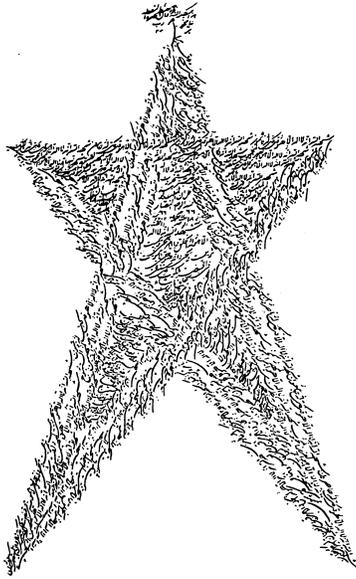


Demystifying Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of the Temple (*Súratu'l-Haykal*)

Part I – First half of the Súrih of the Temple



A star haykal in the Báb's handwriting (from the reproduction in *Qismati az alwá-yi Khatt-i Nuqta-yi Ulá*, p. 26).

- Part I ⚙ Background
- ⚙ Compilation 1 – First half of the Súrih
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 - ⚙ Summons to the Body of the Temple
 - ⚙ Bahá'u'lláh and the Maid of Inner Meanings
 - ⚙ Letters of the Temple
 - ⚙ "Erelong" "temples" of the Temple –the Bahá'ís
- Part II Second half of the Súrih

Notes – This is a deepening on the Tablet of the Temple, which was first published in an authorized English translation in 2002 in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts. This mystical first section is also called the "individual" Tablet of the Temple - for clarity, here it is referred to as "the Súrih" and the full Tablet of the Temple is referred to as the "combined Tablet". Part I primarily contains the first half of the Súrih and is suitable for group deepening with a general Bahá'í audience, which can be conducted by just reading the text (1½-3 hours, do not read the references aloud); Part II is much more challenging, so is more suitable for advanced Bahá'ís. For better insight from this deepening, please review the Súrih from The Summons of the Lord of Hosts before proceeding. prepared by H. Bau, 2018

BACKGROUND

"One of the most momentous of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh is the *Súriy-i-Haykal* or *Súratu'l-Haykal* (Súrih of the Temple)... The *Súriy-i-Haykal* contains many challenging themes. Every line is charged with enormous power and every subject is indicative of the greatness of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, such greatness that sometimes it staggers the imagination." RB3:133,145

The word Súrih, which can be spelled in different ways in English, is Arabic for "chapter" and was used for the chapters of the Qur'án. "Súrih" was also used by Bahá'u'lláh for many of His Arabic Writings and has been translated into English as "Tablet". The word "haykal" has Jewish roots and originally meant "temple" - a place of worship - but the Báb used an Arabic connotation for haykal - that of a sanctified person, a "human temple". The Báb placed an importance on the "haykal" concept and had His followers wear "haykal" talismans for protection; a pentacle for men and five concentric circles around a point for women, so the concept of "living temples" was widespread among the Bábis.

"the Súrih of the Temple...was originally revealed [*in Arabic*] during His banishment to Adrianople and later recast after His arrival in 'Akká." Universal House of Justice, SLH: i

"Bahá'u'lláh states that the *Súratu'l-Haykal* was first written in Edirne [*formerly translated as Adrianople*] but was revised in 'Akká... The existence of two editions probably explains the numerous variations between the two published [*Arabic*] texts... Bahá'u'lláh said that He Himself was both the addresser and addressee (*Asráru'l-Athár*, 5:277)." SAS:166

"[*In 'Akká, the individual Súrih*] was combined with five of the Tablets to the Rulers and transcribed in the shape of a pentacle. This collection, too, is referred to as the "*Súratu'l-Haykal*"... The pentagram - a five-pointed star reminiscent of the shape of a human body with out-stretched hands and feet — is a symbol for the human body... [*To Bábis,*] "haykal" has other meanings...including "talisman." The Báb...construct[ed] talismanic symbols, such as pentagrams...from His Tablets, including the famous list of the many-hundred derivations of "Bahá." bahai-library.com/wilmette_surih_haykal_outline:3.3

"During the last years of His ministry Bahá'u'lláh Himself arranged for the publication for the first time of definitive versions of some of His principal works, and the *Súriy-i-Haykal* was awarded a prominent position among them." Universal House of Justice, SLH: ii

The individual Súrih was one of Bahá'u'lláh's first Tablets to be translated into English. 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated in a 1908 letter:

“The translation of the Surat-ul-Hykl is of the utmost difficulty. It must be translated by a committee who are exceedingly efficient both in Persian and English, exercising the closest and most minute attention. Otherwise the text would not become intelligible. The same rule applieth to other Writings and Tablets.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá, TAB:iii,iv

“...many passages have been translated by Shoghi Effendi and can be found in The Promised Day is Come...; World Order of Bahá'u'lláh...; and God Passes By... A provisional translation by Anton F. Haddad has been circulating since around 1900.”

bahai-library.com/wilmette_surih_haykal_outline:2.2-3.

In 2002, the Universal House of Justice released the first authorized English translation of the individual Súrih of the Temple as the first section of the combined Tablet of the Temple, published in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts.

The individual Súrih is lengthy; with 101 verses, it takes about 2 hours just to read it aloud, so it was split into two parts for this deepening. The Súrih seemed to have had a transformational effect on Bahá'u'lláh – after the Súrih, He openly declared His station to the Bábí community and also to the world through the rulers; He also began differentiating His Bahá'í Faith from the Báb's religion. This deepening is presented with the intention to bring the reader closer to Bahá'u'lláh through an interpretation of the Súrih as a trigger to Bahá'u'lláh's transformation. Part I presents the historical context and verses primarily from the first half of the Súrih; these feature the magnificent themes of the Body and Letters of the Temple, and Bahá'u'lláh's introductory dialogues with two heavenly Maidens. Part II presents the remaining verses of the Súrih with interpretive commentary – these verses expand on the Temple theme, continue the divine dialogues and present the Báb's message to Bahá'u'lláh.

Context

The Súrih is integrally connected to Bahá'u'lláh's situation at the time when it was revealed. Here are some of the historical events of those years to help put the Súrih's verses in context. This background describes events leading up to and surrounding the individual Súrih, which was revealed in Adrianople in 1866; and also discusses the conditions around the combined Tablet which Bahá'u'lláh reworked in 'Akká around 1869.

“Bahá'u'lláh unveiled His station gradually and in stages. His Declaration took place in the Garden of Ridván in 1863..., [where] He revealed...His station to only a few of His Companions. Many of the Bábís who were assembled in that Garden... had no knowledge of this declaration; they learnt of it months later...”

“The second stage...was its announcement mainly to the members of the Bábí community, through the revelation of innumerable Tablets from Adrianople as well as the teaching exploits of some of His outstanding disciples...”

“the final stage was...[His] majestic proclamation...to the world at large through the kings and leaders.”

RB2:301-303

The individual Súrih of the Temple seems to have been revealed to trigger the second and final stages. After the Súrih, Bahá'u'lláh began to decisively state His claim throughout the widespread Bábí community and also began His Proclamation to the world. This was a tumultuous and crucial time for the Bábís, when each Bábí had to choose whether or not to accept Bahá'u'lláh's claim.

“As the news of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh as 'He Whom God shall make manifest' began to reach the...Bábís in Persia...a crisis unprecedented in its scope and severity was brewing in Adrianople... Originating from Mírzá Yahyá [*Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother and the Báb's nominee for the leadership of the Bábí Faith*] and engineered by Siyyid Muhammad-i-Isfahání [*Bahá'u'lláh described him to Mírzá Yahyá as “him who led thee astray” KA:184*], it eventually engulfed the whole community, bringing in its wake untold sufferings to Bahá'u'lláh and creating a temporary breach in the ranks of the believers.

“Soon after his arrival in Adrianople Mírzá Yahyá realized that his life was no longer in danger. He had feared persecution and death ever since the martyrdom of the Báb... But now, in Adrianople...there was no persecution. Bahá'u'lláh, soon after His arrival, had won the respect and admiration of the people of Adrianople including the Governor and other dignitaries...Highly jealous of the rising prestige of Bahá'u'lláh and aware of the declaration of His station as 'He Whom God shall make manifest', Mírzá Yahyá decided it was time to...wrest the leadership of the community...”

“Emboldened by Bahá'u'lláh's loving forgiveness, duped by Siyyid Muhammad's enticing prospects and spurred on by his own ambitious lust for leadership, Mírzá Yahyá embarked upon a path [*to murder Bahá'u'lláh*]..., for he knew that he had no power whatsoever to confront Bahá'u'lláh. It is a fact that whenever Mírzá Yahyá came into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, he found himself speechless... This puzzled Mírzá Áqá Ján, until later he realized that Mírzá Yahyá was like anyone else in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. However, Bahá'u'lláh had instructed His amanuensis not to disclose his observations to anyone.”

RB2:152,153

“Mírzá Yahyá had on previous occasions resorted to murder to eliminate people he perceived as rivals. During Bahá'u'lláh's withdrawal to Kurdistan [1854-1856, *Mírzá Yahyá*]...had commissioned the assassination of Dayyán, one of the Báb's most outstanding followers... He had also brought about the assassination of Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar, the Báb's cousin, and had called for the murder of other leading Bábis in an effort to eliminate all competition for leadership of the Bábí community.” CTR:137,138

“...the monstrous behavior of Mírzá Yahyá...the...recognized chief of the Bábí community...finally broke out, in all its violence, in the years immediately preceding the proclamation of His Message. It brought incalculable sorrow to Bahá'u'lláh, visibly aged Him, and inflicted...the heaviest blow...in His lifetime...”

