

# Oceans of Light:

The Major Works of Bahá'u'lláh

# Our Approach

- The Cause needs more . . . people who not only are devoted to it and believe in it and are anxious to tell others about it, but also who have a deep grasp of the Teachings and their significance, and who can correlate its beliefs with the current thoughts and problems of the people of the world. (21 October 1943 to an individual believer) (Compilations, Scholarship, p. 4)

# Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation

- 15,000 tablets revealed over 40+ years
- Arabic, Persian, a mix of the two, and “pure” Persian
- Many genres (letters, prayers, poetry, treatises, polemics, laws)
- Taherzadeh's 4 volumes discuss 86 tablets
- Gleanings has 166 extracts, Prayers and Meditations, 184, but several can be from the same tablet
- The “Leiden List” gives names, dates, and revelation data for 513 tablets (when available)
- This course discusses about 30!

# Timeline

- Nov. 1817: Birth
- 1844: Accepts the Bab
- 1853: Siyah Chal
- 1855-58: Kurdistan
- 1858-63: Baghdad (Hidden Words, Seven Valleys, Four Valleys, Book of Certitude)
- 1863-64: Istanbul
- 1864-68: Edirne
- 1868-92: Akka
- 1867-70: Tablets to the Kings
- 1873: Most Holy Book
- 1876-78: Tabernacle of Unity tablets
- 1870s-90s: Tablets revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas
- 1891: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Tablet of Carmel
- May 1892: Passing

# Why it is an Ocean

- We have partial or full translations from maybe 500 tablets only
- But we have the longest and most important tablets
- Even less is available in other languages
- Shoghi Effendi's translations set the standard for translating and are used as the source for translating into non-Islamic languages

# A Comparison with Other Manifestations

- Abraham could not write anything down and very little has survived
- Moses's revelation was an oral tradition at least 250 years
- Jesus's revelation was an oral tradition for 10-60 years and was written in Greek, not Aramaic
- Much of Christianity is founded on letters by the Apostle Paul (note much of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation is also letters)
- Muhammad's revelation was partly written and partly oral for about 10 years before the Qur'an was assembled
- We have only a few hundred tablets by the Bab

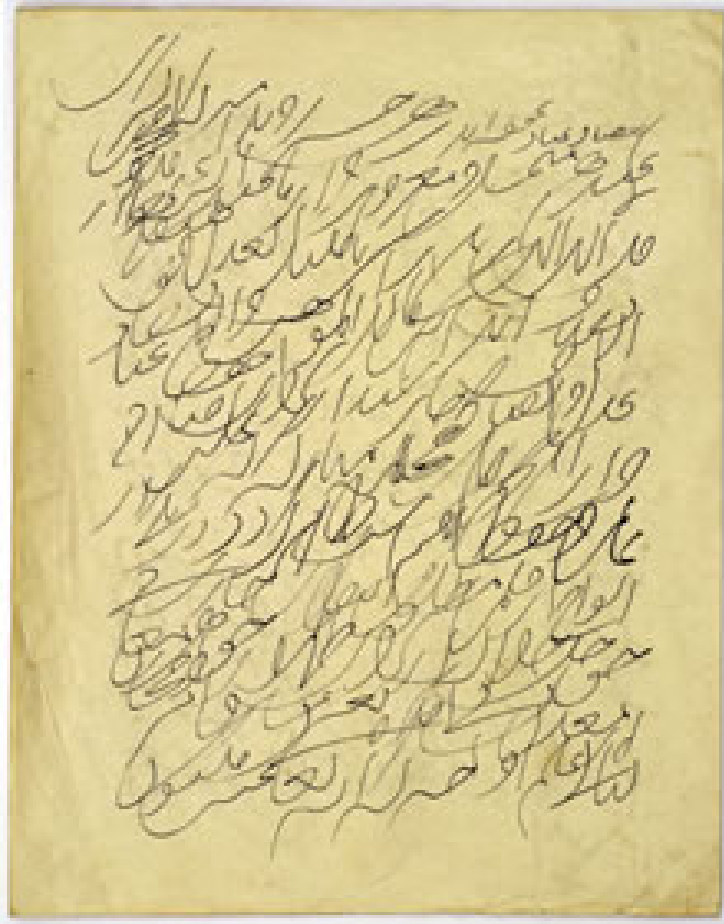
# The Phenomenon of Revelation

- In those days Mirza Aqa Jan, as instructed by Bahá'u'lláh, would first read the letters to Him and then, as Bahá'u'lláh dictated, write the Tablets in answer to them. The verses of God were revealed with great rapidity and without prior contemplation or meditation. By reason of the speed with which these were written, the recorded words were mostly illegible. Some of them no one was able to read; even Mirza Aqa Jan himself at times had difficulty in deciphering his own writing and had to seek the help of Bahá'u'lláh for clarification. Thus the Word of God was revealed. (Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah* v 1, p. 36)

# Manifestations and Revelation

- The greatest proof of the authenticity of the Manifestations of God is the revelation of the words of God. No one else is capable of doing this. The holy Word revealed from the heaven of the Will of the All-Merciful first descends upon the pure and radiant heart of the Manifestation of God and then is spoken by Him. In His Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Bahá'u'lláh confirms this in these words: 'This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing.' (Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah* v 1, p. 36)





- A sample of “revelation writing”; a page from Epistle to the Son of Wolf.

