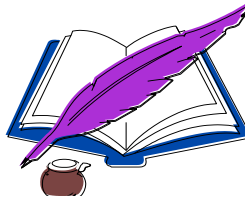


ʿIrfán Colloquium

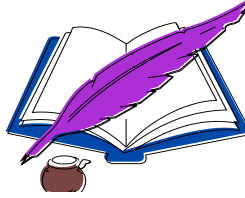
Ninety-Fifth Session

EXPLORATIONS IN BAHÁ'Í BELIEF SYSTEM AND BAHÁ'Í SACRED WRITINGS



Bosch Bahá'í School
Santa Cruz, California

May 19-23, 2010



**`Irfán Colloquium, in 2010, inaugurates
a four year centenary celebration of
`Abdu'l-Bahá's Talks
and the significant events associated with
His historic travels to the West (1911-1913)**

The Haj Mehdi Arjmand Memorial Fund was established in 1992 to honor Haj Mehdi Arjmand (1861-1941), a Persian 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.

Starting in 1993, the Fund began sponsoring “`Irfán Colloquia,” to foster systematic studies in fundamental principles of the Bahá'í belief system, Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith, and the interface of the Bahá'í Faith and current intellectual and religious trends in the world. *`Irfán* being a Persian word referring to mystical, theological and spiritual knowledge.

`Irfán colloquia are being held annually in North America and Europe, in the English, German, and Persian languages. As of January 2010 ninety-three sessions of colloquia have been held. Selections of papers presented in English at the `Irfán Colloquia are published in a series of volumes, *Lights of `Irfán*.

`Irfán Colloquium

Ninety-Fifth Session

EXPLORATIONS IN BAHÁ'Í
BELIEF SYSTEM AND
BAHÁ'Í SACRED TEXTS

Program and Abstracts



`Irfán Colloquium is held under the auspicious
of the National Spiritual Assembly of
the Bahá'ís of the United States

Sponsored by
Haj Mehdi Arjmand Memorial Fund
and supported by
Dr. Nasser and Mrs. Mehrshid Derakhshan
Fellowships

Bosch Bahá'í School
Santa Cruz, California
May 19-23, 2010



‘Irfán Colloquium
Ninety-Fifth Session
May 19 – 23, 2010

Wednesday May 19, 2010`

4: 00PM – Registration

6: 00PM – Dinner

8: 00PM – 8:20 PM

Opening Session: Welcoming program

School Administrators

Nancy Norton

Jordan Rager

Program Coordinators

Sholeh Quinn (English Program)

Bahia Farahi and Soheila Afnani (Persian Program)

8:20 – 8:45

‘Irfán Colloquia: Past and Present

Iraj Ayman

9:00 – 10:00 PM

From al-Mulk (the Dominion) to al-Mu'minin (the
Believers) Some Further Thoughts on the Surah

Titles of the Qayyúm al-‘asmá of the Báb

Stephen Lambden

(English Language Sessions will be held at Seminar
Room 1, and Persian Language Sessions at Martha

Root Hall)

10:00 - 11:00

Bookshop Café

Thursday, May 20, 2010

7:30 -8:00 AM

Mashriqu'l-Azkár
Martha Root Hall

8:00 – 9:00 AM

Breakfast

9:00 – 9:10 AM

Opening Prayer and Announcements

9:10 – 10:10 AM

A Comparative Review of Zakat and Huqúq'u'lláh

Nabil Fares

10:10 – 10:40 AM

Break

10:40– 11:00 AM

Musical Performance

11:00 - 12:00 AM

The Essence of Man, Part I

Wolfgang Klebel

12:00 – 2:00 PM

Lunch

2:00 - 3:00 PM

The Essence of Man, Part II

Wolfgang Klebel

3:00 - 3:30 PM

Break

3:30 - 3:45 PM

Musical Performance

3:45 - 4:45 PM

The Genesis of Bábí Ritual as Exemplified
in the *Khasa'il-Sab`a* ('The Seven
Directives') of the Báb