“[*Mírzá Yahyá's*] Desperate designs to poison Bahá'u'lláh and His companions...began [in 1864], approximately a year after their arrival in Adrianople...[He] began, contrary to his wont, to invite Bahá'u'lláh to his home, where, one day, having smeared His tea-cup with a substance he had concocted, he succeeded in poisoning Him sufficiently to produce a serious illness which lasted no less than a month, and which was accompanied by severe pains and high fever, the aftermath of which left Bahá'u'lláh with a shaking hand till the end of His life... On another occasion this same Mírzá Yahyá had...poisoned the well which provided water for the family and companions of Bahá'u'lláh, in consequence of which the exiles manifested strange symptoms of illness.”

Shoghi Effendi, GPB:163-166

“In spite of this Bahá'u'lláh did not wish to disclose the wicked deeds of His brother to the public. He advised His companions not to spread the news. However, it was through Mírzá Yahyá's own actions later that the story had to be told. For soon after Bahá'u'lláh's recovery, Mírzá Yahyá openly and by insinuation shamefully claimed that it was Bahá'u'lláh who had tried to poison him! This outrageous and false accusation against One who was the well-spring of love and forgiveness served to unmask Mírzá Yahyá, and revealed his satanic nature to friends and strangers alike.

“The fact that he was the nominee of the Báb was sufficient for the rank and file of the believers to attach great importance to him... However, most Bábis who had been able to meet Mírzá Yahyá were struck by his ignorance and cowardice... But those who had not attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh were often confused by rumours and controversy among the Bábis concerning the position of Mírzá Yahyá.”

RB2:154,66-72

“Bahá'u'lláh's reaction to this most distressful episode in His ministry was...characterized by acute anguish. "He who for months and years...I reared with the hand of loving-kindness hath risen to take My life." "The cruelties inflicted by My oppressors... have bowed Me down, and turned My hair white."... "By God!...No spot is left on My body that hath not been touched by the spears of thy machinations.”

Shoghi Effendi, GPB:169,170

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Bahá'u'lláh concealed these crimes from the community, but Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad continued their schemes to discredit Bahá'u'lláh. The events which caused Bahá'u'lláh to finally expel Mírzá Yahyá from His protection happened about a year after He was poisoned and were initiated by Mírzá Yahyá's attempt to convince Bahá'u'lláh's barber to murder Him; Ustád Muhammad-'Alí, the barber, describes the incident:

“Azal [*Mírzá Yahyá's title given by the Báb*] would come to the bath... At this time no one had even an inkling of his being a violator, a breaker of the Covenant... he would carry on a conversation with me about this and that..., in his own way, he was trying to convert me, but I pretended not to understand what he was after.”

MMB:46

“One day...Azal came in...and he began to talk to me... His tone and implications were that he, the successor of the Báb, was the wronged one, and his Brother (I take refuge in God!) was the usurper and aggressor... In all this talk, the tone of his remarks...and his encouragement to me, he was in fact telling me to kill Bahá'u'lláh.

“The effect of all this upon me was so disturbing that in all my life I had never felt so shattered. It was as if the whole building was falling upon my head. I was frightened; without uttering a word I went out to the ante-room... I thought to myself that I would go inside and cut his head off regardless of consequences. Then I thought, to kill him is easy, but perhaps I would offend the Blessed Beauty. One thing which prevented me from carrying out my intention was the thought that if I killed him and then went into the presence of the Blessed Beauty, and He asked me why I had killed him, what answer could I give?

“I returned to the bath and being extremely angry, I shouted at him...and I have never seen him since.

‘My state of mind, however, was such that nothing could calm me... As it happened, that day...Áqá Mírzá Músáy-i-Kalím [*Bahá'u'lláh's faithful brother*] came. I told him that Azal had set me on fire with his sinister suggestion. Áqá Mírzá Músá said: 'He has been thinking of this for years, this man has always been thinking in this way. Do not pay any attention to him.' He counselled me to disregard the whole thing...

‘However...I went to the Master [*Abdu'l-Bahá*] and reported to Him what Mírzá Yahyá had told me, and how I was filled with rage and wanted to kill him...the Master said, 'This is something that you alone know. Do not mention it to anyone, it is better that it remain hidden.' I then went to Mírzá Áqá Ján, reported the details of the incident and asked him to tell Bahá'u'lláh. He returned and said 'Bahá'u'lláh says to tell Ustád Muhammad-'Alí not to mention this to anyone.'

'That night I collected all the writings of Azal and went to the tea-room of Bahá'u'lláh's house and burnt them all in the brazier. Before doing so, I showed them to seven or eight of the believers who were present. They all saw that they were the writings of Azal. They all protested to me and asked me the reason for doing this. I said, 'Until today I esteemed Azal highly, but now he is less than a dog in my sight'.

"In the end Ustád Muhammad-'Alí found himself unable to keep this matter to himself. Soon the news spread and created much fear and anguish in the hearts of the believers in Adrianople." RB2:155,158-161

"When the secret was revealed, Mírzá Yahyá disclaimed his intention and imputed the intended murder to the attendant." CTR:139

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These two different accounts of the attempted murder of Bahá'u'lláh spread throughout the Bábi community and caused a great amount of confusion and turmoil. Bahá'u'lláh could no longer hide Mírzá Yahyá's misdeeds.

"Bahá'u'lláh decided to announce formally to Mírzá Yahyá, as the nominee of the Báb, His claim to be... 'Him Whom God shall make manifest'. Although Mírzá Yahyá was already informed of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh... this announcement was of great significance, in so far as it left no excuse for Mírzá Yahyá to cloud the issue. Bahá'u'lláh... summoned him... through the revelation of a special Tablet known as Súriy-i-Amr (Súrih of Command). In it He clearly stated His claims and conveyed the character of His Mission... This is the first Tablet in which Bahá'u'lláh uses the term 'people of Bahá' to refer to His followers, to distinguish them from the 'people of the Bayán.' "

RB2:161,162,179

"...the following day he [Mírzá Yahyá] replied that he himself had become the recipient of divine Revelation, and it was incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to follow him and pay allegiance to his person. [*Shoghi Effendi called this a 'counter-declaration'* GPB:167].

"Such a claim by one who was the embodiment of deceit and falsehood evoked the wrath of God, and was clearly regarded as a signal for the eventual split between Bahá'u'lláh and Mírzá Yahyá... the contest between the forces of light and darkness came to a head." RB2:162,166

"[This outrageous 'counter-declaration' forced Bahá'u'lláh] to sever all ties with His younger half-brother, whom He had served as guardian since their father's death when Mírzá Yahyá was a boy of nine. This "Most Great Separation," as Bahá'u'lláh referred to the severing of the relationship, perplexed and confused the believers who were unfamiliar with Mírzá Yahyá's conduct, damaged the prestige of the Faith, and gratified and encouraged its enemies." CTR:132,139

.....
"Embarking on an action reminiscent of His solitary retirement to the mountains of Kurdistán,... Bahá'u'lláh... withdrew with His family to the nearby house of Ridá Big... and refused to associate with anybody. This was on 10 March 1866. The reason for this withdrawal... was... to relieve the tension and alleviate the feelings of enmity which... had been engendered in the hearts of some by Mírzá Yahyá and were fanned into flame by his latest actions..."

"Bahá'u'lláh... ordered His brother Áqáy-i-Kalím to divide all the furniture, bedding and utensils and send half of them to the house of Mírzá Yahyá, and to see that he received his full share of the government allowance allocated to the exiles. He also directed that several items such as the rings of the Báb, His seals and some manuscripts be delivered to him. Mírzá Yahyá had longed to possess these relics which the Báb, before His martyrdom, had specifically sent to Bahá'u'lláh..."

"The withdrawal of Bahá'u'lláh... and His refusal to meet any of the exiles created a situation in which some of the unfaithful openly turned against Him and transferred their allegiance to Mírzá Yahyá... A period of intense activity ensued in which Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad... Assisted by their infamous allies and associates... loaded their letters with calumnies and false accusations against Bahá'u'lláh and disseminated them far and wide among the believers in Persia and 'Iráq... These letters caused much confusion and dissension among some of the Bábi community in Persia... A number of Bábís wrote to Bahá'u'lláh and begged for guidance and enlightenment.

"Several Tablets in this period were revealed in response to such questions. Other believers... were moved by the dissemination of these evil letters to take action, and they arose... to champion the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh..."