# Classifications of the Revelation by Fazil Mazandarani:

- **I. Tone of Tablet**

- 1. Tablets with the tone of command and authority.
- 2. Those with the tone of servitude, meekness and supplication.

- **II. Subject Covered by Tablet**

- 1. Writings dealing with interpretation of the old Scriptures, religious beliefs and doctrines of the past.
- 2. Writings in which laws and ordinances have been enjoined for this age and laws of the past abrogated.

- 3. Mystical Writings
- 4. Tablets concerning matters of government and world order, and those addressed to the kings.
- 5. Tablets dealing with subjects of learning and knowledge, divine philosophy, mysteries of creation, medicine, alchemy, etc.
- 6. Tablets exhorting men to education, goodly character and divine virtues.
- 7. Tablets dealing with social teachings.

# Genres of Revelation

- In addition to Mázindarání's nine categories, one can identify the following five literary genres in which tablets fall:
  - 1. Letters to individuals. This is often revealed by *epistolary style*, in other words, there are greetings to the person, exhortations, and usually an opening and a closing that sound like a letter. See the opening and closing several pages of the Four Valleys for an example; especially read footnote 9.
  - 2. Essays or books revealed as a letter to an individual. This may be difficult to separate from the first category. Among the defining characteristics are length, elaborate arguments, and a complex internal structure (division into chapters or sections).
  - 3. Essays or books, not revealed to a specific person. This category is very rare.
  - 4. Poems. These works are often not translated into English.
  - 5. Prayers.

# Sprinkling of the Cloud of Unknowing

- Rashh-i-Ama (Persian)
- The “Ama” (cloud) refers to the Unknowable Essence
- Revealed in the Siyah-Chal, Tehran, 1853
- A poem of 19 lines
- Translations: Provisionals only (no authorized translation)

- Although consisting of only nineteen lines, this poem in itself constitutes a mighty book. Within it are contained the potentialities, the character, the power and the glory of forty years of Divine Revelation to come. It announces the glad-tidings of the release of spiritual energies which are described by Bahá'u'lláh in such terms as the wafting of the divine musk-laden Breeze, the appearance of the Ocean of the Cause of God, the sounding of the Trumpet Blast, the flow of the Living Waters, the warbling of the Nightingale of Paradise and the appearance of the Maid of Heaven. In language supremely beautiful and soul-stirring, He attributes these energies to Himself. His choice of words, and the beauty, power, depth and mystery of this poem and, indeed, of others which were revealed later, are such that they may well prove impossible to translate. (Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 1, p. 45)

# The Hidden Words

- Kalimat-i-Maknunih (Arabic, Persian)
- Significance: Refers to a book supposedly revealed by the Archangel Gabriel to comfort Fatimih after the death of Muhammad
- Date of Revelation: 1857 (Baghdad)
- Recipient: None, it was not revealed to a particular person
- Translations: Very early translation into English; current translation by Shoghi Effendi

- Next [after the Iqan] to this unique repository of inestimable treasures must rank that marvelous collection of gem-like utterances, the "Hidden Words" with which Bahá'u'lláh was inspired, as He paced, wrapped in His meditations, the banks of the Tigris. . . . The significance of this dynamic spiritual leaven cast into the life of the world for the reorientation of the minds of men, the edification of their souls and the rectification of their conduct can best be judged by the description of its character given in the opening passage by its Author: "This is that which hath descended from the Realm of Glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old. We have taken the inner essence thereof and clothed it in the garment of brevity, as a token of grace unto the righteous, that they may stand faithful unto the Covenant of God, may fulfill in their lives His trust, and in the realm of spirit obtain the gem of Divine virtue." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 137)

# The Seven Valleys

- Haft Vadi (Persian)
- Significance: Follows the rough structure of Faridu'd-din Attar's *Conference of the Birds* (*Mantiq'u't-tayr*) about a group of birds who seek the Phoenix (symbol of the Beloved)
- Date of Revelation: 1858-62 (Baghdad period)
- Recipient: Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din, the Qadi of Khaniqayn Sufi Order, in response to his questions
- Translation by Ali-Kuli Khan and Marzieh Gail, not Shoghi Effendi (first translation, 1906)



# Shoghi Effendi's Description:

- To these two outstanding contributions to the world's religious literature [Iqan and Hidden Words], occupying respectively, positions of unsurpassed preeminence among the doctrinal and ethical writings of the Author of the Bahá'í Dispensation, was added, during that same period, a treatise that may well be regarded as His greatest mystical composition, designated as the "Seven Valleys," which He wrote in answer to the questions of Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din, the Qadi of Khaniqayn, in which He describes the seven stages which the soul of the seeker must needs traverse ere it can attain the object of its existence. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 137)

# The Four Valleys

- Chahar Vadi (Persian)
- Date of Revelation: 1858-62
- Recipient: Shaykh Abdu'r-Rahman-i-Karkuti
- Translation by Ali Kuli Khan and Marzieh Gail, not by Shoghi Effendi.

