



# The Reference Desk: Cataloging and Subject Indexing

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# Challenges for foundational work

2

## Access

- ▶ What is out there?
- ▶ “Chart the coastline”

## Content

- ▶ What does it say?
- ▶ “Plumb the depths”

# The goals

3

Create two aids for foundational work

- ▶ 1. Facilitating access: catalog the accessible sources
  - ▶ Exhaustive list of what we presently have access to
  - ▶ Both original texts and translations
  - ▶ Include all three Central Figures
- ▶ 2. Exploring content: thematic reconstructions
  - ▶ Multiple approaches possible

- ▶ August 2019 Wilmette Institute Webinar:  
The Writings of the Báb
  - ▶ <http://wilmetteinstitute.org/overview-of-the-writings-of-the-bab/>
- ▶ February 2020 Wilmette Institute Webinar:  
The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh (and Abdu'-Bahá)
  - ▶ <https://wilmetteinstitute.org/overview-of-the-writings-of-bahauallah/>

# Challenges on the path of approach: The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

## ▶ Access

- ▶ Both original texts and translations are scattered, uncoordinated (beyond the BWC)
- ▶ Majority of texts (>90%) are untranslated
- ▶ For those wanting an exhaustive and systematic study: where do they begin and where do they end? And where can I find them?

## ▶ Content

- ▶ Size: ~5 + 6 + 6 million words  
~2,000 + 20,000 + 30,000 surviving works
- ▶ Uncharted vastness discourages the approach

# A “coordinate system” for the Bahá’í Writings

6

of  
14

Longest                      Shortest Later additions

## ▶ Writings

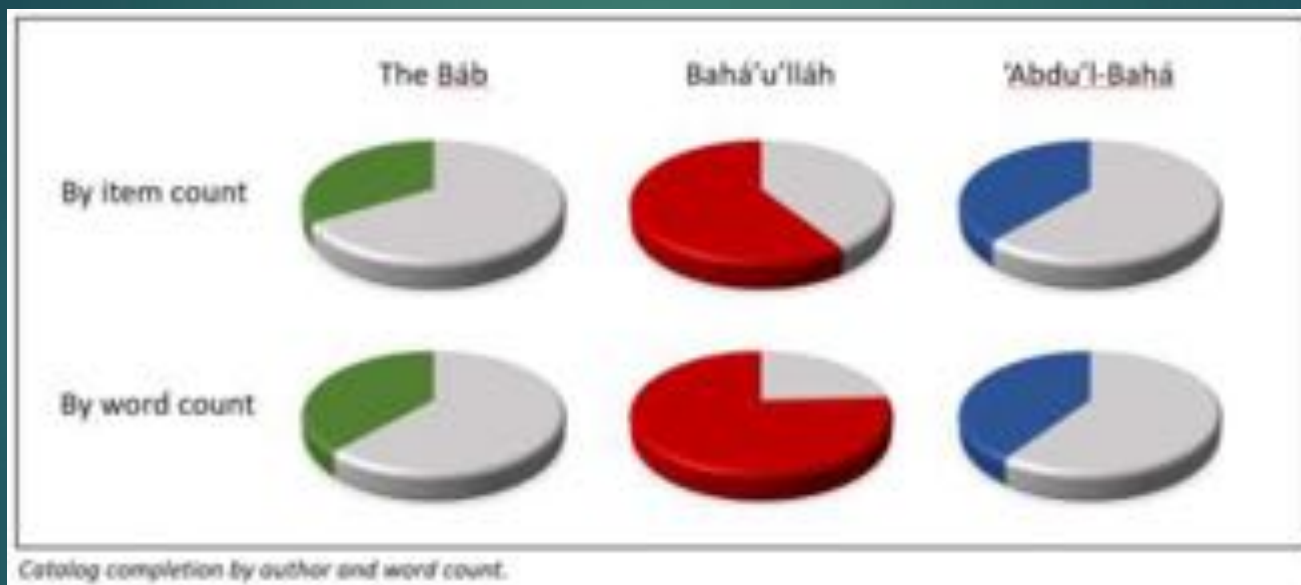
▶ The Báb	BB00001	...	BB00635	BB00636+
▶ Bahá’u’lláh	BH00001	...	BH11676	BH11677+
▶ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá	AB00001	...	AB11805	AB11806+