"Because of the harmful actions of Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh was forced to end His withdrawal, which had lasted about two months, and come forward to protect the Cause of God... It was at this time that Bahá'u'lláh expelled Siyyid Muhammad from the gatherings of His followers and soon the 'Most Great Separation', which was a clear division between the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and those of Mírzá Yahyá, became public. The two-months' withdrawal of Bahá'u'lláh acted as a spiritual vacuum for the exiles in Adrianople. It created a great test and as a result each one of them showed the measure of his sincerity and faith... the great majority of the exiles remained steadfast in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Only a few, who had gathered around Mírzá Yahyá, were expelled from the presence of Bahá'u'lláh." RB2:162,165-168, 170



These were the conditions under which the individual Súrih of the Temple was revealed. Although the actual date of revelation is not known, the following verses suggest that it was revealed after the incident with Bahá'u'lláh's barber(v27), after the "counter-declaration"(v29), after the move to the house of Ridá Big(v28) and also possibly after He expelled Mírzá Yahyá's associates from His presence (v48):

"...he [Mírzá Yahya] conferred with one of My servants [Bahá'u'lláh's barber, Ustád Muhammad-'Alí] and sought to win him over to his own designs." Bahá'u'lláh, TT:27

"...he [Mírzá Yahya] had committed that which no pen dare describe, and by which he disgraced the dignity of My station and profaned the sanctity of God..." Bahá'u'lláh, TT:29

"Removing Ourselves from their midst, We took up residence in another house [of Ridá Big], that perchance the flame of envy might be quenched in Our brother's breast, and that he might be guided aright." Bahá'u'lláh, TT:28

"Having found upon the earth many a soiled hand, We sanctified the hem of Thy garment from the profanity of their touch and placed it beyond the reach of the ungodly." Bahá'u'lláh, TT:48

Part I covers the inspirational first half of the Súrih, which includes the lofty summons to Bahá'u'lláh's physical Temple and Bahá'u'lláh's grievances against Mírzá Yahyá. Part II examines the more challenging second half, which provided Bahá'u'lláh with subtle, but more pointed motivations. The Súrih's purpose seems to have been for Bahá'u'lláh to voice His complaints to God and God's divine response. The inspirations and challenges of the Súrih were instrumental in spurring Bahá'u'lláh to direct His energies towards the future.

"This Tablet consists of a series of formal addresses and dialogues, rich in symbolism, parables, and references to the Scriptures of the past. This literary style with its meaningful and symbolic language makes this Tablet one of the most challenging and most beautiful works of Bahá'u'lláh.

"Some of the mightiest statements of Bahá'u'lláh about the power that has been infused into His Revelation appear in this tablet. Many topics such as the spiritual birth of man, the creative power of the Word of God, and the example of the life of His Manifestation are covered in this Tablet. A brief but moving account of Mirza Yahyá's early life and education under the direction of the Blessed Beauty and finally his transgression against Bahá'u'lláh is also given in this Tablet. This tablet, with its numerous addresses to the Bábí communities, along with other books such as the Kitáb-i-Badí', was instrumental in the mass conversion of the Bábí communities to the Cause of Bahá." ISH:15,abstract



The expulsion of Mírzá Yahyá and his cohorts from the believers, brought Bahá'u'lláh to a new phase. This was a major turning point for Bahá'u'lláh; with the "Most Great Separation", He had broken away from the Bábí community - His new mission was to create His own, independent Bahá'í Faith. The Súrih shows that Bahá'u'lláh was still concerned about the Bábis; for the Bábis' own spiritual fates, Bahá'u'lláh strove to convince them of His station and to become Bahá'ís. In 1863, He had declared His station as the Báb's successor to a few of His followers. After the Súrih in 1866, He openly proclaimed His station as "He Whom God shall make manifest" throughout the Bábí community, and also began His proclamation as the "Promised One" to all of humanity through the world's rulers.

"A period of prodigious activity ensued which, in its repercussions, outshone the vernal years of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry. 'Day and night,' an eye-witness has written, 'the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them. Mírzá Áqá Ján wrote them as they were dictated, while the Most Great Branch was continually occupied in transcribing them. There was not a moment to spare.'... Every month the equivalent of several volumes would be transcribed...and sent to Persia... Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: 'Such are the outpourings ... from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed.' 'So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayán would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness.' 'I swear by God!' He, in another connection has affirmed, 'In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed.' 'That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople),' He, furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has declared, 'secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed.' Shoghi Effendi, GPB:170-171

"[Then] an event of the utmost significance occurred which toppled Mírzá Yahyá to his doom and degraded him in the eyes of his supporters as well as the authorities in Adrianople. This was in the month of...September 1867... The person who became instrumental in bringing this matter to its conclusion was Mír Muhammad-i-Mukárí from Shiráz, a [Bábí] caravan-driver who had accompanied the Báb on His pilgrimage to Mecca, and later, Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdád to Constantinople..."

"Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí...reminiscences [in his memoir *Stories from the Delight of Hearts*]:

"Mír Muhammad...could not imagine that Azal had broken the Covenant... Bahá'u'lláh said to him that if ever Azal came face to face with Him at a meeting place, then he could consider Azal's claims to be true..."

“This form of confrontation [is] known as mubáhilih...a challenge between truth and falsehood; the two parties come together, each one invoking God to annihilate the other, and calling on His wrath to strike down the faithless. It is expected in these circumstances that the power of Truth will destroy the forces of falsehood.” RB2:291,292,294-295

“Mír Muhammad...succeeded in forcing Siyyid Muhammad to induce...[Mírzá Yahyá] to meet Bahá'u'lláh face to face... Foolishly assuming that his illustrious Brother would never countenance such a proposition, Mírzá Yahyá appointed the mosque of Sultán Salím as the place for their encounter. No sooner had Bahá'u'lláh been informed of this arrangement than He set forth, on foot... for the afore-mentioned mosque.” Shoghi Effendi, GPB:168

“Mírzá Yahyá declined to meet with Bahá'u'lláh on that day, so Bahá'u'lláh postponed the confrontation to Friday, when Muslims gather for congregational prayers. The news of the upcoming mubáhilih spread quickly throughout the city and on Friday, a large crowd gathered in support of Bahá'u'lláh... When He arrived at the mosque, the imam suddenly stopped mid-sentence and remained speechless until Bahá'u'lláh seated Himself and permitted him to continue. The service and prayers came to an end and Mírzá Yahyá still had not appeared. Haydar-'Alí states “We had heard that he had feigned illness and asked to be excused.” RB2:296

Then Bahá'u'lláh decided to visit the takyih of the Mawlavís, Sufi dervishes who were associates of the perfidious Siyyid Muhammad. The crowd that followed Him included high ranking dignitaries of the city. Bahá'u'lláh motioned to the dignitaries to lead the procession, but they declined and preferred to stay behind Him as a sign of deference. When Bahá'u'lláh arrived, the whirling and chanting stopped; the dervishes and their leader bowed to Him and remained silent until He and the dignitaries were seated, then He permitted them to proceed with their service.

“Those members of the public who were in the mosque were amazed by [His]...powerful...words... Bahá'u'lláh at one point ordered Mír Muhammad to go and call Mírzá Yahyá to come with all his sins and transgressions and face his Lord. Bahá'u'lláh remained in the mosque till near sunset, while Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad stayed at home and gave some excuses to Mír Muhammad for not attending...”

“[These details] of the mubáhilih and Mírzá Yahyá's failure to appear...[were] widely circulated among the believers. This event, which established Bahá'u'lláh's ascendancy in the eyes of the public over [Mírzá Yahyá]... removed the veil from the eyes of many among the followers of the Báb and enabled them to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.” RB2:294,298

“Yet, subsequently, Mírzá Yahyá had the temerity to write to his partisans that it was Bahá'u'lláh who did not come to meet him face to face.” BKG:241

.....
Bahá'u'lláh's numerous writings, His travel teachers and the mubáhilih resulted in the mass conversion of most of the Bábis into Bahá'ís. Bahá'u'lláh began defining His new religion.

“[During this period] Bahá'u'lláh revealed the prayers for fasting and the Tablet of the Branch, which foreshadowed ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's future station as the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. Other significant developments during [this time]...were the adoption of the term 'Bahá'í' in place of 'Bábi' and 'people of Bahá' in place of 'people of the Bayán,' a term that was used henceforth to refer to the followers of Mírzá Yahyá. Similarly, the greeting 'Alláh-u-Abhá' (God is Most Glorious) replaced 'Alláh-u-Akbar' (God is Most Great). Moreover...Tablets of Pilgrimage [were revealed for]...the houses of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh [in Shíraz and Baghdád].” CTR:157

“Mírzá Yahyá's dramatic fall was accompanied by an unprecedented outpouring of revelation by Bahá'u'lláh which soon afterwards resulted in the proclamation of His Message to the kings and rulers of the world.” RB2:298

.....
“Bahá'u'lláh had already acquainted His companions with His prophetic mission in the Ridván Garden on the eve of His departure from Baghdád and had announced His mission to the Bábis of Persia by dispatching Tablets and teachers from Adrianople. Now He returned to the announcement of His mission to the kings, rulers, and leaders of the world.” CTR:144

“Almost immediately after the “Most Great Separation” had been effected, the weightiest Tablets associated with His sojourn in Adrianople were revealed. [In] The Súriy-i-Mulúk, the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh (Súrih of Kings)...He, for the first time, directs His words collectively to the entire company of the monarchs of East and West...”

“Bahá'u'lláh, in the Súriy-i-Mulúk, discloses the character of His Mission; exhorts them to embrace His Message; affirms the validity of the Báb's Revelation; reproves them for their indifference to His Cause; enjoins them to be just and vigilant, to compose their differences and reduce their armaments; expatiates on His afflictions; commends the poor to their care; warns them that “Divine chastisement” will “assail” them “from every direction,” if they refuse to heed His counsels, and prophesies His “triumph upon earth” though no king be found who would turn his face towards Him.” Shoghi Effendi, GPB:171,172

“Centuries before, Muhammad had sent emissaries to rulers of some neighbouring lands announcing His mission and inviting them to embrace His Faith... The Báb...had addressed the 'concourse of kings and sons of kings' in His Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', and summoned them to deliver His Message to the peoples of the world...”

