

**PROOFS
OF THE
PROPHETS**

**THE CASE
FOR
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**



Peter Terry

Compiler and Commentator

Volume XVII, Bahá'í Studies Series

**Original compilation of texts related to
Bahá'u'lláh**

**Forty Proofs of Prophethood set forth
in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb,
'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and
other authors, in English translations.**

**Passages from the Writings of the Báb
are in some cases presented in the
compiler's rendering of their French
translation by A.L.M. Nicolas,
originally published circa 1900-1911.**

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Verily I say! No one hath apprehended the root of this Cause. It is incumbent upon everyone, in this day, to perceive with the eye of God, and to hearken with His ear. Whoso beholdeth Me with an eye besides Mine own will never be able to know Me. None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation.¹

The essential requirement for whoso advanceth a claim is to support his assertions with clear proofs and testimonies.²

Some of the divines who have declared this Servant an infidel have at no time met with Me. Never having seen Me, or become acquainted with My purpose, they have nevertheless spoken as they pleased and acted as they desired. Yet every claim requireth a proof, not mere words and displays of outward piety.³

In this day the verses of the Mother Book are resplendent and unmistakable even as the sun. They can in no wise be mistaken for any past or more recent utterances. Truly this Wronged One desireth not to demonstrate His Own Cause with proofs produced by others. He is the One Who embraceth all things, while all else besides Him is circumscribed. Say, O people, peruse that which is current amongst you and We will peruse what pertaineth unto Us.⁴

The Cause is manifest, it shineth resplendent as the sun, but the people have become veils unto themselves. We entreat God that He may graciously assist them to return unto Him. He is, in truth, the Forgiving, the Merciful.⁵

The breezes of Revelation can never be confounded with other breezes. Now the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing standeth laden with countless fruits before thy face; besmirch not thyself with idle fancies, as have done the people aforetime. These utterances themselves proclaim the true nature of the Faith of God. He it is Who witnesseth unto all things. To demonstrate the truth of His Revelation He hath not been, nor is He, dependent upon any one. Well nigh a hundred volumes of luminous verses and perspicuous words have already been sent down from the heaven of the will of Him Who is the Revealer of signs, and are available unto all. It is for thee to direct thyself towards the Ultimate Goal, and the Supreme End, and the Most Sublime Pinnacle, that thou mayest hear and behold what hath been revealed by God, the Lord of the worlds.⁶

FOREWORD

The compiler/editor of this volume has used various orthographical devices in order to highlight what he considers to be notable numbers, letters, words, phrases and passages found in the collected texts. These devices are not integral to the text, nor were they featured in the published editions consulted in preparation for this volume. Quotation marks, square brackets, bold or italic typeface which have been employed within quoted words, phrases or passages are among such devices. Long citations from the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and others who are identified in this study as Prophets are indented, while in citations from the Writings and utterances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the writings of Shoghi Effendi only the first line of the citation is indented.

All citations have been carefully checked, but some errors may yet be found by vigilant readers. Please report these without delay to the compiler/editor so that he can correct these blemishes in the Second Edition.

As monarchs, emperors, pontiffs and justices of the courts are addressed with honorific titles such as His Majesty, His Eminence, His Honor and the like, so also Bahá'u'lláh, the principal Author of this work, the Báb (also referenced here) and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the interpreter appointed by Bahá'u'lláh for the elucidation of His teachings and writings, are addressed with a capitalized male pronoun. This usage does not assume that the reader is a believer any more than referring to Her Majesty the Queen of England or His Eminence the Pope presupposes that the writer or reader is a British subject or a Roman Catholic. What it conveys is a measure of respect for these persons who are more highly revered by some than kings or emperors, pontiffs or priests. Indeed, as Professor Edward Granville Browne wrote of his first meeting with Bahá'u'lláh, "No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain."²⁷ It is in honor of such reverence that this convention has been followed in reference to the persons aforementioned, as well as to Muhammad and Jesus and other objects of enduring adoration.

None of the interpretations of texts cited in this study are wholly original to the compiler/commentator, and hence he does not claim to be their inventor. Nor does he claim that his interpretations are the

only valid understandings of the texts cited. Let the reader read, reflect and come to his own conclusions.

The abbreviated titles of source texts are used almost without exception in this book:

ABDP: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy
 ABL: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London
 ADJ: Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice
 AHW: Bahá’u’lláh, Arabic Hidden Words
 BG: Bhagavad-Gita
 BP: Bahá’í Prayers
 BWF: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í World Faith
 ESW: Bahá’u’lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf
 FV: Bahá’u’lláh, The Four Valleys
 GL: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh
 GPB: Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By
 GTT: Shoghi Effendi, Guidance for Today and Tomorrow
 JA: Bahá’u’lláh, Javahiru’l-Asrar
 JN: Gospel of John
 KA: Bahá’u’lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas
 KI: Bahá’u’lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán
 LK: Gospel of Luke
 MK: Gospel of Mark
 MT: Gospel of Matthew
 PDC: Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come
 PHW: Bahá’u’lláh, Persian Hidden Words
 PM: Bahá’u’lláh, Prayers and Meditations
 PT: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks
 PUP: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace
 REV: Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse)
 SAQ: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions
 SDC: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization
 SLH: Bahá’u’lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts
 SP: Báb, The Seven Proofs
 SV: Bahá’u’lláh, The Seven Valleys
 SW: Star of the West
 SWAB: Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
 TAB: Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
 TB: Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
 TF: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to Dr. Auguste Forel
 UAB: Utterances of Abdul Beha Abbas to two young men, American pilgrims to Acre, 1901; New York: The Board of Counsel, 1902

**AN OUTLINE:
PROOFS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

FIRST PROOF

**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FULFILLS THE PROPHECIES OF PREVIOUS
PROPHETS**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:13,17,106,237; JA:7
'Abdu'l-Bahá: ABDP:43; SW:XVI:2:434

SECOND PROOF

WORDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:91-92,197-200,216,217,220,227; GL:105
'Abdu'l-Bahá: ABDP:43

THIRD PROOF

REVELATION OF GOD

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:139-141; GL:60-62,67,85-86,105,142; BWF:116,117
'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:143,377,378

FOURTH PROOF

DEEDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:197
'Abdu'l-Bahá: ABDP:44; SAQ:14-42; PUP:364,366; PT:18

FIFTH PROOF

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN HIMSELF

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:47-48,105; KI:35,72-73,75,91-92,99-100;103-104
'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:366; SAQ:43
Shoghi Effendi: GPB:5,11,14,19-21

SIXTH PROOF

SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:45,224,224-225,225-226,227-228; GL:56-57,75-76,85-86,88-
90,99-100; ESW:36,84-85; WOB:118-119
'Abdu'l-Bahá: KH:631-633; PUP:461

SEVENTH PROOF

COURAGEOUS PROCLAMATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:35,45,230-234
'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:340; SAQ:43-44; SW:XIV:8:231; SW:VIII:13:178

EIGHTH PROOF**EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:146-147,154-156,221-222; GL:82-85; TB:186; KA:#157
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:125,277,340,401-402; SAQ:30-31

NINTH PROOF**EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE MADE LOW**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:33,36,146-147; TB:186; KA:#157

TENTH PROOF**THE STAR-HERALD OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:62,63,65

ELEVENTH PROOF**THE HUMAN HERALD OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:62-66; ESW:158,171

TWELFTH PROOF**THE TRIUMPH OF THE CAUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:91,219-220; PDC:90; Matthew 15:13; Acts 5:34,38-39
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:405

THIRTEENTH PROOF**ANNULMENT OF PREVIOUS DISPENSATIONS BY
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:38-39,44-45,238; GL:147; KA:#7; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:365

FOURTEENTH PROOF**INNATE, DIVINELY-INSPIRED KNOWLEDGE OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:100; SV:26; GL:58,90-91,219; TB:149; KA:#104
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: ABDP:53-54; SAQ:28-29

FIFTEENTH PROOF**FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECIES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: ESW:148,150; GL:58,221
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:232,339,410,432

SIXTEENTH PROOF**REPUDIATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:56-58,83; TB:206; KI:14-15,165,182,228-229,238
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PT:102; SAQ:30,35-36; PUP:431

SEVENTEENTH PROOF
PENETRATION AND POTENCY OF THE WORD OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: TB:173-174; GL:141; KA:#3-5
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SWAB:291-292; PUP:340-341,347; SW IX:9:104

EIGHTEENTH PROOF
DIVINE AND ETERNAL SOVEREIGNTY OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:99-100,106-107,234; GL:302
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:5,210-211,276-277

NINETEENTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH CONFIRMS THE TRUTH OF PREVIOUS
PROPHET

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:20-21; KA:#182
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:154,234,338-339,393,403,404

TWENTIETH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS A MATERIAL, HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL
EDUCATOR

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:156-158
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SAQ:8-13; PUP:77-78,308-311,352-353,364,405-406,465

TWENTY-FIRST PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:80-81,213,254-255; KI:247
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:155,171,204; SWAB:59

TWENTY-SECOND PROOF
MIRACLES ARE THE LEAST SIGNIFICANT OF PROOFS

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:364; ABDP:43-44; SAQ:44-45,115-118

TWENTY-THIRD PROOF
TEACHINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:38-39,120,121
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SWAB:7:20-21; ABDP:43-46; PUP:5-6,61,365-366

TWENTY-FOURTH PROOF
SPIRITUAL PROOF OF THE SPIRITUAL SEASONS

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:27,84,94,167; TB:86
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SAQ:83-86,229

TWENTY-FIFTH PROOF**SPIRITUAL PROOF OF THE SPIRITUAL SUN OF REALITY**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SAQ:86-88; WOB:127; PT:127-129,137; ABDP:59-62

TWENTY-SIXTH PROOF**SPIRITUAL PROOF OF THE MYSTIC HERALD**

Bahá’u’lláh: KI:195-200; HWA:#1-2; SV:5-8,11-12

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: PUP:277

TWENTY-SEVENTH PROOF**GARDENER OF MANKIND**

Bahá’u’lláh: SV:3,4; HWP:#1,2,18; KI:191,211; GL:31,319,320-321

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: BWF:309-310,352,379,420,438; SAQ:225-226; SW:XIV:2,p.43;
TAB:I:641; SWAB:129; PUP:24,51-52,77,118,214-215,235,353,399,400,427-
428

TWENTY-EIGHTH PROOF**BAHÁ’U’LLÁH WAS NOT WITHOUT HONOUR SAVE IN HIS
COUNTRY AND OWN HOUSE**

Bahá’u’lláh: KI:174; ESW:92; P&M:LXVI:106-110

Jesus: MT 13:57; MK 6:4; LK 4:24; JN 4:44

Shoghi Effendi: GPB:X,163

TWENTY-NINTH PROOF**BAHÁ’U’LLÁH WAS EXILED FROM HIS HOMETLAND**

Bahá’u’lláh:KI:174

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Tablet cited in letter of Shoghi Effendi, dated 9 April 1923;

SAQ: IV:15-16

Shoghi Effendi: GPB:VII:107

THIRTIETH PROOF**BAHÁ’U’LLÁH CAME FROM THE EAST**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: GPB:XVI:253-254

THIRTY-FIRST PROOF**BAHÁ’U’LLÁH APPEARED AMONG THE MOST SPIRITUALLY
DEPRIVED AND DEGRADED OF MANKIND**

Bhagavad-Gita:IV:7; Bhagavata:IX:24:56; Genesis:VI:5-8

Shoghi Effendi: ADJ:17-18

THIRTY-SECOND PROOF**BAHÁ’U’LLÁH FOUNDED A NEW CIVILIZATION**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SDC:96; Khitabat:393-394; PUP:142,375

THIRTY-THIRD PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH MANIFESTS THE GLORY OF GOD**

Bhagavad-Gita:XI:12; Exodus:24:16-17;33:18-22;34:29-35; Leviticus:9:6;
 Isaiah:33:18-22;35:2;40:5; Gospel of Matthew:16:27; Gospel of
 John:1:14;2:11;17:5,22; Second Epistle to the Corinthians:3:7-11,18;
 Revelation of St. John:21:23; Qur'án:24:36
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Muntakhabati: #4:14/SWAB:#4:15; Khitabat:117-119; PT:68-
 70; SAQ:IX:35;X:43
 Balyuzi: KG:132-133; F.E.Peters: A Reader in Classical Islám:382-383

THIRTY-FOURTH PROOF**TESTING OF BELIEVERS IN THIS DISPENSATION**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:49,52-53,68-69,162,255

THIRTY-FIFTH PROOF**IN THIS AGE THE LIGHT IS SEEMINGLY QUENCHED**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:73,127; GL:56-58,101-102; WOB:118-119

THIRTY-SIXTH PROOF**PEOPLE KNOWN BY THEIR COUNTENANCES**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:173-174; Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8,11:18; Ezekiel 9:4;
 Revelation of St. John: 7:3,9:4,13:16-17,14:1,14:9,20:4,22:4

THIRTY-SEVENTH PROOF**LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:80-82; JA:14,22-24,48,72-73

THIRTY-EIGHTH PROOF**OPPRESSION IN THIS DISPENSATION**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:29-31

THIRTY-NINTH PROOF**RETURN OF THE PROPHETS AND THEIR CHOSEN ONES IN THIS DISPENSATION**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:116-117,118-119,120-121,148-154,158-162,179

FORTIETH PROOF**REJECTION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BECAUSE HE DOES NOT CONFORM TO CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:170-171,181-182; GL:82-83

PREFACE

Another volume, entitled PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS, introduces forty distinct proofs of Prophethood contained in various source texts associated with Mírzá Husayn 'Alí Núrí (1817-1892), known as Bahá'u'lláh. As that volume demonstrates, Bahá'u'lláh does not consider only the proofs of the Prophethood claimed by the Báb, or proofs of His own prophetic claims. He sets forth, in clear and authoritative fashion, citing verses from the Bible and Qur'án alike, the proofs of all of the Prophets of God. His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whom he appointed the authoritative interpreter of his teachings, and his great-grandson, Shoghi Effendi, appointed to the same office by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, both elaborated these proofs of Prophethood.

This book sets forth these forty proofs of Prophethood as applied to Bahá'u'lláh. While some readers may be familiar with the life of Bahá'u'lláh, I do not assume that this will always be the case. Hence, a short biography is cited here, before we commence upon the topic at hand. Bahá'u'lláh was born in Tíhrán, the capital city of Iran, and was brought up in that city and on various properties in its vicinity and in the province of Mazindaran, northeast of Tíhrán. His father was a minister in the court of Muhammad Sháh, the King of Iran, who left Bahá'u'lláh his extensive properties upon his demise, when his eldest son was only twenty-two years of age.

In spring of the year 1260 according to the Islámic calendar (1844 Gregorian), at a time of considerable ferment through the Muslim domains because of the time prophecies which many believed would be fulfilled with its advent, Bahá'u'lláh received a document from an emissary named Mullá Husayn-i-Bushrú'í. Upon reading that document, Bahá'u'lláh was immediately and unequivocally convinced of the divine inspiration and prophetic calling of its Author, Hájí Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad Shírází (1819-1850), known as the Báb. Henceforth, Bahá'u'lláh was a Bábí, a follower of the Báb. He was active in the promotion of the new Faith, and was chiefly responsible for administering the gathering of Bábís who, in June/July of 1848, affirmed the independence of the Bábí Scriptures (called Bayán) from the Qur'án and hadith of the Islámic Dispensation, and the abrogation of the Islámic law (called shari'ah) by the new Bábí ordinances. Scarcely two years later, in July 1850 the Báb was executed by order of a group of secular and religious officials in the city of Tabríz, subsequent to imprisonment in the mountain fortresses of Máh-Kú

and Chihríq. Another two years after this martyrdom, in August 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and imprisoned following a failed attempt on the life of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, then reigning King of Iran, by a single Bábí bent upon exacting revenge for the government's approval of the execution of his beloved Báb. When released from His imprisonment, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled, along with family members and other Bábís, from city of Tihrán and the kingdom of Iran. He journeyed to Baghdád, in the land of 'Iráq, where the family and devoted friends took up their residence for over ten years. Bahá'u'lláh sojourned near the city of Sulaymáníyyih, in Kurdistán, northeast of Baghdád, for two years, from 1854 until 1856, and before and after this period were spent in Baghdád.

In the same year that Bahá'u'lláh became a follower of the Báb, 'Abbás (1844-1921), known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born, the eldest son of this eminent exile. This son also became an ardent believer in the new Faith, whose favorite pass-time in youth was the memorization and recitation of Tablets revealed by the Báb. The Báb had promised the appearance of "Him Whom God shall make manifest," another Prophet to follow soon after the inception of the Bábí Faith, pointing to the years "9" (1269=1852/1853) and "19" (1279=1862/1863). In the year "9" 'Abdu'l-Bahá recognized Bahá'u'lláh as "Him Whom God shall make manifest" but the loyal son did not tell anyone this secret, because the time had not come for its disclosure. However, in the year "19" Bahá'u'lláh openly proclaimed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a few other Bábís, on the even of their departure from Baghdád, that "Him Whom God shall make manifest" was none other than himself.

The family and many of their Bábí friends were summoned first to Constantinople (Istanbul), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, then to Adrianople (Edirne), a backwater town to the northwest of Constantinople, and finally to the prison-city of 'Akká (Acco), in the province of Palestine (now within the territorial boundaries of the state of Israel). During these years of exile, first in Baghdád, then Sulaymáníyyih, then Constantinople, Adrianople, 'Akká, and finally in the house of Bahjí, in the outskirts of 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh wrote and dictated thousands of pages of prose and verse, on a fantastic range of subjects, in the Persian and Arabic languages.

In this book the forty proofs of Prophethood are applied to Bahá'u'lláh. While considerable in number, this list is by no means exhaustive. In a Tablet first translated by Dr. Zia Bagdadi in Chicago on 14 February 1918 and published in *Star of the West*⁸, and then re-translated

by Marzieh Gail and a committee at the Bahá'í World Centre and published in Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá⁹, 'Abdu'l-Bahá cites some 36 signs or proofs of the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. These will be considered in a separate volume and are merely cited here:

“Praise be to Him Who hath made the world of being, and hath fashioned all that is, Him Who hath raised up the sincere to a station of honour¹⁰ and hath made the invisible world to appear on the plane of the visible – yet still, in their drunken stupor¹¹, do men wander and stray.

“He hath laid down the foundations of the lofty Citadel, He hath inaugurated the Cycle of Glory, He hath brought forth a new creation on this day that is clearly Judgement Day -- and still do the heedless stay fast in their drunken sleep.

“The Bugle¹² hath sounded, the Trumpet¹³ hath been blown, the Crier hath raised his call, and all upon the earth have swooned away -- but still do the dead, in the tombs of their bodies, sleep on.

“And the second clarion¹⁴ hath sounded, there hath followed the second blast after the first¹⁵, and the dread woe hath come, and every Nürsing mother hath forgot the infant at her breast¹⁶ -- yet still the people, confused and distracted, heed it not.

“And the Resurrection hath dawned, and the Hour hath struck, and the Path hath been drawn straight, and the Balance hath been set up, and all upon the earth have been gathered together¹⁷ -- but still the people see no sign of the way.

“The light hath shone forth, and radiance floodeth Mount Sinai, and a gentle wind bloweth from over the gardens of the Ever-Forgiving Lord; the sweet breaths of the spirit are passing by, and those who lay buried in the grave are rising up -- and still do the heedless slumber on in their tombs.

“The flames of hell have been made to blaze, and heaven hath been brought nigh; the celestial gardens are in flower, and fresh pools are brimming over, and paradise gleameth in beauty -- but the unaware are still mired down in their empty dreams.

“The veil hath fallen away, the curtain is lifted, the clouds have parted, the Lord of Lords is in plain sight -- yet all hath passed the sinners by.

“It is He Who hath made for you the new creation¹⁸, and brought on the woe¹⁹ that surpasseth all others, and gathered the holy together in the realm on high. **Verily in this are signs** for those who have eyes to see.

“**And among His signs** is the appearance of omens and joyous prophecies²⁰, of hints and clues, the spreading of many and various tidings, and the anticipations of the righteous, they who have now attained their goal.

“**And among His signs** are His splendours, rising above the horizon of oneness²¹, His lights streaming out from the dayspring of might, and the announcement of the Most Great Glad-Tidings by His Herald²², the One, the Incomparable. Verily in this is a brilliant proof for the company of those who know.

“**Among His signs** is His being manifest²³, being seen by all, standing as His own proof, and His presence among witnesses in every region, among peoples who fell upon Him even as wolves, and compassed Him about from every side.

“**Among His signs** is His withstanding powerful nations and all-conquering states, and a host of enemies thirsting for His blood, intent at every moment upon His ruin, wheresoever He might be²⁴. Verily this is a matter deserving the scrutiny of those who ponder the signs and tokens of God.

“**Another of His signs** is the marvel of His discourse²⁵, the eloquence of His utterance, the rapidity with which His Writings were revealed, His words of wisdom, His verses, His epistles, His communions, His unfolding of the Qur’án, both the abstruse verses thereof and the clear. By thy very life! This thing is plain as day to whoever will regard it with the eye of justice.

“**Again among His signs** is the dawning sun of His knowledge²⁶, and the rising moon of His arts and skills, and His demonstrating perfection in all His ways, as testified by the learned and accomplished of many nations.

“**And again among His signs** is the fact that His beauty stayed inviolate²⁷, and His human temple was protected as He revealed His splendours, despite the massed attacks of all His foes, who came against Him in their thousands with their darting arrows, spears and swords. Herein is verily a wonder and a warning to any fair judge.

“**And among His signs** is His long-suffering, His tribulations and His woes, His agony in His chains and fetters²⁸, and His calling out at every moment: 'Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye righteous! Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye lovers of the good! Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye dawning points of light!' Verily the gates of mystery are opened wide -- but still do the wicked disport themselves with their vain cavillings!²⁹

“**Yet another of His signs** is the promulgation of His Book, His decisive Holy Text wherein He reproved the kings³⁰, and His dire warning to that one³¹ whose mighty rule was felt around the world --

and whose great throne then toppled down in a matter of brief days -- this being a fact clearly established and widely known.

“And among His signs is the sublimity of His grandeur, His exalted state, His towering glory, and the shining out of His beauty above the horizon of the Prison³²: so that heads were bowed before Him and voices lowered, and humble were the faces that turned His way. This is a proof never witnessed in the ages gone before.

“Again among His signs are the extraordinary things He continually did, the miracles He performed, the wonders appearing from Him without interruption like the streaming down of His clouds³³ -- and the acknowledgement, even by unbelievers, of His powerful light. By His own life! This was clearly verified, it was demonstrated to those of every persuasion who came into the presence of the living, the self-subsisting Lord.

“And yet another of His signs is the wide-spreading rays of the sun of His era, the rising moon of His times in the heaven of all the ages³⁴: His day, which standeth at the summit of all days, for its rank and power, its sciences and its arts, reaching far and wide, that have dazzled the world and astonished the minds of men.

“Verily is this a matter settled and established for all time.”

INTRODUCTION

An almost identical Introduction is found in PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS inasmuch as it is neither necessary nor presumed that the reader has read that volume prior to this present study. Reading the Introduction twice will not do any damage, and it may ever reinforce some seminal principles that will assist the reader to grasp the design and development of the topic set forth in this volume.

Among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that science and religion are compatible; that religion must be in agreement with reason and science; that each must investigate reality for himself and all are encouraged to forego blind imitation of others in matters of religious belief and observance. These are lofty principles, but one might well wonder how they can be translated into practice. How might they be realized in the way we live our lives?

The writings of Bahá'u'lláh call upon every human being to do two things: First, to investigate reality, to search after truth, to seek out knowledge, to learn, and specifically, to read and to meditate on the Word of God; Second, to strive to understand the teachings, obey the commandments, live according to the ordinances, and aspire to approach the ideals set forth in the Word of God. Is the first purpose fulfilled by joining a religious community, taking an oath, converting or returning to a Faith? According to conventional wisdom, it is. Religious belief is generally assumed to be based on emotions which defy reasonable explanation and have no relation to logical or scientific thinking. Indeed, those who continue to ask questions after they have apparently become believers in a particular Faith are often looked upon with suspicion by their fellow religionists, and their "faith" is rendered doubtful, their "trustworthiness" is seriously compromised.

This kind of "faith" is not well regarded by Bahá'u'lláh. He not only permits questioning, rather we are invited to ask questions if there is anything we do not understand. In "Seven Valleys" (Haft Vádí), a treatise penned in response to the questions of Shaykh Muhyi'd-Dín, a Muslim judge [qadí] in the city of Kháníqín, in 'Iráq, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

SV:40: If any of the utterances of this Servant may not be comprehended, or may lead to perturbation, the same must be inquired of again, that no doubt may linger, and the meaning

be clear...

Some years later, in the "Book of Certitude" (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*), a two-part reply to the questions of Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, one of the maternal uncles of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh reaffirmed this principle in relation specifically to the Word of God:

KI:172: They have even failed to realize, all this time, that, in every age, the reading of the scriptures and holy books is for no other purpose except to enable the Reader to apprehend their meaning and unravel their innermost mysteries. Otherwise reading, without understanding, is of no abiding profit unto man.

He insisted, in that same Book, that the understanding of the Word of God is not reserved for those with human learning, that it is accessible to the masses of humanity:

KI:210-211: Heed not the idle contention of those who maintain that the Book and the verses thereof can never be a testimony unto the common people, inasmuch as they neither grasp their meaning nor appreciate their value. And yet, the unfailing testimony of God to both the East and the West is none other than the Qur'án. Were it beyond the comprehension of men, how could it have been declared as a universal testimony unto all people? If their contention be true, none would therefore be required, nor would it be necessary for them to know God, inasmuch as the knowledge of the divine Being transcendeth the knowledge of His Book, and the common people would not possess the capacity to comprehend it.

Such contention is utterly fallacious and inadmissible. It is actuated solely by arrogance and pride. Its motive is to lead the people astray from the Ridván of divine good-pleasure and to tighten the reins of their authority over the people. And yet, in the sight of God, these common people are infinitely superior and exalted above their religious leaders who have turned away from the one true God.

This first purpose of humanity, to investigate reality takes on an entirely different character when one considers it in the light of an Islámic tradition, cited by Bahá'u'lláh in that same Book:

KI:238: We will accordingly make mention of a few traditions, that these may impart constancy to the wavering soul, and tranquillity to the troubled mind. Thereby, will the testimony of God unto the people, both high and low, be complete and perfect.

Among them is the tradition, 'And when the Standard of Truth is made manifest, the people of both the East and the West curse it.' The wine of renunciation must needs be attained, and the meditation referred to in the words 'One hour's reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship' must needs be observed, so that the secret of the wretched behaviour of the people might be discovered, these people who, despite the love and yearning for truth which they profess, curse the followers of Truth when once He been made manifest.

What sort of "faith" is this, which proclaims, along with Socrates, that the unexamined life is not worth living? 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, designated as the authoritative interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and the expounder of His Teachings, has defined "faith" in the following terms:

"Although a person of good deeds is acceptable at the threshold of the Almighty, yet it is first "to know,' and then 'to do'...

"By faith is meant, first conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds."³⁵

This is not a "faith" merely composed of "belief" nor one grounded in "imitation"--it is "faith" which is in harmony with science and reason.

Bahá'u'lláh has invited all of humanity to recognize the Prophets of God, not one alone, but all. He affirms that each of the Prophets of God can be recognized through observing His signs, His proofs, His evidences and arguments. We may be accustomed to thinking of "signs" as pertaining to the seasons--April showers bring May flowers, autumn leaves and winter's snow and ice; and to roads--finding our way as we drive our cars from place to place to place. It may be quite a stretch for us to even imagine what the "signs" of God could be. The terminology of proofs, evidence and arguments may remind us of mathematical formulas and rhetorical tactics we may have learned in high-school and college, or of movies about lawyers and newscasts about politicians. For some these words will recall the occasional

unsympathetic classmate who was certain to counter whatever one might say with one relentless refrain: "Prove it! Prove it! Prove it!" How can proofs, evidence and arguments be associated with things of the Spirit, with religion, with God and His Prophets?

Bahá'u'lláh affirms the truth of something we probably take for granted--that there is one reality. This is not to say that reality is undifferentiated, but that there are not plural, multiple realities co-existing in the same space and time. That reality is something objective and verifiable, although the manner in which we experience its verifiability may be modified depending upon which facet of reality we are encountering. Bahá'u'lláh establishes the Prophethood of all of the Prophets of God on a rational basis, a scientific foundation--this we will discover in the course of this book. This is not positivistic reason, materialistic philosophy, a science of physical things which can be discerned through the senses--the reason and science with which we are all somewhat familiar. Rather, this is the science of metaphysics (that is, beyond the physical), the science of the extra-sensory, and it is as systematic, logical, inclusive, associative and reliable as our "physical" science. Indeed, Bahá'u'lláh affirms that inasmuch as this science has been developed under the guidance of the infallible and divinely-inspired Prophets of God, it is actually more reliable than any physical science.

This systematic formulation of the proofs of Prophethood by a claimant to the Prophetic station is entirely unprecedented in the recorded history of religion. While it would have been astonishing enough if Bahá'u'lláh had merely set forth scientific proofs in support of His own Prophetic mission, Bahá'u'lláh has added astonishment to astonishment through the establishment of the Prophethood of all of the Prophets of God on the same foundation. Hence, we find 'Abdu'l-Bahá stating that the foundation of the religions of God is one, He is not saying something which is beyond our comprehension, something we must "believe" and not question, something which does not satisfy our minds. Rather, in affirming the one foundation of the teachings of the Prophets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was simply stating a fact, for it is upon evident and clear signs, proofs, evidences and arguments that Bahá'u'lláh established the validity of the Prophets of God. This one foundation of the proofs of Prophethood establishes the essential truth of all of these divinely-revealed Faiths.

There are various terms used in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi to denote the signs, proofs, evidences and

arguments for God and His Prophets. Study of this terminology and of the subjects it refers to may acquaint us with dimensions of the Bahá'í teachings which would otherwise remain hidden and unappreciated. Those who wish to acquaint themselves with these terms and their definitions in the original languages of the Bahá'í Writings--Arabic and Persian--are invited to read the chapter on this subject entitled "The Nomenclature of Proof" in COMPANION TO PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS.

Many proofs of all of the Prophets of God were defined for the first time in "Kitáb-i-Íqán", which Bahá'u'lláh wrote when He was widely regarded as the most prominent and influential leader among the followers of the Báb, some nine years after He received His first call to independent Prophethood, and some two years prior to His first open avowal of this Prophetic station to certain of His immediate companions. Nevertheless, particular passages of "Kitáb-i-Íqán" indicate that the reader for whom that work was penned (one of the uncles of the Primal Point) was being told that Bahá'u'lláh was writing under the influence of Divine inspiration. One of those verses which is expressive of this theme is as follows, while others can be discovered by any careful reader:

KI:59: When the stream of utterance reached this stage, We beheld, and lo! the sweet savours of God were being wafted from the dayspring of Revelation, and the morning breeze was blowing out of the Sheba of the Eternal. Its tidings rejoiced anew the heart, and imparted immeasurable gladness to the soul. It made all things new, and brought unnumbered and inestimable gifts from the unknowable Friend.

The proofs of the Prophets, most of which are delineated in "Kitáb-i-Íqán" are developed in the addresses and writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as has been established in PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS. While the Prophets all assert, and Bahá'u'lláh in particular insists that the ordinary human being does not have the right or even the ability to examine the claims of the Prophet of God according to human standards, according to those measures which he has inherited from his forebears and those which he has taken a fancy to due to the peculiarities of his character and personality, this does not prove that there is no standard by which the claims of would-be Prophets can be assayed. Indeed there is a standard according to which these Prophetic claims can be tested. This standard is objective, it is comprehensive, it is comprehensible, and it can be applied by every individual independently of the views of any one else. This standard is independent of the love and hate of anything in this world or

the world to come; it is free of sentiment; free of self-interest of any kind; free of that moral and intellectual ambivalence which is so often wrapped up with human judgment and choice. Either the facts fit this standard or the would-be Prophet is false.

In this volume, these very same standards will be applied to the claim of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, His claim to be the most recent Manifestation of God, the Prophet for this Age and for this Cycle of humanity. To facilitate the systematic study of these proofs and the comparative study of the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh in comparison with those of previous Prophets, the order of presentation of proofs will be the same as found in the PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS.

Preliminary to commencing this study, we will consider the order of proofs given by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. His first proof, which corresponds to the fifth proof in this study, is described in "Lawh-i-Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil Qazvini":

GL:49: He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation, and His Manifestation can adduce no greater proof of the truth of His Mission than the proof of His own Person.

This proof is reiterated in "Lawh-i-Ashraf":

GL:105: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self.

A second proof is then cited in "Lawh-i-Ashraf":

GL:105: Next to this testimony is His Revelation.

This same proof is reiterated elsewhere in the same Tablet:

GL:105: Beware that ye do not deprive yourselves of the grace of God, that ye do not bring to naught your works, and do not repudiate the truth of this most manifest, this lofty, this shining, and glorious Revelation.

When Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the "truth of this most manifest...Revelation," this may refer to the teachings revealed by Himself as a Prophet of God, which would correspond to the twenty-third proof in this study. If He is referring in this verse to the universal

influence of His Revelation, this will be considered in the third proof in our study.

A third proof is then cited in "Lawh-i-Ashraf":

GL:105: For whoso faileth to recognize the one or the other [the Person of the Prophet or His Revelation] He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth. This is, verily, an evidence of His tender mercy unto men.

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" we find superlative references to this proof:

KI:205: Behold how lofty is the station, and how consummate the virtue, of these verses which He hath declared to be His surest testimony, His infallible proof, the evidence of His all-subduing power, and a revelation of the potency of His will. He, the divine King, hath proclaimed the undisputed supremacy of the verses of His Book over all things that testify to His truth. For compared with all other proofs and tokens, the divinely-revealed verses shine as the sun, whilst all others are as stars. To the peoples of the world they are the abiding testimony, the incontrovertible proof, the shining light of the ideal King. Their excellence is unrivalled, their virtue nothing can surpass.

KI:206: If thou wilt grasp the implication of this verse, thou wilt recognize the truth that no manifestation greater than the Prophets of God hath ever been revealed, and no testimony mightier than the testimony of their revealed verses hath ever appeared upon the earth. Nay, this testimony no other testimony can ever excel, except that which the Lord thy God willeth.

The implications of these verses are impossible to misread! This proof of prophethood will be addressed second. And now to the...

FIRST PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FULFILLS THE PROPHECIES OF
PREVIOUS PROPHETS

Whereas all the Prophets of the past have been heralded by their immediate predecessors and sometimes by earlier Prophets, Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the fulfillment of the prophecies of all Prophets, of all holy books. This is because He claims to be the Universal Prophet, who ushers in the New Age promised by all the Prophets, He who closes the Cycle of preparation and who opens the Cycle of fulfillment. In "Lawh-i-Ashad Muhammad Salmání," Bahá'u'lláh affirms:

GL:5: The Revelation which, from time immemorial, hath been acclaimed as the Purpose and Promise of all the Prophets of God, and the most cherished Desire of His Messengers, hath now, by virtue of the pervasive Will of the Almighty and at His irresistible bidding, been revealed unto men. The advent of such a Revelation Hath been heralded in all the sacred Scriptures.

He reiterates this declaration in "Lawh-i-Aqa Mírzá SadAlláh":

GL:39: This is a matchless Day. Matchless must be the tongue that celebrateth the praise of the Desire of all nations, and matchless the deed that aspireth to be acceptable in His sight. The whole human race hath longed for this Day, that perchance it may fulfil that which well beseemeth its station, and is worthy of its destiny. Blessed is the man whom the affairs of the world have failed to deter from recognizing Him Who is the Lord of all things. So blind hath become the human heart that neither the disruption of the city, nor the reduction of the mountain in dust, nor even the cleaving of the earth, can shake off its torpor. The allusions made in the Scriptures have been unfolded, and the signs recorded therein have been revealed, and the Prophetic cry is continually being raised.

In "Tafsir Bayt Sa'adi," Bahá'u'lláh writes:

GL:340: Verily I say, in this most mighty Revelation, all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation.

Likewise, in other Tablets whose recipients have not been identified, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

GL:314: The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come. Fear ye God, and withhold not yourselves from recognizing the One Who is the Object of your creation.

P&M:275: This is the Day, O my Lord, which Thou didst announce unto all mankind as the Day whereon Thou wouldst reveal Thy Self, and shed Thy radiance, and shine brightly over all Thy creatures. Thou hast, moreover, entered into a covenant with them, in Thy Books, and Thy Scriptures, and Thy Scrolls, and Thy Tablets, concerning Him Who is the Dayspring of Thy Revelation...

In "Lawh-i-Muhammad 'Alí," Bahá'u'lláh calls upon every soul to arise and cry out:

GL:163: Here am I, here am I, O Lord of all Names; here am I, here am I, O Maker of the heavens! I testify that, through Thy Revelation, the things hidden in the Books of God have been revealed, and that whatsoever hath been recorded by Thy Messengers in the sacred Scriptures hath been fulfilled.

Now that the reader is fully aware of the claims of Bahá'u'lláh with regard to His fulfillment of the prophecies of previous Messengers which are recorded in all sacred Books, let us systematically consider the specific prophecies He claims to fulfill. To begin with, Bahá'u'lláh claims to fulfill the prophecies of the Báb, whom He acknowledges as an independent Manifestation of God as well as the divinely-appointed Herald of his Mission:

P&M:275: Thou hast...appointed the Bayán to be the Herald of this Most Great and glorious Manifestation, and this most resplendent and most sublime Appearance.

P&M:276: Thou well knowest, O my God, that the Revealer of the Bayán (the Báb) hath commanded all mankind concerning Thy Cause, and Thy Revelation, and Thy Sovereignty.

P&M:128-29: All Thy previous Revelations culminated in Him Whom Thou has established as the Sovereign Lord of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. He it was

Whom Thou hast determined to be the Herald of Thy Most Great Revelation and the Announcer of Thy Most Ancient Splendor.

Bahá'u'lláh states that many of the Bábís, the followers of the Primal Point, failed to recognize His station, as the Promised One of the Báb:

P&M:179-80: And when the Pledge was fulfilled and the Promised One appeared, He was rejected by such of Thy servants as profess to have believed in Him in Whom Thy Godhead was manifested, Whom Thou didst ordain to be the Herald of this Revelation, and through Whose advent the eyes of the inmates of the sanctuary of Thy unity were cheered.

Bahá'u'lláh quotes some of the references to Himself found in the writings of the Báb (called the Heart and Center of the Bayán):

GL:10: He Who is the Heart and Center of the Bayán hath written: "The germ that holdeth within itself the potentialities the Revelation that is to come is endowed with potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow Me." And again He saith: "Of all the tributes I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor any reference to Him in My Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause."

GL:145: Ages rolled away, until they attained their consummation in this, the Lord of days, the Day whereon the Day Star of the Bayán manifested itself above the horizon of mercy, the Day in which the Beauty of the All-Glorious shone forth in the exalted person of 'Alí Muhammad, the Báb...

GL:146-47: A few believed in Him; few of Our servants are the thankful. These He admonished, in all His Tablets nay, in every passage of His wondrous writings not to give themselves up in the Day of the promised Revelation to anything whatever, be it in the heaven or in the earth.

"O people!" said He, "I have revealed Myself for His Manifestation, and have caused My Book, the Bayán, to descend upon you for no other purpose except to establish the truth of His Cause. Fear ye God, and contend not with Him as the people of the Qur'án have contended with Me. At whatever

time ye hear of Him, hasten ye towards Him, and cleave ye to whatsoever He may reveal unto you. Naught else besides Him can ever profit you, no, not though ye produce from first to last the testimonies of all those who were before you. " And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of the Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all created things. ("Lawh-i-Ahmad Qulí Khán")

What may we gather from reading these declarations of Bahá'u'lláh? First of all, that He affirmed the truth of the claim of the Báb to an independent Prophetic mission; in so doing He has fulfilled the Nineteen Proof, for He has confirmed the truth of his predecessor. Secondly, that He acknowledged that the Báb largely devoted His writings to the announcement of the appearance of "Him Whom God shall manifest," that is, to preparing His followers for the coming of the Prophet who was to succeed Him; and, in so doing He was confirming what they should have recognized as unassailably true, and which, Bahá'u'lláh asserts, is completely obvious to anyone who has read the Writings of the Báb for Himself and judged them with equity and insight. Thirdly, that Bahá'u'lláh has stated without hesitation or equivocation that He is the One promised by the Báb, that he is the Prophet Whom the Báb called "Him Whom God shall manifest"; and, that by asserting this claim, He has required all of the followers of the Báb to make a choice, to accept Him or deny Him. That some have chosen to deny His claim, to reject Him as "Him Whom God shall manifest" is to be expected, for such has been the case for all of the Prophets of God.

Now, let us examine this case more carefully. We have already seen that the Báb taught that "Him Whom God shall manifest" is not to be asked "why" He will reveal whatever He reveals--this is stated clearly in the "Bayán-i-farsi" (III:1), and reaffirmed by Bahá'u'lláh in "Lawh-i-Muhammad 'Alí":

GL:163: We have formerly uttered these words: "This is not the day for any man to question his Lord."

Are we to infer from this that the follower of the Báb was expected to follow anyone who claimed to be "Him Whom God shall manifest"? Was the Bábí forbidden then to challenge the claims of whosoever arose and called himself "Him Whom God shall manifest"? The answer to these two questions appears to be "Yes". The truth would be manifest,

and therefore opposition would avail nothing, for if mistakenly one were to oppose "Him Whom God shall manifest" one would thereby be opposing God Himself, one would be bringing suffering upon the very Manifestation of the All-Loving Creator, and this is to be avoided at all lengths. Indeed, in "Bayán-i-fársi" (V:13), the Báb says that it is impossible that anyone should falsely claim to be "Him Whom God shall manifest". On the other hand, Nabíl-i-A'zam (Muhammad Zarandi) reports that no less than twenty-five Bábís claimed to be "Him Whom God shall manifest" after the passing of the Báb (in 1850) and prior to the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh (1863), and includes himself among the false claimants. It would seem therefore that the Báb's meaning is that it is impossible that anyone should falsely claim to be "Him Whom God shall manifest" and not be found out! Eventually, the falsity of his claim would be discovered, and he would lose whatever following he was able to attract. Shoghi Effendi cites 'Abdu'l-Bahá, an eye-witness to those events, on this score:

“Such was the audacity and effrontery of these demoralized and misguided Bábís that no less than twenty-five persons, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony, had the presumption to declare themselves to be the Promised One foretold by the Bab!” (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 125)

This was when Bahá'u'lláh was in Kurdistán, in 1854-1856...Shoghi Effendi continues with the story:

“Within a few years after Bahá'u'lláh's return from Sulaymaniyih the situation had been completely reversed...

“Even those who, in their folly and temerity had, in Baghdád, in Karbila, in Qum, in Kashan, in Tabriz and in Tihrán, arrogated to themselves the rights, and assumed the title of "Him Whom God shall make manifest" were for the most part instinctively led to seek His presence, confess their error and supplicate His forgiveness.” (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 129, 130)

The historical record is very clear--the only Bábí claimant to be “Him Whom God shall make manifest” who has any appreciable following is Bahá'u'lláh.

While the Báb emphatically states in "Bayán-i-fársi" (VII:11) that the Bábís must not judge "Him Whom God shall manifest" according to the words of the Bayán, but rather, according to His own words; and while the Báb indeed reveals in "Bayán-i-fársi" (IV:8, V:8, VI:6, VII:1), that the

words of the Bayán must be judged according the words of "Him Whom God shall manifest"--inasmuch as these words supersede those of the Bayán itself; nevertheless, Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to certain signs and hints, prophecies of the Báb which were fulfilled in Him and which could only have been fulfilled in Him. It is clear, from the point of view revealed in the Bayán, that Bahá'u'lláh is not obligated to point to these prophecies. Indeed, the only proof He must produce is revealed by God, and this proof we will discuss shortly.