# Shoghi Effendi's Words:

- **The "Four Valleys,"** an epistle addressed to the learned Shaykh Abdu'r-Rahman-i-Karkuti; the **"Tablet of the Holy Mariner,"** in which Bahá'u'lláh prophesies the severe afflictions that are to befall Him; the **"Lawh-i-Húríyyih"** (Tablet of the Maiden), in which events of a far remoter future are foreshadowed; the **"Suriy-i-Sabr"** (Surih of Patience), revealed on the first day of Ridvan which extols Vahid and his fellow-sufferers in Nayriz; the commentary on the Letters prefixed to the Surihs of the Qur'án; His interpretation of the letter Vav, mentioned in the writings of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsa'i, and of other abstruse passages in the works of Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti; the **"Lawh-i-Madinatu't-Tawhid"** (Tablet of the City of Unity); the **"Sahifiy-i-Shattiyyih"**; the **"Musibat-i-Hurufat-i-'Aliyat"**; the **"Tafsir-i-Hu"**; the **"Javahiru'l-Asrar"** and a host of other writings, in the form of epistles, odes, homilies, specific Tablets, commentaries and prayers, contributed, each in its own way, to swell the "rivers of everlasting life" which poured forth from the "Abode of Peace" and lent a mighty impetus to the expansion of the Báb's Faith in both Persia and Iraq, quickening the souls and transforming the character of its adherents. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 137)

# The Gems of Divine Mysteries

- Javahiru'l-Asrar (lit. Gems of Mysteries)
- Date of Revelation: 1860-61
- Revealed in reply to questions of Sayyid Yusuf-i Sidihi Isfahani
- Just translated by the World Centre a few years ago.
- A work echoing themes in the Seven Valleys and the Kitab-i-Iqan

# Book of Certitude

- Kitab-i-Iqan (Persian, with Arabic quotations)
- Significance of Title: Certitude is one of the most important qualities of faith.
- Date of Revelation: mid Jan. 1861, based on a letter of that date from the recipient (the uncle of the Bab) to his son
- Recipient: Haji Mirza Siyyid Muhammad, who addressed (in writing) four questions to Bahá'u'lláh (which have been translated)
- Translations: One of the first of Bahá'u'lláh's works translated into English (1903); Shoghi Effendi's, 1931.

- Foremost among the priceless treasures cast forth from the billowing ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation ranks the Kitáb-i-Íqán (Book of Certitude), revealed within the space of two days and two nights, in the closing years of that period (1278 A.H. -- 1862 A.D.). It was written in fulfillment of the prophecy of the Báb, Who had specifically stated that the Promised One would complete the text of the unfinished Persian Bayan, and in reply to the questions addressed to Bahá'u'lláh by the as yet unconverted maternal uncle of the Báb, Haji Mirza Siyyid Muhammad, while on a visit, with his brother, Haji Mirza Hasan-'Ali, to Karbila. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 137)

- A model of Persian prose, of a style at once original, chaste and vigorous, and remarkably lucid, both cogent in argument and matchless in its irresistible eloquence, this Book, setting forth in outline the Grand Redemptive Scheme of God, occupies a position unequalled by any work in the entire range of Bahá'í literature, except the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book. Revealed on the eve of the declaration of His Mission, it proffered to mankind the "Choice Sealed Wine," whose seal is of "musk," and broke the "seals" of the "Book" referred to by Daniel, and disclosed the meaning of the "words" destined to remain "closed up" till the "time of the end." Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 137)

- Within a compass of two hundred pages it **[1]** proclaims unequivocally the existence and oneness of a personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and almighty; **[2]** asserts the relativity of religious truth and the continuity of Divine Revelation; **[3]** affirms the unity of the Prophets, the universality of their Message, the identity of their fundamental teachings, the sanctity of their scriptures, and the twofold character of their stations; **[4]** denounces the blindness and perversity of the divines and doctors of every age; **[5]** cites and elucidates the allegorical passages of the New Testament, the abstruse verses of the Qur'án, and the cryptic Muhammadan traditions which have bred those age-long misunderstandings, doubts and animosities that have sundered and kept apart the followers of the world's leading religious systems; **[6]** enumerates the essential prerequisites for the attainment by every true seeker of the object of his quest . . . (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 137)



- **[7]** . . . demonstrates the validity, the sublimity and significance of the Báb's Revelation; **[8]** acclaims the heroism and detachment of His disciples; **[9]** foreshadows, and prophesies the world-wide triumph of the Revelation promised to the people of the Bayan; **[10]** upholds the purity and innocence of the Virgin Mary; **[11]** glorifies the Imams of the Faith of Muhammad; **[12]** celebrates the martyrdom, and lauds the spiritual sovereignty, of the Imam Husayn; **[13]** unfolds the meaning of such symbolic terms as "Return," "Resurrection," "Seal of the Prophets" and "Day of Judgment"; **[14]** adumbrates and distinguishes between the three stages of Divine Revelation; and **[15]** expatiates, in glowing terms, upon the glories and wonders of the "City of God," renewed, at fixed intervals, by the dispensation of Providence, for the guidance, the benefit and salvation of all mankind. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 137)

# More on the Iqan

- Well may it be claimed that of all the books revealed by the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, this Book alone, by sweeping away the age-long barriers that have so insurmountably separated the great religions of the world, has laid down a broad and unassailable foundation for the complete and permanent reconciliation of their followers. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 137)
- A book with much commentary and discussion
- Revealed before Bahá'u'lláh declared His mission
- The “Messianic Secret”

# The Wondrous Book

- Kitab-i-Badi` (mostly in Persian, early Akka period)
- Title can also mean “unique”
- An apologia to the Bahá'í Faith
- Particularly criticizes Mirza Yahya and discusses fulfillment of Babi prophecy
- Addressee: “the notorious Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Gílání, a so-called Bábí and a man of perfidy and hypocrisy” (Taherzadeh)
- A polemical work of 400-500 pages
- Translations: Not available in English

