

Translation

Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice: Commentary and Translation

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Baha'i Studies Review, Vol. 20 (2014, published 2018): 97–134.
(The original publication (print or PDF) may be ordered online from [Intellect](#).)

Abstract

Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice (Riḍvānu'l-'Adl, or Riḍwān al-'Adl; also known as Lawḥ-i Riḍvānu'l-'Adl and Lawḥ-i 'Adl) may be regarded as Baha'u'llah's paradigm ('Paradise' or ideal) of 'justice'. Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice transforms received notions of 'justice'. Although typically considered a 'secular' concern within rather specific institutional confines, Baha'u'llah allegorizes, personifies, symbolizes and otherwise expatiates on 'Justice' in such a way as to vivify the concept. Justice is made sacred, deriving from the 'Name' of God as 'The Just' (*al-'ādil*). Justice – encompassing, as it does, both faith and action – is the essence of the Baha'i concept of salvation, both individual and societal. As a framework of analysis, this paper is organized as follows: Introduction; Historical Context; Structure (*vis-à-vis* Apostrophes); Highlights of Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice; Theological Dimension of 'Justice'; Revelatory Dimension of 'Justice'; Authoritarian Dimension of 'Justice'; Contemporaneous Dimension of 'Justice'; Social Dimension of 'Justice'; Individual Dimension of 'Justice'; Conclusion; Appendix: Riḍwān al-'Adl: Paradise of Justice (translated by Adib Masumian). This study demonstrates how Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice presents a significantly expanded paradigm of justice, both in precept and practice.¹

Introduction

One of the 'best-known works'¹ of Baha'u'llah (1817–1892), prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith, is the Paradise of Justice (Riḍvānu'l-'Adl,² or Riḍwān al-'Adl³; also known as Lawḥ-i Riḍvānu'l-'Adl⁴ and Lawḥ-i 'Adl⁵). This is a major Tablet of the late Edirne (in Ottoman Turkey, in 'European' Turkey) or early Akka (in Ottoman Syria or Palestine) period, revealed during Baha'u'llah's public proclamation to the world's political and religious leaders (1866–1873). No exact date has been assigned. The circumstances of revelation have yet to be definitely determined. This paper will attempt to contribute to a fuller understanding of the place of this work within Baha'i history. Although openly directed, in particular, to the world's political and religious leaders and, in general, to the peoples of the world, Baha'u'llah's discourse is immediately focused on winning over the allegiance of the Babi [p. 98]

community. Three passages from the Paradise of Justice have been translated by Shoghi Effendi, whose selection and privileging of these texts provides a thematic context. The first passage is as follows:

In the *Riḍvānu'l-'Adl*, wherein the virtue of justice is exalted, He makes a parallel prediction: 'Erelong will God make manifest on earth kings who will recline on the couches of justice, and will rule amongst men even as they rule their own selves. They, indeed, are among the choicest of My creatures in the entire creation'.⁶

This quotation is found in Paragraph 15 below. Significantly, Shoghi Effendi characterizes Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice as a work 'wherein the virtue of justice is exalted'. Taking the 'virtue of justice' as a cue for understanding Baha'u'llah's intended meaning of 'justice', the Oxford English Dictionary's pertinent definition of 'justice' may serve to further illuminate the range of meanings of 'justice' as set forth in the Paradise of Justice:

The quality of being just or right, as a human or divine attribute; moral uprightness; just behaviour or dealing as a concept or principle (one of the four cardinal virtues: cf. cardinal adj. 2a); the exhibition of this quality or principle in action; integrity, rectitude; commutative justice, distributive justice, social justice, etc.⁷

Shoghi Effendi's cue that 'virtue of justice' constitutes the salient leitmotiv or epitome of Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice is a natural point of departure for the present study. Indeed, the theme of 'justice' centres and unifies the entire Tablet. Since a wide range of topics (sometimes personified) and persons are referenced or addressed here, 'justice' thus serves as the principal theme underpinning and animating the entire text, as seen in this second passage of the Paradise of Justice translated by Shoghi Effendi:

Know verily that the essence of justice and the source thereof are both embodied in the ordinances prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men, if ye be of them that recognize this truth. He doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation. Were His law to be such as to strike terror into the hearts of all that are in heaven and on earth, that law is naught but manifest justice. The fears and agitation which the revelation of this law provokes in men's hearts should indeed be likened to the cries of the suckling babe weaned from his mother's milk, if ye be of them that perceive. Were men to discover the motivating purpose of God's Revelation, they would assuredly cast away their fears, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, rejoice with exceeding gladness.⁸

This passage appears as Paragraph 46 below. It indicates that 'justice' – typically regarded as a secular concern – has a sacred origin and purpose. Although, at first blush, certain laws may appear harsh to some, those whose actions are in conformity with such laws have absolutely nothing to fear. Such fear, after all, is fear

of punishment, not fear of abiding by the dictates of the law. The third passage of the Paradise of Justice translated by Shoghi Effendi is as follows: [p. 99]

Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice, for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.⁹

This excerpt is found in Paragraph 49 below. The audience here is the 'people of the earth' (par. 46). This is a clear warning of approaching judgement and chastisement to be visited on the peoples of the world if they fail to turn towards God. (Part and parcel of this turning to God is the recognition of Baha'u'llah who, from the Baha'i perspective, is the source of revelation (divine guidance) for this day and age, and of faithful adherence to Baha'u'llah's socio-moral principles and precepts.) Such an admonition is classically prophetic in nature, harking back to the dire warnings of the 'Minor Prophets' of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible).

In his seminal essay on this Tablet, Muhammad Afnan has suggested that Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice can be read as consisting of three distinct 'parts', each of which was addressed to a different audience.¹⁰ In the first part (pars. 1–13), the concept of justice is apostrophized as one of God's divine attributes; in the second part (pars. 14–52), the Tablet addresses 'the manifestations of justice', as well as the 'people of the Bayān', and generally the entire human race; and in the third part (pars. 53–69), the focus shifts to Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī. The 'people of the Bayān' refers to the followers of Mīrẓā Yaḥyā Nūrī (d. 1912), a younger half-brother of Baha'u'llah. Mīrẓā Yaḥyā was also known as Ṣubḥ-i Azal ('Dawn of Eternity', or 'Azal', for short). Therefore the 'people of the Bayān' were also known as 'Azalīs'. As Shoghi Effendi explains: 'It was in this period [the late Edirne period] that the phrase 'the people of the Bayān', now denoting the followers of Mīrẓā Yaḥyā, was discarded, and was supplanted by the term 'the people of Bahā'.'¹¹

Baha'u'llah's decision to allegorically illustrate a 'Paradise' (Riḍvān) of justice through this Tablet is noteworthy. Muhammad Afnan notes¹² that the word 'Riḍvān' is only used in the title of one other Tablet by Baha'u'llah, the Riḍvān al-Iqrār, in which the word 'Riḍvān' conveys the idea that one's acknowledgement of the Manifestation of God is an earthly demonstration of divine Paradise, and an act that elicits the good-pleasure of God.

Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice may be regarded as Baha'u'llah's paradigm ('Paradise' or ideal) of 'justice'. As a framework of analysis, this paper is organized as follows: Introduction; Historical Context; Structure (vis-à-vis Apostrophes); Highlights of Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice; Theological Dimension of 'Justice'; Revelatory Dimension of 'Justice'; Authoritarian Dimension of 'Justice'; Contemporaneous Dimension of 'Justice'; Social Dimension of 'Justice'; Individual Dimension of 'Justice'; Conclusion; Appendix: Riḍvān al-'Adl: Paradise of Justice (translated by Adib Masumian); and Acknowledgements.

The provisional translation used in this paper is by co-author, Adib Masumian, whose translation has been posted online, based on the latest and best edition of the Arabic text.¹³ For the purposes of the present study, the translation has been logically broken down into numbered paragraphs, for ease of reference. Also consulted are the independent translations by [p. 100] Stephen Lambden¹⁴ and Juan Cole.¹⁵ With these preliminary considerations in mind, we turn our focus to the work itself.

Historical Context

'Riḍā after Nabil' (Recipient): Baha'u'llah revealed the Paradise of Justice in honour of Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrẓādī. Moojan Momen has greatly illumined the life and legacy of Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrẓādī (1246/1830–1317/1899), also known as Mīr Muḥammad-Riḍā, along with a photograph of this illustrious Baha'i as well.¹⁶ As for the date of the Riḍwān al-'Adl, Stephen Lambden offers this hypothesis:

It was addressed to a certain Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrẓādī (= 'Riḍā after Nabil' (= Muḥammad Riḍā')) (d. 1310/1892–3) one of the *Baqiyyat al-sayf* ('Remnant of the Sword'), the survivors of the Shaykh Tabarsī upheaval of 1848–9 (Ishraq Khavari, *Ganj*, No. 54, p. 208). This key Tablet of Bahā'u'llāh most likely dates from the late Edirne (Adrianople) period, perhaps early 1867.¹⁷

As for the recipient himself, Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrẓādī wrote a work that provides an account of the 1848 siege of Fort Shaykh Tabarsi, and illustrates the spread of the Babi and Baha'i religions in Shahmirzad, entitled *Vaqāyi'-i-Qal'ih va Shahmīrẓād* ('Events of the Fortress [of Shaykh Tabarsi] and Shahmirzad'), which spans 131 quarto pages in length. This memoir has been scanned in full and is available on H-Bahai.¹⁸ The memoir is not dated,¹⁹ but Shahmīrẓādī must have written it after receiving Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice, since he refers to that Tablet by name ('Lawḥ-i 'Adl').²⁰ Momen notes that this local history is 'difficult to follow, with few dates or names but numerous dreams recorded'.²¹

According to the late Baha'i historian, Ahang Rabbani, Shahmīrẓādī was just nineteen years old at the time of the Shaykh Tabarsī conflict, and did not personally witness the event he describes. Thus, his account must be based on eyewitness primary sources, and/or on personal knowledge gleaned from the reports of some of the survivors whom he may have met, including his elder brother. Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrẓādī's account of the Shaykh Tabarsi upheaval was evidently written late in his life.²² Therefore, the assertion that Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrẓādī was a veteran of that armed struggle may be called into question. However, this problem may be resolved based on the following explanation:

In *Maṣābiḥ-i Hidāyat*, 'Azīzu'llāh Sulaymānī notes that, although the young Muḥammad-Riḍā could not join his brothers at Shaykh Tabarsi – as his mother was

old and infirm, and needed someone to take care of her – Quddus nonetheless considered him ‘one who shared in the hardships endured by the people of the Fortress’ (of Shaykh Tabarsi).²³ Sulaymānī goes on to say that, much later on, ‘Abdu’l-Baha named Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā one of the *baqiyyat al-sayf* (‘remnants of the sword’, a title given to the survivors of the upheaval of Shaykh Tabarsi). When ‘Abdu’l-Baha was later asked by a certain Ghaḍānfar – a Baha’i living in Mazandaran – why this appellation had been given to Muḥammad-Riḍā, he replied with a Tablet that begins as follows: [p. 101]

O servant of the Holy Threshold! Thy letter hath been received. Although Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā, upon him be the Glory of the All-Glorious, was not physically present at the Fortress [of Shaykh Tabarsi], yet he was there in spirit.²⁴

Muḥammad-‘Alī Malik-Khusravī, in the *Tārīkh-i Shuhadā-yi Amr*, introduces Āqā Sayyid Muḥammad-Riḍā as an ‘Honorary Remnant of the Sword of the Blessed Fortress’ (of Shaykh Tabarsi).²⁵ This is probably based on the foregoing information.

‘People of the Bayān’ (Immediate Audience): This Tablet, the Paradise of Justice, combines time-specific and timeless elements. The key to unlocking the historical context of this Tablet may be based on internal evidence. It is clear that Baha’u’llah was writing at a time when he was experiencing fierce opposition from the ‘People of the Bayān’ (par. 57). Here, a clear historical context would help decode the text. A definite marker that this Tablet was revealed in the late Edirne period (or later) is provided by Nader Saiedi, who notes that ‘Baha’u’llah uses the title of *ahl-i-Bayān* (people of the Bayān)’ as ‘a distinction that became the norm in the late Edirne period’,²⁶ referring, as previously mentioned, to the partisans of Azal. Here, Baha’u’llah represents the ‘People of the Bayān’ as his immediate opponents. This generally refers to those Babīs who not only failed to recognize the advent of Baha’u’llah as the fulfilment of the Bab’s announcement that an even greater Messenger of God would appear soon, but who openly opposed Baha’u’llah as well.

Mīrzā Yaḥyā (Antagonist): As a further internal clue to the dating of the ‘Tablet of Paradise’, Baha’u’llah evidently refers to Mīrzā Yaḥyā in this passage:

The appointed Hour (*al-sā‘a*) came upon you in your heedlessness, for when the Beauty of the Beloved shone forth above the horizon of the Will of your Lord – the Almighty, the All-Powerful – you turned away from Him, cavilled at Him, rejected His signs, and ascribed partners unto Him, and in this heedlessness you persisted until you resolved to shed His blood – the blood of the Most Holy, the Most Pure, the Most Powerful, the Most Luminous (par. 26).

Jealousy on the part of Azal, intensified by his lust for leadership, grew pejoratively deeper over the course of the Edirne period. As evidence of this, Baha’u’llah apostrophizes ‘you’ who ‘resolved to shed His [Baha’u’llah’s] blood’ (par. 26). This clearly refers to Baha’u’llah’s half-brother and arch-rival, Mīrzā Yaḥyā (‘Azal’), who poisoned Baha’u’llah,²⁷ ‘probably’ with ‘sublimate of mercury’ (mercury chloride).²⁸

Then, failing that, Azal tried to persuade Baha'u'llah's personal attendant and barber, Ustād Muḥammad-'Alī Salmānī, to slit Baha'u'llah's throat.²⁹ Shoghi Effendi tells of such attempts on the life of Baha'u'llah:

Desperate designs to poison Bahā'u'llāh and His companions, and thereby reanimate his own defunct leadership, began, approximately a year after their arrival in Adrianople [Edirne], to agitate his mind. Well aware of the erudition [p. 102] of his half-brother, Āqāy-i-Kalīm, in matters pertaining to medicine, he, under various pretexts, sought enlightenment from him regarding the effects of certain herbs and poisons, and then began, contrary to his wont, to invite Bahā'u'llāh 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 Bahā'u'llāh with a shaking hand till the end of His life. ...