In certain of His works, including the "Bayán al-'arabiyah" (VI:15), the Báb refers to "Him Whom God shall manifest" in conjunction with the "Qayyúm" and the "year 9" (9 Badí, dated from 1260 A.H., 1844 C.E.), that is 1260 A.H./1852 C.E. According to His own testimony, in the "Rash-i-Ama," and also revealed in other contexts including "Risalah fi'l-Násiri'd-Dín Sháh" and "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", Bahá'u'lláh first received His Prophetic call in the year 1269 A.H./1852 C.E., while He was imprisoned in a prison called "Siyáh Chál" (Black Pit) in Tíhrán and shortly before which he was exiled from the land of His birth, for life. Inasmuch as the Báb began his mission in the year 1260 A.H., and as he inaugurated a new calendar beginning with that year, it is clear that his references to the "year 9" are fulfilled in the year 1269 A.H./1852 C.E. Nor did Bahá'u'lláh leave this calculation for us to figure out on our own--he confirmed his fulfillment of this prophecy in his own words, in this passage of his last work, translated as "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf":

ESW:151,151: He saith--blessed and glorified be He: 'In the year nine ye will attain unto all good.' On another occasion He saith: 'In the year nine ye will attain unto the Presence of God.' These melodies, uttered by the Birds of the cities of Knowledge, conform with that which hath been sent down by the All-Merciful in the Qur'án...He saith--glorified be His utterance--addressing his honor, 'Azím: "This, verily, is the thing We promised thee, ere the moment We answered thy call. Wait thou until nine will have elapsed from the time of the Bayán. Then exclaim: "Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers!" Say: This, verily, is an Announcement which none except God hath comprehended. Ye, however, will be unaware on that day.' In the year nine this Most Great Revelation arose and shone forth brightly above the horizon of the Will of God.

The Qayyúm was the name of the second manifestation of the Promised One, Whom Ithná 'Asharí Shí'í Muslims expected to follow the Qá'im, and Bahá'u'lláh stated in certain of his Tablets that he is the

Qayyúm, including his "Risala 'ala'l-Bayán" (translated into French by Hippolyte Dreyfus in *L'Oeuvre de Bahá'u'lláh*); indeed many of his prayers including the Short Obligatory Prayer, come to a close with the utterance of this name of God, which has been translated "the Self-Subsisting". In other passages, in "Bayán-i-fársí" and other writings, the Báb referred to the year 19 as being significant, and indeed nineteen years after the Báb's declaration in 1260 A.H., in the year 1279 A.H. Bahá'u'lláh for the first time declared openly to some of his followers, on the eve of his departure from Baghdád, that He was indeed Him Whom God shall manifest. This declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, His first public avowal of the Prophetic mission, is attested both by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and by Mírzá Áqa Ján, both of whom accompanied Him to the Garden of Ridván for the last twelve days of His sojourn in the City of Peace (Baghdád). He refers to the declaration of the Báb and to His own declaration in this passage from "Lawh-i-Dunyá":

GL:96-97: In the year sixty He Who heralded the light of Divine Guidance --may all creation be a sacrifice unto Him --arose to announce a fresh revelation of the Divine Spirit, and was followed, twenty years later, by Him through Whose coming the world was made the recipient of this promised glory, this wondrous favor. (also TB:89)

These are the two dates which are found in the writings of the Báb and which were fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh. Some of the Bábís have claimed that "Him Whom God shall manifest" could not appear before the expiration of 2001 years from the declaration of the Báb, but this is a blatant and willful misreading of the writings of the Báb. In "Bayán-i-fársí" (VII:10), the Báb states that Him Whom God shall manifest will appear certainly before the number of Mustagháth will have elapsed --this number is calculated as 2001-- but this sets a time limit on how late he can appear, not on how early. Furthermore, in other verses of the same Book (IV:5, VI:3, VII:10), the Báb states that the day of the advent of "Him Whom God shall manifest" is known only to God. It should be noted that "Mustagháth" means (in Arabic) He who is invoked, and that the Greatest Name is invoked very frequently indeed by Bábís, as we shall see. In this spirit perhaps we may understand these verses of Bahá'u'lláh, in "Lawh-i-'Alí Núr Isfáhání", apparently revealed prior to his declaration as "Him Whom God shall manifest":

GL:73: We, verily, believe in Him Who, in the person of the Báb, hath been sent down by the Will of the one true God, the King of Kings, the All-Praised. We, moreover, swear fealty to the One Who, in the time of Mustagháth, is destined to be made manifest, as well as those Who shall come after Him till the end that hath no end.

Other hints and signs in the writings of the Báb point to Bahá'u'lláh as "Him Whom God shall manifest". His is the Most Great Name ("Bayán-i-fársí", III:8), and the Báb identifies the Most Great Name as "Bahá'u'lláh" (Ibid., III:14, V:6). Indeed, "Him Whom God shall manifest" is even called "Bahá'u'l-Bayán" (Ibid., III:14). Furthermore, this Most Great Name "Bahá" is accorded first place in the new calendar (the first month of the year and the first day of each month and the first year of every nineteen years, all are associated with the Báb and set apart for "Him Whom God shall manifest" --all bear this name "Bahá", Ibid., V:3); and the new script ordained by the Báb, which has nineteen varieties, the first and best kind of handwriting is called "khatt-i-abhá", "Abhá" being the superlative form of "Bahá" (Ibid., VII:1). There are many references to "Bahá" which could be identified, but whether or not these make reference to Bahá'u'lláh or not is a matter for the reader to judge for himself. Shoghi Effendi has identified a specific passage in which "Bahá'u'lláh" is mentioned, and states that this passage was fulfilled in the coming of Bahá'u'lláh as "Him Whom God shall manifest". What other meaning could this passage possibly have?

Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and rendereth thanks unto his Lord. For He will assuredly be made manifest. God hath indeed irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán. ("Bayán-i-fársí", III:16)

For those who are not convinced yet that Bahá'u'lláh is "Him Whom God shall manifest" promised by the Báb, please refer to the one proof which the Báb himself regarded as decisive, as stated in "Bayán al-'arabíyyah" (V:7) and in "Bayán-i-fársí" (VI:7,8,15), namely, the verses revealed by the true Prophet of God. This proof is denominated in this study the Second Proof.

Bahá'u'lláh does not claim only to fulfill the prophecies and to satisfy the expectations of the followers of the Báb. As we have seen, his claims are comprehensive, universal. Consequently, we must investigate to learn if he presents evidence in support of these

universal claims. The Qur'án and the hadith are replete with prophecies which are fulfilled in this Day --such is the fearless statement of Bahá'u'lláh, articulated in any number of passages including two Tablets quoted in "Gleanings" (pp. 40-42,43-45) and part of the preamble to "Ishraqát" (TB:117-19), and the last portion of "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" (pp. 178-81) consists of the citation of ahadith which make mention of 'Akká, the final residence of the Promised One. These and other passages are too numerous to cite here except for one which will demonstrate His method. We are to be reminded that Bahá'u'lláh is a Prophet, not a scholar who must present his evidence in a systematic fashion, with logical explanations to justify his every move; a Prophet speaks the truth, and that is enough for Him, and should be enough for us. Here He writes in "Ishraqát", part of which is also found in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" (131-133):

TB:117-120: O thou who hast set thy face towards the splendours of My Countenance! Vague fancies have encompassed the dwellers of the earth and debarred them from turning towards the Horizon of Certitude, and its brightness, and its manifestations and its lights. Vain imaginings have withheld them from Him Who is the Self-Subsisting. They speak as prompted by their own caprices, and understand not. Among them are those who have said: 'Have the verses been sent down? Say 'Yea, by Him Who is the Lord of the heavens!' 'Hath the Hour come?' 'Nay, more: it hath passed, by Him Who is the Revealer of clear tokens! Verily, the Inevitable is come, and He, the True One, hath appeared with proof and testimony. The Plain is disclosed, and mankind is sore vexed and fearful. Earthquakes have let loose, and the tribes have lamented, for fear of God, the Lord of Strength, the All-Compelling.' Say: 'The stunning trumpet-blast hath been loudly raised, and the Day is God's, the One, the Unconstrained.' And they say: 'Hath the Catastrophe come to pass?' Say: 'Yea, by the Lord of Lords!' 'Is the Resurrection come?' 'Nay, more; He Who is the Self-Subsisting [al-Qayyúm] hath appeared with the Kingdom of His signs.' 'Seest thou men laid low?' 'Yea, by my Lord, the Most High, the Most Glorious!' 'Have the tree-stumps been uprooted?' 'Yea, more; the mountains have been scattered in dust; by Him the Lord of attributes!' They say: 'Where is Paradise, and where is Hell?' Say: 'The one is reunion with Me; the other thine own self, O thou who dost associate a partner with God and doubttest.' They say: 'We see not the Balance.'

Say: 'Surely, by my Lord, the God of Mercy! None can see it except such as are endued with insight.' They say: 'Have the stars fallen?' Say: 'Yea, when He Who is the Self-Subsisting [al-Qayyúm] dwelt in the Land of Mystery [Adrianople]. Take heed, ye who are endued with discernment! All the signs appeared when We drew forth the Hand of Power from the bosom of majesty and might [proclamation to the kings and religious leaders from Adrianople]. Verily, the Crier hath cried out [the Báḅ], when the promised time came, and they that have recognized the splendours of Sinai have swooned away in the wilderness of hesitation, before the awful majesty of thy Lord, the Lord of creation. The trumpet asketh: 'Hath the Bugle been sounded? Say: 'Yea, by the King of Revelation! When He mounted the throne of His Name, the All-Merciful.' Darkness hath been chased away by the dawning light of the mercy of thy Lord, the Source of all light. [This is where the reiteration in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" ends.] The breeze of the All-Merciful hath wafted, and the souls have been quickened in the tombs of their bodies. Thus hath the decree been fulfilled by God, the Mighty, the Beneficent. They who reject the truth have said: 'When were the heavens cleft asunder?' Say: 'While ye lay in the graves of waywardness and error.' Among the faithless is he who rubbeth his eyes, and looketh to the right and to the left. Say: 'Blinded art thou. No refuge hast thou to flee to.' And among them is he who saith: 'Have men been gathered together?' Say: 'Yea, by My Lord! whilst thou didst lie in the cradle of idle fancies.' And among them is he who saith: 'Hath the Book been sent down through the power of the true Faith?' Say: 'The true Faith itself is astounded. Fear ye, O ye men of understanding heart! And among them is he who saith: 'Have I been assembled with others, blind?' Say: 'Yea, by Him that rideth upon the clouds!' Paradise is decked with mystic roses, and hell hath been made to blaze with the fire of the impious. Say: 'The light hath shone forth from the horizon of Revelation, and the whole earth hath been illumined at the coming of Him Who is the Lord of the Day of the Covenant!' The doubters have perished, whilst he that turned, guided by the light of assurance, unto the Dayspring of Certitude hath prospered. Blessed art thou, who hast fixed thy gaze upon Me, for this Tablet which hath been sent down for thee -- a Tablet which causeth the souls of men to soar. Commit it to memory, and recite it. By My life! It is a door to the mercy of thy Lord. Well

is it with him that reciteth it at eventide and at dawn. We, verily, heard thy praise of this Cause, through which the mountain of knowledge was crushed, and men's feet have slipped. My glory be upon thee and upon whomsoever hath turned unto the Almighty, the All-Bounteous. The Tablet is ended, but the theme is unexhausted. Be patient, for thy Lord is patient.

These are verses We sent down previously, and We have sent them unto thee, that thou mayest be acquainted with what their lying tongues have spoken, when God came unto them with might and sovereignty. The foundations of idle fancies have trembled, and the heaven of vain imaginings hath been cleft asunder, and yet the people are in doubt and in contention with Him. They have denied the testimony of God and His proof, after He came from the heaven of power with the kingdom of His signs. They have cast away what had been prescribed, and perpetrated what had been forbidden them in the Book. They have abandoned their God, and clung unto their desires. They truly have strayed and are in error. They read the verses and deny them. They behold the clear tokens and turn aside. They truly are lost in strange doubt.

There are many other passages which could be cited along with this one. Any one familiar with the text of the Qur'án will recognize all of the signs noted in this citation, and one who knows the Tanakh and the Gospels will also recognize many of these signs. The purpose of each and every one of these signs is to hail the Most Great Day ("Bayán-i-fársí," VI:19) which the Tanakh calls the Day of Judgment and the Qur'án names the Day of Resurrection (among other appellations). In "Bayán-i-fársí" (II:7, VIII:3, IX:3), the Báb explained that the Day of Resurrection is the Day of the appearance of the Manifestation of God, the period of His ministry. Bahá'u'lláh likewise explained this terminology in "Kitáb-i-Iqán", often with specific reference to Qur'anic verses, and in other Tablets. The Báb states that the Shí'í Muslims have not understood the meaning of these terms in the Qur'án because they have interpreted them literally, in a material sense, whereas their purpose is to be signs of a spiritual phenomenon, the coming of the new Prophet of God ("Bayán-i-fársí," II:7). Hence, Bahá'u'lláh writes to all Muslims, in the midst of demonstrating his fulfillment of the signs in the Scriptures: "Say: Perused ye not the Qur'án? Read it, that haply ye may find the Truth, for this Book is verily the Straight Path. This is the Way of God unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth." (GL:44) In addressing

himself more directly to the Ithná 'Asharí Shí'í sect which is predominant in his native Iran, Bahá'u'lláh writes in "Lawh-i-Husayn":

GL:12: Consider the eagerness with which certain peoples and nations have anticipated the return of the Imam Husayn, whose coming, after the appearance of the Qá'im, hath been prophesied, in days past, by the chosen ones of God, exalted be His glory. These holy ones have, moreover, announced that when He Who is the Day Spring of the manifold grace of God manifesteth Himself, all the Prophets and Messengers, including the Qá'im, will gather together beneath the shadow of the sacred Standard which the Promised One will raise. That hour is now come. The world is illumined with the effulgent glory of His countenance.

The Muslim who is accustomed to the literal or to a standard and well-entrenched symbolic interpretation of the signs of the Day of Resurrection may find Bahá'u'lláh's explanations improbable and unsubstantiated. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has anticipated and accommodated such skepticism in these words:

"In the former books the conditions are explained concerning subsequent manifestators of the divine plan. But those who do not follow closely these things will not be convinced by proofs such as these. This then is not a final proof." (ABDP:43)

It should also be noted that Bahá'u'lláh does not only establish his own claims to Prophethood but that he presents comprehensive proofs of the Prophethood of the Báb, his immediate predecessor, as well as proofs in support of the claims and ministries of Muhammad, Jesus Christ and Moses. It is above all the station of Prophethood itself which he affirms. The Prophets of God are one reality. As he affirms in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:162: Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am all the Prophets"? Hath He not said as We have already mentioned: "I am Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus"? Why should Muhammad, that immortal Beauty, Who hath said: "I am the first Adam" be incapable of saying also: "I am the last Adam"?

Hence, as the Prophets are one reality, Bahá'u'lláh's mission is a continuation of the mission of all the previous Prophets, and furthermore, as the most recent Prophet to appear he has the most

comprehensive mission. Whereas Jesus Christ championed Moses, and Muhammad championed Moses and Jesus Christ, Bahá'u'lláh must champion Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad and the Báb. And this principle of the indivisibility of the Prophets is summed up in this excerpt from "Lawh-i-Ahmad":

BP:212: Be thou assed in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.

And further --for if we reject any of the Prophets of God we have denied the unity of God, as stated in "Lawh-i-Ahmad":

BP:211: O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it, O assemblage of false ones!

We now turn to the followers of Jesus Christ, and the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Gospels and the Apocalypse. Bahá'u'lláh does not dismiss Christians simply because they have not accepted the Prophethood of Muhammad, even though they had had almost thirteen hundred years to investigate the truth of his mission by the time of the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh. Nor does he turn aside from them simply because they did not read their newspapers and hence missed the revelation of his Twin Manifestation and Forerunner, the Báb. Those who have not accepted the most recent Prophet of God are given another chance every time a new Prophet appears. Hence it is possible for the Jew to come to the recognition of Jesus Christ through acceptance of Muhammad, the Christian to the recognition of Muhammad through the acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh, and, in the case of Bahá'u'lláh, he welcomes the votaries of all religions to attest to his Prophethood, and in so doing, to attest to the Prophethood of many Messengers Who are unknown to Jews, to Christians and to Muslims. For that one who accepts him affirms the truth of all of the Prophets whom he declares to be from God, and these include, according to his interpreters --'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi-- all of the Biblical Prophets, and Qur'anic Prophets, and Krishna, Zoroaster and Buddha, as well as hundreds of others whose names are lost in the mists of time.

Hence, Bahá'u'lláh addresses Christians as lovingly as he speaks to Bábís and to Muslims, for they are equally invited to affirm the universal truths which he has been manifested to reveal to humanity.

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán", in "Lawh-i-Aqdas" (Most Holy Tablet), in "Suratu'l-Mulk" (Chapter of the Kings), in "Risalah 'ala'l-Bába" (Letter to the Pope) and in various other writings Bahá'u'lláh addresses Christians and identifies the prophecies he fulfills.

In certain verses recorded in the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ speaks to his disciples about his death and his return:

Jn:XIV:16: And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever;17: Even the Spirit of Truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.18:I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Jn:XIV:26: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Jn:XV:26: But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me:

Jn:XVI:7: Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.

It is well-known that most Christians have understood the promise of Jesus Christ to send the Comforter as meaning that he would send to his followers the Holy Ghost (Spirit), and that this promise was fulfilled in Pentecost, and that hence no other Comforter apart from this Holy Ghost is implied in these prophetic verses. Bahá'u'lláh does not deny that the followers of the Christ received the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of their Master. Here is how he describes the spiritual influence of the Christ upon his ascension:

GL:85-86: Know thou that when the Son of man yielded up His breath unto God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The

deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit. ("Lawh-i-Fatah A'dham")

Many other verses of Bahá'u'lláh speak of this theme, and it is also discussed in the discourses and writings of his appointed interpreters. The other meaning of "Comforter" according to Bahá'u'lláh is its reference to the return of Jesus Christ in another Prophet, or what Christians call the "second coming":

WOB:104-105: The Comforter Whose advent all the Scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.

In the Gospel of John XIV:16 and XV:26 the Comforter is identified with the Spirit of Truth. In John XVI:13 Jesus Christ speaks of the Spirit of Truth to His followers:

Jn:XVI:13: Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

Bahá'u'lláh speaks directly to this verse in a number of passages, some of which are cited below:

PDC:27-28: O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus..."When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." And yet, behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies. (BWF:38: "Surat'u'l-Mulk")

TB:12: Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

WOB:104: Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you into all truth.

In the same chapter of the Gospel of John there are other verses pertaining to this Comforter, this Spirit of Truth --they are fulfilled also:

Jn:XVI:12: I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Bahá'u'lláh responds:

TB:11: This is the Word which the Son concealed, when to those around Him He said: 'Ye cannot bear it now.' And when the appointed time was fulfilled and the Hour had struck, the Word shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God. Beware, O followers of the Son, that ye cast it not behind your backs.

WOB:104: This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it.

ESW:148: Briefly, in the sayings of Him Who is the Spirit (Jesus) unnumbered significances lie concealed. Unto many things did He refer, but as He found none possessed of a hearing ear or a seeing eye He chose to conceal most of these things. Even as He saith: "But ye cannot bear them now." That Dawning-Place of Revelation saith that on that Day He Who is the Promised One will reveal the things which are to come. Accordingly in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and in the Tablets to the Kings, and in the Lawh-i-Ra'ís, and in the Lawh-i-Fu'ád, most of the things which have come to pass on this earth have been announced and prophesied by the Most Sublime Pen.

The Gospel of John further promises:

Jn:XVI:14: He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Bahá'u'lláh responds:

WOB:104: He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause.

TB:12: Say, this is the One Who hath glorified the Son and hath exalted His Cause.

At some time in the future a systematic study will be made to correlate the prophecies of Jesus Christ with the affirmations of their fulfillment in the vast and bottomless waters of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation --over 17,000 Tablets (current estimate of the Bahá'í World Centre) collected in almost one hundred volumes according to Bahá'u'lláh Himself: "Well nigh a hundred volumes of luminous verses and perspicuous words have already been sent down from the heaven of the will of Him Who is the Revealer of signs, and are available unto all." (ESW:115) "And yet, now, though supported by a hundred books, thou hast rejected Him and rejoicest therein!" (ESW:165)-- but for the present we will have to exercise restraint and restrict ourselves to the consideration of only a few more passages from the Gospels. One such prophecy is found in the Gospel of Matthew (XVI:27), the Gospel of Mark (VIII:38), the Gospel of Luke (IX:26), and in a somewhat modified form in Matthew XXIV:30 and Luke XXI:27:

Mt:XVI:27: For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels...

Mk:VIII:38: ...of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Lk:IX:26: ...of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Mt:XXIV:30: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Lk:XXI:27: And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Bahá'u'lláh in "Lawh-i-Aqdas" addresses various categories of Christians, and refers to these prophetic verses:

TB:9: Say, O followers of the Son! Have ye shut out yourselves from Me by reason of My Name? Wherefore ponder ye not in your hearts? day and night ye have been calling upon your Lord, the Omnipotent, but when He came from the heaven of eternity in His great glory, ye turned aside from Him and remained sunk in heedlessness.

TB:13: O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and come forth, then, from your churches. It behoveth you, in this day, to proclaim aloud the Most Great Name among the nations. Prefer ye to be silent, whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: "The Lord is come in His great glory!?"

TB:14: Bethlehem is astir with the Breeze of God. We hear her voice saying: "O most generous Lord...Praised be Thou in that Thou hast raised the veils, and come with power in evident glory."

In "Suriy-i-Vafa" He reiterates this fulfillment:

TB:182: The Promised One Himself hath come down from heaven, seated upon the crimson cloud with the hosts of revelation on His right, and the angels of inspiration on His left, and the Decree hath been fulfilled at the behest of God, the Omnipotent, the Almighty.

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh explains the inner meanings of the terms used in these passages --the meanings of "clouds", "coming down from heaven", "angels" and so forth-- and 'Abdu'l-Bahá has spoken and written extensively with regard to this symbolic language of the Prophets. Bahá'u'lláh testifies that the return of the Son in the glory of the Father is the return of the Son in "Bahá'u'lláh", a literal translation of "Glory of the Father" if the Father is taken to be equivalent to "Alláh", which the reader will agree is entirely reasonable and indeed, inescapable. However, Bahá'u'lláh takes this one step further, and this is what will astonish many Christians who are given to literal interpretations and therefore do not perceive the flexibility, the subtlety, the infinite significances of the Creative Word --the Son of man returns also in the glory of the Father: hence it is the Father Who is returning in His glory. This harmonizes with certain prophecies from the Hebrew Prophets as we shall see, especially with the Book of Isaiah, chapter IX, verse 6. Here are some of Bahá'u'lláh's challenging verses:

TB:11: Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled! (Lawh-i-Aqdas)

TB:12: Lo! He Who is the Ruler is come. (Ibid.)

TB:14-15: Tell Me then: Do the sons recognize the Father, and acknowledge Him, or do they deny Him, even as the people aforetime denied Him (Jesus)? (Ibid.)

PB:93: O concourse of bishops! Trembling hath seized all the kindreds of the earth, and He Who is the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven. (BWF:60)

PB:30-31: O Pope! Rend the veils asunder...Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. ("Risalah 'ala'l-Bába")

PB:83,85: O King...He, Who is the Father is come, and the Son, in the holy vale crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I. O Lord My God!' (Tablet to Czar Alexander II of Russia)

GL:211: Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory [Bahá], and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting [al-Qayyúm]. ("Kitáb-i-Aqdas", #82)

Inasmuch as 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent over two years travelling in the predominantly Christian West, and as many of his most enthusiastic and resourceful followers were Christian converts, many questions were asked him concerning the relationship of the person and the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. Numerous commentaries are found in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace," "Some Answered Questions," "Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá," and the published and unpublished Western pilgrim's notes. It would be impossible to summarize the contents of these sources in any one book, let alone a chapter. The reader is encouraged to continue his investigation of the fulfillment of Christ's prophecies by Bahá'u'lláh by consulting these sources.

There is a third community of belief which is assured by Bahá'u'lláh that its Promised One is also realized in him. This religious community has been victimized for millennia by the polytheists and

pagans who generally dominated the politics and religion of the Middle East --where they resided-- until the downfall of Rome and the rising up of the Holy Christian Empires of the Orthodox Byzantines and the Catholic European. Unfortunately for many members of this community, the persecutions did not entirely abate with the establishment of a monotheistic Faith, one based largely upon its own doctrines and institutions, for the Christians were generally intolerant of all religious communities other than their own, and indeed they vied with each other for zealousness and for control of the minds and money of their constituents. With the onset and rapid expansion of Islám the hegemony of the Eastern and Western Christian Empires was challenged, many of the lands and peoples of Western Christianity --including Spain, the south of France, the south of Italy and some of its islands-- were governed by Muslims for centuries, while most of the territory associated with Byzantine Christianity were conquered by the Muslims and most of their population converted to Islám. This Islámíic polity treated this beleaguered community rather well, and indeed it flourished in Islámíic realms until the dawn of the present era, the confusion wrought by Western imperialistic regimes and the profound challenge to Islámíic society which is embodied in the state of Israel.

The community referred to is of course that of the Jewish people, including the Ashkenazim --inhabitants of Western Europe-- the Sephardim --originally inhabitants of Spain, and, after 1492 in that country and 1493 in its neighbor Portugal, obliged to disperse, they settled throughout Italy, Northern Africa, the Levant and Turkey-- the Falashas, all living in Ethiopia and virtually unknown to the rest of the world and to the rest of their Jewish brethren until the eighteenth century, and the small communities scattered throughout the world, including that of Cochin in India, Karaites in Russia and Palestine, those in Iran, in Yemen, in 'Iráq. The Jewish people are not a homogeneous people, even in matters of religious doctrine and practice, but they do have certain convictions in common. All religiously observant Jews believe in the divine origin of the Torah, the five books of Tanakh called Bereshit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Veyikra (Leviticus), Bemidbar (Numbers), Devarim (Deuteronomy). Indeed, the Samaritans, now numbering only in the hundreds, who parted ways with the mainstream Jewish community over 2500 years ago, they also believe in the divine inspiration of the Torah.

With the exception of the Samaritans and the Falashas, all inheritors of the Jewish tradition recognize the divine authority of the remaining books of Tanakh, that is, the Nevi'im (Prophets: Joshua, Judges,

1Samuel, 2Samuel, 1Kings, 2Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial; twelve lesser Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, OVadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) and, the Ketuvim (Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1Chronicles, 2Chronicles). With the exception of these two communities and the Yemenites and Karaites, all Jews also believe that the Talmud (the Mishna and its commentary the Gemara) is divinely inspired, and this they call the Oral Law and regard it as the necessary adjunct to the Written Law of Torah. Many groups of Jews also revere various other works of ancient Jewish authorship, in particular the "Pirke Avot", the Book of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Zohar and other works of the kabbalah.

Throughout Jewish sacred literature there are prophecies pointing to the coming of a Messiah and a Messianic Age. Most Christian students of this literature have found the fulfillment of these prophecies in the person and mission of Jesus of Nazareth, Who was called "Christ", shortened form of Christus, meaning "Anointed One" in Latin, and hence being the translation of the Hebrew appellation "Mashiakh". Jewish prophecies relating to a future Redeemer from God describe Him as "Mashiakh", as "Anointed One", not as a Prophet. There were plenty of Prophets described in Tanakh --a recent study identifies 60 by name-- and also several persons who are described as "Mashiakh", all of them kings, including Saul, David, Solomon, Cyrus. This "Mashiakh" is most frequently identified with King David, the reputed founder of Jerusalem, of the Judaic Empire, and author of Psalms, and anticipates the arrival, at the end of days, of a Liberator Who will embody the virtues of this beloved Jewish leader of men and lover of women.

Bahá'u'lláh refers to the prophecies of the Tanakh. He does not make any specific and clearly identified reference to Talmud or to the esoteric literature of Judaism. His reasons for sticking to the Tanakh can be studied but it is not the purpose of this work to engage in such an exploration. Furthermore, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh regards the Gospels as superseding the Tanakh in authority, and the Qur'án as superseding the authority of the Gospels, and as he has likewise asserted the supersession of the Bayán at the time of the Báb and of his writings in his own Dispensation, therefore the Talmud and the Zohar and other works pertaining to Jewish sacred literature are not allotted the same authority by him as is conceived for them by the majority of the Jewish people. He asserts that divine authority can

only come from God, and that this authority is revealed in His successive Manifestations, and inasmuch as, by all accounts, the Talmud was compiled and written down hundreds of years after the arrival of the Christian Dispensation, and also inasmuch as the Zohar and other works of the esoteric literature were compiled and written down after the coming of the Islámic Dispensation, their authority --such as it may have been during the Mosaic Dispensation, if indeed either of these works was extant during that Dispensation-- had been superseded by the directly revealed Word of God in the Gospels and the Qur'án.

In "Lawh-i-Ahbáy Khurásán" Bahá'u'lláh identifies some of the prophecies of the Tanakh which have been fulfilled by His coming:

GL:12-13: The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled. Out of Zion hath gone forth the law of God [Isaiah 2:3], and Jerusalem, and the hills and land thereof, are filled with the glory of His Revelation. [Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk 2:14] Happy is the man that pondereth in his heart that which hath been revealed in the Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting [al-Qayyúm]... In the Book of Isaiah it is written: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty." [Isaiah 2:10] No man that meditateth upon this verse can fail to recognize the greatness of this Cause, or doubt the exalted character of this Day --the Day of God Himself. This same verse is followed by these words: "And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." [Isaiah 2:11] This is the Day which the Pen of the Most High hath glorified in all the holy Scriptures. There is no verse in them that doth not declare the glory of His holy Name, and no Book that doth not testify unto the loftiness of this most exalted theme. Were We to make mention of all that hath been revealed in these heavenly Books and holy Scriptures concerning this Revelation, this Tablet would assume impossible dimensions.

In "Lawh-i-Ridván" Bahá'u'lláh alludes to the words attributed to David in the First Book of Chronicles:

1Chr28:2-3: 28:2 Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I

had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: 28:3 But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

GL:30: This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: "Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the Seat of His mighty Throne."

In "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" he thrice quotes Isaiah with attribution:

ESW:144: O Shaykh! Peruse that which Isaiah hath spoken in His Book. He saith: "Get thee up into the high mountain, O Zion, that bringest good tidings; lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him.'" [Isaiah 40:9-10] This Day all the signs have appeared. A Great City hath descended from heaven [Apocalypse 21:10], and Zion trembleth and exulteth with joy at the Revelation of God, for it hath heard the Voice of God on every side. This Day Jerusalem hath attained unto a new Evangel, for in the stead of the sycamore standeth the cedar [Isaiah 9:9-10]. Jerusalem is the place of pilgrimage for all the peoples of the world, and hath been named the Holy City. Together with Zion and Palestine, they are all included within these regions.

ESW:146: Isaiah saith: "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." [Isaiah 2:11] Concerning the greatness of the Revelation He saith: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory [bahá] of His majesty." [Isaiah 2:10] And in another connection He saith: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the splendor [bahá] of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the splendor [bahá] of our God." [Isaiah 35:1-2] These passages stand in need of no commentary. They are

shining and manifest as the sun, and glowing and luminous as light itself. Every fair-minded person is led, by the fragrance of these words, unto the garden of understanding, and attaineth unto that from which most men are veiled and debarred.

In "Lawh-i-Karmíl" Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to the last-mentioned prophecy, without attribution:

GL:16: 'Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour [bahá] is revealed [Isaiah 35:2]. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Haste forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven [Apocalypse 21:10], the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. (TB:4)

Bahá'u'lláh continues to cite Isaiah in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf":

ESW:147: And likewise, He saith: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart: be strong, fear not, behold your God." [Isaiah 35:4] This blessed verse is a proof of the greatness of the Revelation, and of the greatness of the Cause, inasmuch as the blast of the trumpet must needs spread confusion throughout the world, and fear and trembling amongst all men. Well is it with him who hath been illumined with the light of trust and detachment. The tribulations of that Day will not hinder or alarm him.

He writes in one of his Tablets addressed to leaders of religion:

PB:93: O concourse of bishops! Trembling hath seized all the kindreds of the earth, and He Who is the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven. Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him Who is the Point of Adoration of all who are in the heavens and all who are on earth. (BWF:60)

He writes in the "Suriy-i-Haykal":

SLH:55: Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous!

SLH:59: The Father is come...

SLH:63: This is the Father foretold by Isaiah, and the Comforter concerning Whom the Spirit had covenanted with you. Open your eyes, O concourse of bishops, that ye may behold your Lord seated upon the Throne of might and glory.

SLH:84: Beware lest thy sovereignty withhold thee from Him Who is the Supreme Sovereign. He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: "Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!" He Who is the Father is come.

He writes in the "Lawh-i-Aqdas":

TB:11: The Father is come...

TB:14-15: Tell Me then: Do the sons recognize the Father, and acknowledge Him, or do they deny Him, even as the people aforesaid denied Him (Jesus)?'

He writes in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf":

ESW:57: And further We have said: "He Who is the Father is come..."

Even as Bahá'u'lláh pointed to Isaiah (SLH:63), there is only one use of this term "Everlasting Father" in the whole of the Tanakh --it is found in the Book of Isaiah:

Is:IX:6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. 7: Of the increase of His government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.

That Bahá'u'lláh intended it to be understood that this specific verse, and the title of "Everlasting Father" made reference to him is further confirmed by this quotation:

PDC:34: I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled.

This verse has been understood by Jews to refer to their promised "Mashiakh", He who will rule upon the throne of David, called in the Talmud and other literature "Mashiakh ben David". It is expected that this "Mashiakh" will be born to Israel, the son of Israel, and He will re-establish the just and enlightened rule of King David and that government will have no end. The same verse is interpreted spiritually by Christians to refer to Jesus of Nazareth the Christ (Mashiakh), and two alternative genealogies are given in the Gospels of Matthew (I:1-17) and Luke (III:23-38) to show that His adoptive father, Joseph was descended from King David, while all of the appellations in these verses which refer to the government of "Mashiakh" were regarded as having a spiritual rather than a temporal significance. Bahá'u'lláh explains in "Kitáb-i-Iqán" that much of the language of the Prophets is symbolic in nature, that its meaning is hidden from human understanding until the time is ripe for its comprehension, and that the only infallible standard for the correct deciphering of this symbolic language is the Prophet Himself --He must be consulted, and His answer must be taken to heart. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has applied the principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, and has indicated that the prophecies of Isaiah have symbolic significances:

“The Book of Isaiah announces that the Messiah will conquer the East and the West, and all nations of the world will come under His shadow, that His Kingdom will be established, that He will come from an unknown place, that the sinners will be judged, and that justice will prevail to such a degree that the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the sucking child and the asp, shall all gather at one spring, and in one meadow, and one dwelling.³⁶ The first coming was also under these conditions, though outwardly none of them came to pass. Therefore, the Jews rejected Christ, and, God forbid! called the Messiah *masikh*³⁷, considered Him to be the destroyer of the edifice of God, regarded Him as the breaker of the Sabbath and the Law, and sentenced Him to death. Nevertheless, each one of these conditions had a signification that the Jews did not understand; therefore, they were debarred from perceiving the truth of Christ.

“The second coming of Christ also will be in like manner: the signs and conditions which have been spoken of all have meanings, and are not to be taken literally. Among other things it is said that the stars will fall upon the earth. The stars are endless and innumerable, and modern mathematicians have established and proved scientifically that the globe of the sun is estimated to be about one million and a half times greater than the earth, and each of the fixed stars to be a thousand times larger than the sun. If these stars were to fall upon the surface of the earth, how could they find place there? It would be as though a thousand million of Himalaya mountains were to fall upon a grain of mustard seed. According to reason and science this thing is quite impossible. What is even more strange is that Christ said: "Perhaps I shall come when you are yet asleep, for the coming of the Son of man is like the coming of a thief."³⁸ Perhaps the thief will be in the house, and the owner will not know it.

“It is clear and evident that these signs have symbolic signification, and that they are not literal. They are fully explained in the Kitáb-i-Íqán. Refer to it.” (SAQ:111-112)

In another talk, he indicates that these prophecies refer most completely to Bahá'u'lláh:

“In Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 to 10, it is said: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

“But "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." These conditions did not prevail in the time of the manifestation of Christ; for until today various and antagonistic nations exist in the world: very few acknowledge the God of Israel, and the greater number are without the knowledge of God. In the same way, universal peace did not come into existence in the time of Christ -- that is to say, between the antagonistic and hostile nations there was neither peace nor concord, disputes and disagreements did not cease, and reconciliation and sincerity did not appear. So, even at this day, among the Christian sects and nations themselves, enmity, hatred and the most violent hostility are met with.

“But these verses apply word for word to Bahá'u'lláh. Likewise in this marvelous cycle the earth will be transformed, and the world of humanity arrayed in tranquillity and beauty. Disputes, quarrels and murders will be replaced by peace, truth and concord; among the nations, peoples, races and countries, love and amity will appear. Cooperation and union will be established, and finally war will be entirely suppressed. When the laws of the Most Holy Book are enforced, contentions and disputes will find a final sentence of absolute justice before a general tribunal of the nations and kingdoms, and the difficulties that appear will be solved. The five continents of the world will form but one, the numerous nations will become one, the surface of the earth will become one land, and mankind will be a single community. The relations between the countries -- the mingling, union and friendship of the peoples and communities -- will reach to such a degree that the human race will be like one family and kindred. The light of heavenly love will shine, and the darkness of enmity and hatred will be dispelled from the world. Universal peace will raise its tent in the center of the earth, and the blessed Tree of Life will grow and spread to such an extent that it will overshadow the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, antagonistic sects and hostile nations -- which are like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the calf -- will act toward each other with the most complete love, friendship, justice and equity. The world will be filled with science, with the knowledge of the reality of the mysteries of beings, and with the knowledge of God.

“Now consider, in this great century which is the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh, what progress science and knowledge have made, how many secrets of existence have been discovered, how many great inventions have been brought to light and are day by day multiplying in number. Before long, material science and learning, as well as the knowledge of God, will make such progress and will show forth such

wonders that the beholders will be amazed. Then the mystery of this verse in Isaiah, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," will be completely evident.

"Reflect also that in the short time since Bahá'u'lláh has appeared, people from all countries, nations and races have entered under the shadow of this Cause. Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus and Persians all associate together with the greatest friendship and love, as if indeed these people had been related and connected together, they and theirs, for a thousand years; for they are like father and child, mother and daughter, sister and brother. This is one of the meanings of the companionship of the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, and the lion and the calf.

"One of the great events which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that Incomparable Branch (Bahá'u'lláh) is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself. Universal peace and concord will be realized between all the nations, and that Incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel, signifying that in this cycle Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land, and that the Jewish people who are scattered to the East and West, South and North, will be assembled together.

"Now see: these events did not take place in the Christian cycle, for the nations did not come under the One Standard which is the Divine Branch. But in this cycle of the Lord of Hosts all the nations and peoples will enter under the shadow of this Flag. In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to be manifest. You can see that from all the parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine will become their home." (SAQ:63-66)

In a letter entitled "Why Moses could not see God" and dated 12/8/1887, Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygání, the great Bahá'í scholar interpreted Isaiah IX:6-7 as follows:

"This passage bears witness that for the redemption of the children of Israel from the vexation of abasement and abjectness, a child would be born who would be known by these names: First, 'Counselor,' or giver of advice to the people; second, 'Mighty God,' meaning the greatest of the divine Manifestations and the Primal Letters; third, 'Everlasting Father,' whose power and sovereignty created and trained up the people from beginning to end; and fourth, 'Prince of Peace,' at whose appearance the rites of unity and concord would arise in the world, and the misery of war and hypocrisy, destroyers of the world and abasers of humankind, would be effaced from the earth.

"From the clear text of these verses it is apparent that the heavenly Father will appear in the universal form of a human being, born of a mother and christened with the Most Great Name. My belief is that no mention of the heavenly Father characterized by this sort of clear statement has been made in any other place." ("Letters and Essays, 1886-1913", Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1985, pp. 27-28)

Bahá'u'lláh specifically cites prophecies made by other Hebrew Prophets in various of His Tablets. Indeed, in His last book, "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" He quotes from the Books of Joel, Jeremiah, David and Amos. These passages will be considered at this point, beginning with His citation from Joel:

ESW:143-44: O Shaykh! Hearken unto the melodies of the Gospel with the ear of fairness. He saith –glorified be His utterance-- prophesying the things that are to come: "But of that Day and Hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father." [Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36, 25:13] By Father in this connection is meant God --exalted be His glory. He, verily, is the True Educator, and the Spiritual Teacher. Joel saith: "For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" [Joel 2:11] Firstly, in the sublime utterance set forth in the Gospel He saith that none is aware of the time of the Revelation, that none knoweth it except God, the All-Knowing, Who is cognizant of all. Secondly, He setteth forth the greatness of the Revelation. Likewise, in the Qur'án He saith: "Of what ask they of one another? Of the Great Announcement." [Qur'án 78:1] This is the Announcement, the greatness of which hath been mentioned in most of the Books of old and of more recent times. This is the Announcement that hath caused the limbs of mankind to quake, except such as God,

the Protector, the Helper, the Succorer, hath willed to exempt. Men have indeed with their own eyes witnessed how all men and all things have been thrown into confusion and been sore perplexed, save those whom God hath chosen to exempt.

The passage cited from the Book of Joel corresponds also to a verse from the Book of Malachi:

Joel:II:11: And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Malachi:III:1-2: Behold I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the Covenant, Whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope...

It is to be noted that, in order to explain the significance of the verse in the Book of Joel (II:11), Bahá'u'lláh quotes a verse from the Gospel of Matthew (XXV:13) which is also found in that of Mark (XIII:32) and follows this with a verse from the Qur'án. His explanation thereby takes on the aspect of a harmony of the Scriptures, and demonstrates in one argument that all three holy books are indeed revelations of the one eternal Book of God. We return to his citations from other Hebrew prophets:

ESW:144: Hearken with thine inner ear unto the Voice of Jeremiah, Who saith: "Oh, for great is that day, and it hath no equal." [Jeremiah 30:7] Wert thou to observe with the eye of fairness, thou wouldst perceive the greatness of the Day. Incline thine ear unto the Voice of this All-Knowing Counsellor, and suffer not thyself to be deprived of the mercy that hath surpassed all created things, visible and invisible.

In this passage he refers to the verse of Jeremiah directly and to the verse of Isaiah indirectly: "...and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor..." (Isaiah IX:6). Now Bahá'u'lláh turns to David:

ESW:144: Lend an ear unto the song of David. He saith: "Who will bring me into the strong city?" [Psalms 60:9, 108:10] The Strong City is 'Akká, which hath been named the Most Great Prison, and which possesseth a fortress and mighty ramparts.

TB:259: Indeed all the Prophets have yearned to attain this Day. David saith: "Who will bring me into the strong city?" By Strong City is meant 'Akká. Its fortifications are very strong and this Wronged One is imprisoned within its walls. Likewise it is revealed in the Qur'án: "Bring forth thy people from the darkness into the light and announce to them the days of God." [Qur'án 14:5]

In this latter passage, Bahá'u'lláh relates two quotations from previous Scriptures which do not seem to have any relationship to each other, but their deeper, hidden meaning unites them. Furthermore, it is evident from the latter passage that the passage quoted from "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" did not represent a momentary digression from the theme at hand --the choice of the city of 'Akká to be the seat of the Revelation of the Promised One is a mystery and a triumph and a proof of the greatness of this Day. Bahá'u'lláh also cites Islámic traditions [ahadith] related to 'Akká on five pages of "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf"³⁹ if the reader wishes to further investigate the fulfillment of prophecy in the residence of Bahá'u'lláh in that location. It should be noted that it is the Prophet of God Who makes that location sacred, rather than the converse.

The next Prophet cited by Bahá'u'lláh in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" is Amos, and in His words we reach the veritable climax of the Hebraic Prophetic announcement:

ESW:145-46: Amos saith: "The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem;and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn,and the top of Carmel shall wither." [Amos 1:2] Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard. It is here that, by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised. Happy are they that attain thereunto; happy they that set their faces towards it. And likewise He saith: "Our God will come, and He will not be silent." [Psalms 50:3] O Shaykh! Reflect upon these words addressed by Him Who is the Desire of the world to Amos. He saith: "Prepare

to meet thy God, O Israel, for, lo, He that formeth the mountains and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is His thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, the God of Hosts, is His Name." [Amos 4:12-13] He saith that He maketh the morning darkness. By this is meant that if, at the time of the Manifestation of Him Who conversed on Sinai anyone were to regard himself as the true morn, he will, through the might and power of God, be turned into darkness. He truly is the false dawn, though believing himself to be the true one. Woe unto him, and woe unto such as follow him without a clear token from God, the Lord of the worlds.

We have arrived at perhaps the most challenging of the Hebrew proof texts presented by Bahá'u'lláh, namely, His claim to be the Lord of Hosts, "YHWH ZABAOT". This claim is reiterated in various explicit statements, including:

TB:239-240: Say: O concourse of the rulers and of the learned and the wise! The Promised Day is come and the Lord of Hosts hath appeared. Rejoice ye with great joy by reason of this supreme felicity. Aid Him then through the power of wisdom and utterance. Thus biddeth you the One Who hath ever proclaimed, 'Verily, no God is there but Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.'