- The *Kitáb-i-Badí`* is Bahá'u'lláh's apologia written in defence of His Faith and to demonstrate the validity and the truth of His Own Mission
- This book, almost twice the size of the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* and written in defence of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, occupies a significant position among His Writings. It gives the reader remarkable insight into the prophecies of the Báb concerning 'Him Whom God shall make manifest', and clearly demonstrates that the advent of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh was the ultimate aim of the Báb and the fulfilment of all that He had cherished in His heart. The book exerted a great influence upon the members of the Bábí community, especially those who were confused and vacillating. (Taherzadeh)

# Tablets to the Kings and Rulers

- Suriy-i-Haykal (Temple)
  - Pope Pius IX
  - Napoleon III
  - Czar Alexander II
  - Queen Victoria
  - Nasirud'din-Shah (Lawh-i-Sultan)
- Bahá'u'lláh had these tablets written together in the form of a pentacle
- Suriy-i-Ra'is (Chief)
- Lawh-i-Ra'is (Chief)
- Lawh-i-Fu'ad (Fu'ad)
- Suriy-i-Muluk (Kings)
- Almost all of these tablets were revealed in Arabic between 1867 and 1869.
- Legends says Jesus and Muhammad wrote kings

- The most important of these Tablets, together with the celebrated Suriy-i-Haykal (the Surih of the Temple), He, moreover, ordered to be written in the shape of a pentacle, symbolizing the temple of man, and which He identified, when addressing the followers of the Gospel in one of His Tablets, with the "Temple" mentioned by the Prophet Zechariah, and designated as "the resplendent dawning-place of the All-Merciful," and which "the hands of the power of Him Who is the Causer of Causes" had built. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 212)

- The Proclamation of His Mission had been, as already observed, directed particularly to the kings of the earth, who, by virtue of the power and authority they wielded, were invested with a peculiar and inescapable responsibility for the destinies of their subjects. It was to these kings, as well as to the world's religious leaders, who exercised a no less pervasive influence on the mass of their followers, that the Prisoner of 'Akká directed His appeals, warnings, and exhortations during the first years of His incarceration in that city. "Upon Our arrival at this Prison," He Himself affirms, "We purposed to transmit to the kings the messages of their Lord, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Though We have transmitted to them, in several Tablets, that which We were commanded, yet We do it once again, as a token of God's grace." (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 205)

- To the kings of the earth, both in the East and in the West, both Christian and Muslim, who had already been collectively admonished and warned in the Suriy-i-Mulúk revealed in Adrianople, and had been so vehemently summoned by the Báb, in the opening chapter of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', on the very night of the Declaration of His Mission, Bahá'u'lláh, during the darkest days of His confinement in 'Akká, addressed some of the noblest passages of His Most Holy Book. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 205)



- In these passages He **[1]** called upon them to take fast hold of the "Most Great Law"; **[2]** proclaimed Himself to be "the King of Kings" and "the Desire of all Nations"; **[3]** declared them to be His "vassals" and "emblems of His sovereignty"; **[4]** disclaimed any intention of laying hands on their kingdoms; **[5]** bade them forsake their palaces, and hasten to gain admittance into His Kingdom; **[6]** extolled the king who would arise to aid His Cause as "the very eye of mankind"; and finally **[7]** arraigned them for the things which had befallen Him at their hands. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 205)

# Tablet to Queen Victoria



- Revealed in Akka, c. 1868
- Alexandrina Victoria; 24 May 1819 – 22 January 1901
- Reigned 1837-1901
- The "grandmother of Europe"; her 9 children and 43 grandchildren married into almost every royal family in Europe

- In His Tablet to Queen Victoria He, moreover, **[1]** invites these kings to hold fast to "the Lesser Peace," since they had refused "the Most Great Peace"; **[2]** exhorts them to be reconciled among themselves, to unite and to reduce their armaments; **[3]** bids them refrain from laying excessive burdens on their subjects, who, He informs them, are their "wards" and "treasures"; **[4]** enunciates the principle that should any one among them take up arms against another, all should rise against him; and **[5]** warns them not to deal with Him as the "King of Islam" and his ministers had dealt. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 205)

- To Queen Victoria He, during that same period, addressed an Epistle in which He [1] calls upon her to incline her ear to the voice of her Lord, the Lord of all mankind; [2] bids her "cast away all that is on earth," and set her heart towards her Lord, the Ancient of Days; [3] asserts that "all that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled"; [4] assures her that God would reward her for having "forbidden the trading in slaves," were she to follow what has been sent unto her by Him; [5] commends her for having "entrusted the reins of counsel into the hands of the representatives of the people"; and [6] exhorts them to "regard themselves as the representatives of all that dwell on earth," and to judge between men with "pure justice." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 207)

- Some of the weightiest passages of His Epistle to Queen Victoria are addressed to the members of the British Legislature, the Mother of Parliaments, as well as to the elected representatives of the peoples in other lands. In these He [1] asserts that His purpose is to quicken the world and unite its peoples; [2] refers to the treatment meted out to Him by His enemies; [3] exhorts the legislators to "take counsel together," and to concern themselves only "with that which profiteth mankind"; and [4] affirms that the "sovereign remedy" for the "healing of all the world" is the "union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith," which can "in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled and all-powerful and inspired Physician." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 211)