Stephen Lambden

4:45 - 5:15 PM

Break

5:15 - 6:15
Progressive Revelation in Persian Bayán
Habib Riazati
6:15 - 8:00 PM
Dinner
8:00 - 9:00
Discussion Session
9:00 - 10:00 PM
Bazm-e `Irfán
10:00 - 11:00 PM
Bookshop Café

Friday May 21, 2010

7:30 -8:00 AM
Mashriqu'l-Azkár
Martha Root Hall
8:00 – 9:00 AM
Breakfast
9:00 – 9:10 AM
Opening Prayer and Announcements
9:10 – 10:10 AM
From the *Jabulqa* of **God's Power to the *Jabulqa*** of
Superstition: The Twelfth Imam in the Writings of
Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá'
Omid Ghaemmaghani
10:10 – 10:40 AM
Break
10:40 - 11:00 AM
Musical Performance
11:00 - 12:00 AM
Plotinus and the Bahá'í Writings
Ian Kluge
12:00 – 2:00 PM
Lunch

2:00 – 3:00 PM
Plotinus and the Bahá'í Writings (*continued*)
Ian Kluge
3:00 – 3:30 PM
Break
3:30 - 3:45 PM
Musical Performance
3:45 - 4:45 PM
Hidden Words and Bahá'í Political Philosophy
Mahyad Rahnamaie
4:45 - 5:15 PM
Break
5:15 - 6:15 PM
A Brief Overview of Bahá'í Scripture
Habib Riazati
6:15 - 8:00 PM
Dinner
8:00 - 9:00
Discussion Session
9:00 - 10:00 PM
Bazm-i 'Irfán
10:00 - 11:00 PM
Bookshop Café

Saturday, May 22, 2010

7:30 -8:00 AM
Mashriqu'l-Azkár
Martha Root Hall
8:00 – 9:00 AM
Breakfast
9:00 – 9:10 AM
Opening Prayer and Announcements
9:10 – 10:10 AM
Moral Dimension of Economics:
a Bahá'í Perspective
Farhad Sabetan

10:10 – 10:40

Break

10.40 – 11: 00 AM

Musical Performance

11:00 AM – 12:00

In the Beginning:

An Analysis of the Opening Chapters of the

Báb's *Qayyum al-asma*

Sholeh Quinn

12:00 – 2:00 PM

Lunch

2:00– 3:00 PM

Historical Development:

Sociological and Bahá'í Perspective

Ahva Afnani

3:00 –3:30 PM

Break

3:30 – 3:45 PM

Musical Performance

3:45 – 4:45 PM

The Mystery of Divinity:

Traditional Views in Comparison to those Found in

Some Answered Questions

James Thomas

4:45 - 5:15 PM

Break

5:15 – 6:15 PM

The Bahá'í Faith: A Shift of Paradigm, Part I

Ghasem Bayat

6:15 – 8:00 PM

Dinner

8:00 – 9:00 PM

Discussion Session

9:00 - 10:00 PM

Bookshop Café

Sunday, May 23, 2010

7:30 -8:00 AM

Mashriqu'l-Azkár
Martha Root Hall

8:00 – 9:00 AM

Breakfast

9:00 - 9:10 AM

Opening Prayer and Announcements

The **Bahá'í** Faith: A Shift of Paradigm, Part II

Ghasem Bayat

10:10 - 10:40 AM

Break

10:40 - 11:40 AM

Ibn al-`Arabi in the Baha'i Writings

Muin Afnani

11:40 AM – 12:00

Closing Session

12:00 PM

Lunch

Afternoon

Program Ends



Program Coordinator

Sholeh Quinn

Coordinator of Musical Performances

Firooz Mohtadi

ABSTRACTS

*In Alphabetical Order of
Presenters' Surnames*



Historical Development: Sociological and Baha’i Perspectives

Ahva Afnani

In a letter dated 4 January 2009 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Australia, the Universal House of Justice intimates that in forthcoming plans, the arena of social discourses will become a third area of action (next to expansion and consolidation) in which Baha’is will engage. At all levels of society – from chat forums to statements issued to government officials – the friends will be asked to participate in social discourses by humbly offering the Baha’i view on social issues. Among these discourses include: economics, politics, governance, education, history and religion.