GL:271: The fear of God is the shield that defendeth His Cause, the buckler that enableth His people to attain to victory. It is a standard that no man can abase, a force that no power can rival. By its aid, and by the leave of Him Who is the Lord of Hosts, they that have drawn nigh unto God have been able to subdue and conquer the citadels of the hearts of men.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has elaborated on this theme in some detail:

“When Bahá'u'lláh came to this prison in the Holy Land, the wise men realized that the glad tidings which God gave through the tongue of the Prophets two or three thousand years before were again manifested, and that God was faithful to His promise; for to some of the Prophets He had revealed and given the good news that "the Lord of Hosts should be manifested in the Holy Land." All these promises

were fulfilled; and it is difficult to understand how Bahá'u'lláh could have been obliged to leave Persia, and to pitch His tent in this Holy Land, but for the persecution of His enemies, His banishment and exile. His enemies intended that His imprisonment should completely destroy and annihilate the blessed Cause, but this prison was in reality of the greatest assistance and became the means of its development. The divine renown of Bahá'u'lláh reached the East and the West, and the rays of the Sun of Truth illuminated all the world. Praise be to God! though He was a prisoner, His tent was raised on Mount Carmel, and He moved abroad with the greatest majesty.” (SAQ:32)

“The third woe [Apocalypse 11:14] is the great day of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts and the radiance of the Beauty of the Promised One. The explanation of this subject, woe, is mentioned in the thirtieth chapter of Ezekiel, where it is said: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near." [Ezekiel 30:1-3.]

“Therefore, it is certain that the day of woe is the day of the Lord; for in that day woe is for the neglectful, woe is for the sinners, woe is for the ignorant. That is why it is said, "The second woe is past; behold the third woe cometh quickly!" This third woe is the day of the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh, the day of God; and it is near to the day of the appearance of the Báb.” (SAQ:56)

“Now see: these events did not take place in the Christian cycle, for the nations did not come under the One Standard which is the Divine Branch. But in this cycle of the Lord of Hosts all the nations and peoples will enter under the shadow of this Flag. In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to be manifest. You can see that from all the parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine will become their home.” (SAQ:65-66)

“The hope, therefore, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá cherishes for you is that the same success which has attended your efforts in America may crown your endeavors in other parts of the world, that through you the fame of the Cause of God may be diffused throughout the East and the West and the advent of the Kingdom of the Lord of Hosts be

proclaimed in all the five continents of the globe.” (Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 40)

“Praise thou God that in this age, the age of the dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, thou hast been awakened, hast been made aware of the Manifestation of the Lord of Hosts. All the people of the world are buried in the graves of nature, or are slumbering, heedless and unaware. Just as Christ saith: 'I may come when you are not aware. The coming of the Son of Man is like the coming of a thief into a house, the owner of which is utterly unaware.’” (SWAB:198-199)

Shoghi Effendi cited words of Bahá'u'lláh that are even more astonishing to the Jew and Christian alike:

"I testify before God," proclaims Bahá'u'lláh, "to the greatness, the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation. Again and again have We in most of Our Tablets borne witness to this truth, that mankind may be roused from its heedlessness." "In this most mighty Revelation," He unequivocally announces, "all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation." "That which hath been made manifest in this preeminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like." "He it is," referring to Himself He further proclaims, "Who in the Old Testament hath been named Jehovah, Who in the Gospel hath been designated as the Spirit of Truth, and in the Qur'án acclaimed as the Great Announcement." (WOB:103-104)

We have pointed out the eschatological fulfillment of prophecies related to the Lord of Hosts by Bahá'u'lláh. There are also many verses which refer to the Glory of our God (KAVOD ELOHEINU) and the Glory of the Lord (KAVOD YHWH), and some of these passages are discussed in the Thirty-Third Proof, as it pertains to the Glory of God.

The Prophet Daniel describes a celestial figure which will also have its relationship to Bahá'u'lláh:

7:9: I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

7:13: I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like unto the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

7:22: Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

This vision of the Ancient of Days is distinct from vision which Daniel dates in the "first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus" (9:1), which is of "the Messiah the Prince" (9:25); and from vision in the "third year of Cyrus king of Persia" (10:1), which is of "Michael, one of the chief princes" (10:13) and "one like the similitude of the sons of men" (10:16) who spoke to Daniel and assured him that he "will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth; and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince" (10:21); which latter vision in confirmed in his vision "in the first year of Darius the Mede" (11:1), in which he sees that "at the time of the end" (11:40), "shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time my people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (12:1) More skilled theologians than the present author will have to explore the relationship between the Ancient of Days and the Messiah the Prince, Michael the Prince and His companion.

In Suratu'l-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh writes these verses, in fulfillment of the visions and prophecies of Daniel:

ESW:47: Wert thou to incline thine inner ear unto all created things, thou wouldst hear: "The Ancient of Days is come in His great glory!" Everything celebrateth the praise of its Lord. Some have known God and remember Him; others remember Him, yet know Him not.

In Kitáb-i-Íqán, He writes concerning the Prophets of God, whom he denotes "those Manifestations of Holiness, the Daysprings of ancient glory" (KI:67):

KI:67: They are sent forth through the transcendent power of the Ancient of Days, and are raised up by the exalted will of God, the most mighty King. This is what is meant by the words: 'coming in the clouds of heaven.'

And, in the same work, addressing the uncle of the Báb:

KI:192: But, O my brother, when a true seeker determines to take the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse and purify his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy.

In *Lawh-i-Karmíl*, Bahá'u'lláh specifically refers to Himself as the countenance of the Ancient of Days:

GL:14: All glory be to this Day, the Day in which the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things, a Day so blest that past ages and centuries can never hope to rival it, a Day in which the countenance of the Ancient of Days hath turned towards His holy seat.

Perhaps the most clear proclamations are to be found in *Lawh-i-Ridván*:

GL:32: Rejoice, ye dwellers of the realms above, for the fingers of Him Who is the Ancient of Days are ringing, in the name of the All-Glorious, the Most Great Bell, in the midmost heart of the heavens.

GL:35: Rejoice with exceeding gladness, O people of Bahá, as ye call to remembrance the Day of supreme felicity, the Day whereon the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath spoken, as He departed from His House, proceeding to the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendors of His name, the All-Merciful.

Other references to himself as the Manifestation of the Ancient of Days can be found in the *Lawh al-Amr* (GL:131), *Surat'ul-Muluk* (GL:231, and BWF:37), and *Lawh-i-Muhammad 'Alí* (GL:305-306). In *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Bahá'u'lláh has linked the Ancient of Days with the Desire of all nations:

KA:#80: This is the Day in which He Who held converse with God hath attained the light of the Ancient of Days, and quaffed the pure waters of reunion from this Cup that hath caused the seas to swell... (GL:210-211; BWF:37)

KA:#82: Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation, lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty. (GL:211-212; BWF:37)

Haggai writes that Kavod will be bestowed upon humanity in a future time by the Lord of hosts:

Hag 2:7: And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory [Kavod], saith the Lord of hosts...

Hag 2:9: The glory [Kavod] of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

In Lawh-i-Ridván, Bahá'u'lláh refers to this prophecy and says it is fulfilled by his advent:

GL:32:33: For We perceive the fragrance of the Day whereon He Who is the Desire of all nations hath shed upon the kingdoms of the unseen and of the seen the splendor [Bahá'] of the light of His most excellent names, and enveloped them with the radiance of the luminaries of His most gracious favors-- favors which none can reckon except Him, Who is the omnipotent Protector of the entire creation.

His Lawh-i-Aqa Mírzá Sidru'llah likewise celebrates this Day and this Manifestation as the "Desire of all nations":

GL:39: Say: O men! This is a matchless Day. Matchless much, likewise, be the tongue that celebrateth the praise of the Desire

of all nations, and matchless the deed that aspireth to be acceptable in His sight. The whole human race hath longed for this Day, that perchance it may fulfil that which well beseemeth its station, and is worthy of its destiny. Blessed is the man whom the affairs of the world have failed to deter from recognizing Him Who is the Lord of all things.

Other passages from the Hebrew Prophets which may refer to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, include these verses from Isaiah which are associated with John the Baptist and Jesus Christ in the Gospels and with the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh in some of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh:

Isa 40:3: The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 40:4: Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 40:5: And the glory [Kavod] of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The Prophet Habakkuk writes of the advent of “Kavod Adonai”:

Hab 2:14: For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Kavod of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.
Hab 2:14: God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His Kavod covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

This passage recalls Deuteronomy:

33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Shoghi Effendi writes in “God Passes By”:

“To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the "Everlasting Father," the "Lord of Hosts" come down "with ten thousands of saints"..." (GPB:93)

‘Abdu'l-Bahá refers to these multiple Dispensations reported in the passage from Deuteronomy and Habakkuk:

“But as to the question of the Trinity, know, O advancer unto God, that in each one of the cycles wherein the Lights have shone forth upon the horizons (i.e., in each prophetic dispensation) and the Forgiving Lord hath revealed Himself on Mount Paran (see Habbakkuk 3:3, etc.) or Mount Sinai, or Mount Seir (see Ezekiel 35), there are necessarily three things: The Giver of Grace, and the Grace, and the Recipient of the Grace; the Source of the Effulgence, and the Effulgence, and the Recipient of the Effulgence; the Illuminator, and the Illumination, and Illuminated.

Zechariah likewise had a vision of the “Kavod Adonai” in the latter days:

Zec 2:4: Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: 2:5: For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the Kavod in the midst of her...

Zec 2:10: Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. 2:11: And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Zec 14:9: And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

While Malachi does not use the words “Kavod Elohei”, nevertheless, his vision of "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" has the supernal image of fire and light in the place of Kavod:

Mal 4:1: For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that is shall leave them neither root nor branch. 4:2: But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

There are thousands upon thousands of references to this Sun in the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, but the only specific acknowledgement of the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy is found in Shoghi Effendi's God Passes By:

“Malachi described as 'the great and dreadful day of the Lord' when 'the Sun of righteousness' will 'arise, with healing in His wings'...” (GPB:95)

SECOND PROOF
WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The reader is already informed that Bahá'u'lláh regards the Words of the Prophets of God as the greatest and most convincing proof of their truth. Nevertheless, we will begin this examination with a statement by Bahá'u'lláh quoted from "Kitáb-i-Íqán", some of which we may be encountering for the first time:

KI:206-207: Likewise, He saith: "Such are the verses of God: with truth do We recite them to Thee. But in what revelation will they believe, if they reject God and His verses?" [Qur'án XLV:5] If thou wilt grasp the implication of this verse, thou wilt recognize the truth that no manifestation greater than the Prophets hath ever been revealed, and no testimony mightier than the testimony of their revealed verses hath ever appeared upon the earth. Nay, this testimony no other testimony can excel, except that which the Lord thy God willeth. In another passage He saith: "Woe to every lying sinner, who heareth the verses of God recited to him, and then, as though he heard them not, persisteth in proud disdain! Apprise him of a painful punishment." [Qur'án XLV:6] The implications of this verse, alone, suffice all that is in heaven and on earth, were the people to ponder the verses of their Lord. For thou hearest how in this day the people disdainfully ignore the divinely-revealed verses, as though they were the meanest of all things. And yet, nothing greater than these verses hath ever appeared, nor will ever be made manifest in the world! Say unto them: "O heedless people! Ye repeat what your fathers, in a bygone age, have said. Whatever fruits they have gathered from the tree of their faithlessness, the same shall ye gather also. Ere long shall ye be gathered unto your fathers, and with them shall ye dwell in hellish fire. An ill abode! the abode of the people of tyranny."

Is this only a proof for Muslims? We know that Muslims believe that the Qur'án was revealed by God through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad, that the Qur'án is the Word of God --Muhammad spoke what He heard, and what He spoke was written down in His presence. The Qur'án declares that the greatest proof of the Prophet Muhammad, the proof of Prophethood par excellence, and the proof of the truth of the Qur'án are the verses of the Qur'án

itself. What then of Christians? Do Christians believe that there is a divinely-revealed Word of God which is proof of the truth of Jesus Christ? Christians generally believe that the proof of the truth of Jesus Christ was demonstrated in Him sacrificing His life for the redemption of mankind, for delivering the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve from their inherited sin and from the sins of their own willful disobedience. However, they certainly acknowledge that they would not know of Jesus Christ if the Gospels and Apocalypse and the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles had not been recorded. Hence, the New Testament is the Word of God among men, and while it does not take the place of a direct relationship with Jesus Christ, it is the means whereby that relationship can come into existence.

Do Jews believe in a divinely-revealed Word of God? Certainly, and indeed, although the Torah is the most sacred, followed by the *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*, the observant Jew believes that the *Talmud* and the *Zohar* and other recognized works of sacred literature were divinely-inspired in their origins if not directly revealed to a Prophet. For the Jew the Torah is the most holy of all Books, but the other sacred literature is, as it were, part of the Greater Canon which provides the link between the Jew and God. What of Zoroastrians? Buddhists? Hindus? Many of the adherents of these religions believe that there are Scriptures which are divine in origin, which have been revealed by God through the agency of seers or buddhas or avatars or other enlightened souls, and that these constitute a bridge between the transcendental reality and the temporal reality, in the world and in human consciousness. Therefore, while the Muslim may belong to one of the youngest religious communities, he is by no means the only one to believe that his Scripture comes from God and that it is in itself the greatest proof of its own efficacy, and of the value of the path it proscribes.

What then are the verses that Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the proof of his mission? In order to be verses they must be revealed to him, through him --he must be a channel. If he sits for long periods to write down his thoughts and feelings, if he reflects, if he makes decisions, if he chooses his words then it could be claimed that the verses which come from him are the product of his own mind, his own experience, his own self and not from God Himself. These verses must therefore manifest innate divine knowledge, rather than acquired human learning. For a discussion of this question please see the Fourteenth Proof.

These verses must be revealed without hesitation, spontaneously, inasmuch as their provenance does not reside in a human mind but rather in the limitless eloquence and wisdom and creativity of the world of God. All the testimonies which have come down to us of the manner in which Bahá'u'lláh revealed verses confirm that there was not the least hesitation or premeditation in his revelations of verses; that he often revealed verses at such a pace that it was impossible for His amanuensis to write them down, even in the special "Revelation script", the peculiar shorthand which he developed for that express purpose; that hundreds of thousands of his verses were discarded because he felt that there were no souls capable of appreciating them, and hence the 17,000 Tablets which have filled 100 volumes which have come down to us represent only a fraction of his unimaginably vast revelation of verses; that the verses which flowed from his pen were so eloquent, so inspiring, so imbued with wisdom and insight and beauty, that the perusal of just a few of these verses was sufficient to convince many sincere seekers of their truth. In the Fourteenth Proof you will read the testimonies of those who witnessed his revelations in 'Iráq and Kurdistán, as demonstrations of his innate divine knowledge.

Here we will read the reports summarized by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By" (pp. 170-171) of his revelations in Adrianople:

"A period of prodigious activity ensued which, in its repercussions, outshone the vernal years of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry. 'Day and night,' and eye-witness has written, 'the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them. Mírzá Áqa Ján wrote them as they were dictated, while the Greater Branch [Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí] was continually occupied in transcribing them. There was not a moment to spare.' 'A number of secretaries,' Nabíl has testified, 'were busy day and night and yet they were unable to cope with the task. Among them was Mírzá Báqir-i-Shírání...He alone transcribed no less than two thousand verses every day. He labored during six or seven months. Every month the equivalent of several volumes would be transcribed by him and sent to Persia. About twenty volumes, in his fine penmanship, he left behind as a remembrance for Mírzá Áqa Ján.' Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: "Such are the outpourings...from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed. "So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayán would be sent down from the heaven

of Divine holiness." "I swear by God," He, in another connection has affirmed, "In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed." "That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople)," He, furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has declared, "secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed."

"Already in the midst of that grievous crisis, and even before it came to a head, Tablets unnumbered were streaming from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, in which the implications of His newly-asserted claims were fully expounded."

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. We can read testimonies to the influence which the writings of Bahá'u'lláh had upon his followers immediately after their revelation. What has been the impact of these writings on those who have read them since his passing? This question will be examined in the Seventeenth Proof. The response to the writings of anyone, including a Prophet of God is entirely individual. One must read for himself and experience the effects of that reading for himself. This is not just a statement of principle --it is also a statement of fact. It is impossible for anybody to judge the verses of Bahá'u'lláh without actually reading them. Now it could of course be argued that in order to fully comprehend these verses, to appreciate their full value one must be able to read them in the language in which they were revealed, that is, for some in Arabic and for others in Persian. While this is undoubtedly true, nevertheless the translation of these verses has enabled millions of persons to read them and to judge for themselves, something those millions could not possibly do if they were to be deprived of access to his Writings in their own native tongues.

Consequently, there are verses of Bahá'u'lláh translated into hundreds of languages, into virtually every language that is written and read upon the face of the globe. In the English language there are a considerable number of works available and the reader may consult the bibliography for a list with dates of publication and information about procurement. His interpreter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá assured all those who despair of ever mastering the Arabic and Persian languages, that "All His Books will be translated." (PUP:239) In many public libraries in English-speaking countries there are multiple volumes including verses revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh revealed well over one million verses, taking into account the hundreds of thousands he discarded and the other thousands or hundreds of thousands which

could not be transcribed because of the velocity of His revelation. Nevertheless, the efficacy of a divinely-revealed verse is not dependant upon quantity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains:

“The Books of Bahá’u’lláh number more than one hundred. Each one is an evident proof sufficient for mankind; each one from foundation to apex proclaims the essential unity of God and humanity, the love of God, the abolition of war and the divine standard of peace. Each one also inculcates divine morality, the manifestation of lordly graces --in every word a book of meanings. For the Word of God is collective wisdom, absolute knowledge and eternal truth.” (PUP:154)

The revealed verse has a quality which is superior to any man-made, any humanly-conceived prose or poetry. Whether this special, this life-giving quality can be discerned by the reader depends upon the spiritual receptivity of that reader at the time of the reading. Hence, it is not essential, it is not even important that one who seeks to investigate the claims of Bahá’u’lláh read many of His Tablets before coming to some judgment. Bahá’u’lláh assures the reader that he can discern the quality of the divine verse from the perusal of one verse alone. Bahá’u’lláh in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" affirms the potential influence of one of his verses:

KA:39: The peoples of the world are fast asleep. Were they to wake from their slumber, they would hasten with eagerness unto God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. They would cast away everything they possess, be it all the treasures of the earth, that their Lord may remember them to the extent of addressing to them but one word.

Considering the value, the power of one word to that soul who is truly detached from all things and attached to God alone, how fortunate are we to have in English the most important works revealed by Bahá’u’lláh, which are briefly listed as follows:

"Kitáb-i-Aqdas", Most Holy Book
 "Kitáb-i-Íqán", Book of Certitude
 "Javahiru'l-Asrár", Gems of Divine Mystery
 "Lawh-i-Ibn-i-Dh'ib," Epistle to the Son of the Wolf
 "Lawh-i-Karmíl", Tablet of Carmel
 "Lawh-i-Aqdas", Most Holy Tablet
 "Bisharat", Glad-Tidings
 "Tarazat", Ornaments

"Tajallíyat", Effulgences
 "Kalimat-i-Firdawsíyyih", Words of Paradise
 "Lawh-i-Dunya", Tablet of the World
 "Ishraqát", Splendours
 "Lawh-i-Hikmat", Tablet of Wisdom
 "Asl-i-Kullu'l-Khayr", Words of Wisdom
 "Lawh-i-Maqsud", Tablet to Maqsud
 "Suriy-i-Vafa", Tablet to Vafa
 "Lawh-i-Siyyid-i-Mihdiy-i-Dahají", Tablet to Dahají
 "Lawh-i-Burhan", Tablet of the Proof
 "Kitab-i-'Ahd", Book of the Covenant
 "Lawh-i-Ard-i-Ba", Tablet of the Land of Ba
 "Haft Vadí", Seven Valleys
 "Chahar Vadí," Four Valleys
 "Kalimat al-maknuniyyat al-'arabiyyat", Arabic Hidden Words
 "Kalimat-i-maknunih farsíyyih", Persian Hidden Words
 "The Summons of the Lord of Hosts", Tablets to the Kings and Rulers

It may be instructive for us to be reminded of the past. If we learn from history perhaps we will not be condemned to repeating our mistakes ad nauseum. Have most observant Jews ever read the New Testament? No, and indeed most have only read those portions of the Nevi'im and Ketuvim which are traditionally associated with the selections of the Torah for each day. These are called the "haftorah". In order to recite the entire Torah in the course of a single year the public readers in the synagogue have evolved a particular manner of perusal which is astonishing for its speed and precision and therefore remarkable for its lack of spiritual influence upon the reader. There is no time to meditate, to discuss subtleties of meaning, to let the words sink in and provoke thought and feeling. Most observant Jews may not notice this because what is imperative is that the traditional assumption of duty is discharged, that the Torah portion and its accompanying haftorah is read aloud as required by religious law and custom. How could occur to an observant Jew to read any of the Christian Scriptures when he honestly feels no need to do so, that he has no time to do so, and that to do so would be in conflict with his moral scruples as it would represent association with the impure, the heretical, the ungodly? It does not, he does not; and thus he is unable to discover for himself the divine influence of the utterances, the words of Jesus Christ.

And what of the Christian? Does the Christian read his Bible daily? Some do, most don't. If he finds the time to read a little of the Bible every day he will probably neglect part of it because it is a vast collection of books and difficult to read in a systematic fashion. Besides, his church attaches particular importance to certain passages and certain portions of the Bible and he generally follows the lead of somebody else, either of the minister or priest or of his fellow congregationalists. Would the observant Christian read any of the Qur'án? Most unlikely. Why should he? He is sure that he knows what the true Word of God is, and whatever time he has to read the Word he knows where to go to find it. He certainly would not pick up the Qur'án with the thought that it might contain verses from God! If he ever were to pick up the Qur'án it would be as a missionary serving amongst a Muslim population --a most unfortunate assignment by all accounts-- or as an academic who specializes in Islám, and in either case he would pick up that Book only in order to interpret it's verses according to his own fixed and invariable convictions.

And the Muslim, will he read a single verse from the Bayán or from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas? Like the Jew and the Christian, if he is observant he has already arrived at his regular pattern of Scriptural readings and is unwilling to change, for he is convinced that he is already doing the will of God as well as he can. He knows that wiser and more knowledgeable and more virtuous and much more powerful persons than him, who are prominent in the leadership of his sect of Islám have expressed the considered view that the Báb and His followers are heretics, that Bahá'u'lláh and His followers are also heretics. Consequently, a good Muslim should have nothing whatsoever to do with these heretics, and if he deigns to associate with them, he must take care never to contaminate himself spiritually by listening to them describe their ideas much less by reading any of the satanic verses which have been wickedly fabricated by their false and deceitful leaders! No, the good Muslim will not read any of the verses of Bahá'u'lláh, and if he does read them it is only to refute them, to condemn them, to reject them, to prove them untrue. We arrive at the first step, for the only efficacy of this proof is if the individual reader will take the first step and, setting aside all prejudices and fears and selfish desires, will take up the verses of Bahá'u'lláh and read them for himself and rely upon his own understanding, his own judgment. As Bahá'u'lláh states in "Kalimat-i-maknuneh 'arabiyeh":

HWA:2: O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me,

and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily Justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

THIRD PROOF

REVELATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The reader is already informed that Bahá'u'lláh considered His Revelation as the second testimony to the truth of His Cause, as is established in "Lawh-i-Ashraf":

GL:105: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá makes reference to this proof in this verse:

“And yet another of His signs is the wide-spreading rays of the sun of His era, the rising moon of His times in the heaven of all the ages: His day, which standeth at the summit of all days, for its rank and power, its sciences and its arts, reaching far and wide, that have dazzled the world and astonished the eyes of men. Verily this is a matter settled and established for all time.” (SWAB:17)

As has already been established, in referring to the Revelation of a Prophet of God (see PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS), divine philosophy distinguishes between the Universal Revelation which the Prophet of God renews with all of creation, which is eternal and embraces all beings and at all times both in the past and in the present and future; and the Specific Revelation which represents his particular Dispensation, and the intensity of the grace vouchsafed unto humanity by means of his appearance in the physical and the spiritual worlds inhabited by mankind. It is evident that the Universal Revelation of God remains constant, for we are alive and all things continue to exist, and without that Revelation they would not exist for an instant. Bahá'u'lláh has stated in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:140: Nay, were man to gaze with the eye of divine and spiritual discernment, he will readily recognize that nothing whatsoever can exist without the revelation of the splendour of God, the ideal King.

As to the Specific Revelation of God, this refers in this case to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and the evidence of this Revelation is in the extraordinary state in which humanity finds itself today, a state of being which began with the Revelation of the Báb in spring of 1844

according to Bahá'u'lláh. This theme is much developed in the discourses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, some passages of which will be cited here:

“Do you appreciate the Day in which you live? This is the century of the Blessed Perfection! This is the cycle of the light of His beauty! This is the consummate day of all the Prophets!” (PUP:8)

“It is evident that prejudices arising from adherence to religious forms and imitation of ancestral beliefs have hindered the progress of humanity thousands of years. How many wars and battles have been caused by this form of prejudice! But inasmuch as this century is the century of the revelation of reality --praise be to God!-- the thoughts of men are being directed toward the welfare and unity of humanity. Daily the mirage of imitations is passing away, and the ocean of truth is surging more tumultuously.” (PUP:39)

“The dark ages have disappeared, and the age of light has at last arrived. The Sun of Reality has dawned with supreme effulgence, the realities of things have become manifest and renewed, the mysteries of the unknown have been revealed, and great inventions and discoveries mark this period as a most wonderful age.

“Through the ingenuity and inventions of man it is possible to cross the wide oceans, fly through the air and travel in submarine depths. At any moment the Orient and Occident can communicate with each other. Trains speed across the continents. The human voice has been arrested and reproduced, and now man can speak at long distances from any point. These are some of the signs of this glorious century. The great progress mentioned has taken place in the material world. Remarkable signs and evidences have become manifest. Hidden realities and mysteries have been disclosed.” (PUP:101)

“In the future there will be no very rich nor extremely poor. There will be an equilibrium of interests, and a condition will be established which will make both rich and poor comfortable and content. This will be an eternal and blessed outcome of the glorious twentieth century which will be realized universally. The significance of it is that the glad tidings of great joy revealed in the promises of the Holy Books will be fulfilled. Await ye this consummation.” (PUP:132)

“In past ages it was held that woman and man were not equal --that is to say, woman was considered inferior to man, even from the standpoint of her anatomy and creation. She was considered especially

inferior in intelligence, and the idea prevailed universally that it was not allowable for her to step into the arena of important affairs. In some countries man went so far as to believe and teach that woman belonged to a sphere lower than human. But in this century, which is the century of light and the revelation of mysteries, God is proving to the satisfaction of humanity that all this is ignorance and error; nay, rather, it is well established that mankind and womankind as parts of composite humanity are coequal and that no difference in estimate is allowable, for all are human.” (PUP:133)

“In the estimation of historians this radiant century is equivalent to one hundred centuries of the past. If comparison be made with the sum total of all former human achievements, it will be found that the discoveries, scientific advancement and material civilization of this present century have equaled, yea far exceeded the progress and outcome of one hundred former centuries. The production of books and compilations of literature alone bears witness that the output of the human mind in this century has been greater and more enlightening than all the past centuries together. It is evident, therefore, that this century is of paramount importance. Reflect upon the miracles of accomplishment which have already characterized it: the discoveries in every realm of human research. Inventions, scientific knowledge, ethical reforms and regulations established for the welfare of humanity, mysteries of nature explored, invisible forces brought into visibility and subjection --a veritable wonder-world of new phenomena and conditions heretofore unknown to man now open to his uses and further investigation. The East and West can now communicate instantly. A human being can soar in the skies or speed in submarine depths. The power of steam has linked the continents. Trains cross the deserts and pierce the barriers of mountains; ships find unerring pathways upon the trackless oceans. Day by day discoveries are increasing. What a wonderful century this is! It is an age of universal reformation. Laws and statutes of civil and federal governments are in process of change and transformation. Sciences and arts are being molded anew. Thoughts are metamorphosed. The foundations of human society are changing and strengthening. Today sciences of the past are useless. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy and numberless other systems and theories of scientific and philosophical explanation are discarded, known to be false and worthless. Ethical precedents and principles cannot be applied to the needs of the modern world.” (PUP:143-144)

What does all of this tumultuous change have to do with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh? Most people seem to have assumed that the source of this change is the cultural, economic and military dominance of the West, and that the source of this dominance is Western cultivation of the natural (physical) sciences and Western abandonment of a religious world-view in favour of a scientific world-view. Bahá'u'lláh asserts that the reality of this matter is otherwise. In "Tarazat" He speaks of these Western advancements:

TB:38-39: In this Day the sun of craftsmanship shineth above the horizon of the occident and the river of arts is flowing out of the sea of that region.

In "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih" He identifies the immediate and apparent source of those arts and sciences:

TB:72: The source of crafts, sciences and arts is the power of reflection. Make every effort that out of this ideal mine there may gleam forth such pearls of wisdom and utterance as will promote the well-being and harmony of all the kindreds of the earth.

In other Tablets He revealed the divine source of these wonders --for they are reflections of the spiritual realm rather than of the material world:

GL:141-42: Through the mere revelation of the word "Fashioner," issuing forth from His lips and proclaiming His attribute to mankind, such power is released as can generate, through successive ages, all the manifold arts which the hands of man can produce. This, verily, is a certain truth. No sooner is this resplendent word uttered, than its animating energies, stirring within all created things, give birth to the means and instruments whereby such arts can be produced and perfected. All the wondrous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name. In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before.

GL:156-57: The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the

hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High. The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples. They are like unto leaven which leaveneth the world of being, and constitute the animating force through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. ("Lawh-i-'Abd al-Wahháb")

GL:161: The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created can benefit through him. Such a soul provideth, at the bidding of the Ideal King and Divine Educator, the pure leaven that leaveneth the world of being, and furnisheth the power through which the arts and wonders of the world are made manifest. ("Lawh-i-Muhammad 'Alí")

This is a proof which does not seem to be susceptible to support through logical arguments. This proof which may appeal to some religionists, and for this reason, Bahá'u'lláh has referred to this proof with regard to an earlier Prophet the history of whose influence upon mankind can be studied in the passage of time and by means of many concrete and tangible evidences --Jesus Christ. He writes in "Lawh-i-Fatah A'zam":

GL:85-86: The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.

'Abdu'l-Bahá and many Christian historians and theologians before and after him have written numberless works and delivered countless addresses on the subject of the influence of the Person and Teachings of Jesus Christ on humanity. The spiritual influence of Jesus Christ which is here declared to be inherent in all cultural products of the Christian civilization has not been studied by many, and while it is the central focus of the writings of Rudolf Steiner, he does not provide tangible evidences of this influence. Perhaps the most obvious concrete testimonies to this "quickenning power released by His

transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit" are found in the arts and sciences which were generated by both the universal and the specific influence of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, including the cathedrals, the churches, the monasteries, the paintings and frescoes, the sculptures, the illuminated manuscripts created during the first six centuries following His appearance. It is evident that these arts and sciences were not specifically engendered in the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to what other than the spiritual influence of that Prophet can they be derived? While some of the arts and sciences employed and developed in the Christian civilization were learned from the ancient Greeks, Romans and other pagan peoples, these arts and sciences did not, of themselves create the spectacles of Christendom. The motivation, the energy, the commitment, the love and cooperation which enabled these great works of art and science to be materialized on the physical plane of reality during the first millennium of the Modern Era were certainly not learned from the pagan Greeks and Romans. They were not even learned from the pious Hebrews and Zoroastrians. Rather, it is evident that the "quickenning power" released by Jesus Christ was the source of these wonders. This is but one example from the history of humankind, and further investigation will undoubtedly furnish the reader with many more evidences supportive of this proof.

FOURTH PROOF

DEEDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

There are numerous first-hand accounts of incidents in the life of Bahá'u'lláh, and from these first-hand accounts a few biographies have been written and published in the last half-century. Virtually all of the first-hand accounts were originally written in the Persian or the Arabic language, and of these very few indeed have been translated in their entirety and published. Excerpts of these first-hand accounts have of course been translated while other excerpts have been summarized and paraphrased, and both sorts of excerpts have been published in English-language publications. The volume of this biographical material seems to be so staggering as to have dissuaded any individual scholar or group of scholars from undertaking to compile a comprehensive documentary record of the life of Bahá'u'lláh. It is inevitable that such a work will eventually become available. For the present we must therefore have recourse to those biographical accounts which are based upon reliable first-hand accounts and which are readily available in English. These accounts are listed as follows for the convenience of the reader:

1)Accounts of the life of Bahá'u'lláh in the addresses and writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His son and successor as leader of the Bahá'í Community, based upon his life-long relationship with his father, and with the companions of his father, including "A Traveler's Narrative", translated into English by Professor E. G. Browne; and "Some Answered Questions", translated into English and French by Hippolyte Dreyfus and Laura Clifford Barney.

2)Memories of Bahá'u'lláh by His barber, Ustad Muhammad 'Alí-i-Salmani, translated by Marzieh Gail and published in English.

3)Memories of Bahá'u'lláh by Tarazu'llah Samandari, translated by Mehdi Samandari and published in English.

4)Memories of Bahá'u'lláh by Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, translated by A.Q. Faizi and published in English.

5)Memories of Bahá'u'lláh by various individuals collected and translated by 'Ali Akbar Furutan and published in English.

6)Memories and accounts of the life of Bahá'u'lláh collected by Nabil-i-A'zam Zarandi and partially translated by Shoghi Effendi and published in English.

7)Memories of Bahá'u'lláh by Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán, translated by Ahang Rabbani and published in English (<http://ahang.rabbani.googlepages.com/4>)

8)Memories of Bahá'u'lláh by Áqa Husayn Ashchí, translated by Ahang Rabbani and published in English (<http://ahang.rabbani.googlepages.com/ashchi-f>)

The secondary accounts based upon published and unpublished memoirs and histories include the chapters devoted to Bahá'u'lláh in Shoghi Effendi's summary of Bábí and Bahá'í history for the hundred year period, 1844-1944, entitled, "God Passes By"; two biographies of Bahá'u'lláh by H.M.Balyuzi; a biography authored by David Hofman; a volume depicting the youth of Bahá'u'lláh authored by David Ruhe; a multi-volume survey of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh by Adib Taherzadeh; two works on the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh by Adib Taherzadeh; and recent biographies of Bahá'u'lláh authored by Moojan Momen, Sháhrokh Monjazeb and the present author.

It is not the purpose of this study to provide a biography of this Prophet of God nor to embark upon a critical study of the first-hand accounts and of the secondary sources which are derived from these accounts. Among the signs for the truth of Bahá'u'lláh cited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá are found these words which pertain to His deeds:

"The greatest proof of the Blessed Perfection--may my life be a ransom to him!--consists in the fact that he was always manifest and evident under all conditions and circumstances. He was never concealed nor was he disguised for one day. In Persia, in Baghdád, in Constantinople, in Adrianople, and in the most great prison (Acca), Bahá'u'lláh ever withstood the persecutions of the enemies and kept his own ground in the face of all the world. He never attempted to protect or shield himself for one second." (DMAS:3/7/1914, in "Star of the West", VIII:13 (11/4/1917), p. 178)

This is a demonstration of character, of courage, of fearlessness in the face of obstacles. Consider that while He was a prisoner of the Sultán of the Ottoman Empire, He addressed Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz in "Suratu'l-Muluk" (c.1867) in the following language:

GL:233: Wert thou to incline thine ear unto My speech and observe My counsel, God would exalt thee to so eminent a position that the designs of no man on the whole earth can ever touch or hurt thee.

GL:234: Place not thy reliance on thy treasures. Put thy whole confidence in the grace of God, thy Lord.

GL:235: Allow not the abject to rule over and dominate them who are noble and worthy of honor, and suffer not the high-minded to be at the mercy of the contemptible and worthless, for this is what We observed upon Our arrival in the City (Constantinople), and to it We bear witness. We found among its inhabitants some who were possessed of an affluent fortune and lived in the midst of excessive riches, while others were in dire want and abject poverty. This ill beseemeth thy sovereignty, and is unworthy of thy rank.

GL:239: Let thine ear be attentive, O King, to the words We have addressed to thee. Let the oppressor desist from his tyranny, and cut off the perpetrators of injustice from among them that profess thy faith.

Shoghi Effendi further reports the following anecdote in "God Passes By":

“To this same Sultán He, moreover, as attested by the Suriy-i-Ra'is, transmitted, while in Gallipoli, a verbal message through a Turkish officer named 'Umar, requesting the sovereign to grant Him a ten minute interview, 'so that he may demand whatsoever he would deem to be a sufficient testimony and would regard as proof of the veracity of Him Who is the Truth,' adding that 'should God enable Him to produce it, let him, release these wronged ones and leave them to themselves.'” (GPB:173)

Finally, once He was settled, still a prisoner of the Sultán, in 'Akká, He wrote these astonishing verses in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" (c.1871):

KA:89: O people of Constantinople! Lo, from your midst We hear the baleful hooting of the owl. Hath the drunkenness of passion laid hold upon you, or is it that ye are sunk in heedlessness? O Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas! The throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established

upon thee, and the flame of hatred hath been kindled within thy bosom, in such wise that the Concourse on high and they who circle around the Exalted Throne have wailed and lamented. We behold in thee the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light. Thou art indeed filled with manifest pride. Hath thine outward splendour made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament. Thus informeth thee the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Not only does this last cited passage demonstrate the fearlessness of Bahá'u'lláh in confronting the tyranny of His oppressors --and the oppressors of others who were poor, powerless, and too honorable to take part in the corruption which resulted in wealth and influence-- but He also made a prediction that the tyrant would "soon perish". In 1876 Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz was assassinated; in 1909 his successor, Sultán 'Abdu'l-Hamíd II was overthrown and the Ottoman caliphate was replaced by a secular republic. It is obvious that this Prisoner could have been assassinated or executed by order of the Sultán at any time, from 1853 when Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Baghdád until His ascension in 1892 in 'Akká. During this entire period Bahá'u'lláh resided in realms under the control and governance of the Ottoman Empire, and the Sultán was the absolute monarch, the secular and religious despot whose authority was all-encompassing throughout that Empire. Is it not extraordinary that Bahá'u'lláh wrote letters to such a tyrant?

'Abdu'l-Bahá regarded the proclamation of His Cause from the Prison of 'Akká as one of the most impressive proofs for the mission of Bahá'u'lláh:

"I remember that one day I met a member of Parliament. He asked me: 'What is the proof of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh? I want it in a concise and useful form.' I said: 'The concise and sufficient proof is that Bahá'u'lláh in such a prison as Acre, and when under chains, raised His banner. In Tíhrán He was in prison and under chains. In Acre He was in prison. Under these circumstances He raised His banner.' When I mentioned this proof he became very silent. I said: 'There is nothing recorded comparable to this. What power is this, that from the beginning of the world until today such a thing has not happened?!'" (SW:XIV:8, 231)

“But now, as that Light of Reality has set, all are in need of proofs; so we have undertaken to demonstrate logical proofs of the truth of His claim. We will cite another which alone is sufficient for all who are just, and which no one can deny. It is that this illustrious Being uplifted His Cause in the 'Greatest Prison'; from this Prison His light was shed abroad; His fame conquered the world; and the proclamation of His glory reached the East and West: until our time no such thing has ever occurred.” (SAQ:43-44)

“If we study historical record and review the pages of Holy Writ, we will find that none of the Prophets of the past ever spread His teachings or promulgated His Cause from a prison. But Bahá'u'lláh upheld the banner of the Cause of God while He was in a dungeon, addressing the kings of the earth from His prison cell, severely arraiging them for their oppression of their subjects and their misuse of power...Consider how marvelous it was for a prisoner under the eye and control of the Turks to arraign so boldly and severely the very king who was responsible for His imprisonment. What power is this! What greatness! Nowhere in history can the record of such a happening be found.” (PUP:432)

These proclamations to the Sultán of the Ottoman Empire and to various other sovereigns and rulers will be considered again with the Seventh and Fifteenth proofs. There are many other accounts of His courage, and the reader is encouraged to investigate these for himself by reading "God Passes By" and the Balyuzi, Ruhe, Momen, Monjazeb and other biographies of Bahá'u'lláh.

Courage was not the only virtue demonstrated in the words and deeds of this claimant to Prophethood. Bahá'u'lláh is related to have been perfectly courteous, answering all questions asked of him and all correspondence addressed to him and in a timely fashion; hospitable, inviting one and all to his home, asking his guests to sit, often serving these guests himself; tolerant of personal attack and injury including the repeated attempts on his life by his younger half-brother Mírzá Yahyá (known to some readers as Subh-i-Azal); scrupulously truthful, resulting in his imprisonment four times prior to his expulsion from Iran; entirely trustworthy, never making claims he was not able and willing to back up, and never betraying or misleading either his friends or his foes; loving towards all those with whom he came into contact; a champion of the poor, the oppressed, the rights of women, of religious and other minorities, not just in word but in deed. His son describes him as follows:

“He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all. He always had many guests. This unbounded generosity was conducive to greater astonishment from the fact that He sought neither position nor prominence. In commenting upon this His friends said He would become impoverished, for His expenses were many and His wealth becoming more and more limited. 'Why is he not thinking of his own affairs?' they inquired of each other; but some who were wise declared, 'This personage is connected with another world; he has something sublime within him that is not evident now; the day is coming when it will be manifested.' In truth, the Blessed Perfection was the refuge of every weak one, a shelter for every fearing one, kind to every indigent one, lenient and loving to all creatures.” (PUP:25-26)

“He establishes the equality of man and woman. This is peculiar to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, for all other religions have placed man above woman.” (PUP:455)

“Among these Epistles was a very lengthy one to the Sháh of Persia. It was printed and spread broadcast throughout all the countries. This Epistle was revealed in the year 1870. In it Bahá'u'lláh admonished the Sháh of Persia to be kind to all his subjects, summoning him to dispense justice, counseling him to make no distinction between the religions, charging him to deal equally with Jew, Christian, Muslim and Zoroastrian and to remove the oppression prevailing in his country.

“At that time the Jews were greatly oppressed in Persia. Bahá'u'lláh especially recommended justice for the, saying that all people are the servants of God, and in the eye of the government they should be equally estimated. 'If justice is not dealt out, if these oppressions are not removed and if thou dost not obey God, the foundations of thy government will be razed, and thou shalt become evanescent, become as nothing.’” (PUP:223)

It should be noted in connection with this Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, that this monarch was assassinated in 1896 and the Qájár dynasty of which he was a member came to its end shortly thereafter.

Not only did Bahá'u'lláh hold Himself to an exalted standard of behaviour, not only did He manifest saintly deeds in His own life, He insisted that all those who associated with Him and who claimed to

follow Him adhere to the same sublime standards. Consider the following excerpts from His writings as evidence of this attitude:

GL:117-188: My captivity can bring on Me no shame. Nay, by My life, it conferreth on Me glory. That which can make Me ashamed is the conduct of such of My followers as profess to love Me, yet in fact follow the Evil One. They, indeed, are of the lost. When the time set for this Revelation was fulfilled, and He Who is the Day Star of the world appeared in 'Tráq, He bade His followers observe that which would sanctify them from all earthly defilements. Some preferred to follow the desires of a corrupt inclination, while others walked in the way of righteousness and truth, and were rightly guided. Say: He is not to be numbered with the people of Bahá who followeth his mundane desires, or fixeth his heart on things of the earth. He is My true follower who, if he come to a valley of pure gold, will pass straight through it aloof as a cloud, and will neither turn back, nor pause. Such a man is, assuredly, of Me. From his garment the Concourse on high can inhale the fragrance of sanctity...And if he met the fairest and most comely of women, he would not feel his heart seduced by the least shadow of desire for her beauty. Such an one, indeed, is the creation of spotless chastity. Thus instructeth you the Pen of the Ancient of Days, as bidden by your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. ("Lawh-as-Sahab")

TB:58: Some heedless souls roam the lands in the name of God, actively engaged in ruining His Cause, and call it promoting and teaching the Word of God; and this notwithstanding that the qualifications of the teachers of the Faith, like unto stars, shine resplendent throughout the heavens of the divine Tablets. Every fair-minded person testifieth and every man of insight is well aware that the One true God --exalted be His glory-- hath unceasingly set forth and expounded that which will elevate the station and will exalt the rank of the children of men. ("Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih")

TB:59-60: Certain wrong-doers who profess allegiance to the Cause of God committed such deeds as have caused the limbs of sincerity, of honesty, of justice, of equity to quake. One known individual to whom the utmost kindness and favour had been extended perpetrated such acts as have brought tears

to the eye of God. Formerly We uttered words of warning and premonition, then for a number of years We kept the matter secret that haply he might take heed and repent. But all to no purpose. In the end he bent his energies upon vilifying the Cause of God before the eyes of men. He tore the veil of fairness asunder and felt sympathy neither for himself nor for the Cause of God. Now, however, the deeds of certain individuals have brought sorrows far more grievous than those which the deeds of the former had caused. Beseech thou God, the True One, that He may graciously enable the heedless to retract and repent. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Bountiful, the Most Generous. (Ibid.)