## ▶ Utterances

▶ The Báb	BBU0001	...	BBU0015	BBU0016+
▶ Bahá’u’lláh	BHU0001	...	BHU0065	BHU0066+
▶ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá	ABU0001	...	ABU3664	ABU3665+

# Results of the inventory

- ▶ Availability:
  - ▶ The Báb: ~25-30% in public domain in original languages
  - ▶ Bahá'u'lláh: ~75%
  - ▶ 'Abdu'l-Bahá: ~40%



- ▶ Reported utterances
  - ▶ A few thousand more (mostly 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

# Accessing the inventory (~50MB pdf)

8

▶ <http://blog.loomofreality.org/>

Welcome

Here is the latest version of the "Inventory" – an unofficial, academic tool for the identification of Bahá'í texts in Arabic/Persian and in English translation:

[Download](#)

**A Partial Inventory of the Works of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith**

Compiled from public domain sources

With a subject classification scheme for the Bahá'í writings

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EXTENDED BU

Including the  
Conscience  
The Call of the  
series)  
The Verge of  
Science, Belie  
New Year's

ONE-OFF INTE  
LECTURES

Conversation  
and Mystics  
Possible futu  
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# Parsing catalog entries

<http://blog.loomofreality.org/>

9

- ▶ Catalog ID
- ▶ Title
- ▶ Word Count
- ▶ Language
- ▶ First line (Ara/Per)
- ▶ Manuscripts (Ara/Per)
- ▶ Publications (Ara/Per)
- ▶ Translations (Eng only)
- ▶ First line in translation
- ▶ Musical interpretations
- ▶ Notes
- ▶ [Hyperlinks]

BH00001. *Kitab-i Aqdas (The Most Holy Book)*. 10520 words, Ara. ان اول ما كتب الله على العباد عرفان مشرق وحيه و مطلع امره الذي كان مقام Mss: INBA43:069, BLUB.Or02820.001, BLUB.Or15691.001, BLUB.Or15729.002, BLUB.Or15737a.001, KB#833:006, CMB.F29, CMB.F30, CMB.F31, LEID.Or4969x, BN.6397. Pubs: AQDA, GWBP#037 p.062bx, GWBP#056 p.078x, GWBP#098 p.130bx, GWBP#105 p.137x, GWBP#155 p.213x, GWBP#159 p.216x, GWBP#166 p.222bx, ROB3.000x. Trans: AQDS, GWB#037x, GWB#056x, GWB#098x, GWB#105x, GWB#155x, GWB#159x, GWB#166x, BADM.016x, BADM.021ax, COF.018-019x, TDH#082x, TDH#158.3x, GPB.102x2x, GPB.112x, GPB.154x, GPB.170x2x, GPB.176x, GPB.195x, GPB.206x6x, GPB.207x3x, GPB.208x5x, GPB.209x5x, GPB.211x, GPB.214x7x, GPB.215x15x, GPB.215-216x, GPB.216x, GPB.225x, GPB.226x4x, GPB.230-231x, GPB.231x, GPB.242x, GPB.254x, GPB.325x, GPB.331-332x, GPB.376x, GPB.390x, GPB.395-396x, GPB.396x, MBW.166x, MBW.168x, PDC.040x, PDC.040-042x, PDC.042x, PDC.058-059x, PDC.059x, PDC.059-060x, PDC.064-065x, PDC.092x, PDC.092-093x, PDC.095x, PDC.100x, PDC.118-119x, PDC.121x, PDC.133-134x, PDC.134-135x, PDC.161x, PDC.187x, WOB.105x, WOB.109x, WOB.146x, WOB.132x, WOB.134x, WOB.162x, WOB.171-172x, WOB.172x, WOB.176x, SW v01#05 p.009x, SW v14#04 p.112 (et al)x, DWN v1#02 p.002-003x, DWN v2#09 p.069-070x, BLC.PT#045, BLC.PT#056, BSC.110 #043-044+046x, BSC.156 #138-139x, BSC.262 #547x. *The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws...* Notes: LAC.213-257, ROB3.275 et al, BKOG.351 et al, GPB.206 et al, EBTB.155, EBTB.189, MMAH.199, GSH.133, LL#027.

