly the holy Qur'án. Most of these topics were elaborated upon in greater detail, in books such as the *Kitáb-i-Íqán (Book of Certitude)*, and *Gems of Divine Mysteries* which were revealed before this Tablet. However, we suggest that topics such as the above which are presented in the Tablet, important as they may seem, may not constitute the primary significance of this Tablet. Rather, we believe that the primary significance of this Tablet lies in clarifying the manner of announcement of Bahá'u'lláh's station, when He left Baghdad, and in references made to His station as the Promised One of the Dispensation of the Báb. This paper discusses 'Concealed Declaration', 'Open Declaration', and 'Public Declaration'.

The Tablet also makes reference to the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*. In this paper, we explore the inter-connectedness of the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá* and the Tablet. References made in the Tablet regarding 'two names', 'two dawning places', 'two mysteries' and other such references are traced and identified in the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá*. In this paper we note the striking

resemblance between the *Qayyúmu 'l-Asmá* and the Tablet of Patience and explore/examine the similarities between the two divinely revealed Tablets. The Surih-i-Sabr does not explicitly mention the name of the arch enemy of the 'Eternal Beauteous Countenance of God', the half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, Yahyá Azal. However, the Tablet includes several references to Yahyá such as the 'Calf' and 'Sámirí'. This paper identifies these references and examines their meanings. The Tablet includes a prophecy and warning regarding the 'birds of darkness' which will start flying in the absence of the light - a reference which is in reality the 'Light of His Countenance'. These passages are identified and their meanings explored. Finally, the Tablet includes references to Satan and idol worshipers. These passages are also identified and their meaning explored.

Notes

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