On another occasion this same Mīrzā Yaḥyā had, according to the testimony of one of his wives, who had temporarily deserted him and revealed the details of the above-mentioned act, poisoned the well which provided water for the family and companions of Bahā'u'llāh, in consequence of which the exiles manifested strange symptoms of illness. He even had, gradually and with great circumspection, disclosed to one of the companions, Ustād Muḥammad-'Alīy-i-Salmānī, the barber, on whom he had lavished great marks of favor, his wish that he, on some propitious occasion, when attending Bahā'u'llāh in His bath, should assassinate Him.³⁰

Consistent with his otherwise reclusive and self-protective behaviour, Azal's rivalry reached its pejorative nadir in resorting to attempted murder and conspiracy to murder. These episodes added a sordid, criminal dimension to Azal's intrigues. Obviously these were acts of desperation of unmitigated audacity, motivated by an all-consuming lust for leadership. These acts, for the most part, formerly were covert, and largely concealed. Notwithstanding, Azal resolved to openly challenge Baha'u'llah for leadership of the fledgling Babi community.

The 'Days of Stress' (Key Historical Context): On Saturday, 10 March 1866, the 'Most Great Separation' (*faṣl-i akbar*)³¹ occurred, in which Baha'u'llah moved to the house of Riḍā Big in another locale in Edirne, and, for around two months, remained in seclusion. According to Moojan Momen, this signal event 'precipitated' the 'Days of Stress'.³² The 'Days of Stress' (*ayyām-i shidād*) is the term by which Baha'u'llah characterizes a period of several years of intense, internecine strife, marked by the open hostility shown by Mīrzā Yaḥyā (or 'Azal') to Baha'u'llah, including Yaḥyā's efforts to wrest leadership of the Babi community by attempts to murder Baha'u'llah. The 'Days of Stress' are relevant to the historical contextualization of the Paradise of Justice because they arise in the context of opposition, by the Azalīs (followers of Azal), to Baha'u'llah's claims and leadership, particularly in relation to Mīrzā Yaḥyā's attempts on Baha'u'llah's life, followed by the 'Most Great Separation', and thereafter a public challenge (that was supposed to

be a showdown or contest between Baha'u'llah and Mīrzā Yaḥyā), and, finally, machinations on the part of Mīrzā Yaḥyā to persuade Ottoman officials to exile Baha'u'llah to a far-off place, by way of a harsh decree.

Baha'u'llah himself has made references to the 'Days of Stress' in some of his Tablets. In a Tablet to Javād-i Qazvīnī, for instance, Baha'u'llah writes:

In this year of stress, which hath been mentioned previously in the perspicuous Tablets, the great sedition and dire calamity shall come to pass with such severity as will remove the suckling babe from his mother's breast, and [p. 103] cast out the lovers from the land of their Beloved. Perchance, in these days and at those moments, that servant [Javād-i Qazvīnī?] will hold fast to the bounties of his Lord, cling to the hem of His mercy, and abide by His bidding with such firmness and steadfastness that if the people of enmity were to join forces with the hosts of obstruction, they would both be powerless to make him falter in his path.³³

This is primarily an exhortation to steadfastness, as the Babi community was experiencing internal turmoil due to the challenge by Azal to Baha'u'llah's prophetic claims. In another Tablet, Baha'u'llah writes: 'O Javād! This year is the 'Year of Stress' (*sani-yi shidād*)'.³⁴ Baha'u'llah assures 'Javād' (perhaps also Javād-i Qazvīnī) that such times of tribulation will not deter Baha'u'llah from proclaiming his mission:

O Javād! This is the Year of Stress unto men, and it is the year of God's decree. Were calamity to befall Us, this would be a good thing, and We would be content therewith; and if God were to protect Us from calamity, this too would be good, and We would be grateful for it.³⁵

Māzindarānī also mentions a third Tablet (recipient not specified), but provides a summary of its contents rather than reproducing the actual text. He writes:

In a Tablet [from Baha'u'llah] signed by Mīrzā Aqa Jan, dated 1283 AH, the 'Year of Stress' is mentioned, by which is meant the days of Mīrzā Yaḥyā's opposition, resistance, and adherence [to Siyyid Muḥammad Isfahani?].³⁶

It would be reasonable to assume that the 'Year of Stress', as mentioned here, is basically synonymous with the 'Days of Stress'. Therefore, this Tablet is a contemporaneous writing that confirms that 1283 AH was one such 'Year of Stress'. (In the Gregorian calendar, 1283 AH converts to 16 May 1866 to 4 May 1867.) There were doubtless more years of prolonged 'stress'.

The timing of the 'Days of Stress', however, has never been definitely resolved in the published literature. Shoghi Effendi offers some definite statements that shed further light on the significance and duration of the 'Days of Stress'. Basically, this was an intense and protracted 'period of travail', in which the 'first major internal convulsion' within the fledgling Babi community precipitated 'the heaviest blow ever sustained by Him [Baha'u'llah] in His lifetime'.³⁷ This period of time began

'approximately a year after their arrival in Adrianople', when Azal's nefarious 'designs to poison Bahā'u'llāh' were conceived in the ferment and turpitude of Azal's fratricidal rivalry, as described above. So, the onset of the 'Days of Stress' would be around a year after 12 December 1863, which was the date of Baha'u'llah's arrival in Edirne. That is to say, the 'Days of Stress' must have begun around late 1864.³⁸ The end of the 'Days of Stress', however, apparently was not so clearly indicated by Shoghi Effendi.

Riaz Ghadimi actually gives two definitions for the terms 'Days of Stress' (*ayyām-i shidād*) and 'Years of Stress' (*sinīn-i shidād*), which he uses interchangeably.³⁹ One refers to the years following the ascension of Baha'u'llah, when Mīrzā Muḥammad-'Alī and his accomplices broke the Covenant by [p. 104] opposing 'Abdu'l-Baha's newly-assumed leadership of the Baha'i community. The other definition – and the one relevant to this discussion – refers to the years in Edirne when Mīrzā Yaḥyā rose against Baha'u'llah, pursuing machinations that ultimately culminated in Baha'u'llah's excommunication of Mīrzā Yaḥyā and Siyyid Muḥammad Isfahani, which in turn resulted in the 'Most Great Separation'. The 'Most Great Separation' (*faṣl-i akbar*), which occurred on Saturday, 10 March 1866, happened shortly before the beginning of 1283 AH.

Thereafter, in September 1867 (month of Jamādīyu'l-Avval 1284 A.H.),⁴⁰ a public confrontation (Persian: *mubāhalih*; Arabic: *mubāhala*)⁴¹ between Baha'u'llah and Azal was arranged by mutual assent, to take place at the Sultan Selim mosque (Mosque of Selim in Edirne, Turkey) on a Friday. A twist in this tryst with fate took place when Azal failed to appear for this final and decisive showdown – despite the fact that Baha'u'llah waited until sundown. In the evening, later that same day, Baha'u'llah revealed the Tablet of Confrontation (Lawḥ-i Mubāhala), in which Baha'u'llah stated that he would be at Sultan Selim mosque for the next two days, waiting for Azal to appear. By failing to face Baha'u'llah, Azal lost face, whereupon many of Azal's partisans, in Edirne and Iran, deserted him.

An end date to the 'Days of Stress' may be reasonably fixed by a process of deduction. This period has been characterized by Shoghi Effendi as the 'rebellion' of Azal, as well as his covert plots and overt acts against Baha'u'llah. The 'Days of Stress' are coterminous with the continued machinations of Mīrzā Yaḥyā, among the Babis in Edirne, against Baha'u'llah. Unless all such evils ceased after the *mubāhala*, then the problems, although less severe, presumably continued. Shoghi Effendi indicates the unrelenting plots and cabals by Azal in this telling statement: 'The petitions of Mīrzā Yaḥyā which reached them through Siyyid Muḥammad, his agent, had provoked them' (here, referring to 'Mīrzā Husayn-Khān, the Mushīru'd-Dawliḥ, and his associates' as the 'authorities in the capital').⁴² So notorious was this entire ordeal that news of it reached the highest echelons of authority, culminating in a 'strongly worded Farmān, issued by Sulṭān Abdu'l-'Aziz', whose decree was 'to banish Bahā'u'llāh to the penal colony of 'Akkā, and Mīrzā Yaḥyā to Famagusta in Cyprus'. The original decree was 'to banish Bahā'u'llāh, Āqāy-i-Kalīm and Mīrzā

Muḥammad-Qulī, with a servant to 'Akkā, while the rest were to proceed to Constantinople'.

This imperial decree, however, 'provoked scenes of indescribable distress' and was soon 'revoked', upon Baha'u'llah's insistence and on the subsequent order of Major Umar Effendi, commander of the armed escort, at Gallipoli, shortly after Baha'u'llah and family were taken from Adrianople on 12 August 1868. The revised order was to exile Baha'u'llah, and a retinue of seventy (along with several Azalīs), to Akka, while Azal and the bulk of his immediate followers (along with four Baha'is) were dispatched to the remote island of Cyprus.⁴³

Clearly, Mīrzā Yahyā persisted in his machinations against Baha'u'llah, by dispatching various 'petitions' to 'Mīrzā Husayn-Khān, the Mushīru'd- Dawlih, and his associates' as the 'authorities in the capital', ultimately resulting, and culminating, in the 'strongly worded Farmān, issued by Sulṭān Abdu'l-'Aziz' which provoked 'scenes of indescribable distress'. This arguably is part and parcel of the 'Days of Stress'. Therefore, the 'Days of [p. 105] Stress' reasonably may be dated from around December 1864, to (on or shortly before) 21 August 1868, when Baha'u'llah embarked in an Austrian-Lloyd steamer for Alexandria, when Baha'u'llah was finally free of Azal.⁴⁴ The foregoing analysis is based largely on Shahrokh Monjazeb's well-grounded theory, to wit: 'We must also bear in mind that this special phrase (*Ayyām-i Shidād*), used by Bahā'u'llāh in His Tablets, was to underscore the psychological severity of that very turbulent period of perfidy and dissension in Edirne which brought an extraordinary level of distress and pain to the person of Bahā'u'llāh'.⁴⁵

These events likely provided the historical context (and possibly predated) the Paradise of Justice. The present writers find evidence that the Paradise of Justice definitely alludes to events within the 'Days of Stress'. Whether or not this important Tablet was revealed during the 'Days of Stress' or after is an open question for future researchers to resolve.

Dating the Paradise of Justice: Late Edirne Hypothesis: Similarly to Lambden, Cole proposes roughly the same date, based on this rationale:

This Tablet was probably written in winter-spring of 1867, at a time before Baha'u'llah decisively promulgated the ideal of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary governance, which he does only once he arrives in Akka. ... This Tablet toward the end refers to some Baha'is who were recently martyred. The first Baha'is to be martyred were Mīrzā Mustafa, Shaykh Ahmad, and Mīrzā 'Alī Naqī, all of Khurasan, at Tabriz on 8 January 1867. These three believers had been en route to Edirne to see Baha'u'llah, but were arrested by the Iranian authorities in Tabriz. I think it most likely that these are the martyrs referred to by Baha'u'llah in this Tablet, which would then date it to winter-spring, 1867.⁴⁶

Baha'u'llah mentions those 'who suffer martyrdom in the path of God in these days' (par. 66), but the martyrs are not named. Balyuzi describes the events that culminated in the martyrdoms of Mīrzā Mustafa, Shaykh Ahmad and Mīrzā 'Alī Naqī. Balyuzi relates that these three, en route to Edirne to attain the presence of Baha'u'llah, arrived in Tabriz. There, they met a certain Siyyid 'Alī-yi 'Arab, who, in the course of their conversation, deprecated Baha'u'llah in vile terms. Incensed and enraged, the three 'rushed him and tied around his neck the shawl he wore round his waist, which led to his death'. Shaykh Ahmad did not deny his role in the killing. The three were later beheaded, not because of the murder, 'but because they were Baha'is'.⁴⁷

The acts of these three martyrs, in taking the life of their victim, was obviously contrary to Baha'u'llah's command in the preceding paragraph: 'Do thou forbid them to shed blood', and further: 'We, verily, have made this unlawful unto them in all the Tablets (*innā qad nahyināhum fī kullil alwāḥ*)' (par. 65). It may be that Baha'u'llah, if alluding to these three recent martyrs, takes this recent episode as an opportunity to emphasize that, while martyrdom is praiseworthy, violence is not.⁴⁸ In addition to those martyrdoms, however, another Baha'i – this one completely innocent of any crime – was also martyred shortly thereafter.⁴⁹ Balyuzi notes that a petition – addressed to Baha'u'llah and written by Mīrzā Muḥammad-'Alī-yi Zanjānī, a physician – was found in the pockets of the Baha'i martyrs of Tabriz. This [p. 106] was apparently grounds enough for the execution of that physician, despite the fact that he not only had nothing to do with the aforementioned murder of Siyyid 'Alī-yi 'Arab, but was not even in Tabriz at the time of the incident. It is possible, therefore, that Baha'u'llah's reference to martyrs in the Paradise of Justice could have also included Mīrzā Muḥammad-'Alī-yi Zanjānī.

In addition to the foregoing evidence, others have pointed to the similarity between the language Baha'u'llah uses in this Tablet when mentioning John the Baptist (pars. 20–24) and his treatment of that figure in the Kitāb-i Badī',⁵⁰ revealed sometime between September 1867 and August 1868,⁵¹ to draw the conclusion that this Tablet was probably revealed in the late Edirne period.