## Some use cases

- ▶ Lookup from source reference (e.g., “GWB#050”)
  - ▶ Refer to bibliography for source code abbreviations
- ▶ Lookup from words/phrases in first line
- ▶ Systematic readthrough
  - ▶ Longest-to-shortest, shortest-to-longest
- ▶ Browse titles (from index)
- ▶ Browse questions (from index)
- ▶ Collation of original text from multiple manuscripts
  - ▶ May be useful when authorized text at Bahá'í Reference Library does not exist

<http://blog.loomofreality.org/>

# Next step: Content

(appendix to the Inventory)

11

## Kant's Critique of Pure Reason

- ▶ What can we know?
- ▶ What should we do?
- ▶ What may we hope?

THE CANON OF PURE REASON 635

THE CANON OF PURE REASON

Section 2

THE IDEAL OF THE HIGHEST GOOD, AS A DETERMINING  
GROUND OF THE ULTIMATE END OF PURE REASON

Reason, in its speculative employment, conducted us through the field of experience, and since it could not find complete satisfaction there, from thence to speculative ideas, which, however, in the end brought us back to experience. In so doing the ideas fulfilled their purpose, but in a manner which, though useful, is not in accordance with our expectation. One other line of enquiry still remains open to us: namely, whether pure reason may not also be met with in the practical sphere, and whether it may not there conduct us to ideas which reach to those highest ends of pure reason that we have just stated, and whether, therefore, reason may not be able to supply to us from the standpoint of its practical interest what it altogether refuses to supply in respect of its speculative interest.

All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope?

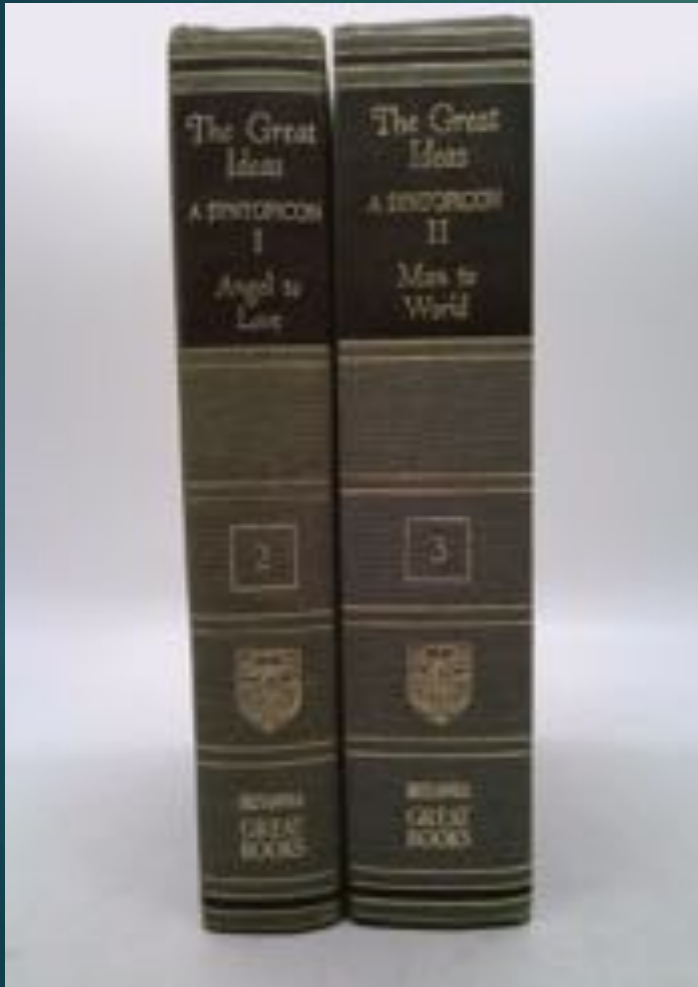
(A 805  
B 831)