“The revelation of so many important Tablets, and the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh's Message to the kings and rulers of the world, had endowed the Faith with such ascendancy that by the summer of 1868 the authorities in Constantinople had become apprehensive of its rising prestige and power. The exaggerated reports and calumnies of Siyyid Muhammad [*and his associates*]...induced the Ottoman Government to remove the Author of such a dynamic Faith from the mainland and sentence Him to solitary confinement in a far-off prison [*Akká*].”

RB2:303,397-398

“Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká opened the last and longest phase of His ministry... Having initiated the proclamation of His prophetic mission to the kings and rulers of the world in Constantinople with a tablet addressed to [*the*] Sultán...and in Adrianople with the revelation of the Súriy-i-Mulúk, Bahá'u'lláh continued to reveal Tablets proclaiming His mission to the world's leaders during His incarceration in the prison-barracks of 'Akká.”

CTR:165,188

“Never since the beginning of the world,” Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, “hath the Message been so openly proclaimed.”

Shoghi Effendi GPB:212



In 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh made some modifications to the individual Súrih; then combined it with Tablets to five rulers, which were similar in tone to the Súriy-i-Mulúk. None of the five Tablets were well received by their recipients.

“Súrih-ye Haykal is one of the Tablets that was revealed in Akká in 1869. Its original text in Arabic is 88 printed page[s] and contains the texts of a number of Tablets addresses to the Kings and Rulers. It should not be mistaken by Lawh-i-Haykal which contains a selection of extracts from the Tablets addressed to the Kings and Rulers of the world and is written in pentacle form at the instruction of Bahá'u'lláh.”

https://bahai-library.com/wilmette_surih_haykal_notes

“The most important of His Tablets addressed to individual sovereigns Bahá'u'lláh ordered to be written in the form of a pentacle, symbolizing the temple of man.”

Shoghi Effendi, PDC: 44-49

“Bahá'u'lláh ordered the Súrih of the Temple and the Tablets to the Kings to be copied in the form of a pentacle...in the following order: the *Súriy-i-Haykal* itself, then the Tablet to Pope Pius IX, the Tablet to Napoleon III, the Tablet to Czar Alexander II, the Tablet to Queen Victoria and the Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh.”

RB3:133

“Of the various writings that make up the Súriy-i-Haykal, one requires particular mention. The Lawh-i-Sultán, the Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Bahá'u'lláh's lengthiest epistle to any single sovereign, was revealed in the weeks immediately preceding His final banishment to 'Akká.”

Universal House of Justice, SLH:ii-iii

“However, that Tablet was not dispatched until 1869...[by] Áqá Buzurg, a youth of seventeen...In two private interviews with Bahá'u'lláh the youth had been created anew and had been given the name Badi' (Wonderful)... Badi' succeeded in presenting Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the Sháh, who ordered Badi's immediate arrest. For three days he endured brutal torture without showing any sign of pain. On the fourth day his guards became so exasperated that they beat him to death.”

CTR:189



“Let us now consider the consequences that have ensued. The reaction of these monarchs was...varied...and...disastrous in its consequences... All failed completely in their duty to arise and extend their assistance... The dark warnings He uttered were haughtily scorned. The bold challenges He issued were ignored. The chastisements He predicted they derisively brushed aside.”

Shoghi Effendi, PDC:48

“...the process of the disintegration and rolling up of the old order had been set in motion when the summons of the Lord of Hosts to the kings and rulers of the world was either rejected or ignored.”

RB3:109

“[*This process*] passed from incubation to visible manifestation when Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies, enshrined for all time in the Súriy-i-Haykal, and uttered before Napoleon III's dramatic downfall and the self-imposed imprisonment of Pope Pius IX in the Vatican, were fulfilled. It gathered momentum when...the Great War [*World War I*] extinguished the Romanov [*Russian*], the Hohenzollern [*Bavarian*], and Hapsburg [*Austrian Empire*] dynasties, and converted powerful time-honored monarchies into republics. It was further accelerated...by the demise of the effete Qájár dynasty in Persia, and the stupendous collapse of both the Sultanate and the Caliphate [*secular and Islamic leadership of the Turkish Ottoman empire*]. It is still operating, under our very eyes [*Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1941, World War II began in 1939*], as we behold the fate which, in the course of this colossal and ravaging struggle, is successively overtaking the crowned heads of the European continent. Surely, no man...can escape the conclusion that the last hundred years may well be regarded, in so far as the fortunes of royalty are concerned, as one of the most cataclysmic periods in the annals of mankind.”

Shoghi Effendi, PDC:49

“...the generality of mankind, its leaders and its wise men, have not been able to discover the cause of their sufferings and the reason for such conflict and disorder in the world. Only those who have recognized the station of Bahá'u'lláh and embraced His Faith know that these calamities are the direct consequence of the rejection of the call of Bahá'u'lláh by mankind in general and by the kings and

leaders of the world in particular. They firmly believe that there is no refuge for man today unless and until he comes under the shadow of the Cause of God.”

.....
(optional) Discuss this historical background to the Súrih.

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COMPILATION 1 – First Half of the Súrih

There are many different approaches to deepening on this Súrih. Religious scholars tend to take a theological approach, where the Súrih’s verses are linked to other scriptures (ref. SAS & ISH). This deepening takes a more personal approach – by relating the Súrih both to Bahá’u’lláh and to you: Part I’s historical background presents Bahá’u’lláh’s troubling situation at the time, and the Part II interpretations expand on that context. This deepening’s questions, commentary and interpretations are intended show the relevance of the Súrih to ourselves as Bahá’is in this present day. The compilations help make the contents of the Súrih more accessible, but the underlying purpose of this deepening is to encourage a transformation in your nearness to Bahá’u’lláh.

Shoghi Effendi states: “the Súratu'l-Haykal, [is] one of the most challenging works of Bahá’u’lláh.” WOB:109

One challenging aspect is that there are interrupting trains of thought in the Súrih. The Part I and II compilations take a structural approach to the Súrih’s verses - here, the interrupted verses are separated and reconnected by topic. This topical rearrangement is not authoritative; it is just one way to simplify and detangle the lines of thought so the Súrih is easier to read. This section contains minimal commentary; those who prefer to interpret the Writings on their own should disregard the questions and comments; with study, the Súrih itself clarifies many of the more difficult topics. For group deepenings, do not read the verse numbers aloud.

The whole text of the Súrih is presented within the combined Parts I and II of this deepening, with some duplication. Part I contains most of the first half of the Súrih, the remaining verses are in Part II. There are three basic themes to the Súrih: the Temple theme (Compilations #1 and #2), the divine dialogues between Bahá’u’lláh and the Maidens (Compilations #1 and #3), and the Báb’s message to Bahá’u’lláh (Compilation #4). The Súrih seems to be God’s response to Bahá’u’lláh’s grief over the “Most Great Separation”; Bahá’u’lláh voices His complaints to the Maidens during the divine dialogues, God’s response is through the Temple theme and the Báb enters the conversation near the end of the Súrih.

Part I’s compilation consists of four sections with the Temple theme: the Opening verses; the Summons to the Body of the Temple; the Letters of the Temple; and verses which relate to the future followers of Bahá’u’lláh, the “erelong” “temples” of the Temple. Part I also contains two divine dialogues; between Bahá’u’lláh and the Maid of Remembrance, and between Bahá’u’lláh and the Maid of Inner Meanings.

It is highly recommended that you review the Súrih in its original form, from The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, before and/or after this deepening. When reading the Súrih, keep in mind that:

“Bahá’u’lláh wrote that He was both the addresser and the addressee of this Tablet.” bahai-library.com/wilmette_surih_haykal_outline, ref:RB3:133

Súrih of the Temple – Opening verses

- i This is the Súrih of the Temple which God hath ordained to be the Mirror of His Names between the heavens and the earth, And the Sign of His Remembrance amidst the peoples of the world.
- ii He is the Most Wondrous, the All-Glorious!
- 1 Glorified is He Who hath revealed His verses to those who understand. Glorified is He Who sendeth down His verses to those who perceive. Glorified is He Who guideth whomsoever He pleaseth unto His path. Say: I, verily, am the Path of God unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth; well is it with them that hasten thereunto!
- 2 Glorified is He Who sendeth down His verses to those who comprehend. Glorified is He Who speaketh forth from the Kingdom of His Revelation, and Who remaineth unknown to all save His honoured servants. Glorified is He Who quickeneth whomsoever He willeth by virtue of His word "Be", and it is! Glorified is He Who causeth whomsoever He willeth to ascend unto the heaven of grace, and sendeth down therefrom whatsoever He desireth according to a prescribed measure.
- 3 Blessed is He Who doeth as He willeth by a word of His command. He, verily, is the True One, the Knower of things unseen. Blessed is He Who inspireth whomsoever He willeth with whatsoever He desireth, through His irresistible and

inscrutable command. Blessed is He Who aideth whomsoever He desireth with the hosts of the unseen. His might is, in truth, equal to His purpose, and He, verily, is the All-Glorious, the Self-Subsisting. Blessed is He Who exalteth whomsoever He willeth by the power of His sovereign might, and confirmeth whomsoever He chooseth in accordance with His good pleasure; well is it with them that understand!