Cole's point that this Tablet was written prior to the Akka period is based on an argument from silence – that is, it was revealed 'at a time before Baha'u'llah decisively promulgated the ideal of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary governance'. Yet, Baha'u'llah does address the kings and rulers of the world so:

O concourse of rulers! Crown your heads with the diadems of justice (*akālil al-'adl*), that the regions of every land may be illumined with their light. Thus have We bidden ye in token of Our grace unto you.

O concourse of kings! Erelong will God make manifest on earth kings who will recline on the couches of justice (*namāriq al-'adl*), and will rule amongst men even as they rule their own selves. They, indeed, are among the choicest of My creatures in the entire creation. (pars. 14–15)

Here, if not evidence of Baha'u'llah's grander proclamation to the world's most powerful individuals, there is a clear anticipation of Baha'u'llah's increasing concern with good governance, for which 'justice' is a metonym and mandate. Thus, if anything, Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice is transitional, from proclamation to the 'people of the Bayan' to the peoples of the world: 'O people' (par. 16). Both audiences – respectively immediate and virtual – are concurrently in view. The precise historical context of this Tablet, therefore, is a matter for further investigation.

Dating the Paradise of Justice: Early Akka Hypothesis: According to Ishraq-Khavari, this Tablet may have been revealed in the early Akka period. As has been mentioned previously, Baha'u'llah alludes to Baha'i martyrs towards the end of his Paradise of Justice. Among the Baha'i martyrs of the early Akka period were Āqā Buzurg-i Nishāpurī, known as Badī' (d. 1869), Āqā Naqd-'Alī Baṣīr (d. 1870) and Āqā Siyyid Ashraf-i Zanjān (d. 1870).⁵² It is possible, therefore, that these were the individuals Baha'u'llah had in mind when making that reference to martyrs. Lack of specificity as to the identity of these martyrs, however, has led others to place this Tablet in the late Edirne period (c. 1866–1867), rather than the early Akka period (c. 1868–1870).

Internal evidence provides two further clues as to a possible alternative date for the revelation of the 'Tablet of Paradise'. Paragraph 64 states, in part: 'O My name! Cleanse My servants of every fragrance that is not of Me' (*an yā ismī ṭah-hir 'ibādī 'an nafahāti dūnī*). Then, in the very next [p. 107] paragraph, Baha'u'llah commands: 'Do thou forbid them to shed blood', and further: 'We, verily, have made this unlawful unto them in all the Tablets' (*innā qad nahyināhum fī kullil alwāḥ*)' (par. 65). 'O My name!' clearly refers to Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā, while 'them' has the Baha'is in mind.

According to independent scholar, Shahrokh Monjazeb, the first time that Baha'u'llah – in an open, 'proclamatory' epistle – publicly commanded the Baha'is, in writing,⁵³ not to kill another – under any circumstances – was possibly in the Lawḥ-i Sulṭān (Tablet to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh).⁵⁴ Baha'u'llah writes: 'Know ye that to be killed in the path of His good pleasure is better for you than to kill'.⁵⁵ The Lawḥ-i Sulṭān was revealed in Edirne sometime between September 1867 and August 1868,⁵⁶ but not delivered until the Akka period, which is when this Tablet was made known to the Baha'is as well (sometime after mid-1869).

As to the time-frame of the Paradise of Justice, perhaps the most telling piece of internal evidence is as follows: 'The harmful effect of their deeds hath redounded upon the very Root of the Tree' (par. 65). On 22 January 1872, a murder took place in Akka. This may be the event to which Baha'u'llah alludes in par. 65. New light has been shed on this heinous event by Necati Alkan, whose research is based largely on minutes of court proceedings from Syria preserved in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul: 'And whereas Baha'i sources state that the seven Baha'is killed the three Azalīs actively based on their mischief, the minutes of the Ottoman court

mention that the seven Baha'is acted based on money issues between the two parties and defended themselves after being attacked by the Azalis'.⁵⁷

Considering that the martyrs of Tabriz were executed in January 1867; that Baha'u'llah may not have publicly condemned the shedding of blood, under any circumstances, in a major Tablet before September 1867; and that Baha'u'llah could be referring retrospectively to that interdict (in the *Lawḥ-i Sulṭān*) in this Tablet (par. 65: 'We, verily, have made this unlawful unto them in all the Tablets...'), one could make a case that certain allusions in the 'Paradise of Justice' ('The harmful effect of their deeds...', 'As for them who suffer martyrdom...') refer to events in the early Akka period, rather than those of Edirne, and that Baha'u'llah thus revealed this Tablet sometime after 22 January 1872 – the day when the aforementioned Azalis were murdered.⁵⁸ This is simply an alternative theory for the dating of the Paradise of Justice.

In the final analysis, whether the Paradise of Justice was revealed during the late Edirne period or in the early Akka period does not have much bearing on the central message of this Tablet. As previously stated, the Paradise of Justice has both time-referenced and timeless elements, which is to say that, regardless of when it was actually written and/or promulgated among the 'people of the Bayān' as well as the 'people of Bahā', the themes of 'justice' belong to the 'timeless' dimension of the Paradise of Justice. A thematic and rhetorical analysis follows.

Structure (vis-à-vis Apostrophes)

Linguist Christina Alm-Arvius notes that 'personification can be coupled with apostrophe'. She adds that apostrophe, as a rhetorical device, 'denotes direct, vocative addresses to beings that may not be actually or factually present'.⁵⁹ [p. 108] Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice opens with a Preamble (pars. 1–3), followed by an apostrophe to 'O this name!' (the spirit of 'Justice', pars. 4–13). Then the population at large ('O People') is addressed (pars. 16–17). Their leaders ('O Embodiments of Justice') are called upon next (pars. 18–24). Then Baha'u'llah speaks to the Babis ('O people of the Bayān') directly (pars. 25–26). He switches back to people generally ('O people!') and to their leaders as well (pars. 27–44). This is followed by Baha'u'llah's discourse on the various forms of 'Justice' (pars. 45–52). The world at large ('O people!') is called upon once again (pars. 49–52). Then Baha'u'llah addresses the recipient of this Tablet ('O servant!'), who is Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī (pars. 53–57). Baha'u'llah then closes with a special prayer and benediction (pars. 49–52).

Highlights of Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice

Preamble (pars. 1–3): Baha'u'llah describes this Tablet as the Paradise of Justice, laden with 'wondrous fruits' (par. 1). He singles out one of God's names, 'The Just' (pars. 2–3), from which God inspires ('breathes') the 'Spirit of Justice' into 'all

that dwell on earth'. This is stated as a potentiality, of course. The purpose is to empower people to 'arise to rule over themselves and over others with pure justice' (par. 3).

'O this name!' (Spirit of Justice) (pars. 4–13): Baha'u'llah addresses 'The Just' (or 'Justice') as though an intelligence. He does so by apostrophe (a figure of speech, in which some thing is addressed, as though to a person, pars. 4, 5, 6, 12, 13) and personification (another figure of speech). 'Justice' is a spiritual 'sun', the radiance of which can dispel the darkness of 'oppression' (par. 4). Divine 'Justice' is the 'very source' of justice on earth (par. 5). 'Justice' proceeds from Baha'u'llah, who 'ascended the throne of justice' (par. 6).

In this Tablet, Baha'u'llah singles out, or privileges, the quality or attribute of 'Justice' for special mention (par. 7). The various 'Names' of God, as manifested through Baha'u'llah, are 'raiments' (i.e. perfections or powers). 'Justice' may 'adorn' a person by God's will and power (par. 10). The spirit of 'Justice' is greatest when its quality of 'detachment' (or self-disinterest) is at its apex (par. 11). In due course, God will raise up the very embodiments of the spirit of 'Justice' (par. 12), 'through whom We shall roll up the standard of oppression and unfurl the banner of justice between the heavens and the earth' and through whom 'God shall blot out every trace of injustice from the earth' (par. 12).

Muhammad Afnan believes that, although this could be interpreted as a general allusion to sovereigns and others who hold the reins of secular power, it is probably a specific reference to the members of the Universal House of Justice.⁶⁰ Justice, moreover, is the great 'ornament of the sovereigns', who rule 'with equity and complete sincerity towards their subjects' (par. 13) The true 'crown' of rulers is 'diadems of justice' (par. 14). 'Erelong' such just kings will appear as 'the choicest of My creatures in the entire creation' (par. 15).

'O People' (pars. 16–17): Baha'u'llah enjoins 'justice', 'courtesy and equity' for the peoples of the world (par. 16). Baha'u'llah, moreover, has 'planted trees of justice in this Paradise' which 'will, erelong, bear fruit' (par. 17). [p. 109]

'O Embodiments of Justice' (pars. 18–24): Leaders should call upon the followers of the Bab to recognize Baha'u'llah (par. 18). The Babis' belief in the Bab is questioned – i.e. compromised by their rejection of Baha'u'llah, foretold by the Bab (par. 19). Such people are 'foolish' and 'heedless' (par. 19) The Bab is compared to John the Baptist, and Baha'u'llah to Christ (par. 20). Like the followers of John the Baptist in rejecting Christ, the Babis have done the same with respect to Baha'u'llah (pars. 20–24).

'O people of the Bayān' (pars. 25–26): The Babis are then addressed directly, and castigated for their disbelief in Baha'u'llah, even though foretold by the Bab (pars. 25–26).

'O people!' and their Leaders (pars. 27–44): God speaks through Baha'u'llah, by revelation (par. 28). People should 'judge fairly' (par. 33) and recognize Baha'u'llah by virtue of his inherent qualities, independent of all bias, whether individually or by the influence of religious leaders (pars. 30–31).

Baha'u'llah is the metaphorical 'Flute' of God from which heavenly 'melodies' are played (par. 34). Switching metaphors, Baha'u'llah rhetorically asks: 'Can the sun that riseth above the horizon of Revelation shine aught but light from itself?' (par. 34). Baha'u'llah is now the 'Supreme Pen' set in motion by 'the fingers of your Lord' (par. 35). 'The dwellers of the Realms above are astonished' by the people's rejection of Baha'u'llah, such that the 'Eye of Justice' and the 'Reality of Justice' are perturbed thereby (par. 36). 'Say: O people! Ye have entered Paradise, and have attained unto a Rose' (par. 38).

'Explanation of Justice' (pars. 45–52): Baha'u'llah explains that 'justice consisteth of innumerable degrees and incalculable meanings' (par. 46). The 'essence of justice and the source thereof' are embodied in Baha'u'llah's laws (par. 46). Baha'u'llah 'doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation' (par. 46). 'It is through justice that every one is rendered his due' (par. 47). Recognition of Baha'u'llah itself is an act of justice. (par. 48.) '... whoso believeth not' in Baha'u'llah hath indeed abandoned the stronghold of justice' (par. 48).

'O people!' (pars. 49–52): The advent of 'Divine justice' is approaching, 'for the promised hour is now come' (par. 49). 'Say: O people! Adorn your bodies with the ornament of justice' (par. 50).

'O servant!' (Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrzādī, pars. 53–57): Baha'u'llah calls upon the 'Supreme Pen!' to manifest 'Riḍā after Nabīl' as 'one of the embodiments of justice' which is 'his faith in God', which 'is a justice unmatched by any other' (par. 53). The following historical account will give the reader a fair idea of the character of Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrzādī in light of Baha'u'llah's commendation of him:

Of the two youngest sons of Āqā Mir Muḥammad 'Alī, Mir Abu Talib Shahmīrzādī ... survived Shaykh Tabarsi, while Mir Muḥammad Rida Shahmīrzādī ... had been left behind to look after their mother. After the end of the Shaykh Tabarsi episode, a severe persecution erupted in Shahmirzad [p. 110] and after a time the family were forced to move in with their sister Ma'sumih in Sangsar. Even here they were relentlessly persecuted, at one stage being reduced to eating grass. Although still in their teens and early twenties, the two brothers took on extensive responsibilities looking after the dependents of those who had been killed at Shaykh Tabarsi. Their property had been looted and so they began as pedlars, eventually developing a pattern of travelling together through Mazandaran in the winter months, taking with them salt, fruit and dried foods from Shahmirzad, and returning to the Sangsar area in the summer with rice from Mazandaran. In all the years of their travelling, they faced many hardships and much persecution but they never hid their religion from anyone. Over the years, these two succeeded in converting many

people in Mazandaran, in villages such as Ivil and Rawshankuh and towns such as 'Alīyabad (Shahi). The two brothers married the two daughters of a Babi, Mulla Amina of 'Arab-Khayl in Mazandaran, and also established a residence in that village.