The first question is merely speculative. We have, as I flatter myself, exhausted all the possible answers to it, and at last have found the answer with which reason must perforce content itself, and with which, so long as it takes no account of the practical, it has also good cause to be satisfied. But from the two great ends to which the whole endeavour of pure reason was really directed, we have remained just as far removed as if through love of ease we had declined this labour of enquiry at the very outset. So far, then, as knowledge is concerned, this much, at least, is certain and definitively established, that in respect of these two latter problems, knowledge is unattainable by us.

The second question is purely practical. As such it can

# Previous systems?

Adler's "Syntopicon"



## Metaphysics/logic

Reasoning  
Philosophy  
Metaphysics

Logic  
Principle  
Definition  
Cause  
Chance  
Change  
Dialectic  
Hypothesis  
Induction

Being  
Form  
Matter  
Quality  
Quantity  
Relation  
Opposition

Necessity and Contingency  
One and Many  
Same and Other  
Universal and Particular

Eternity  
Infinity

## Mind/language

Mind  
Knowledge  
Memory and Imagination  
Experience  
Idea  
Opinion

Language  
Sign and Symbol  
Rhetoric

History  
Medicine

## Theology

God  
Religion  
Prophecy  
Theology

Soul  
Immortality  
Angel

Fate  
Will

## Moral philosophy

Truth

Good and Evil  
Sin  
Duty  
Judgment  
Law  
Punishment

Virtue and Vice  
Love  
Temperance  
Courage  
Honor  
Prudence  
Wisdom

Desire  
Emotion  
Happiness  
Pleasure and Pain  
Habit

## Aesthetics

Beauty  
Art  
Poetry

## Natural philosophy

Mathematics  
Science  
Physics  
Astronomy  
Nature  
World  
Element  
Mechanics  
Space  
Time

Animal  
Sense  
Evolution  
Life and Death

## Political philosophy

Justice  
Liberty  
Progress  
Man

Labor  
Wealth  
Education  
Family

Government  
Aristocracy  
Democracy  
Monarchy  
Oligarchy  
Tyranny

State  
Citizen  
Slavery  
Constitution  
Custom and Convention  
Revolution  
War and Peace



# A classification scheme

- ▶ What can we know?
  - ▶ What are the ultimate things to know about?
  - ▶ How do we know them? How does language function as a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge?
  
- ▶ What should we do?
  - ▶ As individuals, in relation to ourselves, others, the Truth?
  - ▶ As groups of individuals that need to both cooperate and compete?
  
- ▶ What shall we hope?
  - ▶ Where did we come from, and what kind of a world are we creating?

APPENDIX		
A SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR THE BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS:		
MAIN HEADINGS		
<i>Questions of being</i>	<b>I. Degrees and Conditions of Existence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. God and the Realm of the Divine Will</li> <li>B. Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy</li> <li>C. The Manifestations of God</li> <li>D. The Covenant and the Faith of God</li> </ul>	METAPHYSICS, THEOLOGY, NATURAL PHILOSOPHY
<i>Questions of knowledge</i>	<b>II. Knowledge, language and symbol</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Knowledge and the Investigation of Reality</li> <li>B. Language, Symbol and Interpretation</li> <li>C. Sacred Writings: Modes, Styles, Disposition of</li> </ul>	EPISTEMOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE, HERMENEUTICS
<i>Questions of conduct</i>	<b>III. Individual Reality and Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Individual Spiritual Reality: Soul, Mind, Spirit</li> <li>B. The Spiritual Purpose of Human Existence</li> <li>C. Spiritual Life and Practice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In Relation to God</li> <li>2. In Relation to Self</li> <li>3. In Relation to Others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	PSYCHOLOGY, PERSONAL ETHICS, MYSTICISM
<i>Questions of governance</i>	<b>IV. Collective Reality and Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Laws and Ordinances</li> <li>B. Prohibitions and Admonitions</li> <li>C. Social Teachings</li> <li>D. The Administrative Order and the Bahá'í Community</li> </ul>	JURISPRUDENCE, SOCIOLOGY, ECONOMICS, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
<i>Questions of historical contingency</i>	<b>V. Past, Present, and Future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Beliefs and Dispensations of the Past</li> <li>B. The Central Figures and Events of Their Ministries</li> <li>C. Present and Future Order; Crisis and Victory; Prophetic Statements</li> </ul>	HISTORY, ESCHATOLOGY