# Tablet to Napoleon III

- First tablet revealed in Arabic in Adrianople in 1867
- Second tablet revealed in Akka, 1869, predicted his downfall
- Charles Louis Napoléon Bonaparte) (20 April 1808 – 9 January 1873)
- Lost all power during the Franco-Prussian War, 19 July 1870—10 May 1871



- To the Emperor of the French, Napoleon III, the most prominent and influential monarch of his day in the West, designated by Him as the "Chief of Sovereigns," and who, to quote His words, had "cast behind his back" the Tablet revealed for him in Adrianople, He, while a prisoner in the army barracks, addressed a second Tablet and transmitted it through the French agent in 'Akká. In this He [1] announces the coming of "Him Who is the Unconstrained," whose purpose is to "quicken the world" and unite its peoples; [2] unequivocally asserts that Jesus Christ was the Herald of His Mission; [3] proclaims the fall of "the stars of the firmament of knowledge," who have turned aside from Him; [4] exposes that monarch's insincerity; and [5] clearly prophesies that his kingdom shall be "thrown into confusion," that his "empire shall pass" from his hands, and that "commotions shall seize all the people in that land," unless he arises to help the Cause of God and follow Him Who is His Spirit. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 206)

# Lawh-i-Sultan

- Revealed to Nasiru'd-din Shah
- Carried to the Shah by Badi, who was martyred for delivering it
- Dates July 16, 1831-May 1, 1896
- Assassinated by a follower of Jamalu'd-din Afghani





# Tablet to Czar Alexander



- Revealed 1868-69
- The czar's dates are 1818-81, reigned 1855-81
- Assassinated 13 March 1881

- To Nicolaevitch Alexander II, the all-powerful Czar of Russia, He addressed, as He lay a prisoner in the barracks, an Epistle wherein He **[1]** announces the advent of the promised Father, Whom "the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled," and "with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned"; **[2]** commands him to "arise ... and summon the nations unto God"; **[3]** warns him to beware lest his sovereignty withhold him from "Him Who is the Supreme Sovereign"; **[4]** acknowledges the aid extended by his Ambassador in Tihran; and **[5]** cautions him not to forfeit the station ordained for him by God. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 206)

- In a celebrated passage addressed to **William I, King of Prussia** and newly-acclaimed emperor of a unified Germany, He, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, [1] bids the sovereign hearken to His Voice, the Voice of God Himself; [2] warns him to take heed lest his pride debar him from recognizing "the Day-Spring of Divine Revelation," and [3] admonishes him to "remember the one (Napoleon III) whose power transcended" his power, and who "went down to dust in great loss."
- Furthermore, in that same Book, apostrophizing the "banks of the Rhine," He predicts that "the swords of retribution" would be drawn against them, and that "the lamentations of Berlin" would be raised, though at that time she was "in conspicuous glory." (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 207)

- In another notable passage of that same Book [Aqdas], addressed to **Francis-Joseph**, the Austrian Emperor and heir of the Holy Roman Empire, Bahá'u'lláh **[1]** reproves the sovereign for having neglected to inquire about Him in the course of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; **[2]** takes God to witness that He had found him "clinging unto the Branch and heedless of the Root"; **[3]** grieves to observe his waywardness; and **[4]** bids him open his eyes and gaze on "the Light that shineth above this luminous Horizon."

(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 207)

- **To Ali Pasha, the Grand Vizir of the Sultan of Turkey**  
He addressed, shortly after His arrival in 'Akká, a second Tablet, in which He [1] reprimands him for his cruelty "that hath made hell to blaze and the Spirit to lament"; [2] recounts his acts of oppression; [3] condemns him as one of those who, from time immemorial, have denounced the Prophets as stirrers of mischief; [4] prophesies his downfall; [5] expatiates on His own sufferings and those of His fellow-exiles; [6] extolls their fortitude and detachment; [7] predicts that God's "wrathful anger" will seize him and his government, that "sedition will be stirred up" in their midst, and that their "dominions will be disrupted"; and [8] affirms that were he to awake, he would abandon all his possessions, and would "choose to abide in one of the dilapidated rooms of this Most Great Prison." (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 208)

- In the Lawh-i-Fu'ád, in the course of His reference to the premature death of the Sultan's Foreign Minister, Fu'ad Pasha, He thus confirms His above-mentioned prediction: "Soon will We dismiss the one (Ali Pasha) who was like unto him and will lay hold on their Chief (Sultan Abdu'l-'Aziz) who ruleth the land, and I, verily, am the Almighty, the All-Compelling." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 208)

# Shoghi Effendi about Addresses to Ecclesiastics:

- In immortal passages of His Kitáb-i-Aqdas and other Tablets He [1] bids the entire company of these ecclesiastical leaders to "fear God," to "rein in" their pens, "fling away idle fancies and imaginings, and turn then towards the Horizon of Certitude"; [2] warns them to "weigh not the Book of God (Kitáb-i-Aqdas) with such standards and sciences as are current" amongst them; [3] designates that same Book as the "Unerring Balance established amongst men"; [4] laments over their blindness and waywardness; [5] asserts His superiority in vision, insight, utterance and wisdom; [6] proclaims His innate and God-given knowledge; [7] cautions them not to "shut out the people by yet another veil," after He Himself had "rent the veils asunder"; [8] accuses them of having been "the cause of the repudiation of the Faith in its early days"; and [9] adjures them to "peruse with fairness and justice that which hath been sent down" by Him, and to "nullify not the Truth" with the things they possess.  
(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 209)