In early 1861 the two brothers were arrested in Bihnamir and taken together with three of the Babis of that area to Tehran where they were imprisoned together with several other Babis for two and a half years. At the shah's court there was a native of Sangsar called Āqā Muḥammad Sangsari of whom the shah was so fond that he called him 'Dā'ī' (uncle). This man had been a close friend of the brothers' father, Mir Muḥammad 'Alī, and now managed to obtain orders for their release. (He had also written to Mahdi-Qulī Mīrzā during the Shaykh Tabarsi episode and asked him to ensure the safety of the sons of Mir Muḥammad 'Alī – an action that enabled Mir Abu Talib to survive this episode.) The two brothers would not leave the prison however until their fellow prisoners were also released and Da'ī arranged this as well. The latter took the two brothers to his home in Tehran as guests and they convinced him of the truth of the Baha'i Faith. After this they undertook a trip to Isfahan, Yazd and Khurasan in the company of Ibn Asdaq, visiting Baha'i communities. Several accounts comment on the joyful and radiant faces of these two brothers and mention that the Baha'is in each place looked forward to their visits.⁶¹

Baha'u'llah calls upon Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī to dispel the 'darts of doubt' among the Babis and to 'draw their attention to this Announcement', i.e. Baha'u'llah (par. 55). Faithful to this charge, Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī fulfilled his mission. Here is one example:

A similarly important local cleric was Mulla Muḥammad Hasan (d. 1322/1902) who was converted in 1285/1868 after speaking with Mir Muḥammad Rida (Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī). He renounced his religious leadership and became a builder as well as a copier of the Baha'i scriptures. Nevertheless, his relatives tried to kill him. He was responsible for spreading the Baha'i Faith to the village of Aftar. His wife was also a distinguished Baha'i.⁶²

Another example of his effectiveness as a Baha'i teacher is seen in the fact that 'about half of the villagers (of Ivil) became Baha'is, a process that was assisted by the visits of such persons as Mulla 'Alī Jan Mahfuruzaki ... and Mir Muḥammad Rida Shahrīrādī'.⁶³ [p. 111]

Baha'u'llah further takes to task the Babis for their opposition (pars. 56–58) and for having 'broken the Covenant of God' (par. 59), such that Baha'u'llah is 'left alone amidst the people of the Bayān' (par. 60). The Babis are directly addressed (par. 61) and called upon to recognize Baha'u'llah as the one foretold by the Bab (par. 61). In rejecting Baha'u'llah, the wayward Babis are the oppressors, notwithstanding that Baha'u'llah has raised up the 'embodiments of justice', i.e. the Baha'is (par. 62). Such Babis are considered satanic (par. 63). Baha'u'llah asks Shahrīrādī to 'attract' the Babis by 'the wonders of My melodies and My words' (par. 64) – in other words, to proclaim Baha'u'llah's message among the remnant Babis. As an illustration of

how this illustrious Baha'i was faithful to Baha'u'llah's command, the following episode – which Momen relates – is of interest:

In 1276/1859, there was an episode of persecution in Sangsar when the mujtahid of the town wrote to the governor of Simnan complaining about the Babis in the village. (This mujtahid was related to Mir Muḥammad Rida and had been a Babi at first but had apostatized after the defeat of the Babis at Shaykh Tabarsi.) The governor sent some officials who ill-treated some of the Babis. They arrested Mir Muḥammad Rida and his nephew, bound them and took them off towards Sangsar. On the way, they came to a shrine called Imamzadih Qasim (1 kilometre north of Sangsar) of which Mir Muḥammad Rida had been custodian until he had been replaced (this was the original home village of the family). He spoke for over an hour to the people of the village that surrounds this shrine (population 500 in 1951) and several were converted. When they reached Sangsar, they arrested Ma'sumih, the sister of Mir Muḥammad Rida, her son and their cousin as well as two other Babis and insulted and harassed them. They released Ma'sumih and took the other six off to Simnan, where they were thrown into prison. After three months of imprisonment, they were fined and released.⁶⁴

Baha'u'llah also calls upon Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrzādi: 'Do thou forbid them to shed blood' (par. 65), because those 'who dispute with and wage war against men have indeed forsaken the Paradise of Justice' (par. 64). As for those who 'suffer martyrdom in the path of God', they will be welcomed by 'the entire company of the Concourse on High', who 'shall stand ready to receive them bearing the banners of this Cause' (par. 66).

In upholding the 'Covenant of God' (par. 59), Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahmīrzādi remained faithful to the end:

After the passing of Baha'u'llah, Jamal Burujirdi, who had travelled frequently to Mazandaran and was highly regarded there, wrote letters to gather support for Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī in Barfurush, Sari and Mahfuruzak but was unsuccessful owing to the efforts of Haji Mīrzā Haydar 'Alī Isfahani and Mīr Muḥammad Rida Shahmīrzādi.⁶⁵

And further:

In 1893, following the death of Baha'u'llah, Mir Muḥammad Rida visited 'Abdu'l-Baha in Akka. During this trip, he became aware of the schemings of Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī (even though these had not yet become public) [p. 112] and upon his return, he warned the Baha'is of the area so effectively of the dangers of failing to follow 'Abdu'l-Baha that no one from the area later followed Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī, despite two visits to the area by Āqā Jamal Burujirdi, a Baha'i who sided with Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī.⁶⁶

Shahmīrzādi's death is noteworthy as well:

When Mir Muḥammad Rida Shahrīrādī ... died in Barfurush, the people of the town forbade his burial. It was the Luri Baha'is who enabled him to be buried in their quarter.⁶⁷

There is also more extensive biographical information on Shahrīrādī available in a variety of Persian sources.⁶⁸

'Prayer' and Benediction (pars. 68–69): Baha'u'llah closes with a prayer, in which God is acknowledged as 'the One Who hath planted the trees of justice in the Paradise of Thy Revelation and Thy Wisdom', and prays that the faithful may 'abide beneath the shadow of their leaves' (par. 67). Baha'u'llah ends the Tablet by inviting the faithful to partake of 'the fruits of these trees' and to 'rest beneath the shadow of their leaves' of the trees in the 'Paradise of Justice' (par. 68). Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī is given this great 'Bounty' (par. 69).

Theological Dimension of 'Justice'

Does Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice offer a new paradigm of justice? Certainly 'justice' is used in a number of ways, which can be appreciated within the following framework of analysis, encompassing six dimensions of justice: (1) theological, (2) revelatory, (3) authoritarian, (4) contemporaneous, (5) social, and (6) individual.

A place to begin might be termed 'theological justice'. One can say that the universe itself, in a sense, is founded on 'justice' as it pertains to order. When God, Baha'u'llah writes, ascended the 'throne of justice', He 'fashioned all created things through a single word from [His] side' (par. 6). Indeed, the 'Name' or attribute of justice is characterized as 'the very source of Our justice amidst such among Our servants as are near unto Us'. Through this justice, God has 'manifested the justice of every just one, and has adorned the sincere ones among [His] servants' with the 'ornament' of justice (par. 5). In other words, justice is a virtue, by virtue of the fact that it is an attribute of God.

Justice, therefore, is both divine and human, i.e. godly and goodly. Baha'u'llah opens this Tablet by invoking God's attributes of justice and wisdom: 'In the Name of the Just, the All-Wise' (par. 2). This 'Tablet' is a discourse on God's 'Name' (attribute, or power), 'The Just' (par. 3). From this 'Name', God has 'breathed the Spirit of Justice into the mortal frames of all that dwell on earth' so that, ideally, 'they may arise to rule over themselves and over others with pure justice' (par. 3). Thus justice, as manifested in this world, is anchored in divine justice. In this sense, Baha'u'llah makes justice sacred. In other words, justice is not simply 'secular'. It is a sacred value and virtue. However, there is a distinction between institutional and individual justice, as explained below.

In his essay on Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice, Muhammad Afnan makes the following observation: [p. 113]

... the establishment of justice on the Day of Recompense is the objective of the divine religions, and the promised 'Paradise' refers to a place where the effects of divine justice will encompass everyone. This Paradise will be realized when justice is established; thus, the Paradise of Justice is the very reality of that justice – promised and divine – which is mentioned in this Tablet.⁶⁹

The preamble of the Tablet (par. 1) states that the 'Paradise of Justice ... hath appeared as a token of God's grace'. Muhammad Afnan notes that these two concepts – justice and grace – are often portrayed as irreconcilable, yet the two seem to be interconnected in this Tablet. He writes:

In the nomenclature of religious studies, 'justice' and 'grace' are concepts that are invariably invoked as two of God's attributes, and they are portrayed as opposites of one another. 'Justice' looks to the merit of a person or thing to ensure that they receive their due accordingly, whereas 'grace' is rooted in God's favour, his beneficence, and his disregard for an individual's capacity or talent. Could we not say, however, that at the very outset of this Tablet, the Manifestation of God looks upon all created things, in a general sense – and upon every person, more specifically – with the eye of grace and pardon?⁷⁰

Afnan goes on to give another example⁷¹ of how justice and grace are interconnected in his observation of par. 17, where Baha'u'llah states that God has planted 'trees of justice' in the 'Paradise of Justice', and has watered those trees with 'the waters of [His] grace'.

Revelatory Dimension of 'Justice'

Justice, as conceived in Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice, 'consisteth of innumerable degrees and incalculable meanings', a veritable 'Ocean' from which God has given mankind a mere 'sprinkling', an amount nonetheless sufficient to 'cleanse [mankind] from the defilement of oppression, and cause [them] to be numbered with the sincere ones' (par. 46). Through the figure of speech known as 'apostrophe', Baha'u'llah hypostasizes, personifies and calls upon 'Justice' to take pride in the fact that it has been made 'the dawning-place of [God's] justice amidst all people' (par. 12).

'Pure justice' is defined as a justice from which all that dwell on earth 'shall not deviate by one jot or one tittle' in the exercise thereof 'over themselves and over others' (par. 1). In a highly intriguing explication of justice, Baha'u'llah declares that: 'The essence of justice and the source thereof are both embodied in the ordinances prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men'. This Manifestation of God (Baha'u'llah) incarnates 'the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation'. Baha'u'llah remarks that: 'It is through justice that every one is rendered his due', and that – contrary to what 'most of the people imagine' – this is behaviour that can be discerned 'in the manifestations of the world of being' (par. 47). What is apparently the most potent form of justice – a justice that 'causeth the pillars of tyranny to quake and the foundations of misbelief to

crumble' – is none other than 'the recognition of this [the Baha'i] Revelation' (par. 48).

Those who have failed to believe in Baha'u'llah are described as having 'abandoned the stronghold of justice', whose 'name is recorded among the [p. 114] oppressors in God's mighty and guarded Tablets' (par. 48). 'Even if a man were to strive until the end that hath no end and bend every possible effort to deal equitably with others, if he should ever hesitate in the exercise of justice, he would verily have committed an injustice against his own self, and would be regarded as one of the oppressors' (par. 48). Those who have 'fail[ed] to apprehend [the] import' of 'the days of Divine justice' will be 'accounted among the erring' (par. 49).

Authoritarian Dimension of 'Justice'

Justice, in essence, is defined by Baha'u'llah as follows: 'It is through justice that every one is rendered his due' (par. 47). As for historical context, the world in the nineteenth-century was dominated by monarchs, autocrats, dictators and the like. This being the case, when speaking of 'kings' and 'rulers' (pars. 14–15), they are metonyms for government institutions in general, endowed with plenary legislative, executive, judiciary and administrative powers. Baha'u'llah calls upon those in authority to carry out their duties with self-disinterest in favour of the best interests of the people, i.e. to do whatever is best for the commonweal.

Justice is considered 'an ornament of the sovereigns'. A sovereign can best practise this 'ornament' by 'act[ing] with equity and complete sincerity towards their subjects, and decree[ing] for them what God Himself hath decreed in His mighty and everlasting Book' (par. 13). Should the rulers of the world choose to 'crown [their] heads with the diadems of justice', these diadems will have the potential to illuminate 'the regions of every land with their light' (par. 14). This mandate extends from the present to the future, with this vision or prophecy in view: God will soon 'make manifest on earth kings who will recline on the couches of justice'. These kings 'will rule amongst men even as they rule their own selves', and they are considered to be 'among the choicest of [God's] creatures in the entire creation' (par. 15).

Contemporaneous Dimension of 'Justice'

Baha'u'llah, addressing 'the embodiment of justice', takes to task those 'who have disbelieved in [Him] and ascribed partners unto [Him], even after [His] advent' notwithstanding the fact that Baha'u'llah's advent was 'promised in every Tablet'. This suggests that the failure of the Babis (whom Baha'u'llah thoroughly castigates soon before this point) to divorce themselves from literal or superficial understandings of their scripture, which ultimately resulted in their rejection of Baha'u'llah, constituted an act of great injustice (par. 37). The 'Eye of Justice' and the 'Reality of Justice' are both distressed at Baha'u'llah's plight, suggesting that the

suffering He underwent and the calamities imposed upon Him were demonstrations of extreme injustice (par. 36).

Forecasting the future consequences of contemporary tyranny, Baha'u'llah states that 'the cruelty' of those 'oppressors' (also referred to as 'infidels') who 'ascribed oppression unto the One through Whom the embodiments of justice were raised up [Baha'u'llah]' will, ere long, 'change this earth and frustrate the affairs of men' (par. 62). Baha'u'llah beseeches God, Who has 'planted the trees of Justice in the Paradise of [His] Revelation and [His] Wisdom', to 'shelter' those trees from 'the raging storms of fate [p. 115] and the rolling thunder of calamity, that their boughs and their branches may grow and develop beneath the shade of [His] bounty and the canopy of [His] mercy'. He further entreats God to 'cause them who are the chosen ones amongst [His] creatures and the truly devoted amidst [His] servants to abide beneath the shadow of [the] leaves' of these trees – in other words, he beseeches God to help His servants to be just (par. 67).

Social Dimension of 'Justice'

The peoples of the world are instructed to 'adorn themselves...with the raiment of justice, inasmuch as the exercise thereof befitteth all mankind'. By contrast, those who have 'dispute[d] with and wage[d] war against men' are described as having 'forsaken the Paradise of Justice', and have been 'numbered with the oppressors in the sublime and preserved Tablets' (par. 65). Baha'u'llah goes on to say that He has 'enjoined courtesy and equity' upon people 'in most of His Tablets', as if to suggest that justice, equity and courtesy are all somehow related (par. 16). It is 'through this name' (justice) that 'God hath shed His splendour upon all things in this Tablet'.

They who have been illumined with the light of justice and have attained unto it are reckoned with 'the truly devoted among [Baha'u'llah's] servants' (par. 17). God has planted 'trees of justice' in this 'Paradise' (of justice – in other words, this Tablet), and He has 'watered them with the waters of [His] grace'. He assures, moreover, that 'every one of those trees will, ere long, bear fruit' (par. 17).

Individual Dimension of 'Justice'

Justice is a virtue, as Shoghi Effendi explains: 'In the *Riḍvānu'l-ʿAdl* ... the virtue of justice is exalted'.⁷² 'Justice', on an individual, interpersonal level, is defined primarily in terms of two corollary virtues, 'courtesy' and 'equity':

Adorn yourselves, O people, with the raiment of justice, inasmuch as the exercise thereof befitteth all mankind, did ye but know it. Thus have We enjoined courtesy and equity upon you in most of Our Tablets, that ye may be of them who comprehend (par. 16).