In approaching the arena of social discourses, it is crucial to have a basic familiarity with the field of sociology – one of the disciplines from which, as the House of Justice suggests, the Baha’is will draw from in contributing to the discourse on social issues. All three of the classical sociological theorists – Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber – offer a theory of historical development, or a theory of how society develops. In doing so, these theorists also provide a commentary on the areas of social discourse listed above. In an effort to provide some basic understanding of the field of sociology, this presentation explores sociology’s three classical theories of historical development, and will conclude

by contrasting these theories with the Baha'i view of historical development.



References to Ibn Arabi in the Bábí – Bahá'í Writings

Muin Afnani

Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) is considered the greatest Islamic mystic and philosopher¹. Due to the range of his influence, both within the Islamic community and outside its circle, he has been called the greatest Muslim after Prophet Muhammad. The range and extent of his writings are so extensive that even to this day scholars are trying to figure out the authorship of new treatises and articles that continuously surface and get attributed to him. So far, about 750 books and articles have been attributed to him; there is consensus on his authorship of about 550 of those works. As for the remaining 200 works, there are differing opinions as to whether he has been the author or one of his student or followers. His writings cover a wide range of topics from philosophy, Sufism, commentary on the Qur'an, explanation of Islamic traditions, jurisprudence, theology, cosmology, and literature. His largest work is known as *Futuh al-Makkiyyah*, The Meccan Opening, which in the modern edition

¹ Philosophy in the broad sense of the word.

amounts to about 15,000 pages. We recall from the Baha'i history that when Baha'u'llah was in Sulaymaniyyah, some of the mystics of that area approached Him for explanation of some of the difficult passages from *Futuh al-Makkiyyah*. The most celebrated mystical work of Ibn Arabi is called *Fusus al-Hikam*, The Ringstones of the Wisdom. More than any other work of Ibn Arabi, this book has been the subject of commentaries and books since the 13th century. In the last three decades in Europe and North America the Ibn Arabi Society has been holding conferences and seminars, where scholarly research on the writings of Ibn Arabi is presented. Moreover, several academic journals publish the latest research on his writings.

The Bab, Baha'u'llah, and Abdul-Baha have made references to Ibn Arabi and some of his thoughts and doctrines. Such instances include topics like the ontological divine order, the concept of love as the motivating force for existence, the concept of creation, references to the Promised One, and so forth.



Freedom of Thought and Expression in the Bahá'í Faith

Iraj Ayman

From time to time we encounter such queries as " Aside from what has been interpreted and explained by the Central Figures of the Faith, are Bahá'ís free

and permitted to express their own personal understanding and present their own individual deductions from the sacred texts?" In other words, since according to Bahá'í belief system Founders of the Faith and their authorized Interpreters are infallible and divinely inspired, could individual Bahá'ís also attempt to deduct their own personal understanding and elucidations from the holy texts and share their views and findings with others? This presentation is a preliminary attempt to answer the above question. It begins by defining the framework set in the Bahá'í Writings for personal investigation of truth and deeper understanding of the holy texts followed by different categories of interpretation and how individuals may exercise their freedom of thought and expression. Based on the guidance given in the Baha'i Writings and messages of the Universal House of Justice, individual Bahá'ís not only are free to express their own views on and understandings from the holy texts. they are actually encouraged to try to better understand the deeper meanings of the holy texts and exchange their views and findings with other friends. This kind of discourse further enriches our knowledge and insight. However this should not be taken as absolute freedom. There are certain rules and conditions for exercising such freedom that will be delineated during this presentation



The Bahá'í Faith – A Shift of Paradigm in Religion

Ghasem Bayat

Since the mid 19th-Century and the emergence of the age of science and technology, every aspect of human life on earth has been revolutionized and great progress has been achieved in all areas of human endeavor: travel and transportation, communication, manufacturing, agriculture and food production, healthcare and medicine, the building of major cities and roads, all on scales never before dreamed. These achievements in turn resulted in large population growth and the growth of cities and towns, the coming together of peoples with diverse cultures and beliefs and languages, and hence the globalization and the emergence of a global village. Religions that until then had served various scattered groups of humanity across the globe, and had accumulated harmful creeds, superstitions and prejudices, now in combination with corrupt and narrow-minded partisan politics became a major cause of resistance to change and played large parts in many regional and global wars.