# Tablet to Pius IX



- Revealed in Arabic in 1868-69
- Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, 1792-1878
- Became Pope June 16, 1846
- Convened Vatican I 1869, where he was declared infallible
- Lost secular power to Italy, 1870



- To **Pope Pius IX**, the undisputed head of the most powerful Church in Christendom, possessor of both temporal and spiritual authority, He, a Prisoner in the army barracks of the penal-colony of 'Akká, addressed a most weighty Epistle, in which He **[1]** announces that "He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds," and that "the Word which the Son concealed is made manifest." He, moreover, **[2]** warns him not to dispute with Him even as the Pharisees of old disputed with Jesus Christ; **[3]** bids him **[a]** leave his palaces unto such as desire them, "sell all the embellished ornaments" in his possession, "expend them in the path of God," **[b]** abandon his kingdom unto the kings, "arise ... amidst the peoples of the earth," and **[c]** summon them to His Faith. Regarding him as one of the sons of the heaven of God's names, He **[4]** cautions him to guard himself lest "darkness spread its veils" over him; **[5]** calls upon him to "exhort the kings" to "deal equitably with men"; and **[6]** counsels him to walk in the footsteps of his Lord, and follow His example. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 209)

# Shoghi Effendi about Bahá'u'lláh's Call to the Presidents of the American Republics

- In memorable passages addressed to "the Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein" He, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, [1] calls upon them to "adorn the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of remembrance" of their Lord; [2] declares that "the Promised One" has been made manifest; [3] counsels them to avail themselves of the "Day of God"; and [4] bids them "bind with the hands of justice the broken" and "crush" the "oppressor" with "the rod of the commandments of their Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 206)

- "Never since the beginning of the world," Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, "hath the Message been so openly proclaimed." "Each one of them," He, specifically referring to the Tablets addressed by Him to the sovereigns of the earth -- Tablets acclaimed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a "miracle" -- has written, "hath been designated by a special name. The first hath been named 'The Rumbling,' the second 'The Blow,' the third 'The Inevitable,' the fourth 'The Plain,' the fifth 'The Catastrophe,' and the others 'The Stunning Trumpet-Blast,' 'The Near Event,' 'The Great Terror,' 'The Trumpet,' 'The Bugle,' and the like, so that all the peoples of the earth may know, of a certainty, and may witness, with outward and inner eyes, that He Who is the Lord of Names hath prevailed, and will continue to prevail, under all conditions, over all men." (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 212)

# Most Holy Book

- Kitab-i-Aqdas (1873) (Arabic)
- The most important work in Bahá'u'lláh's revelation
- No recipient (which is unusual!)
- Revealed in the house of Udi Khammar
- Translations: First translated into English by Anton Haddad, 1900; official translation, 1992

# Shoghi Effendi on the Aqdas:

- Unique and stupendous as was this Proclamation, it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry -- the promulgation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Alluded to in the Kitáb-i-Íqán; the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the "new heaven" and the "new earth," as "the Tabernacle of God," as the "Holy City," as the "Bride," the "New Jerusalem coming down from God," this "Most Holy Book," whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Bahá'u'lláh, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 213)

- Revealed soon after Bahá'u'lláh had been transferred to the house of Udi Khammar (circa 1873), at a time when He was still encompassed by the tribulations that had afflicted Him, through the acts committed by His enemies and the professed adherents of His Faith, this Book, this treasury enshrining the priceless gems of His Revelation, stands out, by virtue of the principles it inculcates, the administrative institutions it ordains and the function with which it invests the appointed Successor of its Author, unique and incomparable among the world's sacred Scriptures.
- (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 213)

- For, unlike the Old Testament and the Holy Books which preceded it, in which the actual precepts uttered by the Prophet Himself are non-existent; unlike the Gospels, in which the few sayings attributed to Jesus Christ afford no clear guidance regarding the future administration of the affairs of His Faith; unlike even the Qur'án which, though explicit in the laws and ordinances formulated by the Apostle of God, is silent on the all-important subject of the succession, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, revealed from first to last by the Author of the Dispensation Himself, not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 213)

- Charter for World Civilization
- Ordains the institution of the House of Justice
- Defines its duties
- Anticipates the institution of the Guardianship
- Laws of prayer and fasting
- Institutes huququ'llah, Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, 19 Day Feast, Holy Days, Intercalary Days
- Abolishes priesthood
- Prescribes monogamy
- Forbids a bunch of things
- Specifies punishments



- Summons kings and rulers
- Urges the adoption of a universal script and language
- consort, with amity and concord and without discrimination, with the adherents of all religions
- The laws and ordinances that constitute the major theme of this Book, Bahá'u'lláh, moreover, has specifically characterized as "the breath of life unto all created things," as "the mightiest stronghold," as the "fruits" of His "Tree," as "the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples," as "the lamps of His wisdom and loving-providence," as "the sweet smelling savor of His garment," as the "keys" of His "mercy" to His creatures. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 215)