# Classification: sub-categories

14

- ▶ Links to thematic compilations of extracts
- ▶ Shoghi Effendi, Universal House of Justice heavily referenced here

## A SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR THE BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS: SUB-HEADINGS

### I.A. GOD AND THE REALM OF THE DIVINE WILL

God [Alláh; ʿIzzat; Haqq; Uḡhiyyat]  
God: transcendence/unknowability of  
God: absolute freedom/independence of  
God: no causal link to creation  
God: every concept of is sheer imagination  
God: beyond "being", "oneness", "existence"  
God: love for own essence  
God: self-description of  
God: impersonality of  
God: impossibility of true worship of  
God: as immanent/personal  
God: essential vs. actional attributes  
God: proofs for existence:  
God: proofs for existence: cosmological proof  
God: proofs for existence: teleological proof (from design)  
God: proofs for existence: proof from "voluntary composition"  
God: proofs for existence: proof from existence of opposites  
God: proofs for existence: impossibility of logical proof  
names and attributes of God [asma' vs sifa']  
names and attributes of God: inadequacy of in describing the essence  
names and attributes of God: within all things; every atom  
names and attributes of God: require the existence of objects  
names and attributes of God: God's knowledge of things  
names and attributes of God: same as knowledge of God  
names and attributes of God: eternal archetypes [a'yán-i-ʿábitah]  
names and attributes of God: oneness [ahadiyyih and wihidiyyih]  
names and attributes of God: revealed in the Manifestations  
Divine unity [tawhid] and levels of unity  
the Primal Will [magʿbiyyat]/First Mind [ʿaql-i-awwal]  
the Primal Will: in relation to God  
the Primal Will: self-generation of  
the Primal Will: appearance in the Manifestation  
the Primal Will: identified with the Logos/Word of God  
the Primal Will: identified with the First Remembrance  
the Primal Will: immediate/efficient cause of creation  
the Primal Will: inner reality of all things

the Holy Spirit: as mediator  
the Holy Spirit: source of knowledge/inspiration/influence  
the Holy Spirit: cause of quickening of souls  
the Holy Spirit: gift of; successive descent of  
the Holy Spirit: love as breath of  
the Holy Spirit: cause of physical/spiritual healing  
the Holy Spirit: cause of unity  
the Holy Spirit: cause of progress in the world/discoveries  
the Holy Spirit: humanity's need for  
the Holy Spirit: personified as dove/maiden/etc.  
Primal Will identified with Word of God  
Word of God identified with Holy Spirit

### I.B. METAPHYSICS AND NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

divine philosophy contrasted with natural philosophy  
the realms of being and overlapping hierarchies/frameworks  
the realms of being: God, Will/Command, creation  
the realms of being: three degrees of divine emanation  
the realms of being: arcs of ascent and descent  
the realms of being: material and spiritual existence; two books  
the realms of being: Nasut/Malakut/Jabarut/Lahut/ʿIsbat  
the divine emanation  
the divine emanation: three degrees of  
the divine emanation: all things emanate from God  
the divine emanation: the divine bounty pervades all things  
the divine emanation: infinite power of  
the divine emanation: necessary condition of existence  
the divine emanation: ceaseless/eternal  
the divine emanation: continual re-creation of the world  
emanation [sudúr] vs. manifestation [zuhúr]  
the four/five pathways of love [mahabbat]  
love: first pathway, of God for own essence  
love: second pathway, of God for the creatures  
love: third pathway, of the creatures for God  
love: fourth pathway, of the creatures for each other  
love: fifth pathway, of the self of God standing within  
creation [khalq]