TB:70: We have said: 'My imprisonment doeth Me no harm, nor the things that have befallen Me at the hands of My enemies. That which harmeth Me is the conduct of My loved ones who, though they bear My name, yet commit that which maketh My heart and My pen to lament.' Such utterances as these have again and again been revealed, yet the heedless have failed to profit thereby, since they are captive to their own evil passions and corrupt desires. (Ibid.)

TB:121: Verily We have enjoined the people to do what is meet and seemly and yet they have committed such things as have caused My heart and My Pen to lament. Incline thine ear to that which is sent down from the heaven of My Will and the realm of My good-pleasure. I sorrow not for My captivity, nor for the things that have befallen Me at the hand of Mine enemies. Nay, My sorrows are occasioned by those who claim to be related to Me and yet commit that which causeth the voice of My lamentations to be lifted up and My tears to flow. ("Ishraqát")

What lying imposter, you may ask yourself, would admit to having followers who wrought evil? What false Prophet would affirm that he can only be made to suffer by those who claim to be his followers and who commit deeds which reflect poorly upon his Cause? What immoral man would conceal the immoral deeds of another so that that one might come to his senses, realize the error of his ways and return to the highest standards of conduct? A lying imposter would deny that any of his followers wrought evil, or he would try to explain away their evil deeds. A false Prophet would blame his suffering on his enemies, and on anybody else he could effectively and safely scapegoat

--everyone knows that scapegoating draws attention away from one's own misdeeds. Also, a false Prophet would be so concerned to keep his followers' allegiance that he would exonerate them from any blame for any wrongdoing. An immoral man would reveal the immoral deeds of another in order to camouflage his own evil acts or would cover them up because otherwise his own immorality would be made manifest. Bahá'u'lláh's response is not that of a lying imposter, a false Prophet, an immoral man. What kind of man is He then?

FIFTH PROOF

THE PERSON OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

When we consider this proof of the Prophet of God we must define our terms. A dictionary definition of "Person" indicates first the bodily appearance of an individual human being, secondly the clothing of such an one, thirdly the personality and presence of that one. Let us begin then with the first of these three, and in its first formula, as it is phrased by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

“Among His signs is His being manifest, being seen by all, standing as His own proof, and His presence among witnesses in every region, among peoples who fell upon Him even as wolves, and compassed Him about from every side.” (SWAB:15)

In other words, Bahá'u'lláh did not live in some remote region where He was only seen by a half dozen individuals over the course of a lifetime. He was a prominent man in Iran, the country of his birth, known to thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands of persons. Likewise, when He was exiled from Iran and resided in Baghdád, Constantinople, Adrianople and then 'Akká, He associated with thousands of persons, many of whom counted themselves His followers, but many more who did not. Describing His sojourn in Baghdád, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated:

“It often happened that in Baghdád certain Muhammadan 'ulamá, Jewish rabbis, and Christians, met together with some European scholars, in a blessed reunion; each one had some question to propose, and although they were possessed of varying degrees of culture, they each heard a sufficient and convincing reply, and retired satisfied.” (SAQ:34)

In "God Passes By" we find the following account of the great number of persons who met Bahá'u'lláh, just in the period of 1856-1863 in Baghdád:

“Numerous and striking are the anecdotes which have been recounted by those whom duty, accident, or inclination had, in the course of these poignant years, brought into direct contact with Bahá'u'lláh. Many and moving are the testimonies of bystanders who were privileged to gaze on His countenance, observe His gait, or overhear His remarks, as He moved through the lanes and streets of

the city, or paced the banks of the river; of the worshippers who watched Him pray in their mosques; of the mendicant, the sick, the aged, and the unfortunate whom He succored, healed, supported and comforted; of the visitors, from the haughtiest prince to the meanest beggar, who crossed His threshold and sat at His feet; of the merchant, the artisan, and the shopkeeper who waited upon Him and supplied His daily needs; of His devotees who had perceived the signs of His hidden glory; of His adversaries who were confounded or disarmed by the power of His utterance and the warmth of His love; of the priests and laymen, the noble and learned, who besought Him with the intention of either challenging His authority, or testing His knowledge, or investigating His claims, or confessing their shortcomings, or declaring their conversion to the Cause He had espoused.” (Shoghi Effendi, "God Passes By," pp. 135-36)

In other words, it is entirely impossible that the Person who is named Bahá'u'lláh and who declared Himself to be the Prophet of God for the present Age and Cycle is a figment of the imagination of His followers! He had an objective existence, and we can be more sure of that fact than we can be of the objective existence of any of the other Prophets with the exception of the Báb. There is at least one photograph extant of Bahá'u'lláh, and there are many testimonies to His existence and to His wondrous Person, written by many Eastern contemporaries and at least one Westerner, Edward Granville Browne, professor of Persian literature at Cambridge University. Now that it is established that Bahá'u'lláh was a real man and not a fictitious character, a mythical apparition, let us consider His bodily appearance.

“And again among His signs is the fact that His beauty stayed inviolate, and His human temple was protected as He revealed His splendours, despite the massed attacks of all His foes, who came against Him in their thousands with their darting arrows, spears and swords. Herein is verily a wonder and a warning to any fair judge.” (SWAB:15,15-16)

It is also an incontestable fact, that Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned four times prior to His exile from Iran in 1852, that during the last of these imprisonments, in the Síyáh Chál in Tíhrán, He was also poisoned and His health was gravely affected. About a month after He was released from Síyáh Chál He was expelled from Iran and began a four month long trek through the snowy mountains which divide Iran from 'Iráq. After this He lived for the better part of two years (1854-56) in a cave in Kurdistán near Sulaymáníyih, and finally, after repeated expulsions,

from Baghdád to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Adrianople, from Adrianople to ‘Akká, He was imprisoned in an extremely cramped and unhealthy prison cell for a lengthy period.

Notwithstanding all of these privations, all of these physical sufferings, the like of which would have broken the health and spirits of many a man, the description of a meeting with Bahá’u’lláh in 1890, by E.G. Browne does not disappoint:

“In the corner, where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure...The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age with the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!” (Introduction to "A Traveler's Narrative", p. xxxviii-ix, first edition, 1891)

Bahá’u’lláh was 73 years of age at the time of this description by Browne. Other descriptions of Bahá’u’lláh will undoubtedly come to light when more of the first-hand accounts available in Persian and Arabic are translated and published in English. However, the most telling proof of the undiminished beauty of Bahá’u’lláh through all of the vicissitudes of life is the photograph taken of Him in Adrianople which is displayed on special occasions to His followers. This photograph was taken of him when He was some fifty years old (c.1867), and it agrees in all respects with the description given by E.G. Browne over twenty years later. The reader may see this photo for himself (freely accessible on the internet) and reach his own conclusion.

As to the manner of the clothing of Bahá’u’lláh, it is clear and evident that Bahá’u’lláh wore a turban and fez throughout much of his life, that He wore robes, that His dress was rather typical of the upper classes in Iran, when it was possible for His family and followers to assure that He be well dressed. Inasmuch as He counseled his followers to wear whatever clothing was customary in the lands in which they sojourned; and as He stressed cleanliness above everything else in personal appearance and attire, we are assured that He himself dressed according to the style that was customary for men of His class

and nationality and that He was immaculately clean and well-groomed. The memoir of His barber, Ustad Muhammad ‘Alí-i-Salmání has been translated into English and published, and the reader is referred to this volume for details regarding Bahá’u’lláh's "person".

It has been observed that the color Bahá’u’lláh associated with His Cause was crimson (GL:170,212;TB:71,97,120,134); and this color has been related by some (Lady Blomfield, "The Chosen Highway",p. 242; William Sears, "Thief in the Night",p. 113) as that of His robe and thereby to the fulfillment of a specific prophecy of Islámic provenance. In no place has Bahá’u’lláh been found to refer to such a prophecy, and likewise no reference thereto has been located in the writings or addresses of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. If such reference were to be found it might more likely relate to certain promises in the Hebrew Prophets than to the visions of a Muslim holy man. It seems likely therefore that any fulfillment of prophecy associated with Bahá’u’lláh would more likely correspond to the color of His Cause than to the color of His clothes.

We now come to consider the Person of Bahá’u’lláh, His personality and His presence. He has been described by His chroniclers as possessed of charm, wit, insight, patience, humour. The anecdotes which have been recorded to illustrate these qualities of personality are, generally speaking, too numerous and too lengthy to admit of being included in this account. However, a few citations from "God Passes By" will have to suffice:

“How shall I ever describe that voice and the verses it intoned, and His gait, as He strode before me!” (Mírzá Áqa Ján to Nabíl Zarandí, p. 116)

“I found," this same Shaykh Sultán, recounting his experiences to Nabíl, has stated, "all those who lived with Him in that place, from their Master down to the humblest neophyte, so enamoured of, and carried away by their love for Bahá’u’lláh, and so unprepared to contemplate the possibility of His departure that I felt certain that were I to inform them of the purpose of my visit, they would not have hesitated to put an end to my life.” (Shaykh Sultán to Nabíl Zarandí, pp. 121-22)

“Nor could those distinguished Persians, who either lived in Baghdád and its environs or visited as pilgrims the holy places, remain impervious to the spell of His charm.” (Shoghi Effendi describing

Bahá'u'lláh's effect on the people of Baghdád upon His return from Kurdistán in 1856, p. 129)

As has been earlier cited, Shoghi Effendi testified in "God Passes By" that "Numerous and striking are the anecdotes which have been recounted by those whom duty, accident, or inclination had, in the course of these poignant years, brought into direct contact with Bahá'u'lláh." (GPB:135) The "poignant years" described at this point in the text are those seven years between 1856 and 1863; how many more testimonies may exist from the subsequent five years spent in Constantinople and Adrianople, not to speak of the twenty-four years in 'Akká!

Perhaps the distinction between personality and presence is not notable, but many are the specific references to the transformative power of the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, a presence which he identifies in "Kitáb-i-Iqán" with the Prophets of God and with the Presence of God:

KI:142: By attaining, therefore, to the presence of these holy Luminaries, the "Presence of God" Himself is attained...

KI:143: Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the "Presence of God" Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. Attainment unto such presence is possible only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation.

'Abdu'l-Bahá attests to the power of his father's presence in these statements:

"To sum up, both His antagonists and His partisans, as well as all those who were received in the sacred spot, acknowledged and bore witness to the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh, though they did not believe in Him, still they acknowledged His grandeur, and as soon as they entered the sacred spot, the presence of Bahá'u'lláh produced such an effect on most of them that they could not utter a word. How many times it happened that one of his most bitter enemies would resolve within himself: 'I will say such and such things when I reach His presence, and I will dispute and argue thus with him,' and when he

entered the Holy Presence he would become amazed and confounded and remain speechless.” (SAQ:IX:40-41)

“If you had come to this blessed place in the days of the manifestation of the evident Light, if you had attained to the court of His presence, and had witnessed His luminous beauty, you would have understood that His teachings and perfection were not in need of further evidence.

“Only through the honour of entering His presence, many souls became confirmed believers; they had no need of other proofs. Even those people who rejected and hated Him bitterly, when they had met him, would testify to the grandeur of Bahá’u’lláh, saying, 'This is a magnificent man, but what a pity that he makes such a claim! Otherwise all that He says is acceptable.’” (SAQ:X:43)

Once again we turn to "God Passes By" for accounts of Bahá’u’lláh's presence:

“It was this same reception room which, in spite of its rude simplicity, had so charmed the Shuja'u'd-Dawlih that he had expressed to his fellow princes his intention of building a duplicate of it in his home in Kázimayn. 'He may well succeed,' Bahá’u’lláh is reported to have smilingly remarked when apprized of this intention, 'in reproducing outwardly the exact counterpart of this low-roofed room made of mud and straw with its diminutive garden. What of his ability to open onto it the spiritual doors leading to the hidden worlds of God?' 'I know not how to explain it,' another prince, Zaynu'l-'Abidín Khán, the Fakhru'd-Dawlih, describing the atmosphere which pervaded that reception room, had affirmed, 'were all the sorrows of the world to be crowded into my heart they would, I feel, all vanish, when in the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. It is as if I had entered Paradise itself.’” (GPB:134-35)

“Mírzá Buzurg Khán, on his part, used his influence in order to arouse the animosity of the lower elements of the population against the common Adversary, by inciting them to affront Him in public, in the hope of provoking some rash retaliatory act that could be used as a ground for false charges through which the desired order for Bahá’u’lláh's extradition might be procured. This attempt too proved abortive, as the presence of Bahá’u’lláh, Who, despite the warnings and pleadings of His friends, continued to walk unescorted, both by day and by night, through the streets of the city, was enough to plunge His would-be molesters into consternation and shame. Well

aware of their motives, He would approach them, rally them on their intentions, joke with them, and leave them covered with confusion and firmly resolved to abandon whatever schemes they had in mind. The consul-general had even gone so far as to hire a ruffian, a Turk, named Rida, for the sum of one hundred tumans, provide him with a horse and with two pistols, and order him to seek out and kill Bahá'u'lláh, promising him that his own protection would be fully assured. Rida, learning one day that his would-be-victim was attending the public bath, eluded the vigilance of the Bábís in attendance, entered the bath with a pistol concealed in his cloak, and confronted Bahá'u'lláh in the inner chamber, only to discover that he lacked the courage to complete his task. He himself, years later, related that on another occasion he was lying in wait for Bahá'u'lláh, pistol in hand, when, on Bahá'u'lláh's approach, he was so overcome with fear that the pistol dropped from his hand; whereupon Bahá'u'lláh bade Áqay-i-Kalím, who accompanied Him, to hand it back to him, and show him the way to his home." (GPB:142)

In other passages from "God Passes By" we find references to His prestige (pp. 128-32, 141, 148-50), His admirers (pp. 128-32, 135-37, 141, 143, 148-50), and the love He inspired in friends and followers alike (pp. 136-37, 141). Certainly His prestige, admirers and lovability were not derived from His presence alone, and indeed we will encounter His prestige in Eighteenth Proof and His admirers and followers in the Eighth Proof. His superhuman capacity to inspire love is much deserving of notice, inasmuch as He has asserted that the very purpose of the Revelation of God, and hence His purpose as a Prophet of God is to inspire an all-consuming love in the hearts of men --as demonstrated in this "Hidden Word":

HWA:8: O Son of Spirit! There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.

Nabíl Zarandí's account of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh at the time of their sojourn in Baghdád is once again cited, as it appears in "God Passes By":

"So intoxicated were those who had quaffed from the cup of Bahá'u'lláh's presence,' is yet another testimony from the pen of Nabíl, who was himself an eye-witness of most of these stirring episodes,

'that in their eyes the palaces of kings appeared more ephemeral than a spider's web...The celebrations and festivities that were theirs were such as the kings of the earth had never dreamt of.' 'I, myself with two others,' he relates, 'lived in a room which was devoid of furniture. Bahá'u'lláh entered it one day, and, looking about Him, remarked: "Its emptiness pleases Me. In My estimation it is preferable to many a spacious palace, inasmuch as the beloved of God are occupied in it with the remembrance of the Incomparable Friend, with hearts that are wholly emptied of the dross of this world.'" His own life was characterized by that same austerity, and evinced that same simplicity which marked the lives of His beloved companions. "There was a time in 'Iráq,' He Himself affirms, in one of His Tablets, 'when the Ancient Beauty...had no change of linen. The one shirt He possessed would be washed, dried and worn again.'

"Many a night,' continues Nabíl, depicting the lives of those self-oblivious companions, 'no less than ten persons subsisted on no more than a pennyworth of dates. No one knew to whom actually belonged the shoes, the cloaks, or the robes that were to be found in their houses. Whoever went to the bazaar could claim that the shoes upon his feet were his own, and each one who entered the presence of Bahá'u'lláh could affirm that the cloak and robe he then wore belonged to him. Their own names they had forgotten, their hearts were emptied of aught else except adoration for their Beloved...O, for the joy of those days, and the gladness and wonder of those hours!" (GPB:137)

'Abdu'l-Bahá has paid tribute to the intensity of the love engendered by the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in the following excerpt from a public address:

"The great mass of humanity does not exercise real love and fellowship. The elect of humanity are those who live together in love and unity. They are preferable before God because the divine attributes are already manifest in them. The supreme love and unity is witnessed in the divine Manifestations. Among Them unity is indissoluble, changeless, eternal and everlasting. Each One is expressive and representative of all. If we deny One of the Manifestations of God, we deny all. To inflict persecution upon One is to persecute the Others. In all degrees of existence each One praises and sanctifies the Others. Each of Them holds to the solidarity of mankind and promotes the unity of human hearts. Next to the divine Manifestations come the believers whose characteristics are agreement, fellowship and love. The Bahá'í friends in Persian

attained such a brotherhood and love that it really became a hindrance in the conduct of material affairs. Each one into whatever house of the friends he went considered himself the owner of the house, so to speak. There was no duality but complete mutuality of interests and love. The visiting friend would have no hesitation in opening the provision box and taking out enough food for his needs. They wore each other's clothes as their own when necessary. If in need of a hat or cloak, they would take and use it. The owner of the clothing would be thankful and grateful that the garment had gone. When he returned home, he would perhaps be told, 'So and so was here and took away your coat.' He would reply, 'Praise be to God! I am so grateful to him. Praise be to God! I am so thankful I have been given this opportunity of showing my love for him.' To such an extreme degree this love and fellowship expressed itself that Bahá'u'lláh commanded that no one should take possession of another's belongings unless presented with them. The intention is to show to what an extent unity and love prevailed among the Bahá'í friends in the East.

“I hope that this same degree and intensity of love may become manifest and apparent here; that the spirit of God shall so penetrate your hearts that each one of the beloved of God shall be considered as all; that each one may become a cause of unity and center of accord and all mankind be bound together in real fellowship and love.” (PUP:208-209)

In the various memoirs, biographies and other historical accounts of the life of Bahá'u'lláh the reader will find a great many descriptions of the effect of the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, more than enough to convince many a reader of the extraordinary nature of this claimant to Prophethood.

SIXTH PROOF
SUFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR
HUMANITY

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Gospel of Luke XII:48) To the Prophet all things are given -- divine knowledge, love, charm, presence, miraculous powers, all good things in superlatives-- and from the Prophet all things are required -- utterances and writings, inspiration, healing, social reconstruction, individual transformation. Likewise, the Prophet must endure the most degrading of humiliations, the most painful and prolonged of all sufferings, the most complete of all sacrifices, for it is through His endurance that the liberation of mankind is effected.

Did Bahá'u'lláh suffer, did He sacrifice Himself for humanity? Bahá'u'lláh was born Husayn 'Alí, in Tíhrán, the capital of Iran, to a father who held a ministerial post in the Court of the Sháh (King). Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that "The Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, belonged to the royal family of Persia." (PUP:25) By any standard, whether that of His times or of our own, He was born into a very wealthy family, possessing properties in Tíhrán and in rural Mazandaran, and reserves of great value in gold and jewels. Throughout His childhood he lived in the lap of luxury, "amidst riches and great comfort" (Balyuzi, "Bahá'u'lláh," p. 10). 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that "Until His father passed away, Bahá'u'lláh did not seek position or political station notwithstanding His connection with the government. This occasioned surprise and comment. It was frequently said, 'How is it that a young man of such keen intelligence and subtle perception does not seek lucrative appointments? As a matter of fact, every position is open to him.' This is an historical statement fully attested by the people of Persia." (PUP:25) Upon the passing of His father, "the post left vacant in the court was offered to him, he refused to accept it." (Balyuzi, Ibid.) While Mírzá 'Abbas Buzurg (His father) had lost certain of His properties during the last four years of His life (1835-39) due to the personal antipathy of Hájí Mírzá Áqásí, Prime Minister to the Sháh, Bahá'u'lláh nevertheless inherited a considerable fortune. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..." Bahá'u'lláh could have imitated rich people in all countries and in all centuries by hoarding His wealth, by protecting His investments, by indulging His appetites, by rewarding His friends and "spoiling" His relatives. And as some of the wealth and properties of

His father had been taken away He could have endeavored to win back this wealth and these properties, to build up His fortune, the family fortune to its previous level during His childhood, or, as He was regarded as "a young man of such keen intelligence and subtle perception" (PUP:25), He could have applied Himself to surpassing the monetary successes of all of His forebears. Did He do so? His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us:

"He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all. He always had many guests. This unbounded generosity was conducive to greater astonishment from the fact that He sought neither position nor prominence. In commenting upon this His friends said He would become impoverished, for His expenses were many and His wealth becoming more and more limited." (Ibid.)

David S.Ruhe in the first volume of his history of Bahá'u'lláh's life, describes the life led by Bahá'u'lláh and His first wife Asiyih prior to His imprisonment in the Síyáh Chál followed by their expulsion from Iran:

"The life of the capital city was of little interest to the couple, and they took small part in the reciprocal social events, state functions and luxurious living of their peers. They wasted no thought on retrieving their material advantages, however diminished, from Mírzá Buzurg's former great wealth, preferring to devote themselves to charitable causes. Caring for the poor, the troubled and the unfortunate was their way of life. So recognized was this unusual life pattern that Mírzá Husayn 'Alí became known by the title of 'Father of the Poor' while the gracious and good-hearted lady Asiyih won the counterpart name of 'Mother of Consolation'. Their yet-considerable resources enabled them to aid many in that land of shameful wealth and grinding poverty. No one was turned away from their doors. The hospitality which had been challenged by the Prime Minister was the very hallmark of their home and their lives." ("Robe of Light," p. 51)

Speaking of His four periods of imprisonment in Iran and to His expulsion, during the dead of winter, from Tíhrán, Bahá'u'lláh writes in a prayer quoted in "God Passes By" (p. 109):

"Thou hast destined for Him trials and tribulations which no tongue can describe, nor any of Thy Tablets adequately recount. The throat Thou didst accustom to the touch of silk

Thou hast, in the end, clasped with strong chains, and the body Thou didst ease with brocades and velvets Thou hast at last subjected to the abasement of a dungeon. Thy decree hath shackled Me with unnumbered fetters, and cast about My neck chains that none can sunder. A number of years have passed during which afflictions have, like showers of mercy, rained upon Me...How many nights during which the weight of chains and fetters allowed Me no rest, and how numerous the days during which peace and tranquility were denied Me, by reason of that wherewith the hands and tongues of men have afflicted Me! Both bread and water which Thou hast, through Thy all-embracing mercy, allowed unto the beasts of the field, they have, for a time, forbidden unto this servant, and the things they refused to inflict upon such as have seceded from Thy Cause, the same have they suffered to be inflicted upon Me, until, finally, Thy decree was irrevocably fixed, and Thy behest summoned this servant to depart out of Persia, accompanied by a number of frail-bodied men and children of tender age, at this time when the cold is so intense that one cannot even speak, and ice and snow so abundant that it is impossible to move."

And once He emigrated to Baghdád did His sufferings and sacrifices come to an end? He arrived on 8 April 1852 and departed for Kurdistán on 10 April 1854; during these two years He lived in Baghdád, and the author has not found a detailed historical account of this period in His life. However, it is evident that during the subsequent two years, from 10 April 1854 until 19 March 1856 when He returned to Baghdád, He lived in a state of the utmost poverty, as described by Shoghi Effendi:

"Attired in the garb of a traveler, coarsely clad, taking with Him nothing but His kashkul (alms-bowl) and a change of clothes, and assuming the name of Darvish Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh retired to the wilderness, and lived for a time on a mountain named Sar-Galu, so far removed from human habitations that only twice a year, at seed sowing and harvest time, it was visited by the peasants of that region. Alone and undisturbed, He passed a considerable part of His retirement on the top of that mountain in a rude structure, made of stone, which served those peasants as a shelter against the extremities of the weather. At times His dwelling-place was a cave to which He refers in His Tablets addressed to the famous Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahman and to Maryam, a kinswoman of His." (GPB:120)

When Bahá'u'lláh returned to Baghdád, His accommodations and clothing continued to be of the most modest varieties, according to Shoghi Effendi:

"It was this same reception room which, in spite of its rude simplicity, had so charmed the Shuja'u'd-Dawlih that he had expressed to his fellow princes his intention of building a duplicate of it in his home in Kazimayn. 'He may well succeed,' Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have smilingly remarked when apprized of this intention, 'in reproducing outwardly the exact counterpart of this low-roofed room made of mud and straw with its diminutive garden. What of his ability to open onto it the spiritual doors leading to the hidden worlds of God?'" (GPB:134-35)

"His own life was characterized by that same austerity, and evinced that same simplicity which marked the lives of His beloved companions. 'There was a time in 'Iráq,' He Himself affirms, in one of His Tablets, 'when the Ancient Beauty...had no change of linen. The one shirt He possessed would be washed, dried and worn again.'" (GPB:137)

Historical accounts could also be cited for the months Bahá'u'lláh spent en route to Constantinople, in that city, and the years He resided in Adrianople, which would prove that Bahá'u'lláh always lived in utter simplicity and poverty, and continued to be generous with all those who came to Him in need. Upon His arrival in 'Akká, He and His companions were first imprisoned in an unfurnished stone cell of the fortress/prison, and after some time they were permitted to transfer their residence to a building adjacent to the prison but still within the stone walls that surround that fortified city. Finally He was permitted to leave the confines of 'Akká, to live some distance from the city in Mazra'ih and later Bahjí and to travel nearby to the garden of Ridván and across the Bay of Haifa to Mt. Carmel, the small town of Haifa and the Druse villages adjacent to it. It may be observed that towards the close of His long life Bahá'u'lláh resided in what was called the "Mansion of Bahjí", surrounded by groves and gardens, hardly in a state of poverty. The Mansion of Bahjí is a relatively spacious two-storied home which was occupied by almost the entirety of Bahá'u'lláh's family and many of His closest companions. The present-day groves and gardens did not exist and have taken many decades to cultivate to the present state of wondrous beauty. Certainly Bahá'u'lláh lived in greater ease at Bahjí than at any time since His expulsion from Iran in 1852, however His life had been utterly

transformed since those earlier days, and His presence was, in Palestine, the site of hundreds if not thousands of pilgrimages, and the pilgrims had to be accommodated, while Bahá'u'lláh had to be protected from their ardor and assured the privacy to continue with the most lasting work of His mission, the revelation of the Word of God for this Age and Cycle.

In one of His Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá summarizes the sufferings and sacrifices of Bahá'u'lláh in this compact passage:

"The Abha Beauty Himself --may the spirit of all existence be offered up for His loved ones-- bore all manner of ordeals, and willingly accepted for Himself intense afflictions. No torment was there left that His sacred form was not subjected to, no suffering that did not descend upon Him. How many a night, when He was chained, did He go sleepless because of the weight of His iron collar; how many a day the burning pain of the stocks and fetters gave Him no moment's peace. From Niyavaran to Tihrán they made Him run --He, that embodied spirit, He Who had been accustomed to repose against cushions of ornamented silk-- chained, shoeless, His head bared; and down under the earth, in the thick darkness of that narrow dungeon, they shut Him up with murderers, rebels and thieves. Ever and again they assailed Him with a new torment, and all were certain that from one moment to the next He would suffer a martyr's death. After some time they banished Him from His native land, and sent Him to countries alien and far away. During many a year in 'Iráq, no moment passed but the arrow of a new anguish struck His holy heart; with every breath a sword came down upon that sacred body, and He could hope for no moment of security and rest. From every side His enemies mounted their attack with unrelenting hate; and singly and alone He withstood them all. After all these tribulations, these body blows, they flung Him out of 'Iráq in the continent of Asia, to the continent of Europe, and in that place of bitter exile, of wretched hardships, to the wrongs that were heaped upon Him by the people of the Qur'án were now added the virulent persecutions, the powerful attacks, the plottings, the slanders, the continual hostilities, the hate and malice, of the people of the Bayán. My pen is powerless to tell it all; but ye have surely been informed of it. Then, after twenty-four years in this, the Most Great Prison, in agony and sore affliction, His days drew to a close.

"To sum it up, the Ancient Beauty was ever, during His sojourn in this transitory world, either a captive bound with chains, or living under a sword, or subjected to extreme suffering and torment,

or held in the Most Great Prison. Because of His physical weakness, brought on by His afflictions, His blessed body was worn away to a breath; it was light as a cobweb from long grieving. And His reason for shouldering this heavy load and enduring all this anguish, which was even as an ocean that hurleth its waves to high heaven --His reason for putting on the heavy iron chains and for becoming the very embodiment of utter resignation and meekness, was to lead every soul on earth to concord, to fellow-feeling, to oneness; to make known amongst all peoples the sign of the singleness of god, so that at last the primal oneness deposited at the heart of all created things would bear its destined fruit, and the splendour of 'No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy,' [Qur'án LXVII:3] would cast abroad its rays." (SWAB:262-63)

We have seen how 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh has described these sufferings and sacrifices. Now we will venture an independent analysis of these actions and events. It is clear that Bahá'u'lláh did not sacrifice His wealth and His political and social position in Iran for nefarious selfish motives: rather they were sacrificed to better the condition of the needy ones who turned to Him for assistance, and in the furtherance of His convictions. For not only did His wealth dwindle because of His generosity to the poor, it was also taken from Him forcibly in retaliation for His embrace of the Bábí Faith. Likewise, He was exiled from Iran primarily due to His adherence to the Faith of the Báb, although the wealthy and privileged families associated with the court of the Sháh must have been relieved to see such an uncharacteristically selfless and saintly man deprived of His wealth and privilege and sent packing! That these families may have brought pressure to bear upon the Sháh and his Prime Minister is very likely, even if it is not documented. Bahá'u'lláh was then required to leave Baghdád, Constantinople and Adrianople, and in all three cases the cause of this removal was undoubtedly His espousal of the Cause of God. What sort of man sacrifices His goods, His time, His social position, His political influence, His religious respectability to be of service to the materially and the spiritually impoverished?

We have surveyed Bahá'u'lláh's sufferings and sacrifices endured for the sake of His fellow men. What of His attitude towards those sufferings and sacrifices? Did He complain of them, as most of us mortal men and women would? Did He resent them? Or did He embrace them fervently, as sent by God to prove the truth of His claims, the proof of His mission? Bahá'u'lláh speaks for Himself:

GL:99-100: The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold [‘Akká] that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they that have joined partners with God have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities! [‘Akká] ("Lawh-i-Muhammad Quli Reza")

GL:100: I sorrow not for the burden of My imprisonment. Neither do I grieve over My abasement, or the tribulation I suffer at the hands of Mine enemies. By My life! They are My glory, a glory wherewith God hath adorned His own Self. Would that ye know it! The shame I was made to bear hath uncovered the glory with which the whole of creation had been invested, and through the cruelties I have endured, the Day Star of Justice hath manifested itself, and shed its splendor upon men. ("Lawh-i-Mírzá ‘Alí Naqi")

GL:102: God is My witness! Had it not been in conflict with that which the Tablets of God have decreed, I would gladly have kissed the hands of whosoever attempted to shed My blood in the path of the Well-Beloved. I would, moreover, have bestowed upon him a share of such worldly goods as God had allowed Me to possess, even though he who perpetrated this act would have provoked the wrath of the Almighty, incurred His malediction, and deserved to be tormented throughout the eternity of God, the All-Possessing, the Equitable, the All-Wise. ("Lawh-i-Jinab-i-Dhabih")

Perhaps the most astonishing affirmation of this eagerness to suffer and to sacrifice for the sake of the Cause of God is found in this unidentified Tablet:

GL:101-102: O Jews! If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He hath once more, in My person, been made manifest unto you. Deal with

Me as ye wish, for I have vowed to lay down My life in the path of God. I will fear no one, though the powers of earth and heaven be leagued against Me. Followers of the Gospel! If ye cherish the desire to slay Muhammad, the Apostle of God, seize Me and put an end to My life, for I am He, and My Self is His Self. Do unto Me as you like, for the deepest longing of Mine heart is to attain the presence of My Best-Beloved in His Kingdom of Glory. Such is the Divine decree, if ye know it. Followers of Muhammad! If it be your wish to riddle with your shafts the breast of Him Who hath caused His Book the Bayán to be sent down unto you, lay hands on Me and persecute Me, for I am His Well-Beloved, the revelation of His own Self, though My name be not His name. I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. I, verily, anticipate from you the treatment ye have accorded unto Him that came before Me. To this all things, verily, witness, if ye be of those who hearken. O people of the Bayán! If ye have resolved to shed the blood of Him Whose coming the Báb hath proclaimed, Whose advent Muhammad hath prophesied, and Whose Revelation Jesus Christ Himself hath announced, behold Me standing, ready and defenseless, before you. Deal with Me after your own desires.

SEVENTH PROOF
FEARLESS PROCLAMATION OF HIS MESSAGE BY
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh did not take the easy way and preach only to the converted. He did not speak only with believers, with Bábís until His open assumption of the Prophetic mantle or with Bahá'ís thereafter. Nor did He confine Himself to writing books and letters addressed to believers only. 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes that one of the signs of Bahá'u'lláh is: "His calling out at every moment: 'Come unto Me, ye righteous! Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye lovers of the good! Come unto Me, come unto Me, ye dawning points of light!'" (SWAB:16) Furthermore "another of His signs is the promulgation of His Book, His decisive Holy Text wherein He reprov'd the kings..." (Ibid.) We will treat these two signs as one proof in this context. As is related in many sources, including "God Passes By" and "Some Answered Questions", Bahá'u'lláh informed multitudes of His teachings, in His discourses, and in His voluminous writings, most of which were directed to specific readers. He wrote to Zoroastrians and Jews, to Christians and Muslims, to Bábís and Azalís (followers of His half-brother Mírzá Yahyá). He wrote to Muslim clergymen who were in a position to do Him and His followers considerable damage. On at least two occasions Bahá'u'lláh offered to produce any proof requested of Him by a convocation of the 'ulamá, the Shí'í (Ithna 'Ashari, Twelve Imam) clergy as is described by Shoghi Effendi:

"Frustrated in their designs, but unrelenting in their hostility, the assembled divines delegated the learned and devout Hájí Mírzá Mulla Hasan-i-'Ammu, recognized for his integrity and wisdom, to submit various questions to Bahá'u'lláh for elucidation. When these were submitted, and answers completely satisfactory to the messenger were given, Hájí Mulla Hasan, affirming the recognition by the 'ulamá of the vastness of the knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh, asked, as an evidence of the truth of His mission, for a miracle that would satisfy completely all concerned. 'Although you have no right to ask this,' Bahá'u'lláh replied, 'for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request...They 'ulamá must assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain

for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture.' This clear, challenging and courageous reply, unexampled in the annals of any religion, and addressed to the most illustrious Shi'ah divines, assembled in their time-honored stronghold, was so satisfactory to their envoy that he instantly arose, kissed the knee of Bahá'u'lláh, and departed to deliver His message. Three days later he sent word that that august assemblage had failed to arrive at a decision, and had chosen to drop the matter, a decision to which he himself late gave wide publicity, in the course of his visit to Persia, and even communicated it in person to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mírzá Sa'id Khán. 'We have,' Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have commented, when informed of their reaction to this challenge, 'through this all-satisfying, all-embracing message which We sent, revealed and vindicated the miracles of all the Prophets, inasmuch as We left the choice to the 'ulamá themselves, undertaking to reveal whatever they would decide upon.'" (GPB:144)

This first challenge issued to the Muslim clergy took place during Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn in Baghdád. The second challenge is recorded in "Lawh-i-Sultán", the Tablet He wrote to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh while on the verge of leaving Adrianople for 'Akká. According to Shoghi Effendi, "He, moreover, in that same Tablet, demonstrated the validity of His Mission; expressed the wish to be 'brought face to face with the divines of the age, and produce proofs and testimonies in the presence of His Majesty,' which would establish the truth of His Cause..." (GPB:173) 'Abdu'l-Bahá commented on this offer as quoted in "God Passes By" and in "Utterances of Abdul Beha Abbas to two young men, American pilgrims to Acre, 1901":

"Abdu'l-Bahá has written concerning a similar challenge made later by Bahá'u'lláh in the 'Lawh-i-Sultán,' 'we see that the Divine Manifestation never said to those who denied Him "whatever miracle you desire, I am ready to perform, and I will submit to whatever test you propose." But in the Epistle to the Sháh Bahá'u'lláh said clearly, "Gather the 'ulamá and summon Me, that the evidences and proofs may be established.'" (GPB:144)

"The Blessed Perfection, (glory be to Him), in His holy days, declared Himself universally, sent notices to queens and kings, and taught all who wished to know the truth. To the Sháh of Persia He wrote with the greatest evidence, and the Persians as well as the different nations, are informed of this. In His letter to the Sháh of Persia, He requested that all of the learned men be called together for

the purpose of asking him about miracles or arguments until either truthfulness or falsity should become manifest." ("Utterances," pp. 7-8)

The courage and confidence in God's infallible revelation which such challenges clearly require should be proof enough of Bahá'u'lláh's steadfastness in the proclamation of His prophetic claims and message to humanity. However, other evidences can be readily presented. In Adrianople and 'Akká Bahá'u'lláh revealed challenging Epistles to the Pope, the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Monks of the Roman Catholic Church; to the Patriarchs, Metropolitans and Priests and Monks of the Greek Orthodox Church, to the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire (Austro-Hungarian Empire), the Germany Empire, the Czar of Russia, the King of France, the Queen of England, the Sultán of the Ottoman Empire, the Sháh of Iran, the Presidents of the American Republics. All of these letters are extant, published, and many have been available for a century in European language translations. All of these letters were delivered to their addressees during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh. These letters challenge these leaders to act in accordance with the dictates of religion and morality and to acknowledge His claims to be the Promised One of Christianity and Islám alike. Any one of these emperors, monarchs or religious leaders could have retaliated against the Author of these letters, could have ordered His assassination, or agitated at the court of the Sultán for His silencing. Bahá'u'lláh did not write these letters as did Muhammad when the earlier Prophet of God was at the head of a considerable military force and entirely able to defend Himself and His followers from attack. Rather did He write these letters as the Báb wrote a letter to the Ottoman Sultán, two letters to the Sháh of Iran, two letters to Prime Minister Mírzá Hájí Áqásí, and letters to the 'ulamá of Iran and 'Iráq --the Báb was a prisoner and without any army to protect Him when He wrote these letters. But the Báb did not address the potentates of the Ottoman, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, French, German, English realms nor did He challenge the religious authorities of the two largest branches of Christianity. During the year prior to His ascension Bahá'u'lláh revealed His last book, "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" and therein we find this passage which is quoted in conclusion:

ESW:119: O thou who are reputed for thy learning! Bid men to do that which is praiseworthy, and be not of such as tarry. Observe thou with a keen eye. The Sun of Truth shineth resplendently, at the bidding of the Lord of the kingdom of

utterance, and the King of the heaven of knowledge, above the horizon of the prison-city of 'Akká. Repudiation hath not veiled it, and ten thousand hosts arrayed against it were powerless to withhold it from shining. Thou canst excuse thyself no longer. Either thou must recognize it, or --God forbid-- arise and deny all the Prophets!

EIGHTH PROOF
EVERY VALLEY IS EXALTED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Our principal sources for details about the converts made by Bahá'u'lláh are found only in collections of Bahá'í biographies, including that compiled by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1915 and entitled "Tadhkirat al-Wafa' fi Tarjamat Hayat Qudama al-Ahibba"⁴⁰; the biographical dictionary found in Fadl Mazandarani's "Zuhur al-Haqq"⁴¹; the biographical details found in various historical narratives including the unpublished manuscript of Nabíl Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam); "al-Kawakib al-Durriya" by 'Abd al-Husayn Ayatí⁴²; "Tarikh-i Shuhada-yi Amr" by Malik Khusraví⁴³; "Núrayn-i Nayyirayn" by 'Adb al-Hamid Ishraq Khavari⁴⁴. Likewise there are the memoirs of certain companions of Bahá'u'lláh, including those of Muhammad 'Alí-i Salmani (translated by Marzieh Gail, Kalimat, 1982); of Tarazu'llah Samandari (translated by Mehdi Samandari, Kalimat, 1995); of Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí (translated by A.Q. Faizi, Kalimat, 1980).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of works, either for accounts of Bahá'ís during the life-span of Bahá'u'lláh or for the period of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry and since then to the present. Most of the works cited above are written in Arabic or Persian and have not yet been translated into a European language. "Tadhkirat al-Wafa'" was translated into English by Marzieh Gail and published in 1971 and reissued in 1993. A portion of Nabíl Zarandi's narrative was translated and edited by Shoghi Effendi and first published in 1932. "Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh" by Hasan M. Balyuzi⁴⁵ was published in 1985. There are also anecdotes referring to these companions in "God Passes By" by Shoghi Effendi.

It would not be sensible or even-handed to judge all of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh according to standard of those whose lives have been hallowed in these scant and admittedly --and unapologetically-- laudatory accounts. However, it is precisely this standard which is in itself, according to Bahá'u'lláh and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá the very measure of this proof.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, in a talk on 3 December 1912 is recorded in the following account:

"It is my desire that Bahá'u'lláh shall be pleased with you, that you may follow His precepts and become worthy of His

confirmations. The requirements are that your minds must be illumined, your souls must be so rejoiced with the glad tidings of God, you must become imbued with spiritual moralities, your daily life must evidence faith and assurance, your hearts must be sanctified and pure, reflecting a high degree of love and attraction toward the Kingdom of Abha. You must become the lamps of Bahá'u'lláh so that you may shine with eternal light and be the proofs and evidences of His truth. Then will such signs of purity and chastity be witnessed in your deeds and actions that men will behold the heavenly radiance of your lives and say, "Verily, ye are the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh. Verily, Bahá'u'lláh is the True One, for He has trained such souls as these, each one of which is a proof in himself." They will say to others, "Come and witness the conduct of these souls; come and listen to their words, behold the illumination of their hearts, see the evidences of the love of God in them, consider their praiseworthy morals, and discover the foundations of the oneness of humanity firmly implanted within them. What greater proof can there be than these people that the message of Bahá'u'lláh is truth and reality?" It is my hope that each one of you shall be a herald of God, proclaiming the evidences of His appearance, in words, deeds and thoughts. Let your actions and utterances be a witness that you are of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. These are the duties enjoined upon you by Bahá'u'lláh. (PUP:460-61)

In "Lawh al-Sahab" Bahá'u'lláh makes it indubitably clear that this is a two-edged sword --that this standard is not to be treated as an ideal which is beyond the capacity of the average human being, of the average believer. Rather, this high standard of conduct is required of all believers, and any less than adherence to this standard will bring shame upon the Prophet, upon His Cause, and upon the claimant Himself:

GL:117-18: My captivity can bring on Me no shame. Nay, by My life, it conferreth on Me glory. That which can make Me ashamed is the conduct of such of My followers as profess to love Me, yet in fact follow the Evil One. They, indeed, are of the lost. When the time set for this Revelation was fulfilled, and He Who is the Day Star of the world appeared in 'Iráq, He bade His followers observe that which would sanctify them from all earthly defilements. Some preferred to follow the desires of a corrupt inclination, while others walked in the way of righteousness and truth, and were rightly guided. Say: He is not to be numbered with the people of Bahá who followeth his mundane desires, or fixeth his heart on things of

the earth. He is My true follower who, if he come to a valley of pure gold, will pass straight through it aloof as a cloud, and will neither turn back, nor pause. Such a man is, assuredly, of Me. From his garment the Concourse on high can inhale the fragrance of sanctity...And if he met the fairest and most comely of women, he would not feel his heart seduced by the least shadow of desire for her beauty. Such an one, indeed, is the creation of spotless chastity. Thus instructeth you the Pen of the Ancient of Days, as bidden by your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

In another Tablet, "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyih," Bahá'u'lláh warns that those who call themselves believers who turn away from His counsels will not only bring Him sorrow and displeasure but will also bring divine punishment upon themselves and estrange themselves from the Cause of God:

TB:59-60: O thou who hast turned thy gaze towards My face! In these days there occurred that which hath plunged Me into dire sadness. Certain wrong-doers who profess allegiance to the Cause of God committed such deeds as have caused the limbs of sincerity, of honesty, of justice, of equity to quake. One known individual to whom the utmost kindness and favor have been extended perpetrated such acts as have brought tears to the eye of God. Formerly We uttered words of warning and premonition, then for a number of years We kept the matter secret that haply he might take heed and repent. But all to no purpose. In the end he bent his energies upon vilifying the Cause of God before the eyes of all men. He tore the veil of fairness asunder and felt sympathy neither for himself nor for the Cause of God. Now, however, the deeds of certain individuals have brought sorrows far more grievous than those which the deeds of the former had caused. Beseech thou God, the True One, that He may graciously enable the heedless to retract and repent. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Bountiful, the Most Generous.