The Bahá'í Faith that ushered in this age, itself, was at first taken to be another traditional religion with provincial interests and issues of the land of its birth, but soon recognized by its believers to go beyond all they had bargained for. This Faith, step by step, broke the yoke of the believers' traditional thinking and their expectations, and systematically revolutionized all things religious and otherwise.

Only a serious break from the traditional religious thinking of the past, a world perspective and an all-inclusive belief system could promote the unification of the human race, and this was exactly what this new Faith and its vast volume of Scriptures injected into the consciousness of mankind. It introduced new concepts in faith and religion, placed a deeper purpose for life and proposed a radically different set of values for family life and human rights, offered new guidance for education and governance, envisioned new roles for arts and sciences and particularly social sciences, and gave fresh outlook to philosophy and metaphysics, etc. In the words of The Revelation of John 21:5, “All things are made new”.

This presentation will show that the Bahá'í Faith does not fit the traditional description of a religion and that it has brought about a shift in the religious paradigm.



A Comparative Review of Zakat and Huquq'u'lláh

Nabil Fares

The four pillars of the Islamic Religion, are the Obligatory Prayer, which includes ablution and washing, Zakat, Fasting, Pilgrimage to the Sacred House (Kabba) in Mecca.

Zakat is of two kinds, compulsory, and voluntary. The compulsory is an obligation as it is mandated in the sacred text. Muslims are commanded to do it, and the

Islamic tradition states the ratio and conditions of payment of Zakat. As for the Charity or the fifth (as some Muslims call it), it is left to the man of the house to contribute whatever amount he feels that he can afford, whether little or a lot. Some of the Clergy call the compulsory payment Zakat and, the voluntary payment Sadakah.

In this discussion I shall confine my comments to an overview of the Muslim law of the Zakat, charity or the fifth and from there i will focus on Huquq'u'llah the mighty law, a source of inestimable blessings for all humanity.



From the *Jabulqa* of God's Power to the
Jabulqa of Superstition:
The Twelfth Imam in the Writings of
Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá'

Omid Ghemmaghami

Employing radical hermeneutics, Bahá'u'lláh asserts in His Gems of Divine Mysteries that the Báb appeared “from the Jabulqá of God's power and from the Jabulsá of His mercy,” glossing these arcane names as “cities of the unseen in the supernal realm,” exploding in the process over a millennium of belief in their literal portrayal as cities on either end of the earth inhabited by believers who are in regular contact with the Imams and who await the appearance of the promised Qá'im. Implicit in Bahá'u'lláh's exegesis of Shi'i Traditions

that mention these cities is a wholesale rejection of certain dogmas prevalent in the nineteenth century Shi'i world vis-à-vis a physically occulted Imam whose life had been miraculously prolonged by God for over a thousand years and who now resided (some say with his wife and children) in distant uncharted lands not different in substance from Jabulqá and Jabulsá. This rejection is more pronounced in Bahá'u'lláh's later writings on the twelfth Imam, writings in which He continuously oppugns traditional Shi'i messianic doctrines and strongly rebukes the Shi'a for having created an imaginary figure situated in "a superstitious Jabulqá" or "a Jabulsá fashioned by their own fancy." In these later Tablets – which betray a trenchant criticism of the Shi'i ulama – Jabulqá and Jabulsá are regularly invoked, though no longer as unseen cities but rather as archetypes of superstition that were ultimately turned into bullets by an esurient religious class to take the life of the twelfth Imam when he appeared "from the loins" in the person of the Báb.