Another key concept of 'Justice' is adherence to laws, socio-moral principles and ethics that are conveyed through Baha'u'llah's 'revelation':

O people of the earth! Know ye that justice consisteth of innumerable degrees and incalculable meanings, yet We have given you only a sprinkling from this Ocean, that it may cleanse you from the defilement of oppression and cause you to be numbered with the sincere ones. Know verily that the essence of justice and the source thereof are both embodied in the ordinances prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men, if ye be of them that recognize this truth. He doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation. ... Were men to discover the motivating purpose of God's Revelation, they would assuredly cast away their fears, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, rejoice with exceeding gladness (par. 46)

That the 'essence of justice' inheres in 'God's Revelation' expands the notion of justice, making justice more broad-based, anchored as it is in [p. 116] the Baha'i sacred texts. Humanity, collectively and individually, is instructed to 'adorn [their] bodies with the ornament of justice'. In order to do this, one must 'enjoin ... that which God Himself hath enjoined, and be not of them that transgress their bounds' (par. 50). Addressing the recipient of this Tablet, Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī, Baha'u'llah describes Shahrīrādī's 'justice' as 'his faith in God', and He declares that this is 'a justice unmatched by any other' (par. 53). The Paradise of Justice was created 'through [God's] strength and power', and was sent to Shahrīrādī 'with a glorious and wondrous fruit'. In tasting 'the fruits of these trees' and 'rest[ing] beneath the shadow of their leaves', humanity can be 'protected from the fire of the infidels' (par. 68). In addition to this, Baha'u'llah also treats the teaching of Baha'i precepts and principles (along with recognition of the divine authority of Baha'u'llah) as yet another way of promoting justice.

Conclusion

Date of Revelation: Historically, whether Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice belongs to the late Edirne period or to the early Akka period, in the final analysis, may be a distinction without a difference. The historical context is clear enough. This Tablet addresses both the 'people of the Bayan' and the peoples of the world – and their respective leaders. There is a consensus that Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice refers to the period of time that Baha'u'llah designated as the 'Days of Stress'. Whether or not this Tablet was revealed in the late Edirne or early Akka period is a separate, although related inquiry. The present writers, based on their independent investigation and careful review of the available evidence, are of the opinion that Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice was almost certainly revealed during the late Edirne period. That is to say, this Tablet was written during the latter part of the 'Days of Stress'. Exactly when, however, is not possible to determine with precision. That said, is it possible to fix an end-point to the 'Days of Stress'?

Duration of the 'Days of Stress': The 'Days of Stress' refers to the machinations of Azal against Baha'u'llah. Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice evidently alludes to Azal's attempts on Baha'u'llah's life, to wit: 'you [Azal] persisted until you resolved to

shed His [Baha'u'llah's] blood' (par. 26). There is a consensus that the 'Days of Stress' belongs to the Edirne period, starting around December 1864 (approximately a year after arrival from Istanbul in December 1863). There is a further consensus that the 'Most Great Separation' (*faṣl-i akbar*) – on Saturday, 10 March 1866 – belongs to this same period. After the 'Most Great Separation', Azal resumed, renewed and redoubled his opposition – much 'to Bahā'u'llāh's profound distress'.⁷³ This led to the episode known as the *Mubāhilih*, in September 1867. The question remains as to when the 'Days of Stress' ended.

The prevailing opinion appears to favour the view that the 'Days of Stress' ended right after the episode of the *Mubāhilih*. However, after the *Mubāhilih*, Shoghi Effendi speaks of '[o]ther developments and happenings of great, though lesser, significance' that must be taken into account, if this 'agitated and most momentous phase of Bahā'u'llāh's ministry' is to be fully appreciated.⁷⁴ Therefore, it is possible to read Shoghi Effendi's [p. 117] narrative as a sustained history of Azal's plots and cabals against Baha'u'llah, which 'was engineered throughout by the tortuous intrigues and incessant machinations of that same diabolical Siyyid Muḥammad, that vile whisperer' (Azal's instigator and accomplice in all these nefarious intrigues).

In a book entitled *God Passes By* (1944), Shoghi Effendi wrote an interpretive history of the Baha'i Faith. He devoted an entire section – 'Chapter X: The Rebellion of Mīrzā Yahyā and the Proclamation of Bahā'u'llāh's Mission in Adrianople' – to the Edirne period.⁷⁵ The Gallipoli episode is right afterward, and is discussed by Shoghi Effendi in Chapter Ten of *God Passes By* as well.

The present writers venture the theory that the 'Days of Stress' not only included: (1) the attempts on the life of Bahā'u'llāh, as well as (2) the 'Most Great Separation' and (3) the *Mubāhilih* episode, but also that (4) the 'Days of Stress' extended into the Gallipoli episode, at which time Bahā'u'llāh effectively had the Farman altered in its implementation – a major victory over the last remaining attempts to wrest leadership away from Bahā'u'llāh:

The fateful decision was eventually arrived at to banish Bahā'u'llāh to the penal colony of 'Akká, and Mīrzā Yahyā to Famagusta in Cyprus. This decision was embodied in a strongly worded Farmán, issued by Sultán Abdu'l-'Azíz. Even in Gallipoli, where three nights were spent, no one knew what Bahā'u'llāh's destination would be. Some believed that He and His brothers would be banished to one place, and the remainder dispersed, and sent into exile. Others thought that His companions would be sent back to Persia, while still others expected their immediate extermination. The government's original order was to banish Bahā'u'llāh, Áqáy-i-Kalím and Mīrzá Muhammad-Qulí, with a servant to 'Akká, while the rest were to proceed to Constantinople. This order, which provoked scenes of indescribable distress, was, however, at the insistence of Bahā'u'llāh, and by the instrumentality of Umar Effendi, a major appointed to accompany the exiles, revoked. It was eventually decided that all the exiles, numbering about seventy, should be banished to 'Akká.⁷⁶

Alternatively, it could be argued that the Farman itself – decreeing a separation between Baha'u'llah and Azal – marked the end of the 'Days of Stress'.

Either way, the 'Days of Stress' extended well beyond the 'Confrontation' (Arabic: *Mubāhala*) of September 1867. To the best of the present writers' knowledge, this particular point has not been hypothesized before; yet this view is based squarely on a close reading of Chapter Ten of *God Passes By*.

Decree Against Bloodshed: On 22 April 1863, Baha'u'llah abrogated holy war (*jihād*), as Baha'u'llah later recounts: 'On the first day of His arrival in the garden designated the *Riḍvān*, the Ancient Beauty established Himself upon the Most Great Throne. Thereupon, the Tongue of Glory uttered three blessed verses: First, that in this Revelation the use of the sword is prohibited'.⁷⁷ Saiedi points out that Baha'u'llah's principle of nonviolence was promulgated privately among the Babis in Baghdad, and thereafter publicly in Edirne.⁷⁸ But the question of when this same declaration, as a matter of 'public record', as it were, first appeared in Baha'u'llah's writings by way of an open epistle, is a distinct – albeit related – historical issue. The present [p. 118] writers submit that the Paradise of Justice may well be among Baha'u'llah's first 'public' proclamations of the abrogation of *jihad*. Although this is not conclusive for dating purposes, this conclusion has independent value.

Dimensions of 'Justice': Thematically, this study demonstrates how Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice presents a new, significantly expanded paradigm of justice, both in precept and practice. Certainly 'justice' is used in a number of ways, which can be appreciated within the foregoing framework of analysis, in six dimensions of justice: (1) theological, (2) revelatory, (3) authoritarian, (4) contemporaneous, (5) social, and (6) individual.

Justice is both individual and collective. This Tablet significantly broadens the horizons of 'justice' by expanding the purview of 'justice' to encompass equity, courtesy, sincerity, faith and righteousness. The term 'justice' occurs 38 times in the text, with 'equity' mentioned twice and 'courtesy' once. The emphasis placed on these two latter terms, however, deserves comment. In par. 16, Baha'u'llah says that he has 'enjoined courtesy (*al-adab*) and equity (*al-inṣāf*)' throughout most of his Tablets. This claim, though grand, is true to fact. It is interesting that this pronouncement should immediately follow his instruction that people should 'adorn (themselves) ... with the raiment of justice (*ridā' al-'adl*)' – indicating that justice, equity and courtesy are all somehow related. In one of his other writings, Baha'u'llah notes that 'equity' (or 'fair-mindedness', as the word *inṣāf* has been translated in this particular instance) is 'but one of the expressions' of justice.⁷⁹ In a similar vein, Baha'u'llah also says 'It is through justice that every one is rendered his due' (par. 47). It is in this way that justice – normally the prerogative of sovereigns and institutions – can be demonstrated on an interpersonal level by any individual.

This Tablet has intrinsic interest sufficient to warrant a study on historical grounds alone. Yet, this text is a spiritual document as well. It is, after all, a scripture, and, in Baha'i belief, a 'revelation' by God, through Baha'u'llah. This is where history doubles as homily – where the narrative itself edifies. In fine, Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice transforms received notions of 'justice' and elevates this virtue to new heights of aspiration and praxis.

Not only does Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice widen the reach and scope of justice, it does more. Justice, moreover, is made sacred. Justice is divine, according to Baha'u'llah. Justice, after all, derives from the 'Name' of God as 'The Just' (*al-'ādil*). (See par. 47.) In other words, although typically considered a 'secular' concern within rather specific institutional confines, Baha'u'llah allegorizes, personifies, symbolizes and otherwise expatiates on 'Justice' in such a way as to vivify the concept. This rhetorical strategy operates on multiple levels, consistent with the several audiences addressed – kings, rulers, people in general and the Babīs in particular, not to mention the recipient, Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shāhmīrẓādī, whom Baha'u'llah acclaims as 'one of the embodiments of justice' whose 'justice is his faith in God' that is 'unmatched by any other' (par. 53). From this we may tentatively conclude: Justice – encompassing, as it does, both faith and action – is the essence of the Baha'i concept of salvation, both individual and societal.

Mīr Muḥammad-Riḍā – immortalized by Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice – lives on, as the exemplar and paradigm of 'justice' that originates in faith and expresses itself in courtesy, fair-mindedness, equity and service to others, alive to the spiritual as well as social dimensions of life in the wider scheme of things. Baha'u'llah's metaphor of 'Paradise' is reflexive: not only is 'Paradise' a reality in the afterlife, but an angelic mode of [p. 119] being in this life. For those who aspire, 'Paradise' inspires. Here, 'Justice' is its own 'Paradise'. To create a world of justice and equity is to realize Paradise on Earth. If 'Justice' is somehow a 'Paradise', then 'Paradise' is no longer otherworldly. 'Paradise' is a this-worldly paradigm of how things ought to be, and can become. That is the mission of the charismatic prophet-founder, and a function of the sacred text.

As revelatory text, Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice is best analyzed within the phenomenology of revelation, and therefore may be characterized as a document that is inspired, and informed, by flashes of inspiration. As such, it is not a systematic text – nor does it pretend to be, in any sense of the word, a treatise. There is a certain 'creative' element of prophetic revelation (leaving truth-claims aside) that is intended to inspire faith, enlighten consciousness and motivate action on the part of the believers.

Directions for Further Research: The fact that Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice presents 'justice' multidimensionally invites further study on the basis of its wider implications in relation to social discourse and good governance.

One notable effort in this direction is Udo Schaefer's two-volume treatise, *Baha'i Ethics*.⁸⁰ The section 'Justice in Baha'u'llah's Scriptures',⁸¹ includes discussion of Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice. Space does not permit a review of Schaefer's analysis here, except to say that future research should build upon the foundation that Schaefer has laid for further study of Baha'i concepts of justice, as these pertain to the wide-ranging and comprehensive panoply of other virtues set forth in Baha'i texts as well. It may be said that Schaefer's work represents the first systematic study of the Baha'i ethics, to which the present study may, in some way, contribute.

Another important work in this vein that should not go unnoticed is Shapour Rassekh's review of justice as it is portrayed and defined in Baha'i literature, entitled *Mafhūm-i 'Adl dar Āthār-i Mubāraki-yi Baha'i*.⁸² Like Schaefer, Rassekh also mentions Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice in his article, in addition to other writings from Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi that discuss the concept of justice.

Although all of these writings bear on the Baha'i concept of justice and present a much fuller picture, what distinguishes the Paradise of Justice is the way that it correlates and interrelates adjunct notions of 'justice' – such as faith, virtue, ethics, as well as distinctively individual and institutional parameters of justice – as a multidimensional paradigm, by which this cardinal virtue can best be promoted on the widest possible scale.

Translation: Riḍwān al-'Adl: Paradise of Justice

- (1) This is the Paradise of Justice (*riḍwān al-'adl*), which hath appeared as a token of God's grace and been adorned by Him with glorious and wondrous fruits.
- (2) In the Name of the All-Just, the All-Wise.
- (3) This is a Tablet in which God hath raised up His Name, 'The Just', (*al-'ādil*) and from which He hath breathed the Spirit of Justice (*rūḥal-'adl*) into the mortal frames of all that dwell on earth, that they may arise to rule [p. 120] over themselves and over others with pure justice (*'adl al-khāliṣ*) – a justice from which they shall not deviate by one jot or one tittle.
- (4) O this name! We, verily, have made thee one of the suns of Our most excellent names between earth and heaven. Shed thou thy mighty and wondrous splendour upon the whole of creation, that perchance they may gather together beneath thy shadow, cast the ways of oppression behind their backs, and be illumined by thy hallowed and resplendent light.
- (5) O this name! We have indeed made thee the very source of Our justice amidst such among Our servants as are near unto Us. Through thee, We have manifested the justice of every just one, and have adorned the sincere ones among Our servants with thine ornament.
- (6) O this name! Beware lest this station deceive thee and prevent thee from showing humility before God, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. Know thou that thy relationship unto Us is the same as any other relationship; no distinction is there between thee and all else besides thee that have been created in heaven and on

earth. For when We ascended the throne of justice (*'arsh al-'adl*), We fashioned all created things through a single word from Our side. Thy Lord is the All-Wise, and His wisdom encompasseth all things. We have exalted certain names to the kingdom of eternity as a token of Our grace, and I verily am the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Mighty, the Incomparable.