- "This Book," He Himself testifies, "is a heaven which We have adorned with the stars of Our commandments and prohibitions."
- "Blessed the man," He, moreover, has stated, "who will read it, and ponder the verses sent down in it by God, the Lord of Power, the Almighty. Say, O men! Take hold of it with the hand of resignation... By My life! It hath been sent down in a manner that amazeth the minds of men. Verily, it is My weightiest testimony unto all people, and the proof of the All-Merciful unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth."  
(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 215)

- And finally: "In such a manner hath the Kitáb-i-Aqdas been revealed that it attracteth and embraceth all the divinely appointed Dispensations. Blessed those who peruse it! Blessed those who apprehend it! Blessed those who meditate upon it! Blessed those who ponder its meaning! So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Erelong will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth." (Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 215)

- In it He formally **[1]** ordains the institution of the "House of Justice," defines its functions, fixes its revenues, and designates its members as the "Men of Justice," the "Deputies of God," the "Trustees of the All-Merciful," **[2]** alludes to the future Center of His Covenant, and invests Him with the right of interpreting His holy Writ; **[3]** anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship; **[4]** bears witness to the revolutionizing effect of His World Order; **[5]** enunciates the doctrine of the "Most Great Infallibility" of the Manifestation of God; **[6]** asserts this infallibility to be the inherent and exclusive right of the Prophet; and **[7]** rules out the possibility of the appearance of another Manifestation ere the lapse of at least one thousand years. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 214)

- In this Book He, moreover
- prescribes the obligatory prayers;
- designates the time and period of fasting;
- prohibits congregational prayer except for the dead;
- fixes the Qiblah;
- institutes the Huququ'lláh (Right of God);
- formulates the law of inheritance;
- ordains the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar;
- establishes the Nineteen Day Feasts, the Bahá'í festivals and the Intercalary Days;
- abolishes the institution of priesthood;
- (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 214)

- prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy, monasticism, penance, the use of pulpits and the kissing of hands;
- prescribes monogamy;
- condemns cruelty to animals, idleness and sloth, backbiting and calumny;
- censures divorce;
- interdicts gambling, the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks;
- specifies the punishments for murder, arson, adultery and theft;
- stresses the importance of marriage and lays down its essential conditions;
- imposes the obligation of engaging in some trade or profession, exalting such occupation to the rank of worship;
- emphasizes the necessity of providing the means for the education of children; and
- lays upon every person the duty of writing a testament and of strict obedience to one's government. (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 214)

# Tablets Revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas

- Lawh-i-Aqdas/Most Holy Tablet
- Lawh-i-Bisharat (Glad Tidings)
- Lawh-i-Tarazat (Ornaments)
- Lawh-i-Tajalliyat (Effulgences)
- Lawh-i-Dunya (World)
- Lawh-i-Ishraqat (Splendors)
- Lawh-i-Hikmat (Wisdom)
- Lawh-i-Burhan (Proof)

# Tablets Revealed after the Aqdas

- The formulation by Bahá'u'lláh, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of the fundamental laws of His Dispensation was followed, as His Mission drew to a close, by the enunciation of certain precepts and principles which lie at the very core of His Faith, by the reaffirmation of truths He had previously proclaimed, by the elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws He had already laid down, by the revelation of further prophecies and warnings, and by the establishment of subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the provisions of His Most Holy Book. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 216)



- These were recorded in unnumbered Tablets, which He continued to reveal until the last days of His earthly life, among which the "Ishraqat" (Splendors), the "Bisharat" (Glad Tidings), the "Tarazat" (Ornaments), the "Tajalliyat" (Effulgences), the "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih" (Words of Paradise), the "Lawh-i-Aqdas" (Most Holy Tablet), the "Lawh-i-Dunya" (Tablet of the World), the "Lawh-i-Maqsud" (Tablet of Maqsud), are the most noteworthy. These Tablets -- mighty and final effusions of His indefatigable pen -- must rank among the choicest fruits which His mind has yielded, and mark the consummation of His forty-year-long ministry. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 216)

- We hear that the Tablets of Ishraqat (Splendours), Tarazat (Ornaments), Bisharat (Glad Tidings), Tajalliyyat (Effulgences), and Kalimat (Words of Paradise) have been translated and published in those regions. In these Tablets will ye have a model of how to be and how to live. (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 79)

# Principles Enunciated:

- Of the principles enshrined in these Tablets the most vital of them all is the principle of the oneness and wholeness of the human race, which may well be regarded as the hall-mark of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and the pivot of His teachings. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 216)
- “The principle of collective security.”
- He extols justice
- He inculcates the principle of "moderation in all things
- Consultation He establishes as one of the fundamental principles of His Faith
- He emphasizes "consort with all men in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship"

# More Principles:

- To the trustees of the House of Justice He assigns the duty of legislating on matters not expressly provided in His writings
- The doctrine of the Most Great Infallibility
- “Lawh-i-Hikmat (Tablet of Wisdom), in which He sets forth the fundamentals of true philosophy”

# Some Information

- Lawh-i-Bisharat is late Akka period
- Lawh-i-Ishraqat, Aug. 1885; first translated into English, 1904 or so.
- Lawh-i-Burhan was revealed in the early 1880s
- Lawh-i-Tajalliyat, late Akka period
- Lawh-i-Dunya was revealed between 27 June and early August, 1891
- Lawh-i-Aqdas, “Most Holy Tablet,” “Tablet to the Christians” was revealed in the early 1870s to Faris, an Egyptian Physician
- Lawh-i-Tarazat, 9 Aug. - 7 Sept. 1888

# Lawh-i-Hikmat

- Lawh-i-Hikmat, “Tablet of Wisdom,” was revealed in Akka in 1873-74 for Mulla Muhammad-'Ali, known as Nabil-i Qa'ini and Nabil-i Akbar
- A very important tablet about Greek philosophy and early Greek philosophers, praising them highly
- Lawh-i-Maqsud revealed `Akka, Dec. 31 1881

# Tabernacle of Unity

- A tablet revealed 1876-78 to Manikji Limji Hataria (1813-90), a Zoroastrian from Indian residing in Tehran to uplift the Zoroastrians of Iran
- A tablet to Mirza Abu'l-Fadl when he was Manikji's secretary which explains what the first tablet means.