This paper will begin by offering a brief background to Jabulqá and Jabulsá in Islamic sources, with a focus on their description in Shi'i Traditions and the eschatological speculations of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim. Relying on a number of hitherto untranslated Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá' that bear on this theme, it will proceed to chart and explicate the unique, super-rational conception of the Twelfth Shi'i Imam enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh.



The Essence of Man

Wolfgang Klebel

I.

Towards Understanding Human Nature

This presentation is a commentary on a section from Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Mirzá Hádí, translated by Shoghi Effendi in the "*Gleanings of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*," (GWB 164-165) about "*the essence of man*." This paper attempts to provide an understanding of what is expressed in these Words. Bahá'u'lláh's announcement, in these few verses, could change the understanding of "Who is Man."

*Consider the rational faculty with which
God hath endowed the essence of man*

*Examine thine own self, and behold how
thy motion and stillness, thy will and
purpose, thy sight and hearing, thy
sense of smell and power of speech, and
whatever else is related to, or
transcendeth, thy physical senses or
spiritual perceptions, all proceed from,
and owe their existence to, this same
faculty. (GWB 163-166)*

Adib Taherzadeh,ⁱ comments on this passage of the Gleanings, which is taken from Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Mirzá Hádí:

"Mirza Hadiy-i-Qazvini, one of the Letters of the Living, requested

Bahá'u'lláh to explain among other things the meaning of this tradition for him. In a lengthy Tablet to Mírzá Hádí, Bahá'u'lláh explains that the soul of man, which He refers to as the rational faculty, is an emanation from the worlds of God.

Every faculty in man, whether physical or spiritual, is a manifestation of the soul. For instance, each of the senses derives its power from the soul and every spiritual quality is due to it. Yet the sum total of all these faculties within a human being does not make the soul.

So, we might ask, what is the soul? Bahá'u'lláh affirms that the soul is unknowable. Should one contemplate this theme till eternity, he will never be able to understand the nature of his soul, or fathom the mysteries enshrined in it. ...”

Does that mean we should not try to understand what Bahá'u'lláh says in this tablet? And if so, why was it revealed? Do we not have to try to understand what is revealed here, even though we are advised that the underlying reality Bahá'u'lláh describes is unknowable and cannot be comprehended? These are the questions that will be raised and hopefully will find an answer in this presentation. These statements of Bahá'u'lláh will be commented in the light of the Revelation and the attempt is made to find meaning and understanding in this Verse.

II. Towards Understanding Psychology

In the second part of the presentation, the findings about the essence of man, about his soul, will be further investigated, especially as it affects psychology. Being a clinical psychologist, I will introduce my professional experience into the discussion of this question, following the invitation of Bahá'u'lláh to *Examine thine own self*.

About psychology, the Universal House of Justice of the Bahá'í Faith has stated:

Psychology is still a very young and inexact science, and as the years go by Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering. (MUHJ63)

The case material of a person who suffered from Dissociative Identity Disorder (former called Multiple Personality Disorder) will be presented – with her permission – in order to better understand the human condition and what Bahá'u'lláh has said about the *Essence of Man*.

The fact that under certain traumatic circumstances a human child can develop several “selves,” which function independently, have no common memory and are often in conflict with each other, presenting different life styles, morals and preferences, and can alternatively assume executive function of the person, needs to be understood. Since it is a clinical fact of direct observation, it invites reflexion whenever an understanding of “who is man” is attempted. This

investigation can contribute to psychology (science of the psyche), but also will shed some light on the understanding of the human soul, its development and function in ourselves, especially if it is considered in the light of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Furthermore, the practical application of principles and understanding of the nature of man in a clinical situation was very helpful in treating this patient and resulted in new spiritual insight for this psychologist. It is hoped that this presentation will assist the presenter, as well as the listener, to learn more about ourselves and how the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh can renew and elevate the human soul.