Nevertheless, we should not take this to indicate that He would approve of His followers meting out harsh and unforgiving treatment towards those who transgress His commandments and fail to live up to His teachings. Indeed, in "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh warns the believer not to condemn any soul and to continue to have hope in the redemption of every soul:

KI:194-95: He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner, at the hour of death, attained to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the celestial Concourse. And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire. Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object of all adoration, as utter nothingness.

Not only is the believer -- if he is to be a true believer, a true follower, a true seeker of the Will of God -- to "forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate"; in another passage of "Kitáb-i-Íqán", Bahá'u'lláh stipulates that he must not exalt himself above anyone:

KI:193: He must never seek to exalt himself above any one, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vainglory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence, and refrain from idle talk. For the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endure a century. That seeker should also regard backbiting as grievous error, and keep himself aloof from its dominion, inasmuch as backbiting quenceth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.

Innumerable are the passages in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which set forth His standards for the conduct -- the deeds, words and thoughts -- of those who are worthy of being called His followers. These standards have clearly been elucidated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and by Shoghi Effendi, and are continually upheld in the letters and the rulings of the Universal House of Justice and the other institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. While the reader may indeed encounter individuals who associate themselves with the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh whose conduct does not always adhere to this high standard, Bahá'u'lláh has stated in many passages of His writings, including those cited above, that such individuals do not represent His Cause, and that they bring shame upon Him and upon themselves.

Nevertheless, in "Lawh-i-Dunya" Bahá'u'lláh states that most of those who call themselves His followers are indeed transformed by His teachings:

TB:90-91: Day and night this Wronged One yieldeth thanks and praise unto the Lord of men, for it is witnessed that the words of counsel and exhortation We uttered have proved effective and that this people hath evinced such character and conduct as are acceptable in Our sight. This is affirmed by virtue of the event which hath truly cheered the eye of the world, and is none other than the intercession of the friends with the high authorities in favor of their enemies.

To continue with the passage cited earlier from "Lawh-i-Dunya":

TB:91: We cherish the hope that men of piety may illumine the world through the radiant light of their conduct, and We entreat the Almighty --glorified and exalted is He—to grant that everyone may in this Day remain steadfast in His love and stand firm in His Cause. He is, in truth, the Protector of those who are wholly devoted to Him and observe His precepts.

In "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih" Bahá'u'lláh summarizes this question in the following language:

TB:57: It behoveth the people of Bahá to render the Lord victorious through the power of their utterance and to admonish the people by their goodly deeds and character, inasmuch as deeds exert greater influence than words. O Haydar-‘Alí! Upon thee be the praise of God and His glory. Say: Honesty, virtue, wisdom and a saintly character redound to the exaltation of man, while dishonesty, imposture, ignorance and hypocrisy lead to his abasement. By My life! Man's distinction lieth not in ornaments or wealth, but rather in virtuous behavior and true understanding.

Finally, if the reader wishes to be apprized of the conduct of present-day believers in Bahá'u'lláh they have only to contact any local Bahá'í community and to associate with those who call themselves Bahá'ís.

It is evident, however, that the implications of this proof are not demonstrated in the people of Bahá alone. This proof is made manifest, as it must be in the Dispensation of every Prophet of God, by the sociological phenomenon of turning tables. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" promises Isaiah (40:4). Bahá'u'lláh writes in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:146: This station is also one of the signs of the Day of Revelation; even as it is said: "The abased amongst you, He shall exalt; and they that are exalted, He shall abase." And likewise, He hath revealed in the Qur'án: "And We desire to show favour to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make of them Our heirs."

The first interpretation, and that cited by Bahá'u'lláh in "Kitáb-i-Íqán" pertains to its reference to the turning of the tables in religion, with the humble and untitled becoming the "spiritual leaders of men" and the "heirs" of God. In his famous "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus Christ says:

Mt5:5: Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

A second interpretation suggested by these verses is that this great turning of the tables affects all of mankind, believers and unbelievers alike. Indeed, in the nineteenth century and ever since a most remarkable and stunning pattern of reversal has occurred and is still occurring. The Empires of the Russian Czars, the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburgs, the German Kaisers, the Belgian Kingdom, the French Bonapartes and Bourbons, the Dutch Kingdom, the Ottoman Sultáns, the Persian Sháh's, the Belgian Kingdom, and the proud monarchies of Spain, Albania, Greece, Serbia, Italy, Bulgaria, Rumania, Egypt, 'Iráq and Yemen have fallen, one and all. This abasement of the exalted will be considered formally in the Ninth Proof. However, the turn of the tables has resulted in the coming to power of the most subject of the subject, the poorest of the poor, as representative democracies have replaced all of the governments of these Empires and Monarchies, and as the vast plurality of the citizens are among the laboring classes, it is they who rule. Of course, this turning of the tables began with the establishment of the Magna Carta and the English Parliament --both of which obviously much preceded the nineteenth century-- and the

American, French and various Latin American revolutions, which also preceeded the nineteenth century by a few decades or years.

Nevertheless, these revolutions did not have the far-reaching impact on the Imperial and monarchical form of government which became evident with their collapse since the middle of the nineteenth century. Accompanying the collapse of Imperialism and Monarchy is the reversal of wealth. The wealthy of ancient times were aristocrats, nobles, born to wealth, inheritors of fortunes, possessed of hereditary power and money. The wealthy of modern times are predominantly found among the self-made, individual laboring men and women who have risen, who have been exalted by a free enterprise economy, who have been exalted by a socialist economy, for both of these economies exalt the hard-working man and woman and not the ladies and gentlemen of leisure. The labor unions, the employment benefits legislation, the socialist governments in some countries, the greater reliance of increasing numbers of people upon machine-made consumer goods and the need for seemingly ever-fewer laborers in the agricultural field --all of these developments have catapulted the laboring men and women from the dust of slavery to the heights of freedom and affluence.

The most outstanding contributions to modern society are not generally made by the "heirs" of the rich and powerful of yesteryear. Rather are they more often the fruit of the "humble" who have painstakingly worked their way up from the bottom and found themselves, due to their merit and the dynamics of the New Age at the top of the heap. The art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was not principally commissioned by any of the established religions or by any of the established Emperors or monarchs or aristocrats. While the art of the past centuries and millennia is carefully safeguarded in museums, the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is hanging in homes and in business places, in government offices, in galleries where it is for sale to the highest bidder --regardless of his pedigree. What of the music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? This also was not generally the fruit of traditional patronage systems, and the audience for that music has become steadily more working class during this period. All one need do is compare the themes and styles of the paintings and sculptures and musical compositions of the early nineteenth century with those of today to see that the former peasantry and proletariat have become firmly established as the new rulers of aesthetic taste.

The mass art forms of radio, films, television have eclipsed live theater, music, dance, lectures and readings in dollars spent and dollars earned by a margin that makes these ancient crafts seem almost trivial in comparison. The evidences of this turning of the tables, this reversal of fortunes are obvious to all keen observers of public affairs. Even a hermit would find reasons to believe that this is the day of "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low". In religion also, it is the masses, the common folk who have the real power, not the traditional hierarchies. It was the common folk who ushered in the Islámic Revolution of Ayat'u'llah Khomeini in Iran and who brought about the banishment of the Sháh and the abolition of the monarchy. It is the common folk who are fueling all of the revolutionary movements, whether for religious fundamentalism, for economic reform, for political transformation or social restructuring.

There is yet another dimension to this exaltation of the abased. One of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that the poor are to be treated with respect, with love and solicitation. In "Surat al-Bayán" we find the following:

GL:314-15: If ye meet the abased or the down-trodden, turn not away disdainfully from them, for the King of Glory ever watcheth over them and surroundeth them with such tenderness as none can fathom except them that have suffered their wishes and desires to be merged in the Will of your Lord, the Gracious, the All-Wise. O ye rich ones of the earth! Flee not from the face of the poor that lieth in the dust, nay rather befriend him and suffer him to recount the tale of the woes with which God's inscrutable Decree hath caused him to be afflicted. By the righteousness of God! Whilst ye consort with him, the Concourse on high will be looking upon you, will be interceding for you, will be extolling your names and glorifying your action. Blessed are the learned that pride themselves not on their attainments; and well is it with the righteous that mock not the sinful, but rather conceal their misdeeds, so that their own shortcomings may remain veiled to men's eyes.

In "Kalimat-i-Maknunch" Bahá'u'lláh reiterates this theme:

HWP:49: O children of dust!
Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and

deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine: well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.

HWP:51: O son of my handmaid!

Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. Yet to be poor in all save God is a wondrous gift, belittle not the value thereof, for in the end it will make thee rich in God, and thus thou shalt know the meaning of the utterance, "In truth ye are the poor," and the holy words, "God is the all-possessing," shall even as the true morn break forth gloriously resplendent upon the horizon of the lover's heart, and abide secure on the throne of wealth.

HWP:53: O ye that pride yourselves on mortal riches!

Know ye in truth that wealth is a mighty barrier between the seeker and his desire, the lover and his beloved. The rich, but for a few, shall in no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of content and resignation. Well is it then with him, who, being rich, is not hindered by his riches from the eternal kingdom, nor deprived by them of imperishable dominion. By the Most Great Name! The splendor of such a wealthy man shall illuminate the dwellers of heaven even as the sun enlightens the people of the earth!

Bahá'u'lláh warns Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz in "Surat al-Muluk":

GL:236: Fear the sighs of the poor and of the upright in heart who, at every break of day, bewail their plight, and be unto them a benignant sovereign.

NINTH PROOF
EVERY EXALTED ONE HAS BEEN ABASED BY
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh has written beautifully in His Tablets, praising the learned clergyman who accepts the truth of His Revelation, the King who comes to the aid of His Cause. In "Surat al-Bayán" He writes:

GL:315: Blessed are the learned that pride not themselves on their attainments...

In "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" He reveals, referring to His own Revelation:

KA:183: Say: This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth. Say: This is the Most Great Testimony, by which the validity of every proof throughout the ages hath been established, would that ye might be assured thereof. Say: Through it the poor have been enriched, the learned enlightened, and the seekers enabled to ascend unto the presence of God. Beware lest ye make it a cause of dissension amongst you.

Not only will be "learned" who do not pride themselves on their attainment be "blessed"; not only will the "learned" be "enlightened" through the infallible Balance revealed by Bahá'u'lláh --the truly "learned" is "as an eye unto mankind", as it is written in "Lawh-i-Dunya" (and reiterated in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf," p. 83):

TB:207-208: O foolish one! Know thou that he is truly learned who hath acknowledged My Revelation, and drunk from the Ocean of My knowledge, and soared in the atmosphere of My love, and cast away all else besides Me, and taken firm hold on that which hath been sent down from the Kingdom of My wondrous utterance. He, verily, is even as an eye unto mankind, and as the spirit of life unto the body of all creation. Glorified be the All-Merciful Who hath enlightened him, and caused him to arise and serve His great and mighty Cause. Verily, such a man is blessed by the Concourse on high, and by them who dwell within the Tabernacle of

Grandeur, who have quaffed My sealed Wine in My Name,
the Omnipotent, the All-Powerful.

What became of the learned, the spiritual elite of their time, upon the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh? Did they take heed and acknowledge His Revelation? Very few indeed. And those who did acknowledge His Revelation --were they exalted to the heights here described? In the biographies of the believers mentioned in the previous Proof will be found individuals who accepted Bahá'u'lláh after reaching eminence as Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian and Muslim ecclesiastics, and among all of these the most outstanding was Mírzá Abu'l Fadl Gulpayagani. His story is told in the prefaces to English translations of Abu'l-Fadl's letters and treatises published as "Miracles and Metaphors"⁴⁶ and "Letters and Essays 1886-1913"⁴⁷, and in the preface to the reprint of Abu'l-Fadl's book entitled "The Bahá'í Proofs"⁴⁸. This short description will suffice: "A brilliant student, he completed the traditional Islámic education, and--in his twenties--was installed as a scholar and teacher at an important institution of higher learning in Tehran. In that city he accepted the Bahá'í Faith during 1876, becoming the most distinguished and learned convert of his era."⁴⁹ The following excerpt is reproduced from the tribute to Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá shortly after he was informed of the scholar's passing⁵⁰:

"He was indeed a very glorious personage. In every way he was unequalled...In reality he was in the utmost severance, in the utmost firmness and steadfastness in the Cause of God. He was detached from all things. From the day this person became a believer until this day, he was engaged in service in the Cause of God. He was engaged either in giving the Message or in writing. He was never attached to this world.

"How learned he was and studious of books! He was familiar with every nation. With the precepts of all religions he was acquainted. He was my partner and participant in the servitude of the holy threshold.

"During the days of sorrow, he was my consolation. I had perfect confidence in him. Every written criticism of the Cause I used to refer to him and he wrote the answer."

What of the thousands upon thousands of ecclesiastics who rejected Bahá'u'lláh and who continue to reject this most recent Prophet of God? What does He say to them? He speaks to them together with the Kings of the earth, and therefore we will consider what He says

about such Kings as will come to the aid of His Cause. Is Bahá'u'lláh a republican agitator, an anti-monarchy activist? In His "Surat al-Muluk" Bahá'u'lláh addresses Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire:

GL:237: Thou art God's shadow on earth. Strive, therefore, to act in such a manner as befitteth so eminent, so august a station. If thou dost depart from following the things We have caused to descend upon thee and taught thee, thou wilt, assuredly, be derogating from that great and priceless honor.

In "Lawh-i-Abu'l-Fadl Gulpayagani" Bahá'u'lláh writes:

GL:206-207: The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath ever regarded, and will continue to regard, the hearts of men as His own, His exclusive possession. All else, whether pertaining to land or sea, whether riches or glory, He hath bequeathed unto the Kings and rulers of the earth. From the beginning that hath no beginning the ensign proclaiming the words "He doeth whatsoever He willeth" hath been unfurled in all its splendor before His Manifestation. What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom.

In "Surat al-Muluk" He protests the injustice of the continued confinement and repeated displacements of His followers, addressing the Minister of the Sháh of Iran to the court of the Sultán of the Ottoman Empire:

GL:229: Hath any of Mine acts, after Mine arrival in 'Iráq, been such as to subvert the authority of the government? Who is it that can be said to have detected any thing reprehensible in Our behavior? Enquire for thyself of its people, that thou mayest be of them who have discerned the truth.

From these and many other statements found in the published and translated Writings of Bahá'u'lláh we may plainly see that Bahá'u'lláh affirmed the "divine right" of Kings to rule, the legitimacy of monarchy; that He enjoined obedience to all governments and to Kings in particular to all mankind; and that He furthermore claimed to have done nothing whatsoever to "subvert the authority of the government". This is obviously not a republican or

revolutionary...indeed, this Prophet is not the least bit political. Bahá'u'lláh wrote to a number of these Emperors and Kings and other temporal rulers: Napoleon III, Emperor of the French (two Tablets); Czar Alexander II, Emperor of Russia; Kaiser Wilhelm I, Monarch of unified Germany; Francis Joseph (Holy Roman Empire: Austro-Hungarian monarchy); 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, Sultán of the Ottoman Empire and caliph of the Sunní Muslims; Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, King of Iran and supreme ruler of the Shí'í Muslims; Pope Pius IX, supreme head of the largest and most powerful denomination in Christendom and temporal ruler of realms in Italy; Queen Victoria, of the British Empire; French and Persian ambassadors to the court of the Sultán in Constantinople; messages to the Presidents of the American Republics, the Christian monarchs, Christian ecclesiastics, Muslim ecclesiastics. These Epistles are described by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By" and "The Promised Day is Come", and excerpts from them are published in English translations (by Shoghi Effendi) in both of those volumes and in "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh," "The Summons of the Lord of Hosts," "The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh" and "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", while a French translation (by the first French Bahá'í, Hippolyte Dreyfus) of the Tablets to Pope Pius IX, Napoleon III, Alexander II, Queen Victoria and Násiri'd-Dín Sháh are found in "L'Oeuvre de Bahá'u'lláh"⁵¹. In these Tablets Bahá'u'lláh praises, counsels, admonishes, warns.

In "Lawh-i-Abu'l-Fadl Gulpayagani" Bahá'u'lláh describes what will befall the monarch who protects this new Prophet of God and His followers:

GL:207: We cherish the hope that one of the kings of the earth will, for the sake of God, arise for the triumph of this wronged, this oppressed people. Such a king will be eternally extolled and glorified. God hath prescribed unto this people the duty of aiding whosoever will aid them, of serving his best interests, and of demonstrating to him their abiding loyalty. They who follow Me must strive, under all circumstances, to promote the welfare of whosoever will arise for the triumph of My Cause, and must at all times prove their devotion and fidelity unto him. Happy is the man that hearkeneth and observeth My counsel. Woe unto him that faileth to fulfill My wish.

In "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" Bahá'u'lláh repeats this affirmation, after addressing the Kings of the earth (KA:78,81-83) and just prior to His

proclamations to the Emperor of Austria (KA:85), the King of Berlin (KA:86), the Rulers of America and the Presidents of its Republics (KA:88):

KA:84: How great the blessedness that awaiteth the king who will arise to aid My Cause in My kingdom, who will detach himself from all else but Me! Such a king is numbered with the companions of the Crimson Ark--the Ark which God hath prepared for the people of Bahá. All must glorify his name, must reverence his station, and aid him to unlock the cities with the keys of My Name, the omnipotent Protector of all that inhabit the visible and invisible kingdoms. Such a king is the very eye of mankind, the luminous ornament on the brow of creation, the fountainhead of blessings unto the whole world. Offer up, O people of Bahá, your substance, nay, your very lives, for his assistance.

Bahá'u'lláh has addressed the learned and the rulers who become His followers as "the very eye of mankind". We might be more sure of His exact meaning when we read these words, from His "Lawh-i-Muhammad 'Alí" regarding the human eye:

GL:160: Consider the human eye. Though it hath the faculty of perceiving all creating things, yet the slightest impediment may so obstruct its vision as to deprive it of the power of discerning any object whatsoever. Magnified be the name of Him Who hath created, and is the Cause of, these causes, Who hath ordained that every change and variation in the world of being be made dependent upon them.

The learned may consider themselves learned, but in reality their learning is dependent upon God, and the good-pleasure of His Prophet. The rulers of the world may regard themselves as sovereigns, but in reality their sovereignty is conferred, dependent upon the Sovereignty of the King of Kings, Whose perfect mirror image and representation upon earth is the Prophet of the Age. Bahá'u'lláh proclaims the true relationship of all monarchs to God and their relationship to Him in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas":

KA:82: Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter

you from recognizing the Source of Revelation, lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.

Now we come to Judgment Day. For, no matter how many Tablets He revealed, no matter how many messengers He sent to deliver these Tablets, not one of the kings, emperors, or other rulers responded. The immediate consequences of that whole-scale rejection of the new Prophet are described by Shoghi Effendi:

"From two ranks amongst men," is His terse and Prophetic utterance, "power hath been seized: kings and ecclesiastics." "If ye pay no heed," He thus warned the kings of the earth, "unto the counsels which...We have revealed in this Tablet, Divine chastisement will assail you from every direction...On that day ye shall...recognize your own impotence." And again: "Though aware of most of Our afflictions, ye, nevertheless, have failed to stay the hand of the aggressor." And, furthermore, this arraignment: "...We...will be patient, as We have been patient in that which hath befallen Us at your hands, O concourse of kings!"

Condemning specifically the world's ecclesiastical leaders, He has written: "The source and origin of tyranny have been the divines...God, verily, is clear of them, and We, too, are clear of them." "When We observed carefully," He openly affirms, "We discovered that Our enemies are, for the most part, the divines." "O concourse of divines!" He thus addresses them, "Ye shall not henceforth behold yourselves possessed of any power, inasmuch as We have seized it from you..." "Had ye believed in God when He revealed Himself," He explains, "the people would not have turned aside from Him, nor would the things ye witness today have befallen Us." "They," referring more specifically to Muslim ecclesiastics, He asserts, "rose up against Us with such cruelty as hath sapped the strength of Islám..." "The divines of Persia," He affirms, "committed that which no people amongst the peoples of the world hath committed." ("God Passes By", pp. 230-31)

This was His warning and His prediction. The fulfillment of this general prophecy, and of His specific prophecies regarding particular kings will be discussed in the Fifteenth Proof. This story is also told briefly in "God Passes By" and in "The Promised Day is Come", in

both cases by Shoghi Effendi, and in some detail by William Sears in "The Prisoner and the Kings"⁵². Suffice it to say for the present that history has confirmed the truth of these words: "From two ranks among men power hath been seized: kings and ecclesiastics." Bahá'u'lláh affirmed that it is He who has seized this power, and that He returns it conditioned upon the obedience of these ranks to His counsels and commandments. Inasmuch as they have rejected those counsels and commandments they have been rendered impotent by Him. A startling statement from a Persian prisoner of conscience, written, as it were, from a jail cell! But in our time we know of other prisoners of conscience who wrote from jail cells and whose counsels shaped entire nations--Mohandas K. Gandhi in South Africa and India; 'Abdu'l-Ghaffar Khán in Afghanistan and Pakistan; Nelson Mandela in South Africa; and Martin Luther King Jr. in the USA. None of these men were Prophets, and yet their influence upon their people and upon humanity has been enormous, probably greater than that of any contemporary monarch.

The impact of Bahá'u'lláh upon mankind is more powerful than any force human beings have henceforth come into contact with. This is the power, the sovereignty of the Supreme Manifestation of God; this is the power of God Himself. Bahá'u'lláh writes in "Surat al-Muluk" to the Minister of the Sháh in Constantinople:

GL:219-20: Dost thou imagine, O Minister of the Sháh in the City (Constantinople), that I hold within My grasp the ultimate destiny of the Cause of God? Thinkest thou that My imprisonment, or the shame I have been made to suffer, or even My death and utter annihilation, can deflect its course? Wretched is what thou hast imagined in thine heart! Thou art indeed of them that walk after the vain imaginings which their hearts devise. No God is there but Him. Powerful is He to manifest His Cause, and to exalt His testimony, and to establish whatsoever is His Will, and to elevate it to so eminent a position that neither thine own hands, nor the hands of them that have turned away from Him, can ever touch or harm it. Dost thou believe thou hast the power to frustrate His Will, to hinder Him from executing His judgment, or to deter Him from exercising His sovereignty? Pretendest thou that aught in the heavens or in the earth can resist His Faith? No, by Him Who is the Eternal Truth! Nothing whatsoever in the whole of creation can thwart His Purpose.

As we look around us and see the world's order shaking and falling, the rulers of all human realms falling far short of our expectations and their promises, perhaps we will remember the promise of Isaiah (40:4): "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low". And with this in mind let us consider these words of Bahá'u'lláh in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas":

KA:181: The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System--the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

Bahá'u'lláh has "seized" the power from the rulers and the ecclesiastics. But He has not kept it for Himself alone: He has created a new World Order and bestowed upon it His power. It is this wondrous System which is embodied in the laws and counsels of Bahá'u'lláh, in His Covenant with mankind, and in the Administrative Order He has revealed to carry out those laws and counsels and to manifest that Covenant. In "Lawh-i-Dunya" Bahá'u'lláh writes:

TB:90: Were men to strictly observe that which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed in the Crimson Book, they could then well afford to dispense with the regulations which prevail in the world. Certain exhortations have repeatedly streamed forth from the Pen of the Most High that perchance the manifestations of power and the dawning-places of might may, sometime, be enabled to enforce them.

Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian of the Cause appointed in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was the Center of the Cause appointed in the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh, has written profusely on the subject of the structure of this new World Order, including this succinct passage from "The Promised Day is Come" (p.122):

"It is the structure of His New World Order, now stirring in the womb of the administrative institutions He Himself has created, that will serve both as a pattern and a nucleus of that world commonwealth which is the sure, the inevitable destiny of the peoples and nations of the earth."

TENTH PROOF

STAR IN THE HEAVENS HERALDING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

William Sears, in his popular book entitled "Thief in the Night" has identified a number of celestial phenomena which he evidently regarded as heralding the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Sir James Jeans, in "The Universe Around Us: Through Space and Time" has written⁵³: "...oddly enough many of the most conspicuous appearance of comets seem to have coincided with, or perhaps just anticipated, important events in history." In late 1845 a comet was seen which "appeared to be quite an ordinary comet in a year in which some 300 comets had appeared. It had been studied many times in the past."⁵⁴ Indeed, it was discovered by Wilhelm von Biela (1782-1856), a German astronomer and military officer, its orbit first determined in 1826, and accounts of its appearance had been found for 1772 and 1805⁵⁵. This comet, that of "Biela or Gambart, having a period of six years and three quarters...in 1846, it was seen to separate into two distinct comets, which kept moving side by side till they disappeared. On the return of the comet in the autumn of 1852, the distance between the two nuclei had much increased."⁵⁶ "On its return in 1846 it was in two parts, separated by about 157,000 miles, unequal in size, each having a distinct nucleus and tail. At the return in 1852, the parts were 1,250,000 miles asunder. Since then it has not been seen. It has been suggested that its orbit has crossed that of a meteoric shower, and that it has been broken up and dispersed as material for shooting stars."⁵⁷

Sir James Jeans writes of this comet: "The most interesting story is that of Biela's comet which broke in two while under observation in 1846."⁵⁸ He reports that in 1852 the two comets were one and a half million miles apart and that "neither of them has been seen in cometary form, but the place where they ought to be is occupied by a swarm of millions of meteors, known as the Andromedid meteors. Occasionally these meet the earth in its orbit, and make a grand meteoric display."⁵⁹

Another account of the appearance of this comet:

"It was found again late in November 1845, and in the following month an observation was made of one of the most remarkable phenomena in astronomical records, the division of the comet. It put forth no tail while this alteration was going on.

Professor Challis, using the Northumberland telescope at Cambridge, on January 15, 1846, was inclined to distrust his eyes or his glass when he beheld two comets where but one had been before. He would call it, he said, a binary (twin) comet if such a thing has ever been heard of before. His observations were soon verified, however...Late in August 1852, the larger came into view and three weeks later the smaller one, now much fainter than its former companion."⁶⁰

Whatever connection do these cosmic events have with Bahá'u'lláh? The signs in the sky heralding the Prophethood of the Báb are discussed in a separate volume. Inasmuch as the Báb declared His Prophethood on 22-23 May 1844, and Biela's comet did not appear in anything other than a regular fashion until its return on November 1845-January 1846, beginning over a year **after** that declaration, it is obvious to ever fair observer that this celestial sign cannot be considered to have heralded the Báb's Revelation.

On the other hand, this phenomenon may be understood as a sign of the virtually simultaneous emergence of Twin Manifestations of God, that is the appearance of a second Manifestation of God during the lifetime of a first Manifestation of God. This appearance of a second Manifestation of God became apparent to some of the followers of the Báb prior to his passing, and to a "requisite number of pure, of wholly consecrated and sanctified souls" (see below) by the year 1852. In this very same year, Biela's comet reappeared still split in two and with its twin members widely separated, neither of them ever to appear again, except, perhaps in an occasional meteor shower. While this celestial phenomenon was noted by Christian Adventists at the time, and documented by Le Roy Edwin Froom in "The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers"⁶¹ and by William Sears in his book "Thief in the Night"⁶², it is not explicitly referred to in the Bahá'í Writings. The Báb had predicted, in certain of His Writings (please see the First Proof) that "In the year nine ye will attain unto all good...in the year nine ye will attain unto the presence of God."⁶³ In reference to the preparation of souls for this year "nine", Bahá'u'lláh wrote, cited by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By":

GPB:92: Behold how immediately upon the completion of the ninth year of this wondrous, this most holy and merciful Dispensation, the requisite number of pure, of wholly consecrated and sanctified souls has been most secretly consummated.

Bahá'u'lláh also wrote the following:

GPB:92: That so brief an interval should have separated this most mighty and wondrous Revelation from Mine own previous Manifestation is a secret that no man can unravel, and a mystery such as no mind can fathom. Its duration had been foreordained.

Shoghi Effendi has written that Bahá'u'lláh was arrested on or immediately after the 15th of August 1852 -- the time of the reappearance of Biela's comet for the last time, two years and a month after the martyrdom of the Báb in Tabriz -- and that He was imprisoned in the Siyah-Chal in Tihrán. "His imprisonment lasted for a period of no less than four months, in the middle of which the 'year nine' (1269), anticipated in such glowing terms by the Báb..was ushered in, endowing with undreamt-of potentialities the whole world."⁶⁴ During this imprisonment Bahá'u'lláh received His call to Prophethood, thereby fulfilling the prophecy of the Báb regarding the year nine, and also synchronizing with the last appearance of Biela's comet, with one of its two members much larger and more brilliant than the other. Shoghi Effendi translated and cites three descriptions of Bahá'u'lláh's call to Prophethood and they are reproduced here:

GPB:101: One night in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: 'Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Ere long will God raise up the treasures of the earth --men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him.

GPB:101: During the days I lay in the prison of Tihrán, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.

GPB:102: I was but a man like others, asleep on My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over

Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.

This momentous event, this calling forth of a new Prophet--following so closely the Revelation of one who claimed, in the "Persian Bayán" (II:16), to be the greatest Prophet ever to appear to humanity, and who was called "King of the Messengers" by Bahá'u'lláh⁶⁵--took place in the summer and fall of 1852, at the beginning of the year nine (1269). It may well have been heralded in the physical heavens by the remarkable, the unusual phenomenon of the splitting of a comet, and then by the disappearance of that comet once its two parts had assumed a great distance from one another.

It might be pointed out that, according to the Islámic calendar, the Báb was born on the first day of the year, 1 Muharram, and Bahá'u'lláh was born on the second day of the year, 2 Muharram. Also, Bahá'u'lláh was born, according to that calendar, in the year 1233 (1817 AD) while the Báb was born in the year 1235 (1819 AD). Hence, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh were very close to each other in the days and years of their births. Like Biela's comet, these two prophetic luminaries appeared at first as one light, and born in such close proximity, joined in faith in the world of appearances from 1260 (1844 AD) and seemingly separating thereafter.

However, it would not be wise overemphasize this astral precursor inasmuch as it was not identified either by the Báb in any of His prophecies related to "Him Whom God shall make manifest", or by Bahá'u'lláh in His statements in fulfillment of those prophecies. On the other hand, Bahá'u'lláh does refer to a specific celestial sign in connection with His own Manifestation. In verses found in "Ishraqát" and reiterated in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" Bahá'u'lláh states that His coming fulfills all the signs prophesied in the Sacred Scriptures. Among these are the celestial signs promised in the Book of Joel, the Hebrew Prophet:

Joel:2:10: the heavens shall tremble: the sun and moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining...

Joel:2:31: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood...

The first cited passage is quoted by the apostle Peter in the Book of Acts (2:20):

2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 2:18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 2:19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Similar signs are also promised in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation:

Mt:24:29: shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven...

Mk:13:24-25: the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall...

Lk:21:25: And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars...

Rev:6:12-13: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

These celestial signs are also referred to in the Qur'án:

LXXV:4: But when the sight of mortals is confounded and the moon eclipsed; when sun and moon are brought together --on that day man will ask: 'Whither shall we flee?'

The meanings of these words are explained in "Kitáb-i-lqán" and "Some Answered Questions". They have two significances, one of

which is symbolic and spiritual, while the other is literal and physical. In interpreting the meaning of this verse in the Gospel of Matthew:

Mt:24:30: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

Bahá'u'lláh states the following in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:62: By "heaven" is meant the visible heaven, inasmuch as when the hour draweth nigh on which the Day-star of the heaven of justice shall be made manifest, and the Ark of divine guidance shall sail upon the sea of glory, a star will appear in the heaven, heralding unto its people the advent of that most great light. In like manner, in the invisible heaven a star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn. These twofold signs, in the visible and the invisible heaven, have announced the Revelation of each of the Prophets of God, as is commonly believed.

To return to "Ishraqát" (and "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf"):

TB:118: 'Have the stars fallen?' Say: 'Year, when He Who is the Self-Subsisting dwelt in the Land of Mystery. Take heed, ye who are endowed with discernment!' All the signs appeared when He drew forth the Hand of Power from the bosom of majesty and might.

Who is "He Who is the Self-Subsisting"? The "Self-Subsisting", "al-Qayyúm" is one of the names of Bahá'u'lláh. In his "Lawh-i-Bayán" Bahá'u'lláh says⁶⁶:

LB:1:133: It is thus that the Qayyúm, signifying the Manifestation of the year nine, appeared under the name Bahá.

What is the "Land of Mystery"? It is a name for the city of Adrianople⁶⁷, where Bahá'u'lláh lived from 12 December 1863⁶⁸ until 12 August 1868⁶⁹. It was from that "city of Adrianople" that Bahá'u'lláh made the public proclamation of his "Mission to the world's secular and ecclesiastical leaders"⁷⁰ Shoghi Effendi writes that in Adrianople:

“Tablets unnumbered were streaming from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, in which the implications of his newly-asserted claims were fully expounded. The Suriy-i-Amr, the Lawh-i-Nuqtih, the Lawh-i-Ahmad, the Suriy-i-Ashab, the Lawh-i-Sayyah, the Suriy-i-Damm, the Suriy-i-Hajj, the Lawhu'r-Ruh, the Lawhu'r-Ridván, the Lawhu't-Tuqa were among the Tablets which his pen had already set down when he transferred his residence to the house of 'Izzat Aqa...The Suriy-i-Muluk, the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh (Tablet of Kings) in which he, for the first time, directs his words collectively to the entire company of the monarchs of East and West, and in which the Sultán of Turkey, and his ministers, the kings of Christendom, the French and Persian Ambassadors accredited to the Sublime Porte, the Muslim ecclesiastical leaders in Constantinople, its wise men and inhabitants, the people of Persia and the philosophers of the world are separately addressed; the Kitáb-i-Badí', his apologia, written to refute the accusations levelled against him by Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Rashtí, corresponding to the Kitáb-i-Íqán, revealed in defense of the Bábí Revelation; the Munajathay-i-Siyam (Prayers for Fasting), written in anticipation of the Book of His Laws; the first Tablet to Napoleon III, in which the Emperor of the French is addressed and the sincerity of his professions put to the test; the Lawh-i-Sultán, his detailed epistle to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in which the aims, purposes and principles of his Faith are expounded and the validity of his Mission demonstrated; the Suriy-i-Ra'ís, begun in the village of Kashanih on his way to Gallipoli, and completed shortly after at Gyawur-Kyuy--these may be regarded not only as the most outstanding among the innumerable Tablets revealed in Adrianople, but as occupying a foremost position among all the writings of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation.” (GPB:172)

Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation to the kings and ecclesiastics marked the beginning of the end for them, one and all, as we have seen in the Ninth Proof. Hence, the symbolic and spiritual significance of this verse is confirmed in the "Ishraqát" and again in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf". As we would expect, there is also a literal and physical meaning for this verse, and this seems to be manifested in the meteor shower of 1866, a date which falls in the second half of Bahá'u'lláh's Adrianople sojourn.

“Popular interest has been largely aroused respecting "shooting-stars" by reason of the brilliant display of them which took place on the night of November 13, 1866. This "star-shower," the grandest that has ever been observed in Britain, was confidently

predicted, from the occurrence of a similar shower at a corresponding date in 1799, 1833, and 1834; and the extremely favorable state of the atmosphere rewarded those who were on the watch with a complete view of one of nature's most magnificent displays. The shower commenced about 11:30 p.m., with the appearance at brief intervals of single meteors; then they came in twos and threes, steadily and rapidly increasing in number till 1:13 a.m. on November 14, when no fewer than 57 appeared in one minute. From this time the intensity of the shower diminished gradually, wholly ceasing about 4:00 a.m. The total number of meteors which at that time came within the limits of the earth's atmosphere was estimated at about 240,000, and the number seen at each of the several observatories in Britain averaged nearly 6,000...On the morning of November 14, 1867, a star-shower equal in magnitude to that of 1866 was observed in France and America, but was almost wholly invisible in Britain, on account of the cloudy state of the atmosphere."⁷¹

There are a number of interesting and notable characteristics pertaining to this "star-fall" (meteor shower) of November 1866 and its sequel in November 1867. Bahá'u'lláh might have been referring to either or both of these "star-falls" in "Ishraqát", inasmuch as both occurred during his sojourn in Adrianople, and both of them were extremely impressive. The first "star-fall" took place beginning on 13 November and continuing on 14 November; the second "star-fall" also took place on the morning of 14 November. If we trace this phenomenon back one cycle, to 1833, we find that the event in question occurred on the morning of 13 November. If scientists are able to locate the "star-fall" which occurred two cycles back, inasmuch as the "star-fall" "recurs at an interval of 32 or 33 years"⁷², they are likely to find it reported in the evening of 12 November 1800 or 1801.

All of these times are very closely associated with the earthly lifespan of Bahá'u'lláh. Inasmuch as He makes reference to this "star-fall" as a fulfillment of Scriptural prophecy, we might consider the possibility that the day and month of this "star-fall" may be as significant as the year in which it occurred. On 12 November 1817 (corresponding to 2 Muharram 1233), Bahá'u'lláh was born, named Husayn 'Alí. Speaking of the number "33", we might note that the year of His birth is 1233 (AH), that the approximate length of this cycle of falling stars is 33 years, and that furthermore, the spectacular "star-fall" in 1833 in North America was widely regarded as a fulfillment of Scriptural prophecy. On 14 November 1833, "The New York Journal of Commerce" reported: "No philosopher or scholar has told or

recorded an event like that of yesterday morning. A Prophet eighteen hundred years ago foretold it exactly, if we will be at the trouble of understanding stars falling to mean falling stars."⁷³ William Sears quotes other reports of that "star-fall" including the following:

“Clarke in his "History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century" writes...'Once and for all, then, as the result of the star-fall of 1833, the study of luminous meteors became an integral part of astronomy...North America bore the brunt of its pelting. From the Gulf of Mexico to Halifax, until daylight with some difficulties put an end to the display, the sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs.' Denison Olmsted, Professor of Mathematics at Yale University, wrote the following in the "American Journal of Science": 'The morning of November 13th, 1833, was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably the more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded...' ...Professor Olmsted estimated 34,640 falling stars per hour. His estimate was made after the shower had diminished sufficiently for him to make some sort of a count. Dr. Humphreys, President of St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, in his report in the "American Journal of Science," said: 'In the words of most, they fell like flakes of snow.' The "American Journal of Science" carried the following report⁷⁴: 'Though there was no moon, when we first observed them, their brilliancy was so great that we could, at times, read common-sized print without much difficulty, and the light which they afforded was much whiter than that of the moon, in the clearest and coldest night, when the ground in covered with snow.'⁷⁵

Hence, this sign from the heavens, this falling of the stars was first witnessed in North America, and then, 33 years later, in Britain and 34 years later in France and again in America. If it was seen in France and America at the same time, in 1867, it is most likely that it was also visible in the Middle East. Perhaps this was not a sign from the heavens for the inhabitants of the entire planet--perhaps some regions were unable to witness the full glory of one or all of these "star-falls"--but it is virtually certain that they were observed by millions of men, women and children in North America, in Europe and most likely also in the Middle East. Bahá'u'lláh did not address His Tablets revealed in Adrianople to the rulers of Africa or China or India--he addressed the kings and ecclesiastics of the Middle East and Europe. Soon afterwards, from 'Akká, He would also address the presidents of the American Republics and the other rulers of the

American continents. It is likely that this physical fulfillment of prophecy was either witnessed by these men of power or reported to them by their subjects. In either case, they might have suspected that something significant was in the offing. To receive a Tablet from an unknown writer so soon after such a portentous event and to ignore the summons proclaimed therein could reasonably invite the recipient of that Tablet to answer for his disinterest, for, according to the Eighth Ishraq⁷⁶, the “structure of world stability and order hath been reared upon, and will continue to be sustained by, the twin pillars of reward and punishment.” “Small wonder that He Who is the King of Kings and the Vice-gerent of God Himself should, when abandoned, contemned and persecuted, have uttered this epigrammatic and momentous prophecy: ‘From two ranks amongst men power hath been seized: kings and ecclesiastics.’”⁷⁷

ELEVENTH PROOF
THE PERFECT MAN WHO HERALDED BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh describes this Proof as follows:

KI:62: In like manner, in the invisible heaven a star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn.

KI:66: The sign of the invisible heaven must needs be revealed in the person of that perfect man who, before each Manifestation appeareth, educateth, and prepareth the souls of men for the advent of the divine Luminary, the Light of the unity of God amongst men.

One of the extraordinary aspects of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is this: that His herald is none other than a Manifestation of God Himself! Bahá'u'lláh specifically calls the Báb, the Primal Point, His Herald, in addressing His half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá (known as Subh-i-Azal) in "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyih":

TB:75: Were the Point of the Bayán present in this day and should He, God forbid, hesitate to acknowledge this Cause, then the very blessed words which have streamed forth from the wellspring of His Own Bayán would apply to Him. He saith, and His word is the truth, 'Lawful is it for Him Whom God will make manifest to reject him who is the greatest on earth.' Say, O ye that are bereft of understanding! Today that Most Exalted Being is proclaiming: 'Verily, verily, I am the first to adore Him.' How shallow is the fund of men's knowledge and how feeble their power of perception...These words were formerly spoken by My Herald Who at this hour proclaimeth: 'Verily, verily, I am the first to adore Him.'

In "Ishraqát" He addresses His follower entitled Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin and calls the Báb His Herald:

TB:132: Our Exalted Herald--may the life of all else besides Him be offered up for His sake--hath revealed certain laws. However, in the realm of His Revelation these laws were made subject to Our sanction, hence this Wronged One hath put some of them into effect by embodying them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in different words. Others We set aside. He holdeth in His hand the authority. He doeth what He willeth and He ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth. He is the Almighty, the All-Praised. There are also ordinances newly

revealed. Blessed are they that attain. Blessed are they that observe His precepts.

In a Tablet found in "Prayers and Meditations", Bahá'u'lláh describes this Herald of His Revelation:

P&M:128-29: Thou didst successively reveal the Manifestations of Thy Cause...until the time when, as decreed by Thee, all Thy previous Revelations culminated in Him Whom Thou hast appointed as the Lord of all who are in the heaven of revelation and the kingdom of creation, Him Whom Thou hast established as the Sovereign Lord of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. He is was Whom Thou hast determined to be the Herald of Thy Most Great Revelation and the Announcer of Thy Most Ancient Splendor.

Bahá'u'lláh refers to His Herald in another Tablet found in "Prayers and Meditations":

P&M:179-80: And when the Pledge was fulfilled and the Promised One appeared, He was rejected by such of Thy servants as profess to have believed in Him in Whom Thy Godhead was manifested, Whom Thou didst ordain to be the Herald of this Revelation, and through Whose advent the eyes of the inmates of the sanctuary of Thy unity were cheered.

In yet another Tablet found in the "Prayers and Meditations" of Bahá'u'lláh:

P&M:275: This is the Day, O my Lord, which Thou didst announce unto all mankind as the Day whereon Thou wouldst reveal Thy Self, and shed Thy radiance, and shine brightly over all Thy creatures. Thou hast, moreover, entered into a covenant with them, in Thy Books, and Thy Scriptures, and Thy Scrolls, and Thy Tablets, concerning Him Who is the Day-Spring of Thy Revelation, and hast appointed the Bayán to be the Herald of this Most Great and all-glorious Manifestation, and this most resplendent and most sublime Appearance.

These unequivocal passages from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh mandate, justify and explain the identification of the Báb as the Herald of

Bahá'u'lláh in the writings of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. In ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's history entitled "Maqala-yi Shakhsi Sayyah ki dar Tafsil-i Qaziya-yi Báb Nivishtih Shudih" and translated into English by Professor E.G. Browne as "A Traveler's Narrative written to illustrate the episode of the Báb"⁷⁸, describes the principal purpose of the Báb as follows:

“But the essence and purport of His compositions were the praises and descriptions of that Reality soon to appear which was His only object and aim, His darling, and His desire. For He regarded His own appearance as that of a harbinger of good tidings, and considered His own real nature merely as a means for the manifestation of the greater perfections of that One. And indeed He ceased not from celebrating Him by night or day for a single instant...”