- (7) Say: No relationship is there between God and His creation. Sanctified is He from whatsoever He hath created, and from the remembrances of such among His servants as make mention of Him. Indeed, the relationship which is attributed to Him and mentioned in the Tablets hath been revealed through the decree that was sent down from the Heaven of the Divine Will, Which was brought into being through My all-pervading and all-compelling behest. Nevertheless, We have singled thee out and exalted thee in this Tablet, that thou mayest render thanks unto thy Lord, and be of them that are rid of all attachment to any one but Him. Beware lest the loftiness of thy name debar thee from God, thy Lord and the Lord of all worlds.
- (8) Verily, We exalt whomsoever We will through Our behest. We have, from eternity, been powerful to do what We have willed, and to ordain what We have pleased. Behold naught within thyself but the radiance of the Sun of the Word of Revelation, which hath shone forth above the horizon of the Will of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful. In like manner, behold naught within thine essence any power, any strength, any movement, or any tranquility unless it be bidden by God, the Sovereign, the Almighty, the All-Powerful. Be thou animated by the breezes of thy Lord, the Most High, the All-Glorious, and not by that which wafteth from the precincts of passion and desire. Thus biddeth thee the Pen of the Most High, that thou mayest be reckoned with them who observe Our precepts.
- (9) Beware lest thou follow the example of the one We adorned with the ornament of names in the kingdom of creation – the one who, when he looked upon his own self and perceived the loftiness of his name, repudiated God, Who created him and sustained him, and thereupon fell from the most exalted station to the depths of degradation.⁸³ [p. 121]
- (10) Say: The Names are as raiments; We adorn those of Our servants We desire with them, and We take them away from whomsoever We will through Our behest. I am the All-Powerful, the Ordainer, the Omniscient. We take no counsel with Our servants before divesting them of this bounty, even as We consult them not before We bestow Our blessings upon them. Know, then, the command of thy Lord, and be of them who possess manifest certitude. The power We hold over all things can never be wrested from Us, neither can the Hands of Our power ever be chained up, couldst thou but understand.
- (11) Say: The station of every name that knoweth his Lord, and doth not transgress his limit, shall wax greater at every moment, and the Day-Star of the tender mercies of his Lord – the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous – will shine upon him continually. He shall ascend the ladder of detachment until he reacheth a station none can describe, save the One Who created it. He speaketh not except by the leave of his Lord, and moveth not unless it be ordained by Him. He is, in truth, the Almighty, the Just, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.
- (12) O this name! Pride thyself in this, that We have made thee the dawning-place of Our justice (*mashriqa 'adlinā*) amidst all people. The day is approaching when We

shall raise up manifestations of thee upon the earth, through whom We shall roll up the standard of oppression and unfurl the banner of justice between the heavens and the earth. It is through them that God shall blot out every trace of injustice from the earth, and adorn the whole of creation in every land with these names. All beings, both seen and unseen, shall rejoice at their advent, for they are the mirrors of My justice (*marāyā 'adlī*) amidst My servants, and the daysprings of My names amidst My creation. Through them, the hands of oppression shall be severed, and the arms of command strengthened. Such is the decree We have set forth in this holy and preserved Tablet.

- (13) O this name! We, verily, have made thee an ornament of the sovereigns (*zīnatan li'l-mulūk*). Blessed are they that adorn their bodies with thee, act with equity (*ya'dilu*) and complete sincerity (*al-haqq al-khālīs*) towards their subjects, and decree for them what God Himself hath decreed in His mighty and everlasting Book. No better adornment is there for them than thee, for it is through thee that their sovereignty is made manifest, their praise is glorified, and their names are remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Almighty, the Most Great. Whoso depriveth himself of thee would indeed be as one denuded (*'arīyyun*) before the entire creation, though outwardly he be clothed in the finest garments of silk (*ḥurar al-'ālamīn*).
- (14) O concourse of rulers! Crown your heads with the diadems of justice (*akālīl al-'adl*), that the regions of every land may be illumined with their light. Thus have We bidden ye in token of Our grace unto you.
- (15) O concourse of kings! Erelong will God make manifest on earth kings who will recline on the couches of justice (*namāriq al-'adl*), and will rule amongst men even as they rule their own selves. They, indeed, are among the choicest of My creatures in the entire creation.
- (16) Adorn yourselves, O people, with the raiment of justice (*ridā' al-'adl*), inasmuch as the exercise thereof befitteth all mankind, did ye but know [p. 122] it. Thus have We enjoined courtesy (*al-adab*) and equity (*al-inṣāf*) upon you in most of Our Tablets, that ye may be of them who comprehend. The Almighty ordaineth naught for a soul unless it be what is best for him, and what shall profit him in this world and in the world to come. He, verily, is independent of the doings of every doer, and of the knowledge of every man of discernment and understanding.
- (17) Through this name, God hath shed His splendour upon all things in this Tablet. Well is it with them who are illumined with its light and have attained thereunto, for they are the truly devoted among Our servants. With the Hands of Our power, We have planted trees of justice (*ashjār al-'adl*) in this Paradise, and have watered them with the waters of Our grace. Every one of those trees will, erelong, bear fruit. Such is the irrevocable decree We have set forth, for truly We are potent to command.
- (18) O ye who are the embodiments of justice (*mazāhir al-'adl*)! When the breezes of power have wafted over all things, summon ye the people of the Bayān (*malā' al-Bayān*), and call their attention to this Great Announcement.
- (19) Ask of them: O people! By what proof have ye believed in 'Alī (the Bāb), but denied the One Who brought you glad-tidings in all the Tablets? Ponder this, O concourse of foolish ones, and fear ye God, O assemblage of the heedless.

- (20) Do ye claim to believe in the One Who heralded Mine advent though you have repudiated Me, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise? Ye are even as the ones who believed in John the Baptist, who summoned men to the Kingdom of God, yet when Christ, the Word Himself, appeared unto them, they rejected Him and condemned Him to death.
- (21) The curse of God be upon the oppressors! At all times, and in the loudest voice, that herald imparted glad-tidings unto men. He exhorted them to swear fealty unto Christ, and informed them of His imminent advent. At last, out of his love for Christ, he yielded up his spirit to Him, the Almighty, the Wondrous.
- (22) And when the veil of concealment was rent asunder, and the Word of God appeared unto men, they cavilled at Him and protested, saying: 'This Man hath violated the decree of John the Baptist!' Thus did their souls prompt them in such wise that they were deprived of the Presence of their Lord, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.
- (23) One of the infidels among them said: 'The thing for which the son of Zechariah (John the Baptist) came to this world hath not yet come to pass, neither hath his law been established amongst men. Unseemly indeed would it be for any one to appear until that law is established'. Such was the reasoning by which they waxed disdainful before the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ) and rejected His Truth. Still others among them said: 'John the Baptist baptised men with water. The One Who hath appeared unto us, however, doth baptise with the Holy Spirit, yet He associateth with the sinful!'
- (24) And now ye hear the same arguments made by the people of the Bayān in these days. They repeat that which the followers of John the Baptist said [p. 123] aforetime; nay worse, they utter such things as have never been uttered before. Woe betide them that follow these infidels!
- (25) Say: O people of the Bayān! Blush before the beauty of your Lord, the All-Merciful, Who appeared in the midmost heart of the world with a clear and irrefutable proof. The One Who came unto you aforetime by the name of 'Alī informed you of Me and heralded unto you My coming, and He moved not except through His love for Me, and breathed not except to make mention of Me, the Most Powerful, the Most Wondrous. He proclaimed unto you that every luminous one would be eclipsed by His splendour, that every woman that hath a burden in her womb would cast her burden,⁸⁴ and that every bearer of a trust would cast it aside. Such is the decree that hath descended from the Heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Most High, the All-Knowing.
- (26) The appointed Hour (*as-sā'ā*) came upon you in your heedlessness, for when the Beauty of the Beloved shone forth above the horizon of the Will of your Lord – the Almighty, the All-Powerful – you turned away from Him, cavilled at Him, rejected His signs, and ascribed partners unto Him, and in this heedlessness you persisted until you resolved to shed His blood – the blood of the Most Holy, the Most Pure, the Most Powerful, the Most Luminous.
- (27) Say: O people! Fear God, and confine not His command to your own limitations. He, verily, ordaineth as He pleaseth through His behest, and He is indeed the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

- (28) Say: I swear by God that He speaketh in My breast, calleth out to My spirit, and giveth utterance through My tongue. It is He that hath wakened Me with the breezes of His command, and hath caused Me to speak between heaven and earth.
- (29) Say: I swear by God – the Almighty, the Most High – that I am in your midst, and hear from you that which no ear hath heard before. Nevertheless, God hath, in truth, made Me manifest, and I have been bidden not to worship any one but Him, and to remind you of that which is better for you than all that is in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. Had it been in My power, I would have never consented to manifest Myself unto these makers of mischief. Yet, the Almighty is unconstrained in His bidding; He doeth as He willeth, and ordaineth as He pleaseth.
- (30) Look not upon Me, O people, with your eyes, or with the eyes of your leaders. I swear by God that this would avail you not, even were you to seek the aid of the former and the latter generations.
- (31) Say: O people! Behold My beauty with Mine eye, for if you look upon Me with any other sight, you will never recognize Me. Thus hath it been sent down in the Tablets of God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.
- (32) Say: O people! It is neither through Mine own Self nor for Mine own Self that I cry aloud unto you; rather, God crieth out as He willeth through His own Self for His servants, and unto this do My groaning, and My wailing, and the lamentation of My heart bear witness, if ye be of them who judge fairly. [p. 124]
- (33) This indeed is the Leaf that hath been stirred by the winds of the Will of God. Hath it any power of its own to remain still? No, by the One Who hath caused Me to speak in truth! The winds move as they will, and God indeed is powerful over whatsoever He pleaseth. The movement of that Leaf, and the manner in which it stirreth, bear witness to its truth, would ye but understand.
- (34) Consider, O people, the Flute (*mizmār*) that resteth beneath the fingers of the Will of His Lord, the All-Merciful, and how He doth breathe His sanctified breath into it. Can that Flute remain silent in its inmost self? Nay, by your Lord, the Almighty, the Beneficent! He will, rather, make manifest from it diverse melodies as He willeth, and He verily is the All-Powerful, the Ordainer, the Omnipotent. Can the sun that riseth above the horizon of Revelation shine aught but light from itself? Is it able, moreover, to deprive anything of its light? Nay, by the essence of glory! And unto this doth every fair-minded (*munşifin*) and discerning one (*başîrin*) bear witness.
- (35) Say: O people! Verily, it is the fingers of your Lord – the Most High, the All-Glorious – that move this Supreme Pen. This is not My doing, rather is it the bidding of God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. And do ye, O concourse of infidels, protest this Pen? Or do ye cavil at the One Who hath caused it to move through His sovereignty?
- (36) Say: Woe betide you! The dwellers of the Realms above are astonished by your deeds. The Eye of Justice weepeth sore over Me, and the Reality of Justice bewaileth the harm I have sustained and the calamities I have endured. It bemoaneth, moreover, that which hath befallen Me at the hands of them who were created through My Will, who pride themselves in standing in My Presence and seek blessings from the dust that My feet – the feet of the Blessed, the Almighty, the Sublime – have trodden.

- (37) O thou who art the embodiment of justice! I complain unto thee concerning them who have disbelieved in Me and ascribed partners unto Me, even after Mine advent hath been promised in every Tablet – and in the Tablet, too, that God hath preserved in His inviolable treasuries, which He hath safeguarded from even the most discerning ones among His creation.
- (38) Say: O people! Ye have entered Paradise, and have attained unto a Rose (*wardan*). Inhale it, then, if ye find its fragrance to be sweet. Fear ye God, and be not of them who gainsay Him, nor of them who recognize Him and then disclaim Him. Ye would indeed be numbered with the infidels for such an act. Were a person with a keen sense of smell to be found, he would, of a certainty, be able to detect – among all the things that are made manifest from Me – the fragrance of the Most Holy, the Most Powerful, the Most Generous.
- (39) O ye who are the embodiments of Justice (*mazāhir al-'adl*)! Ye were called into being through My behest, and were risen up by My command. Beware lest your rank prevent you from humbling yourselves before your Lord – the Almighty, the Omniscient – on the day when He shall come down unto you overshadowed with clouds and invested with a mighty sovereignty. On that day, He shall breathe the spirit of life into the entire creation; [p. 125] adorn the whole of Paradise with My Name, the Name of the Almighty, the Beneficent; regenerate mankind with the ornament of the All-Merciful; and attire all things with the raiment of names that belongeth to the Wondrous Creator. That indeed is a day for which ye have been created. Fear ye God and take heed, lest ye deprive yourselves of so great a bounty.
- (40) O ye who are called by this Name! Let not the names deceive you on that day. Hasten ye to the court of grace, even if the clouds of Revelation should rain down the darts of wrath upon you. Take heed that ye not tarry for less than a single moment. On that day, none shall have any possessions to their name, for command on that day will be with God, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.
- (41) Say: Be ye faithful, O people, to the Testament of God, and break not the Covenant of the One with Whom you covenanted from time immemorial (*dharr al-baqā'*) in the Presence of God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the Omniscient.
- (42) Say: Open your eyes! I swear by the One True God that He hath been made manifest on this day, at this very moment, and that He hath come overshadowed with clouds.⁸⁵ Blessed is God, the Quickener, the All-Powerful, the Most Lofty, the Almighty.
- (43) Thereupon were the inmates of heaven and earth stricken with terror, and the entire company of the Concourse on High moaned, except for them who were seized by the Hand of the All-Glorious, invested with the sovereignty of the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most High – the Hand Whose Finger of decree hath rent asunder the veil before their eyes, and hath delivered them from the company of the ones who doubted the Presence of God, the Sovereign, the Almighty, the All-Glorious.
- (44) Say: By God! Every name hath been changed, every thing hath cried out in lamentation, and every soul hath become perturbed, save them who were quickened by the breezes of sanctity that wafted from the precincts of your Lord, the All-Merciful – the breezes that awakened them from their slumber, and cleansed them from the defilement of the infidels.