- 4 Blessed is He Who, in a well-guarded Tablet, hath prescribed a fixed measure unto all things. Blessed is He Who hath revealed unto His Servant that which shall illumine the hearts and minds of men. Blessed is He Who hath sent down upon His Servant such tribulations as have melted the hearts of them that dwell within the Tabernacle of eternity and the souls of those who have drawn nigh unto their Lord. Blessed is He Who hath showered upon His Servant, from the clouds of His decree, the darts of affliction, and Who beholdeth Me enduring them with patience and fortitude. Blessed is He Who hath ordained for His Servant that which He hath destined for no other soul. He, verily, is the One, the Incomparable, the Self-Subsisting.
- 5 Blessed is He Who hath caused to rain down upon His Servant from the clouds of enmity, and at the hands of the people of denial, the shafts of tribulation and trial; and yet seeth Our heart filled with gratitude. Blessed is He Who hath laid upon the shoulders of His Servant the burden of the heavens and of the earth—a burden for which We yield Him every praise, though none may grasp this save them that are endued with understanding. Glorified is He Who hath surrendered the embodiment of His Beauty to the clutches of the envious and the wicked—a fate unto which We are fully resigned, though none may perceive this save those who are endued with insight. Glorified is He Who hath left Husayn to make His dwelling amidst the hosts of His enemies, and exposed His body with every breath to the spears of hatred and anger; yet do We yield Him thanks for all that He hath destined to befall His Servant Who repairth unto Him in His affliction and grief.

Note: "Husayn" in verse 5 is likely to be reference to Bahá'u'lláh Himself since His birth name was Husayn-Ali and He refers to Himself as Husayn in the first verse of His Súriy-i-Mulúk (Tablet to the Kings), which revealed shortly after the Súrih of the Temple, "This is a Tablet from this Servant who is called Husayn in the kingdom of names... (SLH, p185)".

Consider: Note the importance placed on understanding and comprehension in the opening verses. This Súrih contains many interrupting explanatory verses which seem to be responses to unspoken questions, especially in the second half. Since the Súrih was addressed to Bahá'u'lláh, it was important for Him to understand the underlying meanings in the Súrih's message.

(optional) Discuss these verses.

Bahá'u'lláh and the Maid of Remembrance (the Síyáh-Chál Maiden)

- 6 While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden - the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord - suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God's honoured servants.
- 7 Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if ye be of them that perceive. This is He Whose Presence is the ardent desire of the denizens of the Realm of eternity, and of them that dwell within the Tabernacle of glory, and yet from His Beauty do ye turn aside.
- 8 O people of the Bayán! If ye aid Him not, God will assuredly assist Him with the powers of earth and heaven, and sustain Him with the hosts of the unseen through His command "Be", and it is! The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting. He shall purify them from the defilement of idle fancies and corrupt desires, shall lift them up to the heights of holiness, and shall cause them to manifest the signs of His sovereignty and might upon earth. Thus hath it been ordained by God, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.

- 9 O people of the Bayán! Would ye deny Him Whose presence is the very object of your creation, while ye rejoice idly upon your couches? Would ye laugh to scorn and contend with Him, a single hair of Whose head excelleth, in the sight of God, all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth? O people of the Bayán! Produce, then, that which ye possess, that I may know by what proof ye believed aforetime in the Manifestations of His Cause, and by what reason ye now wax so disdainful!
- 10 I swear by Him Who hath fashioned Me from the light of His own Beauty! None have I ever seen that surpasseth you in heedlessness or exceedeth you in ignorance. Ye seek to prove your faith in God through such holy Tablets as ye possess, yet when the verses of God were revealed and His Lamp was lighted, ye disbelieved in Him Whose very Pen hath fixed the destinies of all things in the Preserved Tablet. Ye recite the sacred verses and yet repudiate Him Who is their Source and Revealer. Thus hath God blinded your eyes in requital for your deeds, would ye but understand. Day and night ye transcribe the verses of God, and yet ye remain shut out, as by a veil, from Him Who hath revealed them.
- 11 In this Day the Concourse on high beholdeth you in your evil doings and shunneth your company, and yet ye perceive it not. They ask of one another: "What words do these fools utter, and in what valley are they wont to graze? Do they deny that whereunto their very souls testify, and shut their eyes to that which they plainly behold?" I swear by God, O people! They that inhabit the Cities of the Names of God are bewildered at your actions, while ye roam, aimless and unconscious, in a parched and barren land.

Note: The heavenly Maiden in verse 6, who is "the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord", is referred to as the "Maid of remembrance" in this deepening. Shoghi Effendi related verses 6 and 7 to Bahá'u'lláh's mystical experience in the Síyáh-Chál GPB:101-102.

Heavenly Maidens, called houris in Islam, can be considered as actual divine beings and/or as symbolic personifications of something else—for example, some have interpreted the Maid of remembrance to represent the Covenant.

Consider: The harsh rebukes to the Bábís are part of this revelation and should be considered as divine. Verses rebuking the Bábís comprise about a third of the Súrih. Although the Súrih is ostensibly from Bahá'u'lláh to Bahá'u'lláh, in this deepening, these rebukes are considered to be from the Maid of Remembrance—she responded to Bahá'u'lláh's grief by affirming His feelings about His detractors. The Súrih was transcribed and disseminated to be read by Bábís at that time, and was also meant to be read by future Bahá'ís and others. So the rebukes can be also be considered to be aimed directly at the unbelieving reader—the "ye" and "you" in the verses above.

(optional) Discuss these verses.

Summons to the Body of the Temple

- 12 O Pen of the Most High! Harken unto the Call of Thy Lord, raised from the Divine Lote-Tree in the holy and luminous Spot, that the sweet accents of Thy Lord, the All-Merciful, may fill Thy soul with joy and fervour, and that the breezes that waft from My name, the Ever-Forgiving, may dispel Thy cares and sorrows. Raise up, then, from this Temple, the temples of the Oneness of God, that they may tell out, in the kingdom of creation, the tidings of their Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, and be of them that are illumined by His light.
- 18 O Living Temple! Through Thee have We gathered together all created things, whether in the heavens or on the earth, and called them to account for that which We had covenanted with them before the foundation of the world. And lo, but for a few radiant faces and eloquent tongues, We found most of the people dumbfounded, their eyes staring up in fear. From the former We brought forth the creation of all that hath been and all that shall be. These are they whose countenances God hath graciously turned away from the face of the unbelievers, and whom He hath sheltered beneath the shadow of the Tree of His own Being; they upon whose hearts He hath bestowed the gift of peace and tranquillity, and whom He hath strengthened and assisted through the hosts of the seen and the unseen.
- 19 O Eyes of this Temple! Look not upon the heavens and that which they contain, nor upon the earth and them that dwell thereon, for We have created you to behold Our own Beauty: See it now before you! Withhold not your gaze therefrom, and deprive not yourselves of the Beauty of your Lord, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Erelong shall We bring into being through you keen and penetrating eyes that will contemplate the manifold signs of their Creator and turn away from all that is perceived by the people of the world. Through you shall We bestow the power of vision upon whomsoever We desire, and lay hold upon those who have deprived themselves of this gracious bounty. These, verily, have drunk from the cup of delusion, though they perceive it not.

20 O Ears of this Temple! Purge yourselves from all idle clamour and hearken unto the voice of your Lord. He, verily, revealeth unto you, from the Throne of glory, that there is none other God save Me, the All-Glorious, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Erelong shall We bring into being through you pure and undefiled ears which will heed the Word of God and that which hath appeared from the Dayspring of the Utterance of your Lord, the All-Merciful. They shall assuredly perceive the sweet accents of Divine Revelation that proceed from these most blessed and hallowed precincts.

21 O Tongue of this Temple! We, verily, have created thee through Our name, the All-Merciful, have taught thee whatsoever had remained concealed in the Bayán, and have bestowed upon thee the power of utterance, that thou mayest make mention of Mine exalted Self amidst My creatures. Proclaim, then, this wondrous and mighty Remembrance, and fear not the manifestations of the Evil One. Thou wert called into being for this very purpose by virtue of My transcendent and all-compelling command. Through thee have We unloosed the Tongue of Utterance to expound all that hath been, and We shall again, by My sovereign power, unloose it to speak of that which is yet to come. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee eloquent tongues that will praise and extol Me amongst the Concourse on high and amidst the peoples of the world. Thus have the verses of God been revealed, and thus hath it been decreed by the Lord of all names and attributes. Thy Lord, verily, is the True One, the Knower of things unseen. Nothing whatsoever shall prevent these tongues from magnifying their Creator. Through them, all created things shall arise to glorify the Lord of names and to bear witness that there is none other God save Me, the All-Powerful, the Most-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Nor shall those who make mention of Me speak aught unless they be inspired by this Tongue from its lofty station. Few, however, are they who understand! No tongue is there that speaketh not the praises of its Lord and maketh not mention of His Name. Amongst the people, however, are those who understand and utter praises, and those who utter praises, yet understand not.

31 O Living Temple! Stretch forth Thy hand over all who are in heaven and on earth, and seize within the grasp of Thy Will the reins of command. We have, verily, placed in Thy right hand the empire of all things. Do as Thou wilt, and fear not the ignorant. Reach out to the Tablet that hath dawned above the horizon of the pen of Thy Lord, and take hold of it with such strength that, through Thee, the hands of all who inhabit the earth may be enabled to lay fast hold upon it. This, in truth, is that which becometh Thee, if Thou be of those who understand. Through the upraising of Thy hand to the heaven of My grace, the hands of all created things shall be lifted up to their Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Gracious. Erelong shall We raise up, through the aid of Thy hand, other hands endued with power, with strength and might, and shall establish through them Our dominion over all that dwell in the realms of revelation and creation. Thus will the servants of God recognize the truth that there is none other God beside Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. With these hands, moreover, We shall both bestow and withhold, though none can understand this save those who see with the eye of the spirit.