¹ Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation Of Bahá'u'lláh, Adrianople 1863-68*, George Ronald, Oxford 1977, Vol. 2, page 144)



Neoplatonism and the Bahá'í Writings: Expanded Observations

Ian Kluge

This paper summarizes, builds on and expands the ideas presented in “Neoplatonism and the Baha’i Writings” in order to demonstrate how the work of Plotinus and his successors complements and offers new insights into the philosophy embedded in the Baha’i Revelation. Because the convergences and congruencies are numerous and far-reaching, it is my contention that to improve our philosophical understanding of the Writings, we must have some

familiarity with Plotinus and his successors. I shall also conclude that in terms of philosophical affinities, the philosophy embedded in the Baha'i Writings is a unique type of objective idealism.



Gateways to the *Qayyum al-asma'* of the Bab: Some introductory notes based on an examination of its Surah Titles

Stephen Lambden

Part II

Some Further Thoughts on the Surah Titles of the *Qayyum al-asmá'* : From *al-Mulk* (the Dominion) to *al-* *Mu'minin* (the Believers)

The around 400 page Arabic *Qayyum al-asma'* (mid. 1844 CE) of the Báb, Sayyid `Ali Muhammad Shirazi, (d. 1850 CE) is not an easy book to comprehend. It is a kind of commentary on the qur'anic story of Joseph (Q. 12) but much more besides. One way in which to approach this first major revelation of the Báb, is to examine an aspect of its form and content through a study of its Surah or chapter titles. These titles were listed by the Báb himself in his *Kitab al-fihrist* (Book of the Index) and perhaps other writings. They form gateways to the earliest thought of the Bab and provide keys for approaching major themes in his earliest essentially eschatological proclamation.

While the around 6,200 verses of the Qur'an are divided up into 114 named Surahs, the Qayyum al-asma' has a total of 111 Surahs. The names of the suras in both these sacred books often derive from key words in the text of the surahs so described or entitled. The surahs of the Qayyum al-asma' mostly include 'rewritten type' expository comments upon the successive 111 verses of the Surah of Joseph of the Qur'an (= Surah 12 containing 111 verses). Each of the 111 Surahs of the Qayyum al-asma' is around 3-5 pages long having around 42 Arabic verses of varying length in rhyming prose (saj'). The total number of verses in the Qayyum al-asma' is thus around 4662 (= 111 x 42).

Around fifteen of the Qayyum al-asmā' (= QA) Surah titles (about 10%) are identical with those of the Qur'an; including the first Surat al-Mulk (Surah of the Dominion = QA1 + Qur'an 67), the fifth Surat Yusuf (Joseph = Q. 12) and the seventy fifth 'Surat al-Shams' (The Surah of the Sun = Q. 91). Other clusters of Qayyum al-asmā' Surah titles theological such as the Surat al-Tawhid (= the 'Surah of the Divine Unity' = Q. 112) and the Surat al- al-'Ama' (= the 'Surah of the Divine Cloud', QA. 10). Some are cosmological such as the Surat al-'Arsh (the 'Surah of the Throne' = QA. 16) and the Surat al-ma' (The 'Surah of the Watery Expanse', QA.22).

Deep allegorical, non-literal interpretations of the Qur'an and traditions are frequently encountered in the writings of the Bab. This is true of his early Qayyum al-asmā' or Tafsir Surat Yusuf ('Commentary on the Surah of Joseph', mid. 1844), Kitāb al-Rūh (Book of the Spirit, c.1844-5) and other writings and letters, which claim to express aspects of the ta'wīl (inner exegesis) or bātin (deeper) senses of the Qur'an or

indeed, of "everything" (kull shay'). In the Qayyum al-asmā' the figure of Joseph and his 11 brothers -- making up the twelve 'tribes of Israel' -- are interpreted in imamological and numerological terms when linked to the twelve letter kalimat al-tawhīd (la ilaha illa Allah = "There is no God but God"). This level of interpretation is reflected in several Surah titles.