- (45) Alter thou these verses, O Tongue of Eternity, for the ears of men are incapable of hearing that which hath been sent down from the firmament of Thine Essence and the heaven of Thy Will. Impart unto them, in accordance with their capacity, that which Thou dost possess, for this verily is manifest justice.
- (46) O people of the earth! Know ye that justice consisteth of innumerable degrees (*marātib wa maqāmāt*) and incalculable meanings (*ma'ānī*), yet We have given you only a sprinkling (*rashḥ*) from this Ocean, that it may cleanse you from the defilement of oppression (*danas al-zulm*) and cause you to be numbered with the sincere ones. Know verily that the essence of justice (*aṣl al-'adl*) and the source thereof (*mabda'ihī*) are both embodied in the ordinances prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men, if ye be of them that recognize this truth. He doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice (*mīzān al-'adl*) unto all creation. Were His law to be such as to strike terror into the hearts of all that are in heaven and on earth, that law is naught but manifest [p. 126] justice. The fears and agitation which the revelation of this law provokes in men's hearts should indeed be likened to the cries of the suckling babe weaned from his mother's milk, if ye be of them that perceive. Were men to discover the motivating purpose of God's Revelation, they would assuredly cast away their fears, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, rejoice with exceeding gladness.
- (47) Say: If the autumn winds strip the trees of their vernal adornment (*ṭarāz*), this is only to allow for the emergence of another adornment. Thus hath it been decreed by the Almighty, the All-Powerful. It is through justice that every one is rendered his due, even as ye behold this in the manifestations of the world of being; it is not as most of the people imagine. Ponder, then, that ye may understand the purpose of what was revealed by the Wondrous Pen.
- (48) Say: That justice which causeth the pillars of tyranny to quake and the foundations of misbelief to crumble is the recognition of this Revelation (*zuhūr*) in this resplendent dawn, wherein the Sun of Bahā shineth with manifest sovereignty above the horizon of eternity. And whoso believeth not therein hath abandoned the stronghold of justice (*ḥiṣn al-'adl*), and his name is recorded among the oppressors in God's mighty and guarded Tablets.⁸⁶ Even if a man were to strive until the end that hath no end and bend every possible effort to deal equitably with others, if he should ever hesitate in his recognition of this Cause, he would verily have committed an injustice against his own self, and would be regarded as one of the oppressors.
- (49) Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice (*ayyām al-'adl*), for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.
- (50) Say: O people! Adorn your bodies with the ornament of justice (*ṭarāz al-'adl*). Enjoin ye that which God Himself hath enjoined, and be not of them that transgress their bounds.
- (51) Say: Should anyone drink even a drop of water in accordance with My command, it verily would be preferable to the acts of worship and devotion offered by the entire creation, for God doth not accept an act from any one unless it be adorned with the ornament of My leave amidst all people.
- (52) Act ye, O people, in accordance with what We have bidden you in the Tablets that were sent down from the Kingdom of God, the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the All-

Powerful. He whose sight is restored through the sweet savours that waft from the raiment of My Name – the Name of the All-Merciful – shall discern in all things the signs of his Lord, the Just (*al-'ādil*), the All-Wise.⁸⁷

- (53) O Supreme Pen! Raise up the servant who was named 'Riḍā after Nabil',⁸⁸ and cause him to be one of the embodiments of justice in this contingent realm. Verily, his justice is his faith in God, and it is a justice unmatched by any other.
- (54) O servant! Harken thou unto the shrill voice of the Pen of the Most High, and gather all men upon the shore of the Most Mighty Ocean, which hath emerged through this Most Ancient and Everlasting Name. Protect thou [p. 127] the servants of the All-Merciful, lest the blows dealt by the evil suggestions of the manifestations of Satan transform the faces of them that have recognized their Lord. Such is the commandment of thy Lord – the Almighty, the Beneficent – unto thee. Act thou in accordance with what the All-Powerful, the Beauteous, hath bidden thee.
- (55) Be thou a barrier between the forces of unbelief and the hosts of the All-Merciful, lest that blasphemous horde transgress their bounds.⁸⁹ Thus hath the decree been sent down from the Kingdom of the judgment of thy Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We, verily, have made thee a means of Our remembrance amidst Our servants, and a fortress for Our creation in this world, that thou mayest shelter them from the darts of doubt and draw their attention to this Announcement, through which the temples of names have trembled, the faces of men have been changed, the earth of vainglory hath been cleft,⁹⁰ and the fruit hath fallen from every lofty and wondrous tree. Blessed art thou for having utterly abolished the idol of vain imagination through the power of thy Lord, for having cast off from thy body the robe of blind imitation, and for having adorned it instead with the raiment of Divine Unity through this Name, the Most Holy, the Blessed, the Most Exalted, the All-Encompassing.
- (56) Know thou, then, that the People of the Bayān cavilled at their Lord, and rejected the One in Whom they had already believed, and this after We had admonished them in all the Tablets not to let any thing betwixt earth and heaven prevent them from recognizing Me in the hour of Mine advent. Some among them have repudiated Me even as they read My Words, and others glory in the Book that was revealed aforetime through My power.
- (57) Say: If, in this day, the whole earth were to be filled with the knowledge contained in prized and precious books, yet from these books neither the sweet-smelling savours of My command nor the fragrances of My love could be detected, then this knowledge would not be worthy of mention in the Presence of God, thy Lord and the Lord of all worlds.
- (58) Say: Woe betide you, O people! The purpose of all that hath descended from the Kingdom of the Bayān was to make mention of Me and celebrate My praise, did ye but know it.
- (59) Say: Fie upon you for having broken the Covenant of God and cast it behind your backs! In so doing, ye have returned unto your abode in the nethermost hell.
- (60) O My name! I am left alone amidst the people of the Bayān in the absence of the One Who revealed that Book only to make mention of Me, the Wronged One, the Incomparable.

- (61) Say: Fear ye God, O people! I swear by Him that the Primal Point breathed not except to make mention of Me, and spoke not unless it was to celebrate My praise, and that the Beloved of His heart was none other than My luminous and resplendent Beauty.
- (62) O My name! Know thou that the infidels ascribed oppression unto the One through Whom the embodiments of justice were raised up, and from Whom the light of grace shone forth. Such is the manner in which those oppressors acted against Me. Erelong will the cruelty of these oppressors [p. 128] change this earth and frustrate the affairs of men. Thus informeth thee the Tongue of Him that speaketh the truth and is the Knower of all things.
- (63) The tablets of fire have been spread throughout every land, and the manifestation of Satan passeth you by with a book in hand. Then say: O servants of the All-Merciful! Cast it behind your backs, and turn your faces towards the Word of God, the Mighty, the Wondrous. Verily, nothing that hath ever been revealed from the beginning that hath no beginning, or will ever be sent down from the supreme and glorious firmament, can compare with a single letter of that Word.
- (64) O My name! Cleanse My servants of every fragrance that is not of Me, attract them with the wonders of My melodies and My words, and cause them to soar in the atmosphere of My nearness and good-pleasure, that perchance they may attain unto the sanctuary of My glory and the habitation of My grandeur. This is what hath been sent down in truth, and it verily is a thing sent down by thy Lord, the Exalted, the Omniscient.
- (65) Do thou forbid them to shed blood. We, verily, have made this unlawful unto them in all the Tablets, yet they have treated the Laws of God with scorn. They have abandoned the stronghold of command, and are accounted among the wayward. The harmful effect of their deeds hath redounded upon the very Root of the Tree; such is the decree, if only thou wouldst hear it. They who dispute with and wage war against men have indeed forsaken the Paradise of Justice, and have been numbered with the oppressors in the sublime and preserved Tablets.
- (66) As for them who suffer martyrdom in the path of God in these days, they are the most exalted among the entire creation. They make mention of their Creator openly, and the multitude of their enemies are powerless to prevent them from the remembrance of their Lord, until such time as they are martyred and attain the Object of their desire. And when their souls ascend, the entire company of the Concourse on High shall stand ready to receive them bearing the banners of this Cause. Such is the decree that hath, in truth, been set forth at the behest of the Most Powerful, the All-Wise.
- (67) Say: O My Lord and My Master! Thou art the One Who hath planted the trees of justice (*ashjār al-'adl*) in the Paradise of Thy Revelation and Thy Wisdom. Shelter them, O My God, from the raging storms of fate and the rolling thunder of calamity, that their boughs and their branches may grow and develop beneath the shade of Thy bounty and the canopy of Thy mercy. O My God! Cause them who are the chosen ones amongst Thy creatures and the truly devoted amidst Thy servants to abide beneath the shadow of their leaves. Thou verily art powerful over whatsoever Thou willest, and Thou verily art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

- (68) We have, in truth, created the Paradise of Justice (*riḍvān al-'adl*) through Our strength and power, and have sent it unto Thee with a glorious and wondrous fruit. Taste, then, the fruits of these trees, and rest beneath the shadow of their leaves, that thou mayest be protected from the fire of the infidels [p. 129]
- (69) Thus have We perfected this Bounty unto thee, that thou mayest render thanks unto thy Lord and be accounted among the grateful. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank these colleagues for their substantive input and advice, all of which has qualitatively contributed to this paper: (1) Shahrokh Monjazebe, independent scholar, Vancouver, British Columbia (author of *Bahā'u'llāh: A Brief Survey of His Life & Works*, 2007); (2) Dr Nosratollah Mohammad-Hosseini, LL.D., independent scholar, Surrey, British Columbia (author of *The Bab* (in Persian, 1152 pages) and other works); (3) Necati Alkan, Ph.D, Researcher, Institute of Oriental Studies, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Bamberg, Germany (author of *Dissent and Heterodoxy in the Late Ottoman Empire: Reformers, Babis and Baha'is*, 2008); (4) Nader Saiedi, Taslimi Foundation Professor of Baha'i Studies in the department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA (author of *Logos and Civilization*, 2000, and other works). The authors also wish to acknowledge and thank *Baha'i Studies Review* editor, Steve Cooney, for inviting the authors to contribute this article, which was his original idea.

Suggested citation

Christopher Buck & Adib Masumian, 'Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice: Commentary and Translation', *Baha'i Studies Review*, 20, 2014 [published 2018], 97–134.

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Endnotes

1. 'Bahá'u'lláh's Best-Known Works', in *The Baha'i World: An International Record*. Volume XVIII (1979–1983), 'prepared under the supervision of the Universal House of Justice', Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 1986, 834. Online: http://bahai-library.com/pdf/bw/bahai_world_volume_18.pdf. (Accessed 31 December 2016.)
2. Persian transliteration of the original title. This is how Shoghi Effendi referred to this Tablet in English. Refer to Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1980, 74. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/PDC/pdc-20.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
3. Arabic transliteration of the original title.
4. In their Persian-language works, a number of eminent Iranian Baha'i scholars – including Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq-Khavari, Shapour Rassekh, and Muhammad Afnan – have referred to the Tablet by this name.
5. In addition to such Baha'i scholars as Fāḍil Māzindarānī (*Asrār al-āthār*, vol. 4, Tehran: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1973, 323), the recipient of this Tablet himself – Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shāhmīrzādī – has also referred to the Tablet by this name. Refer to Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shāhmīrzādī, '*Vaqāyi'-i-Qal'ih va Shāhmīrzād*' ('Events of the Fortress (of Shaykh Tabarsi) and Shāhmīrzād'), n.p., n.d., 96. Reference to the former courtesy of Nosratollah Mohammad-Hosseini, personal communication, 26 December 2016, and reference to the latter courtesy of Omid Ghaemmaghami, personal communication, 1 January 2017.
6. Shoghi Effendi, *Promised Day Is Come*, 74. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/PDC/pdc-20.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
7. *Oxford English Dictionary* (Second Edition), s.v. 'Justice'. (Accessed 1 January 2017.)
8. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, trans. Shoghi Effendi, Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1990, 175 (Section LXXXVIII, from the Paradise of Justice). Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/b/GWB/gwb-88.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
9. Ibid. 17 (Section XII, from the Paradise of Justice). Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/b/GWB/gwb-12.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
10. Muhammad Afnan, '*Nazarī Ijmālī dar Maḍāmīn-i Lawḥ-i Riḍvānu'l-Adl*'. Published in idem, *Majmū'i-yi Maqālāt-i Duktur Muḥammad Afnān* [Collected Essays of Dr Muhammad Afnan] Dundas, Ontario: Andalib, 2013, 630. The present authors are

- grateful to Omid Ghaemmaghami for acquainting them with this work in a personal communication, 30 December 2016.
11. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979, 176. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 1 January 2017.)
 12. Afnan, *Majmū'i-yi Maqālāt*, 625.
 13. This provisional translation is based on the recension of Baha'u'llah's Paradise of Justice published in the 133 BE printing of *Āthār-i Qalam-i A'lā*, reprinted, H-Bahai: East Lansing, MI, 2000, 4:42–60, <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/areprint/baha/A-F/A/aqa4/aqa4.htm> See also a vocalized version of the complete Tablet published in 2007 in *Safīni-yi-'Irfān, Daftar-i-Dahum*, Darmstadt: Asr-i-Jadid 10: 10–15 http://irfancoolloquia.org/pdf/safini10_laaliy-i-irfan.pdf. The last two citations are courtesy of Shahrokh Monjazeb, personal communication, 1 January 2017.
 14. Stephen Lambden, trans., 'Riḍvān al-'adl (The Tablet of the Riḍvān of Justice)'. Online: <http://hurqalya.ucmerced.edu/node/435/>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
 15. Juan R.I. Cole, trans. 'The Garden of Justice'. Provisional translation (2 March 1996). Online: <http://www.angelfire.com/space/talisman/T96mar1.htm>. See also <http://whoisbahauallah.com/windflower/translations-on-this-site/translations/121-garden-of-justice>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
 16. Moojan Momen, *The Baha'i Communities of Iran, 1851–1921: Volume 1: The North of Iran*, Oxford: George Ronald, 2015, 248 (photograph of Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī). See also idem, 'A Chronicle of the Babi-Baha'i Communities in Sangsar and Shahrīrādī', *Baha'i Studies Review* 14 (2007), 85–96. [p. 131]
 17. Stephen Lambden, 'The Bābī-Baha'i Theology of 'Adl (Justice) and the Lawh-i Riḍvān al-'Adl of Bahā'u'llāh'. (Abstract of unpublished paper.) Online: http://irfancoolloquia.org/116/lamb-den_justice. (Accessed 15 December 2016.) Lambden is referring here to Ishraq-Khavari, s.v. 'Riḍvān al-'Adl' (Entry 54) *Ganj-i Shaygan*, Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Milli-i Matbu'at-i Amri, 207–209. Online (start of entry): <http://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/o/GS/gs-207.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
 18. Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shahrīrādī, '*Vaqāyi'-i-Qal'ih va Shahrīrādī*' ('Events of the Fortress (of Shaykh Tabarsi) and Shahrīrādī'), 131 pages, unpublished, his own handwriting. MS. in private hands. Digitally published in facsimile, East Lansing, MI: H-Bahai, 2001. <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/arabic/vol5/aqariza/131.JPG>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
 19. Momen, *Baha'i Communities* 545.
 20. Shahrīrādī, *Vaqāyi'-i Qal'ih* 96. Reference courtesy of Omid Ghaemmaghami, personal communication, 1 January 2017.
 21. Momen, 'Chronicle', 86.
 22. Ahang Rabbani, *Witness to Shaykh Tabarsi: The Narrative of Hājī Nasir Qazvīnī*, in *Witnesses to Babi and Baha'i History*, vol. 8 (2007) (unpaginated). Online: http://bahai-library.com/pdf/r/rabbani_narrative_haji_qazvini.pdf. Accessed 15 December 2016.