61 O Feet of this Temple! We, verily, have wrought you of iron. Stand firm with such constancy in the Cause of your Lord as to cause the feet of every severed soul to be strengthened in the path of God, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Beware lest the storms of enmity and hatred, or the blasts of the workers of iniquity, cause you to stumble. Be immovable in the Faith of God, and waver not. We, verily, have called you forth by virtue of that Name which is the source of all steadfastness, and by the grace of each one of Our most excellent Names as revealed unto all who are in heaven and on earth. Erelong shall We bring into being through you other feet, firm and steadfast, which shall walk unwaveringly in Our path, even should they be assailed by hosts as formidable as the combined forces of the former and latter generations. In truth, We hold all grace in the hollow of Our hand, and bestow it as We please upon Our favoured servants. Time and again have We vouchsafed unto you Our favours, that ye may offer such thanks unto your Lord as to cause the tongues of all created things to speak forth in praise of Me, the All-Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

64 O Breast of this Temple! We, verily, have caused all things to mirror forth thy reality, and made thee as a mirror of Our own Self. Shed, then, upon the breasts of all created beings the splendours of the light of thy Lord, that they may be freed from all allusions and limitations. Thus hath the Daystar of wisdom shone forth above the horizon of the Pen of the Eternal King. Blessed are those who perceive it! Through thee have We created other sanctified breasts, and unto thee shall We cause them to return, as a token of Our grace unto thee and unto Our favoured servants. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee men with sanctified and illumined breasts, who will testify to naught save My beauty and show forth naught but the resplendent light of My countenance. These shall in truth be the mirrors of My Names amidst all created things.

67 O Inmost Heart of this Temple! We have made thee the dawning-place of Our knowledge and the dayspring of Our wisdom unto all who are in heaven and on earth. From thee have We caused all sciences to appear, and unto thee shall We cause them to return. And from thee shall We bring them forth a second time. Such, indeed, is Our promise, and potent are We to effect Our purpose. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee exponents of new and wondrous sciences, of potent and effective crafts, and shall make manifest through them that which the heart of none of Our servants hath yet conceived. Thus do We bestow upon whom We will whatsoever We desire, and thus do We withdraw from whom We will what We had once bestowed. Even so do We ordain whatsoever We please through Our behest.

Note: The Hands, Breast and Inmost Heart of the Temple have additional verses which are presented later in Part I or in Part II.

Some of the Parts of the Body of the Temple have been associated with groups, such as the Hands of the Cause of God and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s connecting African-Americans with the “pupil of the eye”^{SAB:114}.

Consider: Bahá’u’lláh said: “No spot is left on My body that hath not been touched by the spears of thy machinations.” Bahá’u’lláh, GPB:169

These verses show how the different Parts should be individually; but by working together, they are the essence of “unity in diversity” in form and function.

Note that none of the Parts of the Body reference emotions, which Persian traditions attribute to the heart and liver. Bahá’u’lláh’s human self was overwhelmed with grief over His tribulations and He was drowning in His emotions. These summons to His Body were meant to lift Him from His despair and help bring Him to the point where He would change Himself, so He could work towards His divine mission. Likewise, the Súrih may also have a transformational effect on Bahá’ís - human “temples”^(v12) - especially those who are like Bahá’u’lláh at the time of the Súrih, so overwhelmed by their own grief, emotions, dashed expectations, etc., that they cannot imagine a path towards their destined missions.

Note that the Bahá’ís are human “temples”, not divine “Temples”. This Súrih promises Bahá’u’lláh that He would have followers, the Bahá’ís, who would function as the Parts of His Own Temple. If you relate to any of the Parts of the Temple, try rereading those verses for a better insight into your essential purpose.

Reflect that each Bahá’í is part of the body of the Temple of the Bahá’í Faith; so each of us has a place and a purpose within the Faith too, just as each part of the body works as part of the whole. The last section of Part I offers another opportunity to explore the aspects of the individual Bahá’í within the Body of the Bahá’í Faith.

(optional) Discuss these verses.

Bahá’u’lláh and the Maid of Inner Meanings

22 O Maid of inner meanings! Step out of the chamber of utterance by the leave of God, the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Reveal, then, thyself adorned with the raiment of the celestial Realm, and proffer with thy ruby fingers the wine of the heavenly Dominion, that haply the denizens of this world may perceive the light that shone forth from the Kingdom of God when the Daystar of eternity appeared above the horizon of glory. Perchance they may arise before the dwellers of earth and heaven to extol and magnify this Youth Who hath established Himself in the midmost heart of Paradise upon the throne of His name, the All-Sufficing Helper—He upon Whose countenance shineth the brightness of the All-Merciful, from Whose gaze appear the glances of the All-Glorious, and in Whose ways are revealed the tokens and evidences of God, the omnipotent Protector, the Almighty, the All-Loving.

23 Grieve not if none be found to accept the crimson wine proffered by Thy snow-white hand and to seize it in the name of Thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most High—He Who hath appeared again in His name, the Most Glorious. Leave this people unto themselves, and repair unto the Tabernacle of majesty and glory, wherein Thou shalt encounter a people whose faces shine as brightly as the sun in its noontide splendour, and who praise and extol their Lord in this Name that hath arisen, in the plenitude of might and power, to assume the throne of independent sovereignty. From their lips Thou shalt hear naught but the strains of My glorification and praise; unto this Thy Lord beareth Me witness. The existence of these people, however, hath remained concealed from the eyes of all who, from everlasting, have been created through the Word of God. Thus have We made plain Our meaning and set forth Our verses, that perchance men may reflect upon the signs and tokens of their Lord.

24 These are they who, in truth, were not enjoined to prostrate themselves before Adam.^[1] They have never turned away from the countenance of Thy Lord, and partake at every moment of the gifts and delights of holiness. Thus hath the Pen of the All-Merciful set forth the secrets of all things, be they of the past or of the future. Would that the world might understand! Erelong shall God make manifest this people upon the earth, and through them shall exalt His name, diffuse

His signs, uphold His words, and proclaim His verses, in spite of those that have repudiated His truth, gainsaid His sovereignty, and cavilled at His signs. [1] *cf. Qur'an 2:30-34; 38:71-75. SLH:237*

25 O Beauty of the All-Glorious! Shouldst Thou chance upon this people and enter their presence, recount unto them that which this Youth hath related unto Thee concerning Himself and the things that have befallen Him, that they may come to know what hath been inscribed upon the Preserved Tablet. Acquaint them with the tidings of this Youth, and with the trials and tribulations He hath suffered, that they may become mindful of Mine afflictions, and be of them that understand. Recount, then, unto them how We singled out for Our favour one of Our brothers, how We imparted unto him a dewdrop from the fathomless ocean of knowledge, clothed him with the garment of one of Our Names, and exalted him to such a station that all were moved to extol him, and how We so protected him from the harm of the malevolent as to disarm even the mightiest amongst them.

26 We arose before the peoples of earth and heaven at a time when all had determined to slay us. While dwelling in their midst, We continually made mention of the Lord, celebrated His praise, and stood firm in His Cause, until at last the Word of God was vindicated amongst His creatures, His signs were spread abroad, His power exalted, and His sovereignty revealed in its full splendour. To this bear witness all His honoured servants. Yet when My brother beheld the rising fame of the Cause, he became filled with arrogance and pride. Thereupon he emerged from behind the veil of concealment, rose up against Me, disputed My verses, denied My testimony, and repudiated My signs. Nor would his hunger be appeased unless he were to devour My flesh and drink My blood. To this testify such of God's servants as have accompanied Him in His exile, and they that enjoy near access unto Him.

27 To this end he conferred with one of My servants ^[2] and sought to win him over to his own designs; whereupon the Lord despatched unto Mine assistance the hosts of the seen and the unseen, protected Me by the power of truth, and sent down upon Me that which thwarted his purpose. Thus were foiled the plots of those who disbelieve in the verses of the All-Merciful. They, truly, are a rejected people. When news spread of that which the promptings of self had impelled My brother to attempt, and Our companions in exile learned of his nefarious design, the voice of their indignation and grief was lifted up and threatened to spread throughout the city. We forbade, however, such recriminations, and enjoined upon them patience, that they might be of those that endure steadfastly.

[2] *Ustád Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Salmáni. See God Passes By, pp. 166-168, for an account of the events referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in this and following paragraphs. SLH:237*

28 By God, besides Whom is none other God! We withstood all these trials with forbearance, and enjoined upon God's servants to show forth patience and fortitude. Removing Ourselves from their midst, We took up residence in another house, that perchance the flame of envy might be quenched in Our brother's breast, and that he might be guided aright. We neither opposed him, nor saw him again thereafter, but remained in Our home, placing Our hopes in the bounty of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. When, however, he realized that his deed had been exposed, he seized the pen of calumny and wrote unto the servants of God, attributing what he had himself committed unto Mine own peerless and wronged Beauty. His purpose was none other than to inspire mischief amongst God's servants, and to instil hatred into the hearts of those who had believed in God, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.