Shoghi Effendi likewise describes the station and mission of the Báb, in "God Passes By"⁷⁹: "He, unlike the Founder of the Christian religion, is not only to be regarded as the independent Author of a divinely revealed Dispensation, but must also be recognized as the Herald of a new Era and the Inaugurator of a great universal Prophetic cycle." In "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," Shoghi Effendi explains that the Báb was an independent Prophet and the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh⁸⁰:

“That He is not to be regarded merely as an inspired Precursor of the Bahá'í Revelation, that in His person, as He Himself bears witness in the Persian Bayán, the object of all the Prophets gone before Him has been fulfilled, is a truth which I feel it my duty to demonstrate and emphasize...Indeed the greatness of the Báb consists primarily, not in His being the divinely-appointed Forerunner of so transcendent a Revelation, but rather in His having been invested with the powers inherent in the inaugurator of a separate religious Dispensation, and in His wielding, to a degree unrivaled by the Messengers gone before Him, the scepter of independent Prophethood.”

Bahá'u'lláh has stated that the "sign of the invisible heaven must needs be revealed in the person of that perfect man who, before each Manifestation appeareth, educateth, and prepareth the souls of men for the advent of the divine Luminary" (KI:66); what more "perfect man" could be conceived of than the Manifestation of God? As He has written in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:102-103: Man, the noblest and most perfect of all created things, excelleth them all in the intensity of this revelation, and is a fuller expression of its glory. And of all men, the most accomplished, the most distinguished and the most excellent are the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth.

The Báb is the only independent and universal Manifestation of God who is also the Herald of the Manifestation who is to follow Him. And furthermore, so great is this Revelation of His and that of His Successor that Bahá'u'lláh declares that they are Twin Manifestations, that He is the Latter Manifestation and the Báb is the Former Manifestation of the same Truth. In "Prayers and Meditations" He declares in one of the prayers for the Fast:

P&M:85: Magnify Thou, moreover, such as have believed in Him and in His signs and have turned towards Him, from among those that have acknowledged Thy unity in His Latter Manifestation--a Manifestation whereof He hath made mention in His Books, and in His Scriptures, and in all the wondrous verses and gem-like utterances that have descended upon Him.

In another prayer included in "Prayers and Meditations" he addresses God:

P&M:119: Overpower by Thy Name, the All-Subduing, such as have wronged Thy Previous Manifestation Who hath now appeared invested with Thy title, the All-Glorious.

In "Lawh-i-Ahmad Quli Khán" Bahá'u'lláh writes:

GL:147: And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of the Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all things.

Bahá'u'lláh in "Lawh-i-Dhabih" reiterates this theme:

GL:244-45: Behold how the people of the Bayán have utterly failed to recognize that the sole object of whatsoever My Previous Manifestation and Harbinger of My Beauty hath revealed hath been My Revelation and the proclamation of My Cause. Never--and to this He Who is the Sovereign Truth

beareth Me witness--would He have, but for Me, pronounced what He did pronounce.

In his "Will and Testament," 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to Shoghi Effendi, who was descended from the families of the Báb and of Bahá'u'lláh in these words (BWF:439:

“Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the twin surging seas...”

TWELFTH PROOF
TRIUMPH OF THE CAUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

In "Surat al-Muluk" Bahá'u'lláh explains that the Cause of God can not be stopped and that its triumph is assured:

GL:219-20: No God is there but Him. Powerful is He to manifest His Cause, and to exalt His testimony, and to establish whatsoever is His Will, and to elevate it to so eminent a position that neither thine own hands, nor the hands of them that have turned away from Him, can ever touch or harm it. Dost thou believe thou hast the power to frustrate His Will, to hinder Him from executing His judgment, or to deter Him from exercising His sovereignty? Pretendest thou that aught in the heavens or in the earth can resist His Faith? No, by Him Who is the Eternal Truth! Nothing whatsoever in the whole of creation can thwart His Purpose...

Know thou, moreover, that He it is Who hath, by His own behest, created all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. How can, then the thing that hath been created at His bidding prevail against Him? High is God exalted above what ye imagine about Him, ye people of malice! If this be the Cause of God, no man can prevail against it; and if it be not of God, the divines amongst you, and they that follow their corrupt desires and such as have rebelled against Him will surely suffice to overpower it.

This is an entirely reasonable argument --how can the contingent being, the creation prevail against the eternal and uncreated, the Creator "of all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth"? We do not even know "all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth" --we are discovering new creations, new contingent beings all the time. How could we possibly overpower that which is entirely out of this world, which we have no direct experience of, which has given us being and which sustains all existences? The very thought is absurd and impossible. Bahá'u'lláh then assures His reader that the test of the truth of the Cause of God is its survival, its triumph in the face of all obstacles. Surely, He argues, if the combined forces of opposition which are arrayed against this Cause fail to extinguish its light, this is a proof of its truth. There are three kinds of opposition which He mentions here: 1)"the divines amongst you"; 2)"they that follow their corrupt desires"; 3)"such as have rebelled against Him". All those who oppose the new Prophet, and, in so doing, God Himself, are opponents, and these are called "letters of negation" and "letters of denial" by the Báb in "Bayán-i-fársí" (II:2, II:9); "devils" (Arabic:

shaytanim) in the Qur'án; "adversaries" and "accusers" (Hebrew: satanim) in the Tanakh.

The opposition of the divines, which occurs in every Dispensation (see: Sixteenth Proof), is listed first because it is the origin of all other opposition. Generally the people follow their religious leaders, and in particular when these leaders set themselves in opposition to something or someone, as it is always easier to follow than to lead, and to tear down than to build up, to condemn "untruth" than to embody truth.

The second category of opposition is composed of those "that follow their corrupt desires", and this would appear to refer to all those individuals who are jealously protective of their liberty, their privilege, their "freedom" to do as they please; these ones set themselves against the Cause of God because it infringes upon the manner to which they are accustomed to living or the manner to which they aspire to become accustomed to living. They enjoy their superstitions, their prejudices, they revel in bloodshed and torture, in rape and pillage, in intoxication and fornication, in all varieties of bestial behavior. They want to be left free to think and behave like animals, and they do not want to be reminded that they have been created by God, that their existence has a purpose, that they are called to transcend the animal nature. These are eager to join the clergy, the "divines" in every Dispensation in repudiating the truth of the new Prophet, in rejecting His Book, His Law, the Law of God.

The third factor among those who oppose, are "such as have rebelled against Him", and this seems to refer to those who were followers of the new Prophet and who pledged allegiance to Him and who later turned away and "rebelled against Him". In the Dispensation of Moses there were the many Israelites during the long journey from the land of slavery, Egypt, through the Sinai wilderness to the Promised Land who rebelled against His authority and the Law of God revealed to them. The Torah relates several instances when groups of the Israelites turned away from Moses and from God and were punished for this action; the other Books of the Tanakh, the Neviim and Ketuvim likewise tell many accounts of the Israelite people rebelling against the authority of God, and describing the consequences of these rebellions. In the Dispensation of Jesus Christ the most obvious rebel was the disciple named Judas, who betrayed his Master for a few silver coins, and so regretted his action that he hung himself almost immediately afterward; also there is the cowardice and disobedience of

the first and foremost apostle of the Messiah, named Simon Peter, who denied his Master three times as prophesied by Jesus Christ, and who wept bitterly when he realized what he had done. In the Dispensation of Muhammad there were also those who rebelled against Muhammad and against his chosen Imams. Likewise, in the Dispensation of the Báb certain of his initial followers apostasized, and the disciple whom he chose to lead his community until such time as the Promised One should appear, a half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh originally named Mírzá Yahyá (known as Subh-i-Azal), refused to recognize the authority of Bahá'u'lláh when he declared himself to be that Promised One, and in so doing he rebelled against the Covenant of the Báb, and was the cause of the rebellion of a few of those who initially accepted Bahá'u'lláh as "Him Whom God shall make manifest", promised by the Báb. In the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, those who have "rebelled against Him" are called Covenant-breakers or violators (Arabic: naqadhin) of the Covenant of God, and they include those who rebelled against Bahá'u'lláh, against the provisions of His "Kitáb-i-'Ahd" -- which appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the absolute authority to succeed Him -- and against 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the provisions of his "Will and Testament", which appointed his grandson, Shoghi Effendi as the absolute authority to succeed him. Now that the Universal House of Justice has been established --also deriving its authority from the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá-- those who rebel against this Institution are, at its discretion, declared to be violators of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of these forces arrayed against the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the effects of such opposition to that Cause:

“At the time when this great Light suddenly arose upon the horizon of Persia, all the people, the ministers, the ‘ulamá’, and men of other classes rose against him, pursuing him with the greatest animosity, and proclaiming "that this man wishes to suppress and destroy the religion, the law, the nation, and the empire." The same was said of Christ. But Bahá'u'lláh alone and without support resisted them all, without ever showing the least weakness. At last they said: "As long as this man is in Persia there will be no peace and tranquillity; we must banish him, so that Persia may return to a state of quietude." They proceeded to use violence towards him to oblige him to ask for permission to leave Persia, thinking that by this means the light of his truth would be extinguished, but the result was quite the contrary. The Cause became magnified, and its flame more intense. At first it spread throughout Persia only, but the exile of Bahá'u'lláh caused the

diffusion of the Cause throughout other countries. Afterwards his enemies said, "Íráq 'Arabi is not far enough from Persia; we must send him to a more distant kingdom." This is why the Persian Government determined to send Bahá'u'lláh from Íráq to Constantinople. Again the event proved that the Cause was not in the least weakened; once more they said, "Constantinople is a place of passage and of sojourn for various races and peoples, among them are many Persians." For this reason the Persians further exiled him to Roumelia; but, when there, the flame became more powerful, and the Cause more exalted.

"At last the Persians said, "Not one of these places is safe from his influence, we must send him to some place where he will be reduced to powerlessness, and where his family and followers will have to submit to the direst afflictions." So they chose the prison of 'Akká, which is reserved especially for murderers, thieves, and highway robbers, and in truth they classed him with such people. But the power of God became manifested: his word was promulgated, and the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh then became evident, for it was from this prison and under such circumstances that he caused Persia to advance from knowledge to knowledge. He overcame all his enemies, and proved to them that they could not resist the Cause. His holy teachings penetrated all regions, and his Cause was established.

"Indeed, in all parts of Persia his enemies arose against him with the greatest hatred, imprisoning, killing, and beating his converts; and burning and razing to the ground thousands of dwellings, striving by every means to exterminate and crush the Cause. In spite of all this, from the prison of murderers, highway robbers, and thieves, it became exalted. His teachings were spread abroad, and his exhortations affected many of those who had been the most full of hatred, and made them firm believers; even the Persian Government itself became awakened, and regretted that which had arisen through the fault of the 'ulamá'." (SAQ:35-38)

For anyone who wishes to verify for himself that Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause were opposed by the "divines" and by "they that follow their corrupt desires" there are many historical accounts available, some of which can be found in selected works of such European scholars as Edward G. Browne, Victor Rosen, Alexander Tumansky. Shoghi Effendi devotes a number of pages in his history "God Passes By" to a description of the opposition of "such as have rebelled against Him", beginning with the rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá (known as Subh-i-Azal):

“A twenty-year-old Faith had just begun to recover from a series of successive blows when a crisis of first magnitude overtook it and shook it to its roots. Neither the tragic martyrdom of the Báb nor the ignominious attempt on the life of the sovereign, nor its bloody aftermath, nor Bahá'u'lláh's humiliating banishment from His native land, nor even His two-year withdrawal to Kurdistán, devastating though they were in their consequences, could compare in gravity with this first major internal convulsion which seized a newly rearsen community, and which threatened to cause an irreparable breach in the ranks of its followers. More odious than the unrelenting hostility which Abu-Jahl, the uncle of Muhammad, had exhibited, more shameful than the betrayal of Jesus Christ by His disciple, Judas Iscariot, more perfidious than the conduct of the sons of Jacob towards Joseph their brother, more abhorrent than the deed committed by one of the sons of Noah, more infamous than even the criminal act perpetrated by Cain against Abel, the monstrous behavior of Mírzá Yahyá, one of the half-brothers of Bahá'u'lláh, the nominee of the Báb, and recognized chief of the Bábí community, brought in its wake a period of travail which left its mark on the fortunes of the Faith for no less than half a century.” (GPB:163)

This first rebellion is described in some detail in Chapter X of "God Passes By" and by H.M. Balyuzi in "Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory". A summary of this story, based upon the account by Shoghi Effendi is here cited. The Báb appointed Mírzá Yahyá (known as Subh-i-Azal), to become the chief of the Bábí community upon His passing. Mírzá Yahyá assumed that position but did not exercise it in any systematic or constructive fashion, according to the Bahá'í reports of the period in question, from July 1850 until April 1863. Bahá'u'lláh became cognizant of His Mission, that He was "Him Whom God shall make manifest" promised by the Báb in many of His writings during the fall of 1852, in fulfillment of the Báb's prediction that a great event would take place during the year "nine", in other words, in 1269, which began in October 1852. After Bahá'u'lláh's release from the prison Siyah-Chal in Tíhrán, in mid-December 1852, very gradually individuals began to recognize His station, that is, that He was "Him Whom God shall make manifest" promised by the Báb, but they were enjoined by Him to keep this knowledge secret until the appointed time. Mírzá Yahyá was not one of these individuals who recognized Bahá'u'lláh's Prophethood prior to His declaration thereof to some of His followers on the eve of His departure from Baghdád, in April 1863, and openly during the subsequent three years. Nor did Mírzá Yahyá indicate at the time of that declaration or at any other time that

He accepted Bahá'u'lláh's claims. However, at that time Mírzá Yahyá did not specifically deny his half-brother's claims. Since the age of eight, Mírzá Yahyá had been informally adopted by his older half-brother, and at this time Bahá'u'lláh was providing for his needs. He instructed Mírzá Yahyá to transcribe a number of the writings of the Báb while they were residing in Baghdád, and this Mírzá Yahyá accomplished. On the eve of His departure for Constantinople, Bahá'u'lláh gave Mírzá Yahyá another task to accomplish—he was to take these writings of the Báb to Iran and to disseminate them among the Bábís. The rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá seems to have begun at this point...instead of following the command of his half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá instead left the writings he had transcribed in Baghdád, from whence they seem to have disappeared, and made his way to Constantinople independently of the entourage of Bahá'u'lláh. While this was apparently his first rebellion against Bahá'u'lláh, Mírzá Yahyá had already shown himself to be of an unscrupulous and immoral character, as the reader may judge from reading Shoghi Effendi's account. Mírzá Yahyá, urged on by another rebellious Bábí named Siyyid Muhammad, followed Bahá'u'lláh to Constantinople and then to Adrianople, and at this latter city they and their band of dissident Bábís hatched various schemes to get the entourage of Bahá'u'lláh in trouble with the Ottoman Imperial authorities and to foreshorten or end the life of Bahá'u'lláh himself. Their schemes resulted in the banishment of Bahá'u'lláh and His household to the prison fortress of 'Akká, in the Ottoman province of Syria, and of Mírzá Yahyá and a few other individuals to Famagusta, on the island of Cyprus. In this regard his machinations utterly failed, inasmuch as his exile to Famagusta resulted in the irrevocable decline and extinction of his pretensions to leadership in the Bábí community, while the exile of Bahá'u'lláh to 'Akká resulted in the glorification of His Cause and the fulfillment of prophecies. Also, Mírzá Yahyá's attempts to shorten or end Bahá'u'lláh's life were unsuccessful, although His health was harmed to some degree, and the animosity of His half-brother continued to distress Him for the duration of His life, as evidenced by His references thereto in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf", written in the year previous to His passing (1891).

The rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá and of those who chose to follow his leadership from among the Bábís continued to reverberate after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh (in 1892) and Mírzá Yahyá (in 1911), manifesting itself in opposition to the Bahá'ís in Iran and to the leadership of the Bahá'í community by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and then by Shoghi Effendi. This opposition has however entirely failed of its

purpose, namely to undermine the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. According to the criterion of this Twelfth Proof of Prophethood, the triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the ignominious failure of the schismatic rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá and of his followers, called Azalís, is in itself proof that Bahá'u'lláh's Cause is the Cause of God while the Azalí schism is nothing other than the work of men. If Mírzá Yahyá, who ultimately claimed to be "Him Whom God shall manifest" after he was expelled from the household of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, had been the true Prophet from God and Bahá'u'lláh the false pretender then surely the Azalís would have prevailed rather than the Bahá'ís. This is the logic inherent in this proof of Prophethood.

This was the first rebellion, which resulted in some of the Bábís turning away from "Him Whom God shall make manifest" even before He declared His Prophethood, beginning in April 1863. The second rebellion occurred shortly after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh when it was discovered that He had expressed His wish in His "Kitáb-i-'Ahd" (Book of the Covenant) and also in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" and "Lawh-i-Ghusn" (Tablet of the Branch) that His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá assume leadership of His followers upon His demise. Shoghi Effendi describes this rebellion in Chapter XV of "God Passes By" and a summary of this story is provided here for the convenience of the reader. First, to quote a passage from "God Passes By":

“Before the Faith, however, could plant its banner in the midmost heart of the North American continent, and from thence establish its outposts over so vast a portion of the Western world, the newly born Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh had, as had been the case with the Faith that had given it birth, to be baptized with a fire which was to demonstrate its solidity and proclaim its indestructibility to an unbelieving world. A crisis, almost as severe as that which had assailed the Faith in its earliest infancy in Baghdád, was to shake the Covenant to its foundations at the very moment of its inception, and subject afresh the Cause of which it was the noblest fruit to one of the most grievous ordeals experienced in the course of an entire century.

“This crisis, misconceived as a schism, which political as well as ecclesiastic adversaries, no less than the fast dwindling remnant of the followers of Mírzá Yahyá hailed as a signal for the immediate disruption and final dissolution of the system established by Bahá'u'lláh was provoked by no less than a member of His own family, a half-brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, specifically named in the book of the Covenant, and holding a rank second to none except Him Who had been appointed as the Center of that Covenant. For no less than

four years that emergency fiercely agitated the minds and hearts of a vast proportion of the faithful throughout the East, eclipsed, for a time, the Orb of the Covenant, created an irreparable breach within the ranks of Bahá'u'lláh's own kindred, sealed ultimately the fate of the great majority of the members of His family, and gravely damaged the prestige, though it never succeeded in causing a permanent cleavage in the structure, of the Faith itself.”(GPB:245-46)

The story of this second rebellion begins with the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, the interpreter of His writings and the only legitimate leader of His followers. This appointment was made in "Kitab-i-‘Ahd" and in that same Book the half-brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí was appointed to follow his brother in the event of the former's decease. Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí and certain other members of the family of Bahá'u'lláh would not accept the provisions of "Kitab-i-‘Ahd", rejected and rebelled against the authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, sought to establish a rival branch of the Bahá'í Cause, and did everything they could to win converts in the Bahá'í communities, particularly in Iran but also in Syria (Palestine), Egypt, Europe and North America, and to undermine the relationship of the legitimate leadership of the Cause with the ecclesiastical and governmental authorities in the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Kingdom. Shoghi Effendi writes:

“Gradually and with unyielding persistence, through lies, half-truths, calumnies and gross exaggerations, this "Prime Mover of sedition" succeeded in ranging on his side almost the entire family of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as a considerable number of those who had formed His entourage. Bahá'u'lláh's two surviving wives, His two sons, the vacillating Mírzá Diya'u'llah and the treacherous Mírzá Badi'u'llah, with their sister and half-sister and their husbands, one of them the infamous Siyyid ‘Alí, a kinsman of the Báb, the other the crafty Mírzá Majdi'd-Din, together with his sister and half-brothers--the children of the noble, faithful and now deceased Aqay-i-Kalim--all united in a determine effort to subvert the very foundations of the Covenant which the newly proclaimed Will had laid. Even Mírzá Áqa Ján, who for forty years had labored as Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis, as well as Muhammad Javad-i-Qasvini, who ever since the days of Adrianople, had been engaged in transcribing the innumerable Tablets revealed by the Supreme Pen, together with his entire family, threw in their lot with the Covenant-breakers, and allowed themselves to be ensnared by their machinations.” (GPB:247)

The attempts of this group, led by Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí, to establish this claims among the generality of believers were utterly without fruit, but descendants of these rebels have continued to make difficulties for the Bahá’ís, during the ministry of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, and even during the period following the establishment of the Universal House of Justice. In particular these rebels held on to certain properties associated with Bahá’u’lláh well into the latter half of the 20th century, and presumably will continue their unlawful possession of certain Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí and his band of protestants failed to unseat the lawfully appointed Center of the Covenant, and to impede the progress of the Cause, and hence, once again, the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh has triumphed over the attacks of "such as have rebelled against Him". As for the fate of these violators of the Covenant, each individually is described in "God Passes By" (p. 319).

During the ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and following close on the heels of the rebellion of Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí was the attempt by Ibrahim G. Khayru'llah, after establishing the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh in North America, to assume a leadership position of his own invention, and his subsequent alliance with Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Bahá’í community. The story of this man's campaign of opposition is described in Chapter XVI of "God Passes By". Initially, Khayru'llah's disobedience to the Covenant resulted in the split of the community of believers in North America into two factions, one allied to him and the other to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Over time all of his followers either returned to the Bahá’í fold, discontinued membership in his rival movement or died of natural circumstances and without spiritual heirs. Consequently, while the community of Bahá in North America grew steadily in numbers and influence over the decades, under the leadership of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and then Shoghi Effendi, the followers of Khayru'llah dwindled and eventually disappeared. Khayru'llah is now, at the start of the 21st century, known to his descendants and to the Bahá’ís alike as a man who attempted to establish his own personal "school" of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, who tried and failed. He was the teacher of every one of that first generation of believers in North America, but, when he turned away from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, when he turned away from the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, he was repudiated by his own students, and thereafter all of his efforts came to naught. His fate is also described in "God Passes By"⁸¹.

Nine days after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá --which occurred on 28 November 1921-- his "Will and Testament" was unsealed and read in the presence of witnesses and it was found that it appointed Shoghi Effendi as the first Guardian of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, the interpreter of the Bahá'í Writings, the expounder of the Bahá'í Teachings, and the President of the Universal House of Justice, which it was his responsibility to establish. During the ministry of Shoghi Effendi, most of the members of his immediate family rebelled against his authority and were eventually expelled from the community of believers. Also, some prominent Persian believers rebelled, including Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, in America, who had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary for seven years and as the principal translator of his Tablets into English for twenty years; and 'Abd al-Husayn Ayatí Taftí, known as Jinab-i-Avarih, in Egypt and Persia, who had been acclaimed as the greatest historian of the Bábí and Bahá'í religions by the Guardian himself.

The next rebellion against the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh occurred a couple of years after the demise of Shoghi Effendi, on 4 November 1957. In 1959 the President of the International Bahá'í Council, Hand of the Cause of God Charles Mason Remey, resigned from that body, disavowed the decisions of the otherwise united Hands of the Cause, and unilaterally proclaimed himself the second Guardian of the Cause. He could not support his candidacy with a proof text of any kind, and while the Hands of the Cause did not have the authority to formally expel him from the community of believers, they determined that they had no option but to call for his excommunication pending the approval of the Universal House of Justice inasmuch as to tolerate his open rebellion might otherwise have brought about the fragmentation of the Bahá'í community. Charles Mason Remey persisted in his claims until he died, appointing two rival "Guardians" to succeed him. He was followed by a few Americans, Frenchmen, Indians, Pakistanis and a scattering of other individuals. Although his rebellion severely traumatized the Bahá'í community, it did not impair the unity of the Cause, and, according to plan, the Universal House of Justice was established, in April 1963, and the Cause of God has remained intact and has grown miraculously during the past forty six years, while the Remeyites have dwindled and floundered and fragmented and pose no real threat either to the integrity of the Cause or to its propagation. The Universal House of Justice upheld the expulsion of Charles Mason Remey and his followers upon its election, and has continued to watch over the Bahá'í community, through its network of Counsellors and Auxiliary Board Members and their Assistants, to

protect that community from rebellion in its ranks, from attacks from outside its ranks, and to promote the expansion of the Cause among the generality of humankind. Individuals who rebel against God, against His Prophet, against the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh --and these are synonymous in their implications for the individual's soul and his status in the community of believers-- are counselled, warned, sanctioned, and, in some extreme cases, declared violators of the Covenant. Only the Universal House of Justice has the prerogative to declare an individual a Covenant-breaker. The purpose of this short history of "such as have rebelled against Him" is to show that the attempts of the opponents of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh to impede the progress and to deflect the course of his Cause have been entirely unsuccessful. Perhaps it would be well to recall the alledged comment of Queen Victoria, after reading an English translation of Bahá'u'lláh's "Lawh-i-Malakat Victuriya" (Tablet of Queen Victoria): "If this is of God, it will endure; if not, it can do no harm."⁸²

THIRTEENTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ANNULS LAWS OF THE BÁB

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the annulment of the laws of one Dispensation by those of the succeeding Dispensation in many passages including this one which refers specifically to His own Dispensation, which had not yet been proclaimed:

KI:199-200: In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus the Gospel; in the days of Muhammad the Messenger of God the Qur'an; in this day the Bayán; and in the Dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest His own Book--the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book which standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme.

Having proclaimed Himself as "Him Whom God will make manifest", beginning in 1863, over ten years after He became cognizant of His Mission while imprisoned in the Siyah-Chal in Tíhrán, Bahá'u'lláh assumed the privilege and indeed the requirement of every universal Manifestation, to abrogate the laws of His predecessor.

Just as the Báb had revealed His new laws and teachings, abrogating those of His predecessor, Muhammad, gradually and progressively over the course of some years, likewise Bahá'u'lláh did not test the faith of His followers, many of whom were recently converted adherents of the Bábí, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian and Jewish communities, by revealing many new laws until he was sure that the people of Bahá were ready for these laws. Most of His new laws and teachings were revealed after Bahá'u'lláh was established in 'Akká, after 1870, seven years after His open declaration of His Prophethood in Baghdád, and three or more years after His proclamation to the ecclesiastical and governmental authorities in Adrianople. Also, these new laws were not enforced immediately, while certain of these laws were enforced in certain nations before other nations; indeed, many of them have yet to be universally enforced to this day, awaiting conditions which have yet to be realized among the people of Bahá and among the larger populations in which they find themselves. Nevertheless, Bahá'u'lláh did abrogate the laws of the Báb, and of all Dispensations prior to that of the Báb, as attested by this passage from "Ishraqát", and a study of His laws and teachings and their comparison with those of previous Prophets of God:

TB:132: Our Exalted Herald--may the life of all else besides Him be offered up for His sake--hath revealed certain laws. However, in the realm of His Revelation these laws were made subject to Our sanction, hence this Wronged One hath

put some of them into effect by embodying them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in different words. Others We set aside. He holdeth in His hand the authority. He doeth what He willeth and He ordained whatsoever He pleaseth. He is the Almighty, the All-Praised. There are also ordinances newly revealed. Blessed are they that attain. Blessed are they that observe His precepts.

KA: #142: Verily, He [the Báb] revealed certain laws so that, in this Dispensation, the Pen of the Most High might have no need to move in aught but the glorification of His own transcendent Station and His most effulgent Beauty. Since, however, We have wished to evidence Our bounty unto you, We have, through the power of truth, set forth these laws with clarity and mitigated what We desire you to observe. He, verily, is the Munificent, the Generous.

A comparative study of the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" and other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in which laws are revealed with the contents of the "Bayán-i-fársí", the "Bayán al-'Arabí" and the "Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'" would demonstrate that a considerable number of the laws of the Báb have indeed been reaffirmed in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh while others have not been mentioned. It would seem from these two texts that the laws of the Báb which were to be put into effect in the Dispensation of "Him Whom God will make manifest" --for the Báb clearly states that all of His laws are subject to the sanction of "Him Whom God will make manifest", and, in any case, an independent Prophet must abrogate the laws of His predecessor, as stated in "Kitáb-i-Íqán" and in the writings of the Báb-- are those which have been put "into effect by embodying them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in different words." Hence, the laws revealed by the Báb and not mentioned by Bahá'u'lláh would seem to belong to those which the Latter Manifestation "set aside". Bahá'u'lláh also specifically reveals laws which contradict certain laws of the Báb, and also "ordinances newly revealed". A detailed survey of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh and their comparison with those of the Báb and of previous Manifestations of God is of course far beyond the purposes of this study. However, a limited exposition on this subject will be found in the Twenty-third Proof, and more lengthy dissertations can no doubt be discovered. Among the laws of the Báb which were specifically abrogated by Bahá'u'lláh are the following (derived from a study of the most recent publication of the English translations of "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" and "Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas"):

1. Bayán gives age of maturity at 11; Bahá'u'lláh changes it to 15
2. Bayán stipulates use of an obligatory prayer with nineteen verses; Bahá'u'lláh initially revealed an obligatory prayer with nineteen verses which was stolen and in order to enable His followers to fulfill the commandment daily obligatory prayer he revealed three alternative obligatory prayers, the shortest of which has only two verses
3. Bayán calls for the destruction of all books except the Bayán; Bahá'u'lláh removes this law, forbids the destruction of books
4. Bayán forbids the reading of any books except for the Bayán; Bahá'u'lláh removes this law, permits the reading of all books
5. Bayán forbids the study of philosophy; Bahá'u'lláh encourages the study of philosophy, particularly those philosophers who prove the existence of God and other spiritual realities
6. Bayán forbids association with unbelievers except such association as is necessary for commercial transactions to take place; Bahá'u'lláh removes this law, encourages His followers to associate with the followers of all religions with love and fellowship
7. Bayán calls for men to cut their mustaches; Bahá'u'lláh allows them to cut beard and mustache at their own discretion
8. Bayán calls for fasting until age 42; Bahá'u'lláh calls for fasting until age 70
9. Bayán permitted marriage with consent of both partners; Bahá'u'lláh permits marriage only with consent of both partners and of their parents
10. Bayán forbids asking questions of "Him Whom God will make manifest"; Bahá'u'lláh removes this restriction, inviting the believers to ask necessary questions but refrain from idle questions
11. Bayán restricted travel; Bahá'u'lláh lifts all restrictions to travel
12. Bayán forbids marriage of Bábís with partners of other religions; Bahá'u'lláh lifts this restriction

13. Bayán forbids possessions of an unbelieving spouse to a believing spouse; Bahá'u'lláh lifts this restriction

14. Bayán requires payment of a fine for causing sadness to another; Bahá'u'lláh abrogates this requirement

15. Bayán enjoined holy war against the unbelievers, particularly in five regions which must be inhabited only by Bábís; Bahá'u'lláh reversed this law and forbids holy war under any circumstances

Bahá'u'lláh also abrogates some Islámic laws, while reaffirming other Islámic laws and many laws revealed for the first time in the Bayán. By establishing the Bahá'í day of rest as Friday, named "Yawm al-jum'a" (day of assembly) by Muslims and renamed "Yawm al-Istiqlal" (day of independence), he establishes a consonance with the Islámic Shari'ah (canon law) and a discontinuity with the Hebrew halachah (canon law) and the Roman Catholic *liber usualis* (canon law), the former of which establishes the day of rest as Saturday (*yom ha-shabbat*) and the latter as Sunday. However, those who would claim that Bahá'u'lláh upholds Islámic law are mistaken; as an independent Prophet of God, He claims the right to abrogate the laws of previous Prophets, and, according to His teaching of progressive revelation, His law represents the Will of God for mankind revealed in this Dispensation. Hence, if God chooses to retain one law and to revoke another, this is entirely within His power and His prerogative; as Bahá'u'lláh writes, "He doeth what He willeth and He ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth."

While some have called the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh syncretic and hence derivative, He affirms that He does not pick and choose from this religion and that religion and come up with His own collection of laws! He reveals the Will of God, the Laws of God for the Age in which He is manifested, and if the Laws of one Age resemble the Laws of a previous Age that is because they are suitable to both Ages, the former and the latter. The abrogation and annulment of laws is a sign, a proof of the Prophet of God, for no human being has the right to abrogate or annul the least of the laws revealed by a Prophet of God.

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus Christ is quoted as saying:

Mt:5:17-19: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or

one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. And whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

In another passage, Jesus Christ says that the only one who has the authority to abrogate the law of God is the "son of man", that is, the Prophet of God:

Mt:12:8: For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

Mk:2:28: Therefore, the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

In the Qur'án it is revealed:

XIII:41: What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm: for with Him is the Source of Revelation.

Bahá'u'lláh comments on this verse in "Kitáb-i-Íqán" as follows:

KI:147: Therefore, it hath been said: "To seek evidence when the Proof hath been established is but an unseemly act, and to be busied with the pursuit of knowledge when the Object of all learning hath been attained is truly blameworthy."

FOURTEENTH PROOF
INNATE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

That Bahá'u'lláh lays claim to innate divine knowledge is attested by many passages in His own Writings, including these from "Kitáb-i-Aqdas":

KA:39: Such is the instruction given you by Him Who holdeth the knowledge of things hidden, in a Tablet which the eye of creation hath not seen, and which is revealed to none except His own Self, the omnipotent Protector of the worlds.

KA:175: Say: We, indeed, set foot within the School of inner meaning and explanation when all created things were unaware.

KA:176: We read the Tablet ere it was revealed, while ye were unaware, and We had perfect knowledge of the Book when ye were yet unborn. These words are to your measure, not to God's. To this testifieth that which is enshrined within His knowledge, if ye be of them that comprehend; and to this the tongue of the Almighty doth bear witness, if ye be of those who understand. I swear by God, were We to lift the veil, ye would be dumbfounded.

In His "Lawh-i-'Abbas Faruq" Bahá'u'lláh refers to the innate and divinely-inspired knowledge of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and then concludes with a declaration of His own knowledge:

GL:58: Consider this wronged One. Though the clearest proofs attest the truth of His Cause; though the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language, hath made have been fulfilled; though, in spite of His not being accounted among the learned, His being unschooled and inexperienced in the disputations current among the divines, He hath rained upon men the showers of His manifold and Divinely-inspired knowledge; yet, behold how this generation hath rejected His authority, and rebelled against Him!

In "Lawh-i-Hikmat" He reveals these words in confirmation of this theme:

TB:149: Thou knowest full well that We perused not the books which men possess and We acquired not the learning current amongst them, and yet whenever We desire to quote

the sayings of the learned and of the wise, presently there will appear before the face of thy Lord in the form of a tablet all that which hath appeared in the world and is revealed in the Holy Books and Scriptures. Thus do We set down in writing that which the eye perceiveth. Verily His knowledge encompasseth the earth and the heavens.

This is a Tablet wherein the Pen of the Unseen hath inscribed the knowledge of all that hath been and shall be -- a knowledge that none other but My wondrous Tongue can interpret. Indeed My heart as it is in itself hath been purged by God from the concepts of the learned and is sanctified from the utterances of the wise. In truth naught doth it mirror forth but the revelations of God. Unto this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur in this perspicuous Book.

In "Haft Vadi" (Seven Valleys), He points out the difference between acquired and innate learning:

SV:25: There is many an utterance of the mystic seers and doctors of former times which I have not mentioned here, since I mislike the copious citation from sayings of the past; for quotation from the words of others proveth acquired learning, not the divine bestowal. Even so much as We have quoted here is out of deference to the wont of men and after the manner of the friends. Further, such matters are beyond the scope of this epistle. Our unwillingness to recount their sayings is not from pride, rather is it a manifestation of wisdom and a demonstration of grace.

In "Lawh-i-Nasri'd-Din Sháh", which He cites in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf", Bahá'u'lláh describes His first encounter with the Revelation of God, which took place, according to His own statement, in the Siyah-Chal:

ESW:11: O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing.

Now having determined, beyond a shadow of a doubt that Bahá'u'lláh actually claimed such God-given knowledge for himself, we will see what He says about His schooling, His earthly instruction. To begin

with there are His words in the same "Lawh-i-Nasri'd-Din Sháh", preceded by another statement found only in the "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf":

ESW:11: This Wronged One hath frequented no school, neither hath He attended the controversies of the learned.

ESW:11: The learning current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not. Ask of the city wherein I dwelt, that thou mayest be well assured that I am not of them that speak falsely.

In "Lawh-i-Hikmat" he attested likewise:

TB:149: Thou knowest full well that We perused not the books which men possess and We acquired not the learning current amongst them...

Also, in "Lawh-i-'Abbas Faruq" He attests that:

GL:58: ...in spite of His not being accounted among the learned, His being unschooled and inexperienced in the disputations current among the divines, He hath rained upon men the showers of His manifold and Divinely-inspired knowledge...

And in "Lawh-i-Mashhadi Isma'il Zarqan" Bahá'u'lláh states:

GL:99: The Will of the Almighty hath decreed that out of house wholly devoid of all that the divines, the doctors, the sages, and scholars commonly possess His Cause should proceed and be made manifest.

To return to the first source cited, in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" Bahá'u'lláh attests:

KA:104: We have not entered any school, nor read any of your dissertations. Incline your ears to the words of this unlettered One, wherewith He summoneth you unto God, the Ever-Abiding. Better is this for you than all the treasures of the earth, could ye but comprehend it.

Also, for those who would be tempted to explain away these statements, seeking to humanize Bahá'u'lláh's claim to divine knowledge through the citation and manipulation of fanciful psychological theories, or aiming to contextualize His claims to ignorance of formal education and His lack of exposure to human learning by stating that He would nevertheless have had a tutor and that He must have read widely, we cite the verse which follows immediately after this last-cited statement in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas":

KA:105: Whoso interpreteth what hath been sent down from the heaven of Revelation, and altereth its evident meaning, he, verily, is of them that have perverted the Sublime Word of God, and is of the lost ones in the Lucid Book.

This is a very strong statement indeed, and the seeker cannot but feel that he must investigate this question carefully and judiciously. To begin with Bahá'u'lláh's claim that he did not receive schooling, and that he was not apprized of human learning, it is imperative that we limit ourselves to the consideration of His explicit statements and not generalize or digress therefrom. Bahá'u'lláh claims here the following:

1. that He did not enter or study in any of the schools of the learned
2. that He did not acquire any of the learning current among the learned
3. that he was unschooled and not acquainted with the disputations current among the divines
4. that He had not perused the books which men possess
5. that He was brought up in a house "totally devoid of all that the divines, the doctors, the sages, and scholars commonly possess"
6. that He had not read any of the dissertations of the leaders of religion (this entire passage in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" is addressed to the "leaders of religion", see KA:101)

The extant historical records indeed attest that Bahá'u'lláh did not enter any formal school. As the son of a court official it would not have been customary for Him to attend a primary school; He would have been tutored in His home. While a tutor may have been engaged for Bahá'u'lláh to teach Him the rudiments of Arabic and Persian, and

perhaps to supervise His earliest study of the Qur'án and Persian poetry, it is likely that even this tutoring was very limited indeed. For, if such tutelage had passed beyond the most elementary stages, surely He would not attest that His house was "totally devoid of all that the divines, the doctors, the sages, and scholar commonly possess" or that He had not perused the books which men possess. Beyond this elementary tutelage which He probably received in His own home, it is evident that Bahá'u'lláh did not, as a youth, frequent any "midrasah" --a school for the study of Islámic sciences, the hadith and the Qur'án-- and this was the only kind of school then in existence in Iran which the son of a court official could possibly attend. Nabíl Zarandi briefly refers to two visits which Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have made to a "midrasah" in Yalrud, a village in the Núr district, where His elder sister Sarih lived with her husband Mahmud. Apparently Bahá'u'lláh, then an adolescent, made quite an impact upon the teacher, Shaykh Muhammad Taqí, and his students. Apparently after this second reported visit, Shaykh Muhammad Taqí addressed his students, saying:

“For years I have been instructing you and have patiently striven to instill in your minds the profoundest truths and the noblest principles of the Faith. And yet you allow, after all these years of persistent study, this youth, a wearer of the kulah [a lambskin cap worn by the laity], who has no share in scholarly training, and who is entirely unfamiliar with your academic learning, to demonstrate his superiority over you!”⁸³

This story is reminiscent an account in the Gospel of Luke:

2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 2:43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. 2:44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. 2:45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 2:47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

No other record however is there of Bahá'u'lláh ever attending a "midrasah", nor is there any account of His having studied under any member of the Shí'í 'ulamá' or with a Sufi pir or indeed under the instruction of any individual whatsoever. He likewise denies that He studied the disputations of the divines, or the Islámic sciences, or the Qur'án commentaries, the hadith either of the Prophet Muhammad or of the Twelve Imams. He does not stop here --He goes so far as to say that He has not read the books or studied the learning that is common among men.

It is exceedingly uncommon to find a man who boasts of His ignorance! But to find a man who boasts ignorance and demonstrates extraordinary knowledge, insight, lucidity and eloquence is virtually unprecedented. We know that Bahá'u'lláh wrote tens of thousands of Tablets; that among His writings are the most elegant Persian and Arabic poetic verses, the most profound philosophical treatises, unimaginably mysterious and inspiring mystical treatises, powerfully incisive warnings, unequivocal predictions, heart-healing counsels, heart-rending prayers. We know from the various scholars who have studied His writings that they are written in exquisite Arabic and Persian, some entirely in one language and others in an admixture of vocabulary and alternating passages in one tongue and the other. To every question He answered, speaking to the mind and the heart of His interrogator, and both within and beyond that individual to the soul of humanity which is His audience. How was it possible for a man to know what He knew without having read very widely? In His writings He quotes from the Tanakh of the Hebrews, the Gospels of the Christians, the Qur'án and hadith of the Muslims, from Persian poetry and Arabic proverbs, from historical texts (in "Lawh-i-Hikmat") and mystical texts (in "Haft Vadi" and "Chahar Vadi"), even making a reference in "Lawh-i-Bayán" to a Hindu text. How is it possible that Bahá'u'lláh could have known what He obviously knew unless He read widely?

The answer to this question, a question which perplexes the hearts of many who investigate His Revelation, and indeed the Revelation of any of the Prophets of God, is found in His own words. In "Lawh-i-Hikmat", addressed to the learned mujtahid and philosopher Muhammad-i-Qa'ini, known as Nabíl-i-Akbar, He describes the process whereby he becomes informed of the contents of books:

TB:149: Thou knowest full well that We perused not the books which men possess and We acquired not the learning current amongst them, and yet whenever We desire to quote

the sayings of the learned and the wise, presently there will appear before the face of thy Lord in the form of a tablet all that which hath appeared in the world and is revealed in the Holy Books and Scriptures. Thus do We set down in writing that which the eye perceiveth. Verily His knowledge encompasseth the earth and the heavens. This is a Tablet wherein the Pen of the Unseen hath inscribed the knowledge of all that hath been and shall be --a knowledge that none other but My wondrous Tongue can interpret. Indeed My heart as it is in itself hath been purged by God from the concepts of the learned and is sanctified from the utterances of the wise. In truth naught doth it mirror forth but the revelations of God.

Apparently, according to the testimony of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, He did not always have this extraordinary capacity to read with His inner eye the tablet of all knowledge. In "Kitáb-i-Íqán", revealed some ten years after His Prophetic call and a year prior to His Prophetic declaration to His immediate followers, Bahá'u'lláh refers to Hájí Mírzá Karim Khán and states:

KI:184-86: As We had frequently heard about him, We purposed to read some of his works. Although We never felt disposed to peruse other peoples' writings, yet some had questioned Us concerning him, We felt it necessary to refer to his books, in order that We might answer Our questioners with knowledge and understanding. His works, in the Arabic tongue, were, however, not available, until one day a certain man informed Us that one of his compositions, entitled *Ishadu'l-'Avam* [Guidance unto the ignorant], could be found in this city. From this title We perceived the odour of conceit and vainglory, inasmuch as he hath imagined himself a learned man and regarded the rest of the people ignorant. His worth was in fact made known by the very title he had chosen for his book. It became evident that its author was following the path of self and desire, and was lost in the wilderness of ignorance and folly. Methinks, he had forgotten the well-known tradition which sayeth: "Knowledge is all that is knowable; and might and power, all creation." Notwithstanding, We sent for the book, and kept it with Us a few days. It was probably referred to twice. The second time, We accidentally came upon the story of the "Mi'raj" [Ascent] of Muhammad, of Whom was spoken: "But for Thee, I would

not have created the spheres." We noticed that he had enumerated some twenty or more sciences, the knowledge of which he considered to be essential for the comprehension of the mystery of the "Mi'raj". We gathered from his statements that unless a man be deeply versed in them all, he can never attain to a proper understanding of this exalted theme. Among the specified sciences were the science of metaphysical abstractions, of alchemy, and natural magic. Such vain and discarded learnings, this man hath regarded as the pre-requisites of the understanding of the sacred and abiding mysteries of divine Knowledge...

KI:187: How can the knowledge of these sciences, which are so contemptible in the eyes of the truly learned, be regarded as essential to the apprehension of the mysteries of the "Mi'raj", whilst the Lord of the "Mi'raj" Himself was never burdened with a single letter of these limited and obscure learnings, and never defiled His radiant heart with any of these fanciful illusions? How truly hath he said: "All human attainment moveth upon a lame ass, whilst Truth, riding upon the wind, darteth across space." By the righteousness of God! Whoso desireth to fathom the mystery of this "Mi'raj," and craveth a drop from this ocean, if the mirror of his heart be already obscured by the dust of these learnings, he must needs cleanse and purify it ere the light of this mystery can be reflected therein.