23. 'Azīzu'llāh Sulaymānī, *Maṣābīḥ-i Hidāyat*, Tehran: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 130 BE/1974, 8:67: http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/areprint/authors/sulayman/masabih8/Masabih_Hidayat_v8_34_82.PDF.
24. 'Azīzu'llāh Sulaymānī, *Maṣābīḥ-i Hidāyat*, 8:68. Provisional translation by Adib Masumian.
25. Muḥammad-'Alī Malik-Khusravī, *Tārīkh-i Shuhadāy-i 'Amr*, Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Milli-i Matbu'at-i Amr 2:317: http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/areprint/authors/malikkhusravi/shuhadi/Shuhadi_2.pdf.
26. Nader Saiedi, *Logos and Civilization: Spirit, History, and Order in the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, Bethesda, MD: University Press Maryland, 2000, 177.
27. Historian Hasan M. Balyuzi adds: 'In the International Archives of the Baha'i Faith, on Mount Carmel, a blood-stained handkerchief is preserved with which Bahā'u'llāh used to wipe His mouth on the night He fell ill, as a result of poisoning'. Hasan M. Balyuzi, *Bahā'u'llāh: The King of Glory*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1980, 225, n1.
28. Moojan Momen, *Baha'u'llah: A Short Biography*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007, 75.
29. Ustād Muḥammad-'Alī Salmānī, *My Memories of Bahā'u'llāh*, trans. Marzieh Gail, Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1982, 51–52.
30. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 165–166. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
31. Necati Alkan, *Dissent and Heterodoxy in the Late Ottoman Empire: Reformers, Babis and Baha'is*, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008, 72.
32. Momen, *Baha'u'llah*, 75.
33. Māzindarānī, *Asrār al-Āthār*, Tehran: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 129 BE/ 1973, 4:192–193. Provisional translation by Adib Masumian.
34. Baha'u'llah, 'Lawḥ-i Javad', in *Ibid.*, 193. Provisional translation from the original Persian by Dr Nosratollah Mohammad-Hosseini, LL.D. Personal communication, 1 January 2017.
35. *Ibid.*, 193. Provisional translation by Adib Masumian.
36. *Ibid.*, 193. Provisional translation by Adib Masumian.
37. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 163–164. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 30 December 2016.)
38. This *terminus a quo* (based on Shoghi Effendi's clear statement) was pointed out by Shahrokh Monjazez, personal communication, 30 December 2016.
39. Riaz Ghadimi, *Farhang-i Lughāt-i Muntakhaba*, Toronto, 1986 [1988], 418. Incidentally, Ghadimi also has an entry on 'Year of Stress' (*sani-yi shidād*), which he defines as the year of Baha'u'llah's passing (1892 CE). Ghadimi's source for this information is probably a Tablet from Abdu'l-Baha – addressed to the Baha'is of Ishqabad – to this effect, published in [p. 132] Māzindarānī, *Asrār al-āthār* 4:193. The present authors are grateful to Omid Ghaemmaghami for acquainting them with this work in a personal communication, 1 January 2017.
40. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 168. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 1 January 2016.)

41. See W. Schmucker, 'Mubāhala', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, 7: 276–277. Online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5289. (Accessed 23 December 2016.)
42. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 178–179. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 31 December 2016.)
43. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 163–182, passim. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 30 December 2016.)
44. This *terminus ad quem* was also theorized by Shahrokh Monjazez, personal communication, 30 December 2016.
45. Shahrokh Monjazez, personal communication, 30 December 2016.
46. Cole, 'The Garden of Justice'.
47. Balyuzi, *King of Glory* 237–238. Reference courtesy of Omid Ghaemmaghani, personal communication, 1 January 2017.
48. Insight courtesy of Omid Ghaemmaghani, personal communication, 2 January 2017.
49. Balyuzi, *King of Glory*, 238. Reference courtesy of Omid Ghaemmaghani, personal communication, 1 January 2017.
50. Baha'u'llah, *Kitāb-i Badī'*, Hofheim, Germany: Baha'i Verlag, 2008, 78–79. The aforementioned similarity was mentioned to the present authors by Omid Ghaemmaghani, personal communication, 30 December 2016.
51. Glenn Cameron and Wendi Momen, *A Basic Baha'i Chronology*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1996, 78. For a more extensive discussion of the Kitāb-i Badī', refer to Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahā'u'llāh: Adrianople: 1863–68*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1972, 370–387.
52. Ishraq-Khavari, s.v. 'Riḍvānu'l-'Adl' (Entry 54), in *Ganj-i Shaygan*, 207–209. Online (start of entry): <http://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/o/GS/gs-207.html>. (Accessed 15 December 2016.)
53. We know, from Baha'u'llah's own account, that he forbade holy war on the first day of Riḍvān (Baghdad, 22 April 1863): 'In a Tablet written some years later [henceforth, 'Riḍvān summary Tablet'], Baha'u'llah states that three announcements were made on the first day of Riḍvān. First, Baha'u'llah's followers were forbidden to fight to advance or defend their faith' (John Walbridge, *Sacred Acts, Sacred Space, Sacred Time*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1996, 237). This prohibition, however, was delivered orally to an immediate, limited audience – and even though it was reiterated later in the Riḍvān summary Tablet, at a time that certainly predated the revelation of the Lawḥ-i Sulṭān (Mīrzā Muḥammad-'Alī yi Zanjānī, the martyred physician, is mentioned as one still living at the time), we do not yet know the extent to which that Tablet was circulated among the Baha'is of that time. It may not have been well-known enough to justify an allusion to it from Baha'u'llah in his Paradise of Justice. Beyond all this, one could also argue that prohibiting holy war is not the same as forbidding the shedding of blood under any circumstances, and that the latter was only definitively articulated later in the Lawḥ-i Sulṭān. The Riḍvān summary Tablet was revealed in Persian, and has been published in full in INBA (Iranian National Baha'i Archives) vol. 44, p. 225. Available online here: <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/diglib/INBA/INBA044.pdf>.

- (Accessed 1 January 2017.) See now an authorized translation in *Days of Remembrance: Selections from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh for Bahá'í Holy Days*, Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 2016, vol. 38(9), pars. 1–2.
54. This theory originates with Shahrokh Monjazez, independent scholar, Vancouver, British Columbia. (Personal communication, 26 December 2016.) Monjazez's dating argument has been confirmed by another independent scholar, Dr Nosratollah Mohammad-Hosseini, LL.D., of Surrey, British Columbia, personal communication, 28 December 2016.
 55. Baha'u'llah, 'Nāširu'd-Dīn Shāh', *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 2002, 110 (par. 213).
 56. Cameron and Momen, *A Basic Baha'i Chronology* 78. [p. 133]
 57. Necati Alkan, 'Bahā'u'llāh's Lawḥ-i Istintāq (Tablet of the Interrogation) and the Murder of Three Azalīs in Akka in 1872'. Presented at the Irfan Colloquia Session #138, Centre for Baha'i Studies: Acuto, Italy, July 5–8, 2016. Online: http://irfancoolloquia.org/138/alkan_istintaq. (Accessed 29 December 2016.)
 58. This theory originates with Shahrokh Monjazez, independent scholar, Vancouver, British Columbia. (Personal communication, 26 December 2016.) Monjazez's dating argument has been confirmed by another independent scholar, Dr Nosratollah Mohammad-Hosseini, LL.D., of Surrey, British Columbia, personal communication, 28 December 2016.
 59. Christina Alm-Arvius, *Figures of Speech*, Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur, 2003, 130.
 60. Afnan, *Majmū'i-yi Maqālāt* 627.
 61. Momen, *Baha'i Communities* 247–249.
 62. Momen, 'A Chronicle of the Babi-Baha'i Communities in Sangsar and Shahmirzad' 89.
 63. Momen, *Baha'i Communities* 277.
 64. Momen, 'Chronicle' 90.
 65. Momen, *Baha'i Communities* 273.
 66. Momen, 'Chronicle' 93.
 67. Momen, *Baha'i Communities* 306.
 68. 'Azīzu'llāh Sulaymānī, Maṣābiḥ-i Hidāyat 8:34; Muḥammad-'Alī Malik-Khusravī, Tāriḥ-i Shuhadāy-i 'Amr 317–326; Fāḍil Māzandarānī, Tāriḥ-i Zuhūru'l-ḥaqq, Digitally republished, East Lansing, Michigan: H-Bahai, 2001, vol. 8(2), 801 print/vol12/tzh8b/TZHV8b.pdf.
 69. Muhammad Afnan, *Majmū'i-yi Maqālāt* 624–625. Translation from the original Persian by Adib Masumian.
 70. Ibid. 625. Translation from the original Persian by Adib Masumian.
 71. Ibid. 627.
 72. Shoghi Effendi, *Promised Day Is Come* 74.
 73. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 168. Online: <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/se/GPB/gpb-11.html>. (Accessed 2 January 2017.)

74. Ibid. 176.
75. Ibid. 163–182.
76. Ibid. 179, 181.
77. Provisional translation by Nader Saiedi (of Baha'u'llah, in Fāḍil Māzindarānī, *Asrār al-Āthār*, 4:22, in idem, *Logos and Civilization* 242. See also pp. 243–247 and passim.
78. Baha'u'llah himself alludes to this fact in the Lawḥ-i Sulṭān, where he notes that, in previous Tablets, he has defined 'rendering assistance unto God' (*nuṣrat*) in a nonviolent way. Refer to Baha'u'llah, Nāṣiru'd-Dīn Shāh, 107–110 (pars. 208–213). Two important articles that explore the way in which the concept of *jihād* has been defined in the Baha'i framework are also worthy of mention. The first is Sasha Dehghani, 'The Birth of a Monotheistic Religion in Modernity: On Jihad and Martyrdom in the Baha'i Faith', published in Sasha Dehghani and Silvia Horsch al-Saad (eds.), *Martyrdom in the Modern Middle East*, Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2014, 15–32. Dehghani (p. 26) translates the very same statement of Baha'u'llah that Saiedi has translated above (see the previous footnote) so: 'the use of the sword is abolished in this revelation' (*sayf dar īn zuhūr murtafi' ast*). The second is Todd Lawson, 'The Baha'i Tradition: The Return of Joseph and the Peaceable Imagination', published in John Renard (ed.), *Fighting Words: Religion, Violence, and the Interpretation of Sacred Texts*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012, 135–157. The present authors are grateful to Omid Ghaemmaghami for acquainting them with both of these works in a personal communication, 4 January 2017.
79. Baha'u'llah, *The Tabernacle of Unity*, Haifa: Baha'i World Centre, 2006, 54.
80. Udo Schaefer, *Bahá'í Ethics in Light of Scripture: An Introduction, vol. 2: Virtues and Divine Commandments*, Oxford: George Ronald, 2009.
81. Ibid. 429–491, et seq. [p. 134]
82. Published in *Safīni-yi 'Irfān, Daftar-i Dahum*, Darmstadt, Germany: 'Aṣr-i Jadīd, 2007, 187–201. Available online at: tice.pdf. Accessed 31 December 2016. The present authors are grateful to Omid Ghaemmaghami for acquainting them with this work in a personal communication, 30 December 2016.
83. Muhammad Afnan, *Majmū'i-yi Maqālāt* 626 notes that this is likely a reference to Iblis (Satan), particularly as his downfall is depicted in Qur'ān 7:11–18, and is probably also applicable to Mīrzā Yaḥyā.
84. A reference to Qur'ān 22:2.
85. Cf. Qur'ān 2:210.
86. An authorized translation of parts of this paragraph ('Say: ... this Revelation', 'And whoso guarded Tablets') has been included in a Memorandum dated 7 August 2006 from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and published in Schaefer, *Baha'i Ethics*, 2:433 and 2:434 respectively.
87. This appears to be a reference to Jacob, whose sight was restored when the garment of Joseph was cast over his face. Cf. Qur'ān 12:96.
88. A reference to Āqā Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍā Shāhmīrzādī, the recipient of this Tablet. 'Nabīl' and 'Muḥammad' share the same value in the Abjad system, and the two names are often used synonymously in the Bahā'ī writings.
89. Cf. Qur'ān 18:94, 21:96.

90. Cf. Micah 1:3–4 and Qur'an 50:44.

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