Several Surah titles of the Qayyum al-asma' are distinctly esoteric reflecting Shaykhi perspectives and the Bab's interest in the 'ulum al-ghayb (the 'Esoteric Sciences'). Surah 65 of the Qayyum al-asma' is entitled Surat al-Ghayb (The 'Surah of the Unseen'). Others bear such elusive names as the Sūrat al-Iksīr ('The Surah of the Elixir' = QA. 58), the Surat al-Tarbī' (= QA 64 + 94, 'The Surah of the Rectangular-Fourfold'); the Sūrat al-Bā' (= QA 83: 'The Surah of the [Letter] "B" (al-bā') and Sūrat al-Tathlīth (= QA 95); 'The Surah of the Threefold'). Alchemical, talismanic and other esoteric terminology is fairly common in the writings of the Bab. While Shaykh Ahmad (d. 124X/ 1826) was widely regarded as a master of the esoteric sciences by his awestruck successor Sayyid Kazim Rashti (d. 1259/1843) and others, the Bab claimed to communicate their deepest latter-day secrets. For him the 'ulum al-ghayb ('esoteric sciences') often pointed to his messianic purpose and mission which is reflected in certain of the Surah titles of the Qayyum al-asma'. At least seven of the Qayyum al-asmā' Surah titles are suggestive of the Islamic esoteric sciences ('ulum al-ghayb). Perhaps 32 titles are eschatological connotations (e.g. Hujjat, the Proof = 48) while around 14 are have suggestive legalistic titles (e.g. Surat al-Ahkam = 50+51+104-5). Six or more Surah titles include Shi'i-Shaykhi Islamic terms such as the Surat al-'Ashura ('The Surah of the

10th [of Muharram]'= QA.12) and the Surat al-Rukn ('The Surah of the Pillar' QA. 55).

In this paper the Surah titles of the Qayyum al-asma' will be listed, categorized and commented upon. It will be evident that the Qayyum al-asma' is much more than a neo-Qur'anic text or a new Babi Qur'an. As the Bab explicitly states, it provides a deep, batin (inner) dimension to Islamic sacred scripture. Through subtle yet bold, often rewritten exegesis of the Qur'an, it opens up the reader to a new era in the understanding the Qur'an consonant with the imminent advent of the messianic Imam, the expected Qa'im. For Baha'is this first major work of the Bab also includes cryptic predictions of the Baha'i revelation in the person of the eschatological Imam Husayn, returned as Baha'u'llah.



خصائل سبعة

The Báb's *Risala Khasa'il-i Sab'ah* (The Treatise of the Seven **Directives**): Texts, Translation-Paraphrases, and the Seven Religio-Legal Admonitions

Stephen Lambden

This very brief work of the Báb, the *Risala Khasa'il-i Sab'ah* ('The Treatise of the Seven Directives') is, aside from certain surahs of the Qayyūm al-asma' and a few other pre-1845 CE writings, one of the earliest

legal-ritualistic writings of the Bab. It sets forth the tokens, hallmarks or parameters for the conduct of the true believers in the Báb consonant with the establishment of the religion of the new age of the millennial Kingdom of God. It was most probably composed in or near Bushire towards the end of the Báb's extended (land and sea Hajj) pilgrimage journey (began from Shiraz-Bushire in September 1844) of 1844-5 CE before his arrival back in Shiraz, his birthplace and home city, in mid-late June or early July 1845.

Some details will be presented in this paper about the mss., text(s), translations or paraphrases and circumstances of revelation of the *Risala Khasa'il-i Sab`ah* ('The Treatise of the Seven Directives'), the seven religio-legal admonitions or injunctions. In concise summary form these seven hallmarks of early Bábí religiosity are that the true believer should observe (1) the carrying of a circular talisman; (2) the abandonment of smoking the 'hubble-bubble' or 'water-pipe' (*qalyan*); (3) the drinking of Chinese tea in the company of the 'people of certitude'; (4) mention of the Secreted Pillar [the Báb] (*al-rukhn al-mustasirr*) in the *Shi`i adhan* ("Call to prayer") after the *shahada* (Islamic testimony of faith); (5) devotional praise and prostration through the clay *Turbat al-Husayniyya* (a token "Shrine of Imam Husayn"); (6) the recitation of the *Ziyarat al-jami`a* (the 'Comprehensive Visitation Prayer'; for Muhammad Fatima and all the twelve Imams) originating with the Báb or Imam `Ali (d. 40/661) at certain devotional gatherings and other occasions, and (7) the wearing of an engraved white carnelian signet-ring.