29 By the One in Whose hand is My soul! We were dismayed by his deceitfulness—nay, bewildered were all things visible and invisible. Nor did he find respite from what he harboured in his bosom until he had committed that which no pen dare describe, and by which he disgraced the dignity of My station and profaned the sanctity of God, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Were God to turn all the oceans of the earth into ink and all created things into pens, they would not suffice Me to exhaust the record of his wrongdoings. Thus do We recount that which befell Us, that haply ye may be of them that understand.

30 O Pen of Eternity! Grieve not at the things that have befallen Thee, for ere long shall God raise up a people who will see with their own eyes and will recall Thy tribulations. Withhold Thy pen from the mention of Thine enemies, and bestir it in the praise of the Eternal King. Renounce all created things, and quaff the sealed wine of My remembrance. Beware lest Thou become occupied with the mention of those from whom naught save the noisome savours of enmity can be perceived, those who are so enslaved by their lust for leadership that they would not hesitate to destroy themselves in their desire to emblazon their fame and perpetuate their names. God hath recorded such souls in the Preserved Tablet as mere worshippers of names. Recount then that which Thou hast purposed for this Temple, that its signs and tokens may be made manifest upon earth, and that the brightness of this Light may illumine the horizons of the world and cleanse the earth from the defilement of those who have disbelieved in God. Thus have We set down the verses of God and made plain the matter unto those who understand.

.....
Note: "In a later Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh states that both the Pen of the Most High and the Temple are Himself." wilmetteinstitute.org/projects/haykal.tso.essay.html

In the original Súrih, the “divine dialogue” between Bahá’u’lláh and the Maid of inner meanings (v22-30) is between the verses of the summons to the “Tongue of the Temple” (v21) and to the “Hands” (v31). In this deepening, these abrupt changes in topic are considered to be “interruptions” and are used to separate the verses for the rearranged compilation.

Consider: Bahá’u’lláh’s grievances are a major part of this revelation, they should be considered as valid and befitting to His station.

Compare verses 26-29 to the Fire Tablet, which was revealed five years after the Súrih of the Temple. As a Manifestation of God, Bahá’u’lláh certainly had the power to alleviate His sufferings. Why do you think Bahá’u’lláh chose to experience so many tribulations?

Verses 23 and 30, which have an explanatory tone, are attributed to the Maid of inner meanings in this deepening; and verses 6-11, which have a fervent, passionate tone, are attributed to the Maid of remembrance. In this deepening, the Maid of inner meanings and Maid of remembrance are interpreted to be two separate divine Maidens (houris); they can also be interpreted to be two aspects of the same Maiden, or two symbolic figures, or ...

(optional) Discuss these verses.

Letters of the Temple*

** The word Haykal (Temple) is composed in Arabic of the four letters Há', Yá', Káf and Lám (HYKL). Its first letter is taken to symbolize the word Huvíyyah (Essence of Divinity); its second letter the word Qadír (Almighty), of which Yá' is the third letter; its third letter the word Karím (All-Bountiful); and its fourth letter the word Fadl (Grace), of which Lám is the third letter.*

SLH:237

13 We, verily, have ordained this Temple to be the source of all existence in the new creation, that all may know of a certainty My power to accomplish that which I have purposed through My word "Be", and it is! Beneath the shadow of every letter of this Temple We shall raise up a people whose number none can reckon save God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Erelong shall God bring forth from His Temple such souls as will remain unswayed by the insinuations of the rebellious, and who will quaff at all times of the cup that is life indeed. These, truly, are of the blissful.

36 O Living Temple! We have, in very truth, appointed Thee to be the sign of My majesty amidst all that hath been and all that shall be, and have ordained Thee to be the emblem of My Cause betwixt the heavens and the earth, through My word "Be", and it is!

37 O First Letter of this Temple, betokening the Essence of Divinity! We have made thee the treasury of My Will and the repository of My Purpose unto all who are in the kingdoms of revelation and creation. This is but a token of the grace of Him Who is the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

38 O Second Letter of this Temple, betokening My name, the Almighty! We have made thee the manifestation of Our sovereignty and the dayspring of Our Names. Potent am I to fulfil that which My tongue speaketh.

39 O Third Letter of this Temple, betokening My name, the All-Bountiful! We have made thee the dawning-place of Our bounty amidst Our creatures and the fountainhead of Our generosity amidst Our people. Powerful am I in My dominion. Nothing whatsoever of all that hath been created in the heavens or on the earth can escape My knowledge, and I am the True One, the Knower of things unseen.

46 O Fourth Letter of this Temple, betokening the attribute of Grace! We have made thee the manifestation of grace betwixt earth and heaven. From thee have We generated all grace in the contingent world, and unto thee shall We cause it to return. And from thee shall We manifest it again, through a word of Our command. Potent am I to accomplish whatsoever I desire through My word "Be", and it is! Every grace that appeareth in the world of being hath originated from thee, and unto thee shall it return. This, verily, is what hath been ordained in a Tablet which We have preserved behind the veil of glory and concealed from mortal eyes. Well is it with them that deprive themselves not of this manifest and unailing grace.

Notes: *“The Báb gave each of [His]...first disciples the title ‘Letter of the Living’... The Báb also uses the term “letter” with a broader meaning, applying it to all believers.”*

www.bahai-encyclopedia-project.org/ “Letters of the Living”

In Bahá’u’lláh’s Seven Valleys, which He wrote to a Sufi shayk circa 1860, Bahá’u’lláh explains the letters of the word for sparrow in a similar style to the Letters above; so this seemingly arbitrary method of describing the letters of a word is a traditional mystical literary form.

Four attributes of God are assigned to the Letters of the Temple: the Essence of Divinity, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful and Grace; these seen to be aligned with the four pillars of religion described by the Báb’s in one of His first writings:

“Verily, Religion is supported by four pillars: 1) Affirming the divine unity 2) Prophethood 3) Guardianship, and 4) The community of true believers. These are four gates, none of which is of any use without the others.”

The Báb, “The Spiritual Journey towards God”, bahaiprovisionaltabets.blogspot.com/2015/02/the-spiritual-journey-towards-god.html, T.Lawson provisional translation

In the Súrih, these “four pillars” of religion may be seen as supporting another symbol of the “Temple”, Bahá’u’lláh’s new religion, the Bahá’í Faith. All of the Súrih’s verses can be seen as relating, in one way or another, to this new “Temple”; so supporting Bahá’u’lláh and His new religion is at the core of the Súrih.

The attributes of the Letters of the Temple are studied further in Part II.

Consider: How does this passage relate to Bahá’u’lláh? How do the Letters of the Temple compare to the Body of the Temple?

Verse 13 states that there will be people raised up in the “shadow” of every “Letter,” what do you think this means? Does this passage relate to you – why or why not?

(optional) Discuss these verses.

Verses related to the Bahá’ís – “Erelong” “temples” of the Temple – (some verses are repeated)

- 8 O people of the Bayán!... The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting. He shall purify them from the defilement of idle fancies and corrupt desires, shall lift them up to the heights of holiness, and shall cause them to manifest the signs of His sovereignty and might upon earth. Thus hath it been ordained by God, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.
- 12 O Pen of the Most High! Harken unto the Call of Thy Lord, raised from the Divine Lote-Tree in the holy and luminous Spot, that the sweet accents of Thy Lord, the All-Merciful, may fill Thy soul with joy and fervour, and that the breezes that waft from My name, the Ever-Forgiving, may dispel Thy cares and sorrows. Raise up, then, from this Temple, the temples of the Oneness of God, that they may tell out, in the kingdom of creation, the tidings of their Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, and be of them that are illumined by His light.
- 13 We, verily, have ordained this Temple to be the source of all existence in the new creation, that all may know of a certainty My power to accomplish that which I have purposed through My word "Be", and it is! Beneath the shadow of every letter of this Temple We shall raise up a people whose number none can reckon save God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Erelong shall God bring forth from His Temple such souls as will remain unswayed by the insinuations of the rebellious, and who will quaff at all times of the cup that is life indeed. These, truly, are of the blissful.
- 14 These are servants who abide beneath the shelter of the tender mercy of their Lord, and who remain undeterred by those who seek to obstruct their path. Upon their faces may be seen the brightness of the light of the All-Merciful, and from their hearts may be heard the remembrance of Mine all-glorious and inaccessible Name. Were they to unloose their tongues to extol their Lord, the denizens of earth and heaven would join in their anthems of praise yet how few are they who hear! And were they to glorify their Lord, all created things would join in their hymns of glory. Thus hath God exalted them above the rest of His creation, and yet the people remain unaware!
- 15 These are they who circle round the Cause of God even as the shadow doth revolve around the sun. Open, then, your eyes, O people of the Bayán, that haply ye may behold them! It is by virtue of their movement that all things are set in motion, and by reason of their stillness all things are brought to rest, would that ye might be assured thereof! Through them the believers in the Divine Unity have turned towards Him Who is the Object of the adoration of the entire creation, and by them the hearts of the righteous have found rest and composure, could ye but know it! Through them the earth hath been established, the clouds have rained down their bounty, and the bread of knowledge hath descended from the heaven of grace, could ye but perceive it!
- 16 These souls are the protectors of the Cause of God on earth, who shall preserve its beauty from the obscuring dust of idle fancies and vain imaginings. In the path of their Lord they shall not fear for their lives; rather will they sacrifice their all in their eagerness to behold the face of their Well-Beloved when once He hath appeared in this Name, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Most Holy.
- 17 O Living Temple! Arise by the power of Thy Self in such wise that all created things will be moved to arise with Thee. Aid, then, Thy Lord through such ascendancy and might as We have bestowed upon Thee. Take heed lest Thou falter on

that Day when all created things are filled with dismay; rather be Thou the revealer of My name, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Assist Thy Lord to the utmost of Thine ability, and pay no heed to the peoples of the world, for that which their mouths utter is like unto the droning of a gnat in an endless valley. Quaff the water of life in My name, the All-Merciful, and proffer unto the near ones amongst the inmates of this lofty station that which shall cause them to become detached from all names and enter beneath this blessed and all-encompassing shadow.