- From the literary point of view, the Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh to Manikchi Sahib is a masterpiece of the pure Persian language. In its lucidity and eloquence, its richness and beauty, it is no less outstanding than other celebrated Tablets revealed either in Arabic or Persian. This Tablet contains some of the choicest utterances of Bahá'u'lláh. The celebrated passage, 'Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch', was revealed in this Tablet. (Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah* v 3, p. 270)



# Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

- Lawh-i-Ibn-i-Dhib or Lawh-i-Shaykh (Persian)
- Revealed for Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Isfahani “Ibn-i-Dhib (Son of the Wolf), a major persecutor of the Faith in Isfahan, as was his father, “the Wolf”
- Revealed between 27 June and early August, 1891
- Circumstances of Revelation:
- Translated by Shoghi Effendi in 1941.
- Finally, mention must be made of His Epistle to Shaykh Muhammad-Taqi, surnamed "Ibn-i-Dhi'b" (Son of the Wolf), the last outstanding Tablet revealed by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, in which He **[1]** calls upon that rapacious priest to repent of his acts, **[2]** quotes some of the most characteristic and celebrated passages of His own writings, and **[3]** adduces proofs establishing the validity of His Cause. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 219)

- With this book, revealed about one year prior to His ascension, the prodigious achievement as author of a hundred volumes, repositories of the priceless pearls of His Revelation, may be said to have practically terminated -- volumes replete with unnumbered exhortations, revolutionizing principles, world-shaping laws and ordinances, dire warnings and portentous prophecies, with soul-uplifting prayers and meditations, illuminating commentaries and interpretations, impassioned discourses and homilies, all interspersed with either addresses or references to kings, to emperors and to ministers, of both the East and the West, to ecclesiastics of divers denominations, and to leaders in the intellectual, political, literary, mystical, commercial and humanitarian spheres of human activity.  
(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 219)

# The Phenomenon of “Rerevelation”

- “A careful examination of the quotations in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf shows that the quotations and the original texts are almost exactly the same. Very rarely they may differ in one or two words, usually an adverb, a preposition or an adjective, but the meaning remains the same.
- “To cite an example: in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Bahá'u'lláh quotes the 'second leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise' from His Tablet known as Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih. The phrase 'Pen of the Most High' in the original Tablet is re-revealed in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf as 'Pen of the Divine Expounder',<sup>[1]</sup> but the rest of the quotation remains the same as in its original form.”
- [1 see Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 63, and Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 28. (Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 4, p. 373)

# The Book of the Covenant

- Kitab-i-Ahd or Kitab-i-Ahdi (Book of My Covenant) (Arabic)
- Date of Revelation: late Akka period, but exact date unknown
- First translation was by Ali Kuli Khan about 1906
- Of such cardinal importance is this principle of unity that it is expressly referred to in the Book of His Covenant, and He unreservedly proclaims it as the central purpose of His Faith. "We, verily," He declares, "have come to unite and weld together all that dwell on earth." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 216)

- The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsan, the Afnan and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: 'When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.' The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch [Abdu'l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you Our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch [Muhammad Ali] to be beneath that of the Most Great Branch [Abdu'l-Bahá]. He is in truth the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have chosen 'the Greater' after 'the Most Great', as decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. (Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 221)

# Tablet of Carmel

- Lawh-i-Karmil (Arabic)
- Revealed: between 27 June and early August, 1891 when Bahá'u'lláh visited Mount Carmel
- Consists of a “dialogue” between Bahá'u'lláh and the mountain
- One of the three “charters of the Faith” identified by Shoghi Effendi
- the Author significantly makes mention of "the City of God that hath descended from heaven," and prophesies that "ere long will God sail His Ark" upon that mountain, and "will manifest the people of Baha." (Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 219)

- This Tablet contains significant allusions to the establishment of the World Centre of the Faith and is considered its charter. Before the revelation of this Tablet there was apparently nothing in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings concerning the international Seat of His world-encircling order. From the moment He blessed the mountain of God with His footsteps, mysterious forces were released for the creation of the spiritual and administrative centre of the Faith, a centre from which the world-vivifying energies latent within His Revelation will flow to mankind. (Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah* v 4, p. 351)

- "We, verily," wrote Bahá'u'lláh, surveying, in the evening of His life, from His Most Great Prison, the entire range of this vast and weighty Revelation, "have not fallen short of Our duty to exhort men, and to deliver that whereunto I was bidden by God, the Almighty, the All-Praised." "Is there any excuse," He further has stated, "left for any one in this Revelation? No, by God, the Lord of the Mighty Throne! My signs have encompassed the earth, and my power enveloped all mankind."  
(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 219)