Some aspects of the earliest attempts to carry out certain of these injunctions will be sketched as will the positions of the Bábís involved in this process, most

notably Mulla `Abd al-Karīm Qazvini (d. 1268/1851-2), who became a secretary of the Báb known as al-Katib. He had a key role in attempts to alter the Shi`i adhan (‘call to prayer’) formula. It will be seen that the Bábí-Bahá’í and western sources which touch upon these subjects leave considerable room for reassessment and re-examination. There is still much to be learned about the key early expressions of devotion to the emergent, new religion of the Báb.



In the Beginning: An Analysis of the Opening Chapters of the Báb's *Qayyum al-asmá*

Sholeh A. Quinn

In his *Qayyum al-asmá*, the Báb discusses numerous themes and addresses various audiences of people. The purpose of this paper is to examine more closely the themes and the addressees in the opening chapters of this important text. Chapter One of the *Qayyum al-asmá*, entitled the “Surat al-mulk” is primarily concerned with kings and notions of kingly authority. Here, the Báb lays out certain instructions to kings, describing in what ways they should come to his assistance. He also outlines the nature of their power and authority. Chapter Two of the *Qayyum al-asmá*, the “Surat al-‘ulamá,” addresses clerics, or members of Iran’s religious classes. Here the Báb comments on certain clerical scriptural and legal practices of interpretation. The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the notions of kingly and clerical authority

and responsibilities as expressed by the Báb in the *Qayyum al-asmá*, and to place those ideas within historical context. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the first two chapters of the *Qayyum al-asmá* in relationship to those chapters immediately following them.



Principle of Continuity of Appearance of Manifestations of God and Unity of Religions in the Writings of the Báb

Habib Riazati

The two aspects of divine unity and the progressive and non-linear continuity of all revelations are among the foremost fundamental verities of all the religions of God.

The purpose of this research is to underscore the significance of the concept the continuity and the progressive unfolding of truth, in the major works of the Primal Point. In particular, the multidimensional contexts in the Persian Bayan, in which this fundamental concept has been discussed and emphasized, will be examined



Moral Dimension of Economics: a Bahá'í perspective

Farhad Sabetan

Economics is often associated with material life and economic science attempts to avoid normative judgment. Recent developments in both the economic science and economic reality, however, suggest that ignoring certain moral dimensions in economics not only limits the sphere of a comprehensive scientific inquiry, but it also leads to unpredictable social and economic problems. Ignoring the moral dimensions in economic, in its extreme, may prove to have created unprecedented levels of crises. These moral dimensions are briefly explored in various economic disciplines mainly in the spheres of consumption and production.



The Mystery of Divinity

An essay on traditional views of Divinity in comparison to those found in excerpts from *Some Answered Questions* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'

James B. Thomas

In the normal course of events we share an endless chain of ideas with the use of definitive terms in efforts

to get our points across whether metaphorical or real. And we do this with great confidence in our own understanding of such terms. Even the parameters of uncertainty can be described with clarity in terms of probability when dealing with a myriad of statistical information ranging from human affairs to nuclear physics. Yet in matters of the spirit we often do not have a clue as to what the words such as soul, God, heaven and others that we use so frequently really mean. Generally they are described in a most superfluous manner in order to at least have some kind of transitory grasp of their relationship. Such a term is Divinity, one that truly relates to a realm of deep mystery. This paper approaches an understanding of this subject in four stages: [1] Sources of knowledge relating to divinity are reviewed with reference to the Greco-Roman, Medieval and modern periods; [2] Applications of meanings provided by these sources are evaluated in terms of current understanding; [3] Societal impacts of such applications are examined; [4] New thoughts and proofs are introduced in light of the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá'.

A conclusion is drawn that infers a new paradigm of spiritual evolution, and suggests a possible platform for philosophical dissertation regarding religious influence on secular matters in the modern world.

Notes

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