- 18 ...[From] a few radiant faces and eloquent tongues... We brought forth the creation of all that hath been and all that shall be. These are they whose countenances God hath graciously turned away from the face of the unbelievers, and whom He hath sheltered beneath the shadow of the Tree of His own Being; they upon whose hearts He hath bestowed the gift of peace and tranquillity, and whom He hath strengthened and assisted through the hosts of the seen and the unseen.
- 19 O Eyes of this Temple!... Erelong shall We bring into being through you keen and penetrating eyes that will contemplate the manifold signs of their Creator and turn away from all that is perceived by the people of the world...
- 20 O Ears of this Temple!... Erelong shall We bring into being through you pure and undefiled ears which will heed the Word of God and that which hath appeared from the Dayspring of the Utterance of your Lord, the All-Merciful. They shall assuredly perceive the sweet accents of Divine Revelation that proceed from these most blessed and hallowed precincts.
- 21 O Tongue of this Temple!... Erelong shall We bring into being through thee eloquent tongues that will praise and extol Me amongst the Concourse on high and amidst the peoples of the world... Nothing whatsoever shall prevent these tongues from magnifying their Creator. Through them, all created things shall arise to glorify the Lord of names and to bear witness that there is none other God save Me, the All-Powerful, the Most-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Nor shall those who make mention of Me speak aught unless they be inspired by this Tongue from its lofty station... No tongue is there that speaketh not the praises of its Lord and maketh not mention of His Name...
- 31 O Living Temple!... Erelong shall We raise up, through the aid of Thy hand, other hands endued with power, with strength and might, and shall establish through them Our dominion over all that dwell in the realms of revelation and creation. Thus will the servants of God recognize the truth that there is none other God beside Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. With these hands, moreover, We shall both bestow and withhold, though none can understand this save those who see with the eye of the spirit.
- 34 Erelong shall God draw forth, out of the bosom of power, the hands of ascendancy and might, and shall raise up a people who will arise to win victory for this Youth and who will purge mankind from the defilement of the outcast and the ungodly. These hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the Self-Subsistent, the Mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth. They will enter the cities and will inspire with fear the hearts of all their inhabitants. Such are the evidences of the might of God; how fearful, how vehement is His might, and how justly doth He wield it! He, verily, ruleth and transcendeth all who are in the heavens and on the earth, and revealeth what He desireth according to a prescribed measure.
- 35 Should any one of them be called upon to confront all the hosts of creation, he would assuredly prevail through the ascendancy of My Will. This, verily, is a proof of My power, though My creatures comprehend it not. This, verily, is a sign of My sovereignty, though My subjects understand it not. This, verily, is a token of My command, though My servants perceive it not. This, verily, is an evidence of Mine ascendancy, though none amongst the people is truly thankful for it, save those whose eyes God hath illumined with the light of His knowledge, whose hearts He hath made the repository of His Revelation, and upon whose shoulders He hath placed the weight of His Cause. These shall inhale the fragrances of the All-Merciful from the garment of His Name, and shall rejoice at all times in the signs and verses of their Lord. As for those who disbelieve in God, and join partners with Him, they shall indeed incur His wrath, shall be cast into the Fire, and shall be made to dwell, fearful and dismayed, in its depths. Thus do We expound Our verses, and make plain the truth with clear proofs, that perchance the people may reflect upon the signs of their Lord.
- 41 Erelong shall God raise up, through Thee, those with hands of indomitable strength and arms of invincible might, who will come forth from behind the veils, will render the All-Merciful victorious amongst the peoples of the world, and will raise so mighty a cry as to cause all hearts to tremble with fear. Thus hath it been decreed in a Written Tablet. Such shall be the ascendancy which these souls will evince that consternation and dismay will seize all the dwellers of the earth.
- 61 O Feet of this Temple!... Erelong shall We bring into being through you other feet, firm and steadfast, which shall walk unwaveringly in Our path, even should they be assailed by hosts as formidable as the combined forces of the former and latter generations...

- 64 O Breast of this Temple!... Through thee have We created other sanctified breasts, and unto thee shall We cause them to return, as a token of Our grace unto thee and unto Our favoured servants. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee men with sanctified and illumined breasts, who will testify to naught save My beauty and show forth naught but the resplendent light of My countenance. These shall in truth be the mirrors of My Names amidst all created things.
- 67 O Inmost Heart of this Temple!... Erelong shall We bring into being through thee exponents of new and wondrous sciences, of potent and effective crafts, and shall make manifest through them that which the heart of none of Our servants hath yet conceived...
- 23 Grieve not... and repair unto the Tabernacle of majesty and glory, wherein Thou shalt encounter a people whose faces shine as brightly as the sun in its noontide splendour, and who praise and extol their Lord in this Name that hath arisen, in the plenitude of might and power, to assume the throne of independent sovereignty. From their lips Thou shalt hear naught but the strains of My glorification and praise; unto this Thy Lord beareth Me witness. The existence of these people, however, hath remained concealed from the eyes of all who, from everlasting, have been created through the Word of God...
- 24 These are they who, in truth, were not enjoined to prostrate themselves before Adam. They have never turned away from the countenance of Thy Lord, and partake at every moment of the gifts and delights of holiness... Erelong shall God make manifest this people upon the earth, and through them shall exalt His name, diffuse His signs, uphold His words, and proclaim His verses, in spite of those that have repudiated His truth, gainsaid His sovereignty, and cavilled at His signs.
- 30 O Pen of Eternity! Grieve not at the things that have befallen Thee, for erelong shall God raise up a people who will see with their own eyes and will recall Thy tribulations...
- 48 O Temple of the Cause!... Be patient in the Cause of Thy Lord, for erelong shall He raise up souls endowed with sanctified hearts and illumined eyes who shall flee from every quarter unto Thine all-encompassing and boundless grace.
- 40 O Pen! Send down out of the clouds of Thy generosity that which shall enrich all created things, and withhold not Thy favours from the world of being. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful in the heaven of Thine eternity, and the Lord of infinite grace unto all who inhabit the kingdom of names. Look not upon the people and the things they possess; look rather upon the wonders of Thy gifts and favours. Gather then Thy servants beneath Thy shade that shadoweth all mankind. Stretch forth the hand of bounty over all creation, and the fingers of bestowal over all existence. This, verily, is that which beseemeth Thee, though the people understand it not. Whosoever turneth his face towards Thee doeth so by Thy grace, and as to him who turneth away, Thy Lord, in truth, is independent of all created things. Unto this bear witness His true and devoted servants.

Note: The Breast and Inmost Heart of the Temple have additional verses that are presented in Part II.

Consider: Think of the “temples”, “servants”, “souls”, “faces”, “eyes”, “ears”, “tongues”, “hands”, “feet”, “breasts”, “inmost hearts”, “pens”, “mirrors” and “letters” as members of a community. Do you relate to any of these? If yes, reread the verse(s) that you are associated with; this may help you recognize your innate characteristics as well as your intended purpose within the Bahá’í Faith; also note any warnings. Internalizing and expressing God’s attributes can help us grow spiritually, but beware of feeding your ego.

Compare the “unity in diversity” of the parts of the body to unity in diversity of the “flowers of a garden”. What would “unity in diversity” be like if the concepts of the “body” and the “flowers” are combined?

Compare verses 31, 34-35, 41 to the Hands of the Cause of God and the members of the Universal House of Justice; these seem to relate to the Báb’s third pillar of “Guardianship”. Why would the “hands” inspire fear (v34, v41)?

(optional) Discuss these verses.

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This is the end if Part I. Those who wish to continue deepening with the Súrih’s remaining verses as a rearranged compilation should investigate Part II; however, Part II is harsher, more complicated and even deeper than Part I. It is highly recommended to read the Súrih from The Summons of the Lord of Hosts after Part I/before Part II.

If you enjoyed the historical background, you may gain further insights from studying Bahá’í history. Shoghi Effendi’s God Passes By and Adib Taherzadeh’s The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh series are highly recommended. Also of interest are the accounts of early believers, including: My Memories of Bahá’u’lláh, from Bahá’u’lláh’s barber, Ustád Muhammad-‘Alí-i-Salamání; Stories from the Delight of the Hearts by Mírzá Haydar ‘Alí – the English translation has been out-of-print (as of 2017), but hopefully will be reprinted with demand. Bahá’u’lláh’s cook, Aqa Husayn Aschi, also wrote a memoir, A Lifetime with Bahá’u’lláh: Events in Baghdad, Istanbul,

References *All of these references are publications in English. Do not read aloud for group deepenings!*

- TT = Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, Tablet of the Temple, first authorized English translation 2002.
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