In this story we see reflected many characteristics of Bahá'u'lláh, including His penetrating insights, His call for purification of the human heart, His antipathy to such human sciences as "begin with words and end with words" (Third Tajalliyat, TB:52), His characterization of those who pride themselves on learning as the most ignorant of all men. We also see Him identifying one who "hath imagined himself a learned man and regarded the rest of the people ignorant" as deprived of understanding even as 'Abdu'l-Bahá indicated:

"The teacher should not consider himself as learned and others ignorant. Such a thought breedeth pride, and pride is not conducive to influence. The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls." ('Abdu'l-Baha, SWAB:30)

“Therefore, no one should glorify himself over another; no one should manifest pride or superiority toward another; no one should look upon another with scorn and contempt; and no one should deprive or oppress a fellow creature.” (‘Abdu'l-Baha, PUP:63)

“Throughout past centuries each system of religious belief has boasted of its own superiority and excellence, abasing and scorning the validity of all others. Each has proclaimed its own belief as the light and all others as darkness. Religionists have considered the world of humanity as two trees: one divine and merciful, the other satanic; they themselves the branches, leaves and fruit of the divine tree and all others who differ from them in belief the product of the tree which is satanic. Therefore, sedition and warfare, bloodshed and strife have been continuous among them. The greatest cause of human alienation has been religion because each party has considered the belief of the other as anathema and deprived of the mercy of God.” (‘Abdu'l-Baha, PUP:230)

In view of His disqualification of human learning as the proper approach to investigating reality, what, apart from His own innate knowledge, would he recommend to others? He does not leave us wanting:

KI:210-211: And yet, in the sight of God, these common people are infinitely superior and exalted above their religious leaders who have turned away from the one true God. The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the garden of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding.

This approach goes beyond democracy—it affirms the basic integrity of the individual soul’s direct relationship with the divine Word. The more the individual purify’s his heart, the more he readies himself to receive divine knowledge, which is not factual but insightful, not composed of acquisitions but rather gifted with perceptions.

We also find that Bahá'u'lláh does not claim here to know the contents of "Irshadu'l-'Avam" by virtue of His innate knowledge, the tablet of His inner vision. He straightforwardly states that "We purposed to read some of his works", and that "We sent for the book, and kept it with Us a few days. It was probably referred to twice." (KI:185) If Bahá'u'lláh could know all things, and if all things were revealed to His inner sight in the form of a tablet, then why would He wait until He could procure and read some of this author's works before commenting on them? There seem to be a few possible explanations: the first is that Bahá'u'lláh did not deem it wise to reveal to His correspondent the full extent of His station or the nature of His divine inspiration, and that He altered certain aspects of this story to conceal these attributes while enabling Him to make reference to the author of this book and His character and learning, inasmuch as Hájí Mírzá Karim Khán was an inveterate enemy of the Cause of the Báb and a prolific writer against that Cause. This seems unlikely, because Bahá'u'lláh could have told this story without inventing anything, in other words, He could easily have omitted making any reference to the manner in which He came into contact with this book. Also, it is extremely doubtful that Bahá'u'lláh, who stresses the importance of truthfulness so fervently and consistently throughout His writings would have invented a fictitious story just to make a point.

The second explanation is that Bahá'u'lláh may be able to know all things by means of His inner vision except for the books of men, but this also seems improbable inasmuch as He explicitly states that He sees "all that which hath appeared in the world and is revealed in the Holy Books and Scriptures" (TB:149), and furthermore, He writes of a Tablet revealed by the Báb, "We read the Tablet ere it was revealed, while ye were unaware, and We had perfect knowledge of the Book when ye were yet unborn." (KA:176) If He knows all of this then surely He also knows the contents of this book by Hájí Mírzá Karim Khán. A third explanation is that the knowledge that is innate is not factual or material in nature, but rather is spiritual and pierces the veil of superficiality.

A fourth explanation is that Bahá'u'lláh did not have the capacity to perceive all things through His inner vision at the time He revealed "Kitáb-i-Íqán" but that by the time He revealed "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" and "Lawh-i-Hikmat" He did have this capacity. According to this explanation, the spiritual gifts of the Prophet may increase during the course of His mission, perhaps in accordance with the growing capacity of His followers to receive His teachings. This explanation

would seem to be confirmed in the following episode, from Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn in Sulaymaniyah, as described by Shoghi Effendi:

“That seat of learning⁸⁴ had been renowned for its vast endowments, its numerous takyihs, and its association with Salah'i-d-Din-i-Ayyubi and his descendants; from it some of the most illustrious exponents of Sunnī Islám had gone forth to teach its precepts, and now a delegation, headed by Shaykh Isma'il himself, and consisting of its most eminent doctors and most distinguished students, called upon Bahá'u'lláh, and, finding Him willing to reply to any questions they might wish to address Him, they requested Him to elucidate for them, in the course of several interviews, the abstruse passages contained in the Futuhat-i-Makkiyyih, the celebrated work of the famous Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din-i-'Arabi. "God is My witness," was Bahá'u'lláh's instant reply to the learned delegation, "that I have never seen the book you refer to. I regard, however, through the power of God...whatever you wish me to do as easy of accomplishment." Directing one of them to read aloud to Him, every day, a page of that book, He was able to resolve their perplexities in so amazing a fashion that they were lost in admiration. Not contenting Himself with a mere clarification of the obscure passages of the text, He would interpret for them the mind of its author, and expound his doctrine, and unfold his purpose. At times He would even go so far as to question the soundness of certain views propounded in that book, and would Himself vouchsafe a correct presentation of the issues that had been misunderstood, and would support it with proofs and evidences that were wholly convincing to His listeners.” (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 122-123)

Here we see that Bahá'u'lláh is penetratingly, indeed, superhumanly insightful in His understanding, that His knowledge is entirely independent of the learning of the divines, that it is unpremeditated, spontaneous and rapturously eloquent. We also see that Bahá'u'lláh has "one of them read aloud to Him, every day, a page from that book", and once again, if Bahá'u'lláh had been gifted with the inner vision which was to characterize His later years this would not have been necessary.

Another indication that this may have been the case is the fact that, in “Epistle to the Son of the Wolf”, written during the last year of His life, Bahá'u'lláh denied having perused the Bayán, notwithstanding this Book being the source of many of the laws contained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:

ESW:164-165: In these days We have heard that thou hast striven to lay hands on and destroy every copy of the Bayán. This Wronged One requesteth thee to renounce, for the sake of God, this intention. Thine intelligence and judgment have never excelled, nor do they now excel, the intelligence and judgment of Him Who is the Prince of the World. God testifieth and beareth Me witness that this Wronged One hath not perused the Bayán, nor been acquainted with its contents. This much, however, is known and is clear and indubitable that He hath ordained the Book of the Bayán to be the foundation of His works. Fear God, and meddle not in matters which far transcend thee.

One of the evidences of His innate knowledge is the manner in which Bahá'u'lláh answered questions. He answered without premeditation, without hesitation, in perfect poetry or prose, and in a style and vocabulary ideally suited to His questioner. Testimonies to this miraculous ability to answer questions are found in many sources, in Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, in historical accounts such as those preserved by Nabil Zarandi and those related by Shoghi Effendi. In "Lawh-i-Amr", revealed for Mulla 'Alí Bajistani and apparently written in Constantinople he writes:

GL:131: Tell out to the nations, O Pen of the Ancient of Days, the things that have happened in 'Iráq. Tell them of the messenger whom the congregation of the divines of that land had delegated to meet Us, who, when attaining Our presence, questioned Us concerning certain sciences, and whom We answered by virtue of the knowledge We inherently possess. Thy Lord is, verily, the Knower of things unseen.

Writing of this incident Shoghi Effendi states that the Shi'í 'ulamá' of Najaf and Karbila were fiercely opposed to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád, and having failed to persuade the leading mujtahid among them, Shaykh Murtaday-i-Ansari to pronounce the necessary fatwa (sentence of death) against the Bábís, they sought another means to bring about His death or expulsion:

"Frustrated in their designs, but unrelenting in their hostility, the assembled divines delegated the learned and devout Hájí Mulla Hasan-i-'Ammu, recognized for his integrity and wisdom, to submit various questions to Bahá'u'lláh for elucidation...these were submitted,

and answers completely satisfactory to the messenger were given..." (GPB:143-44)

This story is also told by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in "Some Answered Questions"⁸⁵:

“Even the Persian 'ulama who were at Karbila and Najaf chose a wise man whom they sent on a mission to Him; his name was Mulla Hasan 'Amu. He came into the Holy Presence, and proposed a number of questions on behalf of the 'ulama, to which Bahá'u'lláh replied. Then Hasan 'Amu said, "The 'ulama recognize without hesitation and confess the knowledge and virtue of Bahá'u'lláh, and they are unanimously convinced that in all learning he has no peer or equal; and it is also evident that he has never studied or acquired this learning; but still the 'ulama say, "We are not contented with this; we do not acknowledge the reality of his mission by virtue of his wisdom and righteousness. Therefore, we ask him to show us a miracle in order to satisfy and tranquilize our hearts."

“Bahá'u'lláh replied, "Although you have no right to ask this, for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request. But the Cause of God is not a theatrical display that is presented every hour, of which some new diversion may be asked for every day. If it were thus, the Cause of God would become mere child's play.

“"The ulamas must, therefore, assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture." The learned man, Hasan 'Amu, rose and replied, "There is no more to be said"; he then kissed the knee of the Blessed One although he was not a believer, and went. He gathered the 'ulama and gave them the sacred message. They consulted together and said, "This man is an enchanter; perhaps he will perform an enchantment, and then we shall have nothing more to say." Acting on this belief, they did not dare to push the matter further.

“This man, Hasan 'Amu, mentioned this fact at many meetings. After leaving Karbila he went to Kirmanshah and Tíhran and spread a detailed account of it everywhere, laying emphasis on the fear and the withdrawal of the 'ulama.”

Shoghi Effendi reports other incidents, one in Sulaymaniyyih and the other in Baghdád:

"Astonished at the sight of so many ulamas and Sufis of Kurdish origin, of both the Qadiriyyih and Khalidiyyih Orders, thronging the house of Bahá'u'lláh, and impelled by racial and sectarian rivalry, the religious leaders of the city, such as the renowned Ibn-i-Alusi, the Mufti of Baghdád, together with Shaykh 'Abdu's-Salam, Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Qadir and Siyyid Dawudi, began to seek His presence, and, having obtained completely satisfying answers to their several queries, enrolled themselves among the band of His earliest admirers." (GPB:129)

"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...and in reply to the questions addressed to Bahá'u'lláh by the as yet unconverted maternal uncle of the Báb, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, while on a visit, with his brother, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-‘Alí, to Karbila." (GPB:138-39)

According to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, there were a number of other encounters of this nature:

“It often happened that in Baghdád certain Muhammadan ‘ulamá’, Jewish rabbis, and Christians, met together with some European scholars, in a blessed reunion: each one had some question to propose, and although they were possessed of varying degrees of culture, they each heard a sufficient and convincing reply, and retired satisfied.” (SAQ:34)

It may be significant that the knowledge which Bahá'u'lláh has demonstrated in all of the accounts cited above is not quantitative, made up of facts and figures, of bits of information, storage and corrolation of data. That sort of knowledge might be called "ilm" or "irfán" in Arabic, although both of these words have other significances. Rather is this the sort of knowledge which is called "hikmat" in Arabic, meaning "wisdom, sagacity, underlying reason" and derived from "hakama", meaning "to pass a judgment". Bahá'u'lláh is not merely insightful, perceptive, intuitive...rather, He is characteristically decisive, elucidative, commanding. He is always the leader, never the follower. His knowledge is qualitative, and the

over-riding quality is what we might call moral reason. This knowledge is of course much more rare than quantitative knowledge, particularly in our day and age with its fantastically complicated information technologies. While our literal powers and our quantitative capacities have grown beyond our ancestors wildest dreams, our symbolic powers and our qualitative capacities remain stunted and await comprehensive development. While knowledge can be acquired from a myriad sources, wisdom has only a very few reliable sources, and indeed, it has but one infallible source, and this source is the Prophet of God.

This brings us back to Bahá'u'lláh and a systematic study of His claims. The wisdom and knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh can best be judged by studying His teachings and laws, and we will come to this in the Twenty-third Proof. As to the wisdom and knowledge which He manifested in His actions, many of these have been described in the Fourth Proof, but there are two which will be noted here inasmuch as they may otherwise be neglected. On two occasions Bahá'u'lláh declined the offers of foreign diplomats to arrange for His accomodation in a safe place far from the intrigues of His enemies. This first offer came, as reported by Shoghi Effendi, soon after the release of Bahá'u'lláh from the Siyah-Chal:

"He had hardly rejoined His family and kindred when a decree from Násiri'd-Dín Sháh was communicated to Him, bidding Him leave the territory of Persia, fixing a time-limit of one month for His departure and allowing Him the right to choose the land of His exile.

"The Russian Minister, as soon as he was informed of the Imperial decision, expressed the desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia. This invitation, so spontaneously extended, Bahá'u'lláh declined, preferring, in pursuance of an unerring instinct, to establish His abode in Turkish territory, in the city of Baghdád." (GPB:105-106)

The second offer came to Bahá'u'lláh when He was in Baghdád and is also described by Shoghi Effendi:

"Nor was the then representative of the British government, Colonel Sir Arnold Burrows Kemball, consul-general in Baghdád, insensible of the position which Bahá'u'lláh now occupied. Entering into friendly correspondence with Him, he, as testified by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, offered Him the protection of British citizenship, called on

Him in person, and undertook to transmit to Queen Victoria any communication He might wish to forward to her. He even expressed His readiness to arrange for the transfer of His residence to India, or to any place agreeable to Him. This suggestion Bahá'u'lláh declined, choosing to abide in the dominions of the Sultán of Turkey." (GPB:131)

If Bahá'u'lláh had accepted the Russian Minister's offer of assylum in Russia, what would the Bábís have thought of Him? That He took the first offer of safety and protection? That He was a coward and only interested in His own advantage? How could He have become the hero of the Bábís and thence of the Bahá'ís if He had taken the easy way out rather than submitting to the path which would bring Him endless suffering? In His divinely-inspired wisdom He knew that to choose the easy path would lead to a dead end. The triumph of the Cause demanded no less than that He should sacrifice His pleasure, His ease, His safety, His advantage, and also, it must be remembered, the pleasure, ease, safety and advantage of His companions -- which included three wives and several children -- and He chose the Cause of God. Once again, in Baghdád he was faced with that same choice, and, in His wisdom He understood that to run off to India or to anywhere else within the British Empire was to abandon His mission, a mission which could only be prosecuted by facing each painful challenge as it presented itself, by triumphing against all odds. Furthermore, if Bahá'u'lláh had accepted either of those invitations it is most unlikely that He would have been compelled to repair to Palestine, the Holy Land, and Mt. Carmel, the Mountain of God. If He had fulfilled the prophecies of the Hebrew Prophets through His own efforts He knew well that it would be said that His acts were premeditated and therefore not divinely-inspired and irrevocable.

However, as He was exiled to Palestine, and to the prison of 'Akká, through the agency of the Ottoman Sultán, and not through any decision or act which can be traced to Him, it was said and will be said forever that His exile brought about His fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, and that this could not have happened unless it had been brought about by the Will of God. Nevertheless, the wisdom of Bahá'u'lláh was in discerning and submitting to the Will of God, in Tíhrán on the eve of His exile from Iran, and again in Baghdád on the eve of His exile from that city. These offers recall the Gospel accounts (Mt:4:1-11; Mk:1:12-13; Lk:4:1-14) of the temptation of Jesus Christ by Satan, the devil. As Luke tells the story, Jesus Christ said to

Satan three things which Bahá'u'lláh demonstrated in His refusal of these offers:

Lk:4:4: It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Lk:4:8: It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Lk:4:12: It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Bahá'u'lláh chose obedience to the Word of God over the natural appetites of the animal man. He dedicated Himself entirely to the service of God, and took no thought of Himself. He did not test God's love for Him by deviating so much as a hair's breadth from the narrow path assigned to Him as a Prophet of God. Nor did He call upon the miraculous superhuman powers which God had conferred on Him to alter the natural course of events, for He understood that recourse to such powers would not convince even the weak in faith, let alone unbelievers; and that the recourse to such powers would compromise the integrity of the Cause of God, which had been established, since the Revelation of Muhammad, upon the revealed Word of God, upon established proofs and no longer --as during previous Dispensations-- on miracles, spectacles, wonders.

Another evidence of His innate knowledge is demonstrated by the manner in which His writings were revealed, whether in dictation to an amanuensis, or penned by His own hand. 'Abdu'l-Bahá includes this among the signs of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Another of His signs is the marvel of His discourse, the eloquence of His utterance, the rapidity with which His Writings were revealed...” (SWAB:15)

With regard to "the rapidity with which His Writings were revealed", Mírzá Áqa Ján, who served for forty years as the amanuensis, companion and attendant of Bahá'u'lláh, told Nabíl-i-A'zam the story of the first night he spent in Karbila in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh:

"When He reached me He said: 'You, too, are awake.' Whereupon He began to chant and pace back and forth. How shall I ever describe that voice and the verses it intoned, and His gait, as He strode before me! Methinks, with every step He took and every word

He uttered thousands of oceans of light surged before my face, and thousands of worlds of incomparable splendor were unveiled to my eyes, and thousands of suns blazed their light upon me!" (GPB:116)

The Sunní clerics and students who asked Bahá'u'lláh to elucidate the meaning of Futuhat-i-Makkiyyih asked Him to compose "a poem in a rhyme and meter identical with that of the longer of the two odes, entitled Qasidiy-i-Ta'iyiyih composed by Ibn-i-Farid...This request was complied with, and no less than two thousand verses, in exactly the manner they had specified, were dictated by Him, out of which He selected one hundred and twenty-seven, which He permitted them to keep, deeming the subject matter of the rest premature and unsuitable to the needs of the times." (GPB:123)

Referring to the prolific nature of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation of verses, Shoghi Effendi writes "that during the first two years after His return from His retirement, according to the testimony of Nabíl, who was at that time living in Baghdád, the unrecorded verses that streamed from His lips averaged, in a single day and night, the equivalent of the Qur'án! As to those verses which He either dictated or wrote Himself, their number was no less remarkable than either the wealth of material they contained, or the diversity of subjects to which they referred. A vast, and indeed the greater, proportion of these writings were, alas, lost irretrievably to posterity. No less an authority than Mírzá Áqa Ján, Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis, affirms, as reported by Nabíl, that by the express order of Bahá'u'lláh, hundreds of thousands of verses, mostly written by His own hand, were obliterated and cast into the river. 'Finding me reluctant to execute His orders,' Mírzá Áqa Ján has related to Nabíl, 'Bahá'u'lláh would reassure me saying: "None is to be found at this time worthy to hear these melodies"...Not once, or twice, but innumerable times, was I commanded to repeat this act.' A certain Muhammad Karim, a native of Shiraz, who had been a witness to the rapidity and the manner in which the Báb had penned the verses with which He was inspired, has left the following testimony to posterity, after attaining, during those days, the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and beholding with his own eyes what he himself had considered to be the only proof of the mission of the Promised One: 'I bear witness that the verses revealed by Bahá'u'lláh were superior, in the rapidity with which they were penned, in the ease with which they flowed, in their lucidity, their profundity and sweetness to those which I, myself saw pour from the pen of the Báb when in His presence. Had Bahá'u'lláh no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient, in the eyes of the

world and its people, that He produced such verses as have streamed this day from His pen." (GPB:137-38)

Now it is time for some definitions: What is a verse? According to the Báb's "Bayán-i-fársi"(VI:1), a verse, called "bayt" in Arabic, is composed of 30 letters. There are 4600 verses in the 114 chapters (Surah=chapter) of the Qur'án. These were revealed over a period of some 22 years, from the first revelation to Muhammad c.610 A.D. and the last revelation c.632 A.D. The "Bayán-i-fársi" itself is composed of 8000 verses, while the "Qayyúmu'l-Asma" comprises over 9300 verses. In "Bayán-i-fársi"(VI:11) the Báb affirms that by the time of His arrival in Mah-Ku He had already revealed more than 500,000 verses. Elsewhere (II:1) He writes that 100,000 verses revealed by Him are now available for perusal. He also claims to be able to reveal 1000 verses in 5 hours (II:1);elsewhere He affirms that were He able to find an amanuensis capable of transcribing them He would reveal 6000 verses in the course of 48 hours (xx:x). What do these numbers amount to? First of all, inasmuch as most Arabic words are made up of three or four consonants and the "bayt" has been defined by the Báb as consisting of 30 consonants (40 with vowel marks) then each verse would comprise around ten words. Then if 100,000 verses of the Báb's Writings were distributed by 1848 when "Bayán-i-fársi" was revealed, then this means that a literature comprised of approximately 1,000,000 words or perhaps as much as 3,000 pages was available to the people. On the other hand, the Báb asserts that He had already revealed over 500,000 verses by that time, and this would bring His total to 5,000,000 words or about 15,000 pages. Still more astonishing is the statement made in "Tarikh-i-Jadid" of Mírzá Husayn-i-Hamadani⁸⁶ "on the authority of Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahhab, the various writings of the Báb current in Tabriz alone amounted in all to not less than a million verses!" Of course, a million verses comes to 10,000,000 words and to 30,000 pages! To reveal 1000 verses in 5 hours means to physically write down 10,000 words or about 30 pages in that period, averaging 2000 words and 6 pages per hour; 6000 verses in 48 hours comes to 60,000 words or about 360 pages in that period, averaging over 1000 words and 4 pages per hour.

It may not seem amazing to a professional writer or graduate student with an immanent deadline to write 4 to 6 pages of prose in an hour. But to keep it up for hours at a time! To write 360 pages in 48 hours, or even to write 30 pages in five hours would tax the most prolific author and might well prove to be impossible. Isaac Asimov wrote 8 hours a day, a 300 page book every month, for years at a stretch, but at

that rate it would have taken him 10 years to write 30,000 pages. If Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahhab remembered incorrectly and the Báb had revealed only over 500,000 verses, which might come to 15,000 pages, this might seem to be attainable for an author as prolific as Asimov⁸⁷ -- perhaps he could have written as many pages in 3 years. Then we must consider that the Báb was busy with lots of other things besides revealing verses, that he did not have access to an electric typewriter, and that His capacity during this same five year period according to His own testimony would have been to reveal 1000-2000 words (4-6 pages) per hour and in eight hours he would have revealed 8000-16,000 words (32-48 pages); at this rate he would reveal 2,400,000-4,800,000 words (960-1440 pages) in a month. This is roughly three times as much production as what Asimov, that incredibly prolific writer was able to churn out on his electric typewriter.

Now, let us introduce a reality check into this equation. So far we have been considering the speed of the Báb's revelation of verses and comparing this to a modern author of science fiction and scientific texts. The big awakening comes when we consider that Bahá'u'lláh threw away hundreds of thousands of verses⁸⁸ -- and each hundred thousand represents about 1,000,000 words and 3000 pages -- and that a witness has acknowledged that the speed at which He revealed verses exceeded that of the Báb.⁸⁹

As reported in "God Passes By", Bahá'u'lláh and eye-witnesses have described the outpouring of verses in these words:

"Day and night," an eye-witness has written, "the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them. Mirza Aqa Jan wrote them as they were dictated, while the Most Great Branch was continually occupied in transcribing them. There was not a moment to spare." "A number of secretaries," Nabíl has testified, "were busy day and night and yet they were unable to cope with the task. Among them was Mirza Baqir-i-Shirazi.... He alone transcribed no less than two thousand verses every day. He labored during six or seven months. Every month the equivalent of several volumes would be transcribed by him and sent to Persia. About twenty volumes, in his fine penmanship, he left behind as a remembrance for Mirza Aqa Jan." Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: "Such are the outpourings ... from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed." "So great is the grace vouchsafed

in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayan would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness." "I swear by God!" He, in another connection has affirmed, "In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed." "That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople)," He, furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has declared, "secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed." (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 170-171)

The transcription of so many words over the course of so many hours is an impossibility--the "revelation writing" of Mírzá Áqa Ján tried to accommodate the speed of Bahá'u'lláh's utterances but it is evident from His amanuensis' statements, cited earlier, that he was unable to notate all of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and that Bahá'u'lláh chose to destroy many of the verses revealed. What was possible was the writing down of "Kitáb-i-Íqán", which was "revealed within the space of two days and two nights" (GPB:138) and the length of which is "two hundred pages" in the original Persian recension (GPB:139), and 257 pages in a widely-available edition of the English translation (Wilmette, 1970). Anyone who has perused that book, even for a brief moment, will be convinced that it would be utterly beyond the capacity of a normal human being to write such a work, whether for its length, its style or its profundity of ideation in such a short period of time. This is a proof of Bahá'u'lláh that is matchless, for it demonstrates not only the intensity of His revelation in comparison with ordinary human beings but also in comparison with His predecessor the Báb, and before him the Prophet Muhammad. If His revelation of verses did not exceed that of the Báb (and Muhammad) "in the rapidity in which they were penned, in the ease with which they flowed, in their lucidity, their profundity and sweetness" (GPB:138), how could His claim to be the King of the Messengers and the Supreme Manifestation of this Age and Cycle be seriously contemplated?

FIFTEENTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S PROPHECIES HAVE BEEN
FULFILLED

In the Torah the Lord God anticipates a question and gives a decisive answer:

Deut:18:21-22: And should you ask yourselves, "How can we know that the oracle was not spoken by the Lord?" --If the Prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and the oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by the Lord; the Prophet has uttered it presumptuously: do not stand in dread of him.

Likewise, in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus Christ reveals a prophecy and warning:

Mt:24:5: For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Messiah; and shall deceive many.

Mt:24:11: And many false Prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Mt:24:24: For there shall arise false Messiahs, and false Prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, the shall deceive the very elect.

Mt:7:15: Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

As in the case of Moses, Jesus Christ does not leave His followers wondering how they are to tell the true Prophet from the false Prophet, the true Messiah from the false Messiah:

Mt:7:16-18: Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

It is reasonable to conclude that these standards, of the Torah and the Gospels are consistent and mutually agreeable, and that the fulfillment of prophecy is one of the good fruits of the true Prophet while the non-fulfillment of prophecy is one of the evil fruits of the false Prophet. In "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" Bahá'u'lláh refers to his fulfillment of a prophecy of Jesus Christ and to prophecies He made which were fulfilled in His own lifetime:

ESW:148: Briefly, in the sayings of Him Who is the Spirit unnumbered significances lie concealed. Unto many things did He refer, but as He found none possessed of a hearing ear or a seeing eye He chose to conceal most of these things. Even as He saith: "But ye cannot bear them now." That Dawning-Place of Revelation saith that on that Day He Who is the Promised One will reveal the things which are to come. Accordingly in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and in the Tablets to the Kings, and in the Lawh-i-Ra'is, and in the Lawh-i-Fu'ád, most of the things which have come to pass on this earth have been announced and prophesied by the Most Sublime Pen.

ESW:150: All that hath been sent down hath and will come to pass, word for word, upon the earth. No possibility is left for anyone either to turn aside or protest.

First of all, when were the books referred to Bahá'u'lláh written? According to Shoghi Effendi (God Passes By, Chapters X and XI, passim.), "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" was "revealed soon after Bahá'u'lláh had been transferred to the house of 'Udi Khammar (circa 1873)" (GPB:213); "Suriy-i-Muluk" (Suriy of the Kings, addressed to the Kings of the earth, the Ottoman Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, the kings of Christendom and various other authorities)), the first "Lawh-i-Malakh Napoleon" (addressed to Napoleon III), "Lawh-i-Sultán" (His Tablet to Nasri'd-Din Sháh), "Suriy-i-Ra'is" (addressed to 'Alí Páshá, the Grand Vizir of the Ottoman Sultán), were all revealed in Adrianople, that is, at various times between 12 December 1863 and 21 August 1868. In his reference to the Tablets to the Kings Bahá'u'lláh may have been referring to all of His Tablets to Kings --as he included "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" which contains passages addressed to the Kings of the earth (K:78-84), the Emperor of Austria (K:85), the King of Berlin (K:86), the Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein (K:88)-- and in this case it will be useful for the reader to know that in 'Akká he revealed Tablets to the following monarchs: "Lawh-i-Malkat Victoria" (addressed to Queen Victoria), a second

"Lawh-i-Napoleon" (to Napoleon III), "Lawh-i-Alexander" (addressed to the Russian Czar Nicolaevitch Alexander II), a second "Lawh-i-‘Alí Páshá" (to the Grand Vizir of the Ottoman Sultán), "Lawh-i-Fu‘ád" (named after the former Foreign Minister of the Sultán, Fu‘ád Páshá), "Tablet to the Pope" (addressed to the Roman Catholic Pope Pius IX), and that most of these were revealed shortly after his arrival in that Prison City, 31 August 1868 and prior to the revelation of the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" (circa 1873). Bahá'u'lláh revealed "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf", in which he made the above-cited statement, in the year 1891, around twenty years after his proclamation to the Kings.

Shoghi Effendi does not report the communication of every one of these Tablets to the King, Queen or Ruler to whom it was addressed, but there are enough references to such a communication that it would be implausible to doubt that the other Tablets also found their way to those for whom they were revealed. "To Napoleon III Bahá'u'lláh addressed a specific Tablet, which was forwarded through one of the French ministers to the Emperor..." (GPB:173) and "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 beyond 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." (GPB:207) H.M. Balyuzi does not indicate who conveyed the "Lawh-i-Malkat Victoria" to the Queen of England, nor does he give the source for her alleged response: "It is related that Queen Victoria's comment on reading Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet was: 'If this is of God, it will endure; if not, it can do no harm.'"⁹⁰

The bearer of Bahá'u'lláh's second Tablet to Nasri'd-Din Sháh was a youth of seventeen years named Aqa Buzurg Khurásáni, named Badi' and "Pride of Martyrs" by Bahá'u'lláh, and he was murdered by order of the Sháh, while the Tablet in question was sent "at the Sovereign's order...to the mujtahids [Islámic religious judges] of Tihrán...subsequently forwarded by the Sháh to the Persian Ambassador in Constantinople, in the hope that its perusal by the Sultán's ministers might serve to further inflame their animosity." (GPB:199)

Other accounts which trace the delivery of the other Tablets to the Kings and other rulers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh will probably come to light in the future. Shoghi Effendi writes:

"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.'" (GPB:206)

Now, Bahá'u'lláh says in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" that "most of the things which have come to pass on this earth have been announced and prophesied by the Most Sublime Pen" (ESW:148) and, furthermore, "All that hath been sent down hath and will come to pass, word for word, upon earth." (ESW:150) It is obvious that Bahá'u'lláh does not mean that everything that has come to pass on the earth has been predicted in the Tablets cited above, but rather that most of the predictions made in those Tablets came to pass by 1891, when he wrote "Epistle" and that all of them would come to pass eventually, "word for word, upon earth." (ESW:150) In "Suriy-i-Muluk" Bahá'u'lláh, addressing the kings of the earth, "warns them that 'Divine chastisement' will 'assail' them 'from every direction,' if they refuse to heed His counsels..." (GPB:172) In "Suriy-i-Ra'is" he informs 'Alí Páshá that the "Land of Mystery (Adrianople) and what is beside it...shall pass out of the hands of the King, and commotions shall appear and the voice of lamentation shall be raised, and the evidences of mischief shall be revealed on all sides" (quoting Bahá'u'lláh in GPB:174). "The ministers of the Sultán, He, in the Suriy-i-Muluk, reprimands for their conduct, in passages in which He challenges the soundness of their principles, predicts that they will be punished for their acts, denounces their pride and injustice..." (GPB:174) In his second Tablet to Napoleon III, Bahá'u'lláh "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." (GPB:207) "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...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.'" (GPB:208) In his second Tablet to 'Alí Páshá he "prophesies his downfall...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'...In the Lawh-i-Fu'ád, in the course of his reference to the premature death of the Sultán's Foreign Minister, Fu'ád Páshá, he thus confirms his above-mentioned prediction: 'Soon will We dismiss the one (‘Alí Páshá) who was like unto him and will lay hold on their Chief (Sultán 'Abdu'l-‘Azíz) who ruleth the land, and I, verily, am the Almighty, the all-Compelling.'" (GPB:208-209) "To Pope Pius IX, the undisputed head of the most powerful Church in Christendom...He cautions him to guard himself lest 'darkness spread its veils' over him..." (GPB:209)

Whatever became of these warnings from the Prophet Bahá'u'lláh? Bahá'u'lláh affirms:

GPB:224: God hath not blinked, nor will He ever blink His eyes at the tyranny of the oppressor. More particularly in this Revelation hath He visited each and every tyrant with His vengeance.

Shoghi Effendi comments on this verse:

“Vast and awful is, indeed, the spectacle which meets our eyes, as we survey the field over which the retributory winds of God have, since the inception of the ministry of Bahá'u'lláh, furiously swept, dethroning monarchs, extinguishing dynasties, uprooting ecclesiastical hierarchies, precipitating wars and revolutions, driving from office princes and ministers, dispossessing the usurper, casting down the tyrant, and chastising the wicked and the rebellious.” (GPB:224-25)

The list of the casualties of these "retributory winds of God" is such as to stagger the imagination. Each of these examples is in fulfillment of one or more of the prophecies specifically revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, between 1863 and 1871:

1. Sultán 'Abdu'l-‘Azíz "was condemned by a fatva (sentence) of the Mufti in his own capital, was four days later assassinated (1876), and was succeeded by a nephew who was declared to be imbecile. The war of 1877-78 emancipated eleven million people from the Turkish yoke; Adrianople was occupied by the Russian forces; the empire itself was dissolved as a result of the war of 1914-18; the Sultánate was abolished; a republic was proclaimed; and a rulership that had endured above six centuries was ended." (GPB:225) Furthermore, the Caliph

of Sunnı́ Islám "was by the abolition of the Sultánate in Turkey, divested of his temporal authority, hitherto regarded as inseparable from his high office...the Caliphate, the most august and powerful institution of Islám, was, without consultation with any community in the Sunnı́ world, summarily abolished..." (GPB:228)

2. Fu'ád Páshá, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, "who had so assiduously striven with his colleague 'Alı́ Páshá, to excite the fears and suspicions of a despot already predisposed against the Faith and its Leader, was, about a year after he had succeeded in executing his design, struck down, while on a trip to Paris, by the avenging rod of God, and died at Nice (1869)." (GPB:231)

3. 'Alı́ Páshá, the Grand Vizir of the Ottoman Empire "whose downfall the Lawh-i-Fu'ád had unmistakably predicted, was, a few years after Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to 'Akká, dismissed from office, was shorn of all power, and sank into complete oblivion." (GPB:231-32)

4. Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, "whose reign was stained by the execution of the Báb and the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh...was dramatically assassinated, in the shrine of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azım, on the very eve of his jubilee [in 1896], which, as ushering in a new era, was to have been celebrated with the most elaborate magnificence, and was to go down in history as the greatest day in the annals of the Persian nation. The fortunes of his house thereafter steadily declined, and finally through the scandalous misconduct of the dissipated and irresponsible Ahmad Sháh, led to the eclipse and disappearance of the Qájár dynasty." (GPB:225)

5. Napoleon III, "the foremost monarch of his day in the West...whose downfall was explicitly predicted in a subsequent Tablet [revealed in 'Akká circa 1868-69], was ignominiously defeated in the Battle of Sedan (1870), marking the greatest military capitulation recorded in modern history; lost his kingdom and spent the remaining years of his life in exile. His hopes were utterly blasted, his only son, the Prince Imperial, was killed in the Zulu War, his much vaunted empire collapsed, a civil war ensued more ferocious than the Franco-German war itself, and William I, the Prussian king, was hailed emperor of a unified Germany in the palace of Versailles." (GPB:225-26)

6. William I, "the pride-intoxicated newly-acclaimed conqueror of Napoleon III, admonished in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and bidden to ponder the fate that had overtaken 'one whose power transcended' his own [Napoleon III]...sustained two attempts on his life, and was succeeded by a son who died of a mortal disease, three months after his accession to the throne, bequeathing the throne to the arrogant, the headstrong and short-sighted William II. The pride of the new monarch precipitated his downfall. Revolution, swiftly and suddenly, broke out in his capital, communism reared its head in a number of cities; the princes of the German states abdicated, and he himself, fleeing ignominiously to Holland, was compelled to relinquish his right to the throne. The constitution of Weimar sealed the fate of the empire, whose birth had been so loudly proclaimed by his grandfather, and the terms of an oppressively severe treaty provoked 'the lamentions' which, half a century before, had been ominously prophesied." (GPB:226)

7. Pope Pius IX "was a temporal as well as a spiritual king. As with his fellow monarchs, however, he found himself caught up in the forces released by the 'Day of God'. In 1870 on a year after Bahá'u'lláh had revealed His Epistle to Pius IX, King Victor Emmanuel I suddenly declared war with the Papal States. The royalist troops entered Rome and seized it...The loss of 'the Eternal City,' over which the Papal flag had flown for one thousand years, and the humiliation of the religious orders under his jurisdiction, added mental anguish to his physical infirmities and embittered the last years of his life. The formal recognition of the Kingdom of Italy subsequently exacted from one of his successors in the Vatican, confirmed the virtual extinction of the Pope's temporal sovereignty. Ironically, it was in this very same year, 1870 that Pope Pius IX and the Vatican council formally established the doctrine of Papal infallibility."⁹¹

8. Emperor Franz Josef of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, also known as the Holy Roman Empire, "who had been reproved in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas...was so engulfed by misfortunes and tragedies that his reign came to be regarded as one unsurpassed by any other reign in the calamities it inflicted upon the nation...the 'ramshackle empire' itself disintegrated, was carved up, and a shrunken republic was set up on the ruins of a vanished Holy Roman Empire..." (GPB:226)

9. Nicolaevitch Alexander II, "the all-powerful Czar of Russia, who...had been cautioned not to allow his sovereignty to prevent him from recognizing 'the Supreme Sovereign,' suffered several attempts

on his life, and at last died at the hand of an assassin. A harsh policy of repression, initiated by himself and followed by his successor, Alexander Nicholas II, swept away on a bloody tide the empire of the Czars, brought in its wake war, disease and famine, and established a militant proletariat which massacred the nobility, persecuted the clergy, drove away the intellectuals, disendowed the state religion, executed the Czar with his consort and his family, and extinguished the dynasty of the Romanoffs." (GPB:226-27)

Other kingdoms, sultanates, emirates, duchies, principedoms and other monarchical governments have been discontinued since He issued His proclamation to the kings and other rulers, as listed here:⁹²

Fall of the kingdom of Buhweju, in 1901.

Fall of the kingdom of Rujumbura, in 1901.

Fall of the kingdom of Igara, in 1901.

Fall of the sultanate of Aceh (in Indonesia) in 1903.

Fall of the municipality of Champasak, in 1904.

Fall of the kingdom of Norway, in 1905.

Fall of the kingdom of the Bone state, in 1905, in 1950.

Fall of the kingdom of Portugal, in 1910.

Fall of the kingdom of Korea, in 1910.

Fall of the kingdom of the Manchu dynasty (China), in 1911.⁹³

Fall of the sultanate of Lingga, in 1911.

Fall of the sultanate of Zanzibar, in 1911, in 1964.

Fall of the kingdom of Sintang (Indonesia), in 1913.

Fall of the kingdom of Albania, in 1914, in 1939, in 1943, in 1946.⁹⁴

Fall of the duchies (Germany) of Anhalt, Baden, Bavaria, Courland, Hesse and Rhine, Lippe, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, Saxe-Altenburg, Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Saxe-Meiningen, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, Saxony, Schaumburg-Lippe, Schwarzburg-Rudolfstadt, Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, Waldeck-Pyrmont, Wurttemberg, in 1918.

Fall of the principedoms of Reuss Elder Line and Reuss Younger Line (Germany), in 1918.

Fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in 1918.⁹⁵

Fall of the kingdom of Montenegro, in 1918.

Fall of the kingdom of Prussia (Germany), in 1918.

Fall of the kingdom of Bukhara, in 1920.

Fall of the kingdom of Khiva, in 1920.

Fall of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), in 1922.

Fall of the caliphate of Sunní Islám, in 1924.

Fall of the emirate of Mecca, in 1924.

Fall of the kingdom of Hejaz, in 1925.
 Fall of the kingdom of Bhopal, in 1926.
 Fall of the kingdom of Afghanistan, in 1929, in 1973.
 Fall of the kingdom of Gojjam, in 1932.
 Fall of the kingdom of Thailand, in 1935.
 Fall of the kingdom of Mohammerah (Iran), in 1936.
 Fall of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, in 1941.⁹⁶
 Fall of the kingdom of Kubu (Indonesia), in 1943.
 Fall of the kingdom of Pindus and Macedonia, in 1943.
 Fall of the kingdom of Iceland (Denmark), in 1944.
 Fall of the kingdom of Manchukuo, in 1945.
 Fall of the kingdom of Vietnam, in 1945.
 Fall of the kingdom of Italy, in 1946.
 Fall of the kingdom of Bulgaria, in 1946.
 Fall of the raja of Sarawak, in 1946.
 Fall of the sultanate of Serdang, in 1946.
 Fall of the maharaja of Dewas, in 1947.
 Fall of the kingdom of Romania, in 1947.
 Fall of the kingdom of Hyderabad, in 1948.
 Fall of the kingdom of Wajo, in 1949.
 Fall of the kingdom of Buleleng, in 1950.
 Fall of the kingdom of Karangasem (Indonesia), in 1950.
 Fall of the maharaja of Baruda, in 1951.
 Fall of the maharaja of Lamjung and Kaski, in 1951.
 Fall of the kingdom of Egypt, in 1953.
 Fall of the kingdom of Tunisia, in 1957.
 Fall of the kingdom of Iraq, in 1958.
 Fall of the kingdom of Kokang, in 1959.
 Fall of the kingdom of Tibet, in 1959.
 Fall of the sultanate of Gowa, in 1960.
 Fall of the raja of Kupang (Indonesia), in 1960.
 Fall of the sultanate of Kutai (Indonesia), in 1960.
 Fall of the kingdom of Rwanda, in 1961.
 Fall of the kingdom of Yemen, in 1962.
 Fall of the kingdom of Unyanyembe (Tanzania), in 1962.
 Fall of the kingdom of Burundi, in 1966.
 Fall of the sultanate of Brunei, in 1967.
 Fall of the kingdoms of Bugabula, Buganda, Busoga, and Toro (Uganda), in 1967.⁹⁷
 Fall of the sultanate of Qa'aiti, in 1967.
 Fall of the sultanate of Maldives, in 1968.
 Fall of the kingdom of Libya, in 1969.
 Fall of the maharajah of Bharatpur, in 1971.

Fall of the maharaja of Travancore, in 1971.
 Fall of the raja of Vallabhpur, in 1971.
 Fall of the kingdom of Sikkim, in 1975.
 Fall of the kingdom of Greece, in 1973.
 Fall of the kingdom of Ethiopia, in 1975.
 Fall of the monarchy of Sikkim, in 1975.
 Fall of the kingdom of Laos, in 1975.
 Fall of the Central African Empire, in 1979.
 Fall of the kingdom of Iran, in 1979.
 Fall of the kingdom of Nepal, in 2008.

Undoubtedly there are yet other monarchies which have fallen from power. At the start of the 21st century, it is evident that Bahá'u'lláh's prophesies were fulfilled, some in the year immediately following their revelation, others before the end of the nineteenth century, and virtually all of the remaining kings on earth during the twentieth century. There are a few ornamental kings, but almost no ruling monarchs, and republics are the rule now where the reverse was true a century and a half ago. "From two ranks amongst men power hath been seized: kings and ecclesiastics."⁹⁸ A skeptic may not be prepared to trust that Bahá'u'lláh had divinely-inspired foreknowledge of these events, or that the downfall of these kings and other rulers took place because of their lack of support for Bahá'u'lláh. However, he can certainly attest that Bahá'u'lláh was very exceptionally perceptive, that His predicative powers fall excelled those of most men.

Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets to the Kings were not the only repositories of His prophesies and predictions, and, in the future many other texts will be studied, including the "Tablet of the Holy Mariner," and the "Tablet of the Howdah," both of which were written in 1863, the first in Baghdád and the second from Samsún, on the journey from Baghdád to Constantinople. Before we turn to the next Proof it will undoubtedly prove instructive to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for an elucidation of this theme:

“As soon as He arrived at this prison He addressed an epistle to Napoleon [III], which he sent through the French ambassador...Then a second epistle was issued, which is contained in the Suratu'l-Haykal. The epitome of it is: 'Oh Napoleon, as thou hast not listened to my proclamation, and as thou hast not answered it, thy dominion will before long be taken away from thee and thou wilt be utterly destroyed. This epistle was sent to Napoleon by post, through the care of Cesar Ketafagoo, as was known to all the companions of

his exile. The text of this warning reached the whole of Persia, for it was at that time that the Kitábu'l-Mubín was spread in Persia, and this epistle was among the contents of this book. This happened in 1869 A.D., and as the Suratu'l-Haykal was circulated in Persia and India, and was in the hands of all believers, they were waiting to see what would come to pass. Not long after, in 1870 A.D., the war between Germany and France broke out; and though no one at that time expected the victory of Germany, Napoleon was defeated and dishonoured, he surrendered to his enemies, and his glory was changed into deep abasement.” (SAQ:38-39)

“Briefly, all that was recorded in the Tablets to the Kings is being fulfilled: if from the year 1870 A.D. we compare the events that have occurred, we will find that nearly all have appeared as predicted; only a few remain which will afterwards become manifested.” (SAQ:40)

In a talk on 23 June 1912 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá retells the story of Napoleon III (PUP:211-12), while in another talk on 8 November 1912 he reads from the "Suriy-i-Muluk" and states that "There are many other prophecies in this book, especially in the Epistle to the Sháh of Persia, all of which prophecies have come to pass." (PUP:399) Once again, he returns to this theme in a talk on 15 November 1912 as follows:

“The letter He sent to the Sháh of Persia under such conditions may now be read by anyone. His Epistles to the Sultán of Turkey, Napoleon III, Emperor of France, and to the other rulers of the world including the President of the United States are, likewise, current and available. The book containing these Epistles to the kings was published in India about thirty years ago [circa 1882] and is known as the Suratu'l-Haykal ("Discourse of the Temple"). Whatever is recorded in these Epistles has happened. Some of the prophecies contained in them came to pass after two years; others were fulfilled after five, ten and twenty years. The most important prophecies relative to events transpiring in the Balkans are being fulfilled at the present time though written long ago. For instance, in the Epistle which Bahá’u’lláh addressed to the Sultán of Turkey, the war and the occurrences of the present day were foretold by Him. These events were also prophesied in the Tablet He addressed to the city of Constantinople, even to the details of happenings now being witnessed in that city.” (PUP:432)

“He said in substance, "Erelong you will find yourselves in manifest loss. Your sovereignties will be laid waste; your empires will become a wilderness and a heap of ruins; hosts from without will invade and subdue your lands; lamentation and mourning will rise from your homes. There will be no throne; there will be crown; there will be no palace; there will be no armies. Nay, rather, all these will be brought low; but the standard of the Cause of God will be held aloft. Then will you see that hosts and hosts will enter the Cause of God and that this mighty revelation will be spread throughout with world." Read the prophecies contained in the Suratu'l-Haykal and ponder carefully over them. This is one of the characteristics of Bahá'u'lláh's message and teachings. Can you find events and happenings of this kind in any other Prophetic dispensation? If so, in what cycle have similar things taken place? Do you find such specific prophecies and explicit statements concerning the future in the Holy Books of the past?" (PUP:433)

He returns to this theme once more in a Tablet to Alfred E. Lunt:⁹⁹

“As to the events that had been predicted --Praise be to God!-- all of them have come to pass, and all that had been the explicit and irrefutable declarations of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, and had been incorporated in the addresses of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in America and Europe, all of them, word by word, have been fulfilled. These explicit declarations of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh were revealed fifty years ago by the Supreme Pen, and at present they have been made evident and manifest.”

SIXTEENTH PROOF
REPUDIATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BY RELIGIOUS
LEADERS

A second category of oppressors and enemies are the governmental authorities which have directly brought about Bahá'u'lláh's incarcerations, His banishment from Iran and His displacement from Baghdád to Constantinople to Adrianople to 'Akká. Násiri'd-Dín Sháh ordered His arrest and imprisonment following the attempt on the Sovereign's life on 15 August 1852, without having found any proof whatsoever of His involvement in the bungled plot of a single misguided Bábí. The Sháh also issued the decree "bidding Him leave the territory of Persia, fixing a time-limit of one month for His departure and allowing Him the right to choose the land of His exile." (GPB:106) But it would be well if we were to recognize that Násiri'd-Dín Sháh was very youthful, around seventeen years of age, and that there were many persons in his Court who had considerable influence upon the decisions he made. After his attempted assassination the public reaction across Iran was virtually unanimous:

"A storm of public horror, disgust and resentment, heightened by the implacable hostility of the mother of the youthful sovereign, swept the nation, casting aside all possibility of even the most elementary inquiry into the origins and instigators of the attempt. A sign, a whisper, was sufficient to implicate the innocent and loose upon him the most abominable afflictions. An army of foes --ecclesiastics, state officials and people, united in relentless hate, and watching for an opportunity to discredit and annihilate a dreaded adversary-- had, at long last, been afforded the pretext for which it was longing." (GPB:63)

Bahá'u'lláh and His companions were forced to leave Baghdád in April 1863, almost exactly ten years after their arrival in April 1853, largely as a result of the opposition of two persistent and powerful enemies, Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Husayn, a Muslim cleric and Mírzá Buzurg Khán, the Persian consul-general in Baghdád. The hostility of the Shaykh will be reviewed shortly, but for now we will concern ourselves with the results of this malevolent partnership. Násiri'd-Dín Sháh and his

ministers, on the one hand, and the Persian Ambassador in Constantinople, on the other, were incessantly urged to take immediate action to insure Bahá'u'lláh's removal from Baghdád. According to Shoghi Effendi's account (GPB:146), Násiri'd-Dín Sháh was persuaded and he directed his Foreign Minister, Mírzá Sa'íd Khán to induce the Persian Ambassador at the Ottoman Court, Mírzá Husayn Khán --a close friend of both the Grand Vizir 'Alí Páshá and the Foreign Minister Fu'ád Páshá-- to convince Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz to transfer Bahá'u'lláh far from Baghdád. "Encouraged by the presence on the throne of a monarch who had delegated much of his powers to his ministers, and aided by certain foreign ambassadors and ministers in Constantinople, Mírzá Husayn Khán [the Persian Ambassador at the Ottoman Court], by dint of much persuasion and the friendly pressure he brought to bear on these ministers, succeeded in securing the sanction of the Sultán for the transfer of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions (who had in the meantime been forced by circumstances to change their citizenship) to Constantinople." (GPB:146) 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes this banishment from Baghdád in "Some Answered Questions":

“At first it spread throughout Persia only, but the exile of Bahá'u'lláh caused the diffusion of the Cause throughout other countries. Afterwards his enemies said, 'Iráq Arabí is not far enough from Persia; we must send him to a more distant kingdom.' This is why the Persian Government determined to send Bahá'u'lláh from 'Iráq to Constantinople. Again the event proved that the Cause was not in the least weakened...” (SAQ:IX:36)

Bahá'u'lláh remained in Constantinople for only four months. During that interval He revealed and dispatched His first Tablet to Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz, the Caliph (khalifa) of Sunní Islám. This is described by Shoghi Effendi:

“So potent, so august a personage was the first among the sovereigns of the world to receive a Divine Summons, and the first among the Oriental monarchs to sustain the impact of God's retributive justice. The occasion for this communication was provided by the famous edict the Sultán had promulgated, less than four months after the arrival of the exiles in his capital, banishing them, suddenly and without any justification whatsoever, in the depth of winter, and in the most humiliating circumstances, to Adrianople, situated on the extremities of his empire.

“That fateful and ignominious decision, arrived at by the Sultán and his chief ministers, ‘Alí Páshá and Fu’ád Páshá, was in no small degree attributable to the persistent intrigues of the Mushíru'd-Dawlih, Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Persian Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, denounced by Bahá’u’lláh as His "calumniator," who awaited the first opportunity to strike at Him and the Cause of which He was now the avowed and recognized leader. This Ambassador was pressed continually by his government to persist in the policy of arousing against Bahá’u’lláh the hostility of the Turkish authorities.” (GPB:158-59)

Hence, on the first morning in December 1863, the exiles set out on a twelve day trek to Adrianople, passing through Buyuk-chakmachih, Salvári, Birkas and Bába-Iski. (GPB:161) This banishment is described by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in "Some Answered Questions":

“Again the event proved that the Cause was not in the least weakened; once more they [Bahá’u’lláh's enemies] said, 'Constantinople is a place of passage and of sojourn for various races and peoples, among them are many Persians.' For this reason the Persians [Ottomans impelled by the government of Iran] further exiled him to Roumelia; but, when there, the flame became more powerful, and the Cause more exalted.” (SAQ:36)

Once established in Adrianople, Bahá’u’lláh set about revealing an unprecedented volume of Tablets, which are touched upon in an introductory fashion in the Second Proof and many of which are individually and briefly summarized in Adib Taherzadeh's four volume work, "The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh". As persecution of the Bábís, many of whom became Bahá’ís during these years (1863-68) continued in Iran and ‘Iráq, the opposition to the Bahá’ís and their Prophet did not cease among Ottoman officials. "No less active were Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Mushíru'd-Dawlih, and his associates, who, determined to take full advantage of the troubles that had recently visited Bahá’u’lláh, arose to encompass His destruction. The authorities in the capital were incensed by the esteem shown Him by the governor Muhammad Pásháy-i-Qibrisi, a former Grand Vizir, and his successors Sulayman Páshá, of the Qadiriyyih Order, and particularly Khurshid-Páshá, who, openly and on many occasions, frequented the house of Bahá’u’lláh, entertained Him in the days of Ramadan, and evinced a fervent admiration for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá." (GPB:178-79) The opposition of the Persian Ambassador and his friends, the Grand Vizir and the Foreign Minister of the Ottoman

Empire eventually convinced the Sultán to banish Bahá'u'lláh to 'Akká and Mírzá Yahyá to Famagusta. "This decision was embodied in a strongly worded Farman, issued by Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz." (GPB:179) Soon afterwards the exiles were escorted to Gallipoli, and thence by ship to their separate destinations.

But the hostility of secular authorities did not come to an end when Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to 'Akká. In Iran the government continued to persecute the Bábís, the Azalís and the Bahá'ís. In 'Akká the authorities occasionally cracked down on the Bahá'ís, and this was largely the result of the machinations of Siyyid Muhammad, Áqa Ján and the other Azalí Bábís, who were joined by two of the exiles who had attached themselves to the community of Bahá'ís but were expelled from the Cause due to their scandalous behavior. This campaign of opposition was discontinued when the leading Azalís in 'Akká were assassinated around 1871. While the first Governor of 'Akká under whose jurisdiction Bahá'u'lláh had been initially imprisoned in the Fortress in August 1868 was rather of a lout (GPB:190), his successor, Ahmad Big Tawfiq was sagacious and humane (GPB:191), while the next Governor, Mustafa Diyá Páshá "had even gone so far as to intimate that his Prisoner was free to pass through its gates [those of the fortified city of 'Akká] whenever He pleased, a suggestion which Bahá'u'lláh declined." (GPB:192) 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the circumstances of the exile to 'Akká in "Some Answered Questions":

“At last the Persians said, 'Not one of these places is safe from his influence, we must send him to some place where he will be reduced to powerlessness, and where his family and followers will have to submit to the direst afflictions.' So they chose the prison of Acca, which is reserved especially for murderers, thieves, and highway robbers, and in truth they classed him with such people. But the power of God became manifested: his word was promulgated, and the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh then became evident, for it was from this prison and under such circumstances that he caused Persia to advance from knowledge to knowledge.” (SAQ:36-37)

“His enemies intended that his imprisonment should completely destroy and annihilate the blessed Cause, but this became the means of its development....though he was a prisoner, his tent was raised on Mount Carmel, and he moved abroad with the greatest majesty. Every person, friend or stranger, who came into his presence used to say, "This is a prince, not a captive.” (SAQ:38)

Bahá'u'lláh has established that the most severe and damaging opposition to His Cause comes from within, in this passage from "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih":

TB:70: My imprisonment doeth Me no harm, nor do the things that have befallen Me at the hands of My enemies. That which harmeth Me is the conduct of my loved ones who, though they bear My name, yet commit that which maketh My heart and My pen to lament.

These transgressors and rebels have been discussed in the Eighth Proof. The present proof is almost complete -- the missing piece of this puzzle is the cornerstone, the king pin, the leader of opposition. Bahá'u'lláh identifies the leader of opposition to each newly manifested Prophet to be the clergy of the prevailing established religion of the time and the religious leader of the people among whom He is manifested. In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" He writes:

KI:15: Leaders of religion, in every age, have hindered their people from attaining the shores of salvation, inasmuch as they have held the reins of authority in their mighty grasp. Some for the lust of leadership, others through want of knowledge and understanding, have been the cause of the deprivation of the people.

KI:13: Why then is it that despite the expectation of men in their quest of the Manifestations of Holiness, and in spite of the signs recorded in the sacred books, should such acts of violence, of oppression and cruelty, have been perpetrated in every age and cycle against all the Prophets and chosen Ones of God?

KI:14: Consequently, such behaviour can be attributed to naught save the petty-mindedness of such souls as tread the valley of arrogance and pride, are lost in the wilds of remoteness, walk in the ways of their idle fancy, and follow the dictates of the leaders of their faith. Their chief concern is mere opposition; their sole desire is to ignore the truth.

Addressing "Lawh-i-Burhan" to the Muslim cleric Shaykh Muhammad Báqir, Bahá'u'lláh again refers to the oppression of the leaders of religion:

TB:206: What could have been the evidence produced by the Pharisees and the idolatrous priests to justify their denial of Muhammad, the Apostle of God when He came unto them with a Book that judged between truth and falsehood with a justice which turned into light the darkness of the earth, and enraptured the hearts of such as had known Him? Indeed thou hast produced, in this day, the same proofs which the foolish divines advanced in that age. Unto this testifieth He Who is the King of the realm of grace in this great Prison. Thou hast, truly, walked in their ways, nay, hast surpassed them in their cruelty, and hast deemed thyself to be helping the Faith and defending the Law of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers to the opposition of religious leaders to Bahá’u’lláh in these passages from addresses given in 1911-13 while in North America and Europe:

“Now, in our own day, history repeats itself. Those who would have men believe that religion is their own private property once more bring their efforts to bear against the Sun of Truth: they resist the Command of God; they invent calumnies, not having arguments against it, neither proofs. They attack with masked faces, not daring to come forth into the light of day.” (Talk dated 20 November 1911, in PT:103)

“When Bahá’u’lláh appeared in Persia, all the contemporaneous religious sects and systems rose against Him.” (Talk dated 15 November 1912, in PUP:431)

In "Some Answered Questions" ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also mentions this theme:

“At the time when this great Light suddenly arose upon the horizon of Persia, all the people, the ministers, the ‘ulamá’, and men of other classes rose against Him, pursuing Him with the greatest animosity, and proclaiming 'that this man wishes to suppress and destroy the religion, the law, the nation, and the empire.’” (SAQ:IX:35-36)

That the chief cause of the opposition of the people was their leadership in the repudiation of the new Prophet of God by the leaders of religion is attested in this passage from the same book:

“Indeed, in all parts of Persia His enemies arose against Him with the greatest hatred, imprisoning, killing, and beating His converts; and burning and razing to the ground thousands of dwellings, striving by every means to exterminate and crush the Cause. In spite of all this, from the prison of murderers, highway robbers, and thieves, it became exalted. His teachers were spread abroad, and His exhortations affected many of those who had been the most full of hatred, and made them firm believers; even the Persian Government itself became awakened, and regretted that which had arisen through the fault of the ‘ulamá’.” (SAQ:IX:37)

Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that He was opposed by the religious leaders, not only of Ithná ‘Asharí Shí‘í (Imamî) Islám --the religious tradition of the vast majority of His countrymen in Iran-- but also alludes to and predicts the opposition to His claims by Jewish, Christian, other Muslim divines, and, in principle, to the contradiction of His Prophetic affirmations by the ecclesiastical hierarchies of all religious communities. What does the record of history show? "God Passes By", in too many passages to cite here, as well as any number of other historical surveys of the response to Bahá'u'lláh, unquestionably documents the strenuous opposition of the Muslim ‘ulamá’ (the shaykhs, mullas, qadis, mujtahids, ayatollahs and all other ranks of Muslim religious specialists) to the claims and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Pressure from the First Estate was largely responsible for the successive imprisonments of Bahá'u'lláh in Iran and later in Syria (‘Akká); His exile from His homeland, His banishment from Baghdád, from Constantinople, and finally from Adrianople as well. The repudiation of Bahá'u'lláh by these leaders also resulted in the martyr-deaths of thousands of His followers, both during His lifespan and continuing to this very day.

While the rejection of His Prophethood by Jewish and Christian ecclesiastics in the Americas and Europe has not yet resulted in the martyrdom of any Bahá'í, it should nonetheless be noted that had the Jewish or Christian clergy intervened on behalf of the Bahá'ís during the earthly sojourn of Bahá'u'lláh, His sufferings might have been lessened and fewer of His followers might have been imprisoned, persecuted and killed. The intervention of Jewish clergy (and other notables) in the affair of the Damascus blood libel in 1840 resulted in a much greater measure of independence and protection being afforded the Jewish community in the whole of the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, there are a number of examples which could be cited of the

efficacy of Christian clerical pressure upon Muslim governments during the nineteenth century. The fact is that the religious leaders of no nation stood up for the rights of the Bahá'ís until the latter twentieth century, and still, at the beginning of a new century, the lack of support from religious leaders in defense of this persecuted community continues to remain a major obstacle to the emancipation of the Bahá'ís from persecution in certain Muslim-dominated countries.

Opposition to Bahá'u'lláh and to His Cause takes many forms, and is not restricted to physical attacks upon the Prophet during His lifetime and upon His followers then and now. 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to the attacks of the opponents of Bahá'u'lláh in this talk of 20 November 1911:

“Those who would have men believe that religion is their own private property once more bring their efforts to bear against the Sun of Truth: they resist the Command of God; they invent calumnies, not having arguments against it, neither proofs. They attack with masked faces, not daring to come forth into the light of day. Our methods are different, we do not attack, neither calumniate; we do not wish to dispute with them; we bring forth proofs and arguments; we invite them to confute our statements. They cannot answer us, but instead, they write all they can think of against the Divine Messenger, Bahá'u'lláh. Do not let your hearts be troubled by these defamatory writings!...Therefore when you see books and papers written against the Revelation, be not distressed, but take comfort in the assurance that the cause will thereby gain strength.” (PT:103, 105)

There is a considerable literature, written chiefly by Muslim clerics but also including some works by Christian clergymen, which has attacked Bahá'u'lláh and His Faith with "calumnies", directed against His Person and His Revelation. In his "Bibliography of the Bahá'í Faith", Dr. Denis MacEoin lists no less than 833 published anti-Bahá'í polemical works. This list was compiled over 20 years ago, and the actual numbers of such works, including websites, now numbers in the thousands. The first notable critic of the Faith was the Shaykhi leader Hájí Muhammad Karim Khán Kirmani, who wrote four treatises against the Báb, the first in 1845. Another major critic has been Mírzá Mahdí Khán Za'imud-Dawlih, writing in the early 1900s. Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, there has been a tremendous increase in Shí'í Muslim anti-Bahá'í polemic, much of it on the internet.

Christian anti-Bahá'í polemics began in 1911 with Rev. Peter Z. Easton, and continued in 1915 with Rev. Samuel Graham Wilson, in the 1930s with Rev. John R. Richards, in the 1960s and 1970s with Rev. William McElwee Miller, in the 1980s with Rev. Francis Beckwith and the Rev. John Boykin. In the past 20 years, most Christian anti-Bahá'í polemics have been published on the internet, in hundreds if not thousands of websites. Published responses to such attacks have included a reply commissioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Rev. Peter Z. Easton's two articles attacking the Faith (in "The English Churchman" and "Evangelical Christendom", fall 1911), written by Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygani, and published in English translation as "The Brilliant Proof" (1912); and a reply to Rev. John Boykin's book (entitled "The Bahá'í Faith", 1982), written by Mr. Sháhriar Razavi and Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir, and published in the *Bahá'í Studies Review* (vol. 2.1, 1992). While these "calumnies" have undoubtedly prejudiced some readers against the mission and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that the influence of such attacks is ultimately for the benefit rather than the detriment of the Cause of God:

“Rejoice, rather, that even these falsehoods will result in the spread of the truth. When these slanders appear inquiries are made, and those who inquire are led into a knowledge of the Faith. If a man were to declare, 'There is a lamp in the next room which gives no light', one hearer might be satisfied with his report, but a wiser man goes into the room to judge for himself, and behold, when he finds the light shining brilliantly in the lamp, he knows the truth! Again, a man proclaims: 'There lies a garden in which there are trees with broken branches bearing no fruit, and the leaves thereof are faded and yellow! In that garden, also, there are flowering plants with no blooms, and rose bushes withered and dying--go not into that garden!' A just man, hearing this account of the garden, would not be content without seeing for himself whether it be true or not. He, therefore, enters the garden, and behold, he finds it well tilled; the branches of the trees are sturdy and strong, being also loaded with the sweetest of ripe fruits amongst the luxuriance of beautiful green leaves. The flowering plants are bright with many-hued blossoms; the rose bushes are covered with fragrant and lovely roses and all is verdant and well tended. When the glory of the garden is spread out before the eyes of the just man, he praises God that, through unworthy calumny, he has been led into a place of such wondrous beauty! This is the result of the slanderer's work" to be the cause of guiding men to a discovery of the truth.” (PT:103-104)

SEVENTEENTH PROOF
PENETRATION AND POTENCY OF THE WORD OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The Prophet of God teaches humanity through His Person, His deeds, His Revelation, His Words, His counsels and commandments. We have earlier considered the first four of these categories, and will attend to the last two in due course. In this Proof we study the influence of the utterances of the Prophet of God upon humanity. Bahá'u'lláh reveals the penetration and potency of the Word of God in this passage:

GL:141: Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. All the wondrous works ye behold in this world have been manifested through the operation of His supreme and most exalted Will, His wondrous and inflexible Purpose.

He writes in another passage from "Lawh-i-Maqsud":

TB:173: The Word of God is the king of words and its pervasive influence is incalculable. It hath ever dominated and will continue to dominate the realm of being. The Great Being saith: The Word is the master key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked.

The "potency" and "penetrative influence" of the Word of God is operative whether that Word is spoken or written by the Prophet of God. In the case of Abraham, Moses and Jesus, there are records of certain of the sayings, the utterances of these Prophets of God, and these are found, for Abraham and Moses in the Torah and the Qur'án, and for Jesus in the Gospels and the Qur'án. On the other hand, in the case of Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh there both records of their utterances and copies of their writings, some of them in the handwriting of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh themselves. As will be found by referring to the three Prophets first mentioned, their spoken Revelations have the same divine and temporal efficacy as the written

Revelations of the latter three Prophets. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the penetration and potency of the Word of God:

“Consider the flowers of a garden: though differing in kind, colour, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. Thus when that unifying force, the penetrating influence of the Word of God, taketh effect, the difference of customs, manners, habits, ideas, opinions and dispositions embellisheth the world of humanity. This diversity, this difference is like the naturally created dissimilarity and variety of the limbs and organs of the human body, for each contributeth to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole. When these different limbs and organs come under the influence of man's sovereign soul, and the soul's power pervadeth the limbs and members, veins and arteries of the body, then difference reinforceth harmony, diversity strengtheneth love, and multiplicity is the greatest factor for coordination.

“How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

“Praise be to God, today the splendour of the Word of God hath illumined every horizon, and from all sects, races, tribes, nations, and communities souls have come together in the light of the Word, assembled, united and agreed in perfect harmony. Oh! What a great number of meetings are held adorned with souls from various races and diverse sects! Anyone attending these will be struck with amazement, and might suppose that these souls are all of one land, one nationality, one community, one thought, one belief and one opinion; whereas, in fact, one is an American, the other an African, one cometh from Asia and another from Europe, one is a native of India, another is from Turkestan, one is an Arab, another a Tajik, another a Persian and yet another a Greek. Notwithstanding such

diversity they associate in perfect harmony and unity, love and freedom; they have one voice, one thought and one purpose. Verily, this is from the penetrative power of the Word of God! If all the forces of the universe were to combine they would not be able thus to gather a single assemblage so imbued with the sentiments of love, affection, attraction and enkindlement as to unite the members of different races and to raise up from the heart of the world a voice that shall dispel war and strife, uproot dissension and disputation, usher in the era of universal peace and establish unity and concord amongst men. Can any power withstand the penetrative influence of the Word of God? Nay, by God! The proof is clear and the evidence is complete! If anyone looketh with the eyes of justice he shall be struck with wonder and amazement and will testify that all the peoples, sects and races of the world should be glad, content and grateful for the teachings and admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh. For these divine injunctions tame every ferocious beast, transform the creeping insect into a soaring bird, cause human souls to become angels of the Kingdom, and make the human world a focus for the qualities of mercy.” (SWAB:291-293)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has also described the influence of the Word of God, the penetration and potency of the utterances of the Prophet Bahá'u'lláh in a talk given on 25 September 1912:

“The proof of the validity of a Manifestation of God is the penetration and potency of His Word, the cultivation of heavenly attributes in the hearts and lives of His followers and the bestowal of divine education upon the world of humanity. This is absolute proof. The world is a school in which there must be Teachers of the Word of God. The evidence of the ability of these Teachers is efficient education of the graduating classes.

“In the early part of the nineteenth century the horizon of Persia was shrouded in great darkness and ignorance. The people of that country were in a condition of barbarism. Hatred and bigotry prevailed among the various religions; bloodshed and hostility were frequent among sects and denominations of belief. There were no evidences of affiliation and unity; violent prejudice and antagonism ruled the hearts of men. At such a time as this Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed the first principle of His mission and teaching--the oneness of the world of humanity. His second announcement was the investigation of reality; the third was the oneness of the foundations of the divine religions. Through spiritual education He led the people out of darkness and ignorance into the clear light of truth, illuminated their

hearts with the splendor of knowledge, laid a true and universal basis for religious teachings, cultivated the virtues of humanity, conferred spiritual susceptibilities, awakened inner perceptions and changed the dishonor of prejudiced souls to the highest degree of honor and capacity. Today in Persia and the Orient you will find the followers of Bahá'u'lláh united in the closest ties of fellowship and love. They have abandoned religious prejudices and have become as one family. When you enter their meetings, you will find Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews and representatives of other beliefs present, all conjoined in a wonderful unity without a trace of bigotry or fanaticism, and the light of the oneness of the world of humanity reflected in their faces. Day by day they are advancing, manifesting greater and still greater love for each other. Their faith is fixed upon the unification of mankind, and their highest purpose is the oneness of religious belief. They proclaim to all humanity the sheltering mercy and infinite grace of God. They teach the reconciliation of religion with science and reason. They show forth in words and deeds the reality of love for all mankind as the servants of one God and the recipients of His universal bounty. These are their thoughts, their beliefs, their guiding principles, their religion. No trace of religious, racial, patriotic or political prejudice can be found among them, for they are real servants of God and obedient to His will and command.” (PUP:341-342)

The evidence of the transformative influence of the Word of God in the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh is found in the Bahá'í community of believers. As attested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is virtually no variety of humanity which is unrepresented in this Cause, and all are treated with love and respect and without prejudice of any kind. Not only are Bahá'ís found in virtually every country, territory or island on this planet, but in many of those places the Bahá'í communities are made up of extraordinarily diverse members. Bahá'í meetings are almost always mixed in gender and age, with men and women equally, and with infants to elders. The racial and class diversity seen in these meetings is also remarkable, and utterly unlike virtually any other community, other than that of the United Nations and its related organizations. This does not require description inasmuch as the seeker is able to verify this for himself, through his own attendance at Bahá'í meetings. While 'Abdu'l-Bahá stresses the power of the Word of God in uniting diverse populations, it has another penetrating influence which must be noted--upon the moral resurrection and reconstruction of human individuals and societies. Psychologists have just begun to study the transformative influence of the Bahá'í teachings and the Bahá'í Writings on believers, and hence there is only

a limited literature available to attest to this phenomenon. Likewise, sociologists and historians have written very few studies yet of Bahá'í communities, and the influence of the Bahá'í Faith on pre-existing villages and towns. Nevertheless, those studies which are available -- including masters and doctoral dissertations on the Bahá'ís of Denmark, Burma, Malwa, and Iran (of Zoroastrian and Jewish descent); biographies of outstanding Bahá'ís, a rapidly expanding literature; and a two-volume general history of the American Bahá'í community (with more volumes projected) -- portray the profound and redemptive influence which Bahá'u'lláh has had upon the lives of both individuals and communities. If the spiritual education of souls had not been effected by Bahá'u'lláh then the Bahá'í Faith could not have embraced such a wide diversity of adherents and resulted in the establishment of thousands of institutions which are devoted to the upliftment and welfare of humankind throughout the planet.

It is instructive to study the specific influence of Bahá'u'lláh upon the community of the Bábís in Baghdád (and throughout Iran) prior to His declaration of His independent mission in spring 1863. This is chronicled in detail in "God Passes By", and some excerpts are cited here for the edification of the reader:

“During the seven years that elapsed between the resumption of His labors and the declaration of His Prophetic mission--years to which we now direct our attention--it would be no exaggeration to say that the Bahá'í community, under the name and in the shape of a re-arisen Bábí community was born and was slowly taking shape, though its Creator still appeared in the guise of, and continued to labor as, one of the foremost disciples of the Báb...It was a period that will go down in history as one during which the prestige of a recreated community was immensely enhanced, its morals entirely reformed, its recognition of Him who rehabilitated its fortunes enthusiastically affirmed, its literature enormously enriched, and its victories over its new adversaries universally acknowledged.” (GPB:128)

“The ascendancy achieved by Bahá'u'lláh was nowhere better demonstrated than in His ability to broaden the outlook and transform the character of the community to which He belonged. Though Himself nominally a Bábí, though the provisions of the Bayán were still regarded as binding and inviolable, He was able to inculcate a standard which, while not incompatible with its tenets, was ethically superior to the loftiest principles which the Bábí Dispensation had established. The salutary and fundamental truths advocated by the

Báb, that had been either obscured, neglected or misrepresented, were moreover elucidated by Bahá'u'lláh, reaffirmed and instilled afresh into the corporate life of the community, and into the souls of the individuals who comprised it. The dissociation of the Bábí Faith from every form of political activity and from all secret associations and factions; the emphasis placed on the principle of non-violence; the necessity of strict obedience to established authority; the ban imposed on all forms of sedition, on back-biting, retaliation, and dispute; the stress laid on godliness, kindness, humility and piety, on honesty and truthfulness, chastity and fidelity, on justice, toleration, sociability, amity and concord, on the acquisition of arts and sciences, on self-sacrifice and detachment, on patience, steadfastness and resignation to the will of God--all these constitute the salient features of a code of ethical conduct to which the books, treatises and epistles, revealed during those years, by the indefatigable pen of Bahá'u'lláh, unmistakably bear witness." (GPB:132-33)

"So intoxicated were those who had quaffed from the cup of Bahá'u'lláh's presence,' is yet another testimony from the pen of Nabíl, who was himself an eye-witness of most of these stirring episodes, 'that in their eyes the palaces of kings appeared more ephemeral than a spider's web...The celebrations and festivities that were theirs were such as the kings of the earth had never dreamt of.' 'I, myself with two others,' he relates, 'lived in a room which was devoid of furniture. Bahá'u'lláh entered it one day, and, looking about Him, remarked: "Its emptiness pleases Me. In My estimation it is preferable to many a spacious palace, inasmuch as the beloved of God are occupied in it with the remembrance of the Incomparable Friend, with hearts that are wholly emptied of the dross of this world.'" His own life was characterized by that same austerity, and evinced that same simplicity which marked the lives of His beloved companions." (GPB:137)

What was the condition of the Bábís prior to Bahá'u'lláh's return from Sulaymaniyyih (1856)? It is also described in the same history:

"Such was the audacity and effrontery of these demoralized and misguided Bábís that no less than twenty-five persons, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony, had the presumption to declare themselves to be the Promised One promised by the Báb! Such was the decline in their fortunes that they hardly dared show themselves in public. Kurds and Persians vied with each other, when confronting them in the streets, in heaping abuse upon them, and in vilifying openly the Cause which they professed. Little wonder that on His

return to Baghdád Bahá'u'lláh should have described the situation then existing in these words: "We found no more than a handful of souls, faint and dispirited, nay utterly lost and dead. The Cause of God had ceased to be on any one's lips, nor was any heart receptive to its message." (GPB:125)

By any standard this clearly represents a complete transformation of the character and fortunes of the Bábí community in Baghdád. Certain historians and sociologists would ascribe this revolution to the so-called charismatic attachment of the community of Bábís to Bahá'u'lláh. Charisma is a word which is derived without change from ancient Greek meaning "favor" or "gift", and apart of a specifically Christian connotation it also refers to "a personal magic of leadership arousing special popular loyalty or enthusiasm".¹⁰⁰ While many primitive societies believe in magic and cleave to a superstitious reverence for prestige, particularly of the religious but also of the political, the economic, the artistic and military varieties, this does not seem to have been the case with the Bábí community. During this period, as Shoghi Effendi quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there were no less than twenty-five claimants within that community to the title of "Him Whom God shall make manifest", and this would seem to indicate a remarkable penchant to independent thinking and decision-making. Furthermore, the Báb Himself strongly condemned magic and magicians and lauded true spirituality and the Prophets and Letters of the Living (their most important disciples), and it is therefore unlikely that Bábís would have conceived a magical power in Bahá'u'lláh which required their allegiance to His leadership and their obedience to His teachings. The only authority to whom they were commanded by the Báb to turn was the one true God revealed in all of the Prophets, and in "Him Whom God shall manifest" in the future. The Bábís were transformed through their contact with Bahá'u'lláh, this much is clear, and it is by no means proven that this transformation was effected by means of their inspiration from His personal example and obedience to His leadership. It is much more likely that the Bábís were re-created, resurrected to spiritual life through the penetration and potency of the Word of God, both in the writings of the Báb and in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which began to be revealed during this period.

This, in any case, is the claim made by Bahá'u'lláh, and by His appointed interpreters. Inasmuch as the transformative influence of Bahá'u'lláh continues to this day, notwithstanding His passing from this plane of existence in 1892, over one hundred years ago, it is not

reasonable to insist that the power of His influence was charismatic, magical, and made up of some mysterious force of personality. This may be a popular conception but it is unscientific, and Bahá'u'lláh teaches the harmony of religion with science and reason, not with popular opinion and superstition!

EIGHTEENTH PROOF
DIVINE AND ETERNAL SOVEREIGNTY AND
DOMINION

The Prophet of God must demonstrate divine and eternal sovereignty and dominion, spiritual Kingship, and this is of an entirely different order from the man-made and ephemeral sovereignty and dominion of human kings and rulers. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the great contrast between divine and earthly sovereignty in this passage from an address delivered 23 June 1912:

“How great the difference between the glory of Christ and the glory of an earthly conqueror! It is related by historians that Napoleon Bonaparte I embarked secretly by night from Egypt. His destination was France. During his campaign in Palestine revolution had broken out and grave difficulties had arisen in the home government. The priests of Christianity had fled in terror. France had become atheistic; anarchy prevailed. The ship sailed out into a night brilliant with the light of the moon. Napoleon was pacing up and down the deck. His officers were sitting together, talking. One of them spoke of the similarity between Bonaparte and Christ. Napoleon stopped and said grimly, "Do you think I am going back to France to establish religion?" Jesus Christ established the religion of God through love. His sovereignty is everlasting. Napoleon overthrew governments in war and bloodshed. His dominion passed away; he himself was dethroned. Bonaparte destroyed human life; Christ was a Savior. Bonaparte controlled the physical bodies of men; Christ was a conqueror of human hearts. None of the Prophets of God were famous men, but They were unique in spiritual power. Love is the eternal sovereignty. Love is the divine power. By it all the kings of the earth are overthrown and conquered. What evidence of this could be greater than the accomplishment of Bahá'u'lláh? He appeared in the East and was exiled. He was sent to the prison of ‘Akká in Palestine. Two powerful despotic kings arose against Him. During His exile and imprisonment He wrote Tablets of authority to the kings and rulers of the world, announcing His spiritual sovereignty, establishing the religion of God, upraising the heavenly banners of the Cause of God...

“In brief, the nations of the world are becoming united under the sovereignty of the divine Kingdom. The East and the West are embracing here in love and affection today. This is not a commercial

or political unity, but unity through the love of God. We have crossed the sea to spread that love in America, to announce the call of the Kingdom, to establish the spiritual foundations of international peace. Although men may arise against the Kingdom, the dominion and sovereignty of God will be set up. It is an eternal Kingdom, a divine sovereignty.” (PUP:210-211)

In His "Lawh-i-Muhammad Zarandi Nabíl-i-A'zam" Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to His fulfillment of this Prophetic requirement:

GL:302: Let thine ear be attentive, O Nabíl-i-A'zam, to the Voice of the Ancient of Days, crying to thee from the Kingdom of His all-glorious Name. He it is Who is now proclaiming from the realms above, and within the inmost essence of all created things: "I truly am God, there is none other God but Me. I am He Who, from everlasting, hath been the Source of all sovereignty and power, He Who shall continue, throughout eternity, to exercise His kingship and to extend His protection unto all created things. My proof is the greatness of My might and My sovereignty that embraceth the whole of creation."...Blessed art thou, O My name, inasmuch as thou hast entered Mine Ark, and art speeding, through the power of My sovereign and most exalted might, on the ocean of grandeur, and art numbered with My favored ones whose names the Finger of God hath inscribed. Thou hast quaffed the cup which is life indeed from the hands of this Youth, around Whom revolve the Manifestations of the All-Glorious, and the brightness of Whose presence they Who are the Day-Springs of Mercy extol in the day time and in the night season.

It is not enough, it may be argued, for a claimant to Prophethood to state that His sovereignty is divine and eternal--He must demonstrate the truth of this claim. The previous Prophets are known in the chronological framework of human history. Hence, it is obvious that not one of the Prophets has proven to possess eternal sovereignty, for eternity is not recorded by human beings, and even after thousands or even millions of years the Prophets may be forgotten and hence may no longer be regarded as sovereign. From the human point of view it may be useful to interpret this sovereignty of the Prophets in a relative manner. Hence, it might be understood that the sovereignty of the Prophets endures after their passing from this world, whereas the sovereignty of human rulers passes on to others upon their decease.

While each nation has, in the past, possessed hereditary kingdoms and royal families, one king succeeded another, and the longest that any one king ruled was limited to his mortal lifetime, the Prophet of God is revered and followed for hundreds and thousands of years after the termination of his earthly sojourn. In this sense then, Bahá'u'lláh's eternal sovereignty is already demonstrated inasmuch as He is acclaimed as the King of mankind in this Age and Cycle, for over one hundred years after His ascension to the spiritual world, and by daily increasing minions of millions of souls. In comparison with Bahá'u'lláh, many worldly rulers -- kings and emperors and dictators and presidents and prime ministers -- have ruled and died since 1892, and very few are remembered even by the descendants of their former subjects let alone the generality of mankind.

Another way in which this divine sovereignty may be understood is that the Prophets of God reflect the sovereignty of God, are the Manifestations of that sovereignty, and, inasmuch as God is eternal and His sovereignty is eternal, so also is the sovereignty of the Prophets of God eternal. How are we to know that the sovereignty of God is eternal? For this we must study the divine philosophy of the nature of God and of the attributes of God. How are we to know that the sovereignty of the Prophet of God is eternal? The Prophet of God manifests the reality of God, and all of the attributes of God, and hence, if the sovereignty of God is eternal, the sovereignty of the Prophet is eternal. As Bahá'u'lláh affirms in a prayer for the Fast (month of Ala'):

BP:174: I have believed in Thee after Thou didst enable me to know Thy Self, Whom Thou hast revealed to men's eyes through the power of Thy sovereignty and might.

How are we to know that the sovereignty of the Prophet of God is divine? "Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Mt 7:16) The divine sovereignty is distinguished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá from temporal sovereignty -- by its divine love, its authentic creativity, its true liberty, its uplifting influence, as well as its lasting power and its resistance to destruction. Temporal sovereignty on the other hand is characterized most often by its love of self, its destructiveness, its oppression and confusion, its depressing influence as well as the brief span that it exercises its power and its condemnation to gradual decomposition or violent liquidation. Of these qualities, the salient one seems to be divine love. It is divine love which binds the hearts to God and to the Prophets of God who reveal God to men. It is divine love which

attracts the hearts of men to each other, which engenders the development of civilizations. It is divine love which triumphs over all obstacles, God's love for us and our love for Him. Without this divine love there is no eternity, there is no sovereignty, there is meaninglessness. And the Prophets of God teach that everything has meaning, everything and everyone.

NINETEENTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH CONFIRMS THE TEACHINGS OF HIS
PREDECESSOR

The entirety of "Kitáb-i-Iqán" by Bahá'u'lláh is an exposition of the truth of Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad Shírází the Báb, the immediate predecessor of Bahá'u'lláh. So great was the love and admiration which Bahá'u'lláh felt for the Báb, and so steadfast and unflinching His obedience to the prophetic mission undertaken by His predecessor that throughout the duration of the Báb's earthly ministry Bahá'u'lláh served His Cause fearlessly, inspiring and reconciling His followers and supporting them in their efforts to bring the Báb's message to the masses of Iran. Not once did He undermine the authority of the Báb by declaring or outwardly manifesting His own Prophethood -- which was His from eternity as in the case of all the Prophets of God¹⁰¹ -- nor did He act independently of the Báb, but rather in humble submission to the Will of God as revealed in the Words and Deeds and Person of his predecessor. In His "Lawh-i-Ahmad" he reveals the following:

BP:130: And that One Whom He hath sent forth by the name of 'Alí (i.e. His Holiness the Báb) was the true One from God, to Whose commands we are all conforming. Say: O people be obedient to the ordinances of God, which have been enjoined in the Bayán by the Glorious, the Wise One. Verily He is the King of the Messengers and His Book is the Mother Book did ye but know. Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message. Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside from this counsel, and whosoever desireth let him choose the path to his Lord.

In a prayer for the Fast (month of Ala'), Bahá'u'lláh writes the following words pertaining to the Báb:

BP:180-81: Magnify Thou, O Lord my God, Him Who is the Primal Point, the Divine Mystery, the Unseen Essence, the Day-Spring of Divinity, and the Manifestation of Thy Lordship, through Whom all the knowledge of the past and all the knowledge of the future were made plain, through Whom the pearls of Thy hidden wisdom were uncovered, and the

mystery of Thy treasured name disclosed, Whom Thou hast appointed as the Announcer of the One through Whose name the letter B and the letter E have been joined and united, through Whom Thy majesty, Thy sovereignty and Thy might were made known, through Whom Thy words have been sent down, and Thy laws set forth with clearness, and Thy signs spread abroad, and Thy Word established, through Whom the hearts of Thy chosen ones were laid bare, and all that were in the heavens and all that were on the earth were gathered together, whom Thou hast called 'Alí-Muhammad in the kingdom of Thy names, and the Spirit of Spirits in the Tablets of Thine irrevocable decree, Whom Thou hast invested with Thine own title, unto Whose name all other names have, at Thy bidding and through the power of Thy might, been made to return, and in Whom Thou hast caused all Thine attributes and titles to attain their final consummation. To Him also belong such names as lay hid within Thy stainless tabernacles, in Thine invisible world and Thy sanctified cities. Magnify Thou, moreover, such as have believed in Him and in His signs and have turned toward Him, from among those that have acknowledged Thy unity in His Latter Manifestation—a Manifestation whereof He hath made mention in His Tablets, and in His Books, and in His Scriptures, and in all the wondrous gem-like utterances that have descended upon Him. It is this same Manifestation Whose Covenant Thou hast bidden Him establish ere He had established His own Covenant.

In reference to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh which the Báb established prior to His own Covenant, Bahá'u'lláh writes in "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf":

ESW:160: He saith: "Glorified art Thou, O My God! Bear Thou witness that, through this Book, I have covenanted with all created things concerning the Mission of Him Whom Thou shalt make manifest, ere the covenant concerning Mine own Mission had been established. Sufficient witness art Thou and they that have believed in Thy signs. Thou, verily, sufficest Me. In Thee have I placed My trust, and Thou, verily, taketh count of all things."

In His "Lawh-i-Ahmad Quli Khán" Bahá'u'lláh describes the mission of the Báb in these words:

GL:145-47: Ages rolled away, until they attained their consummation in this, the Lord of days, the Day whereon the Day Star of the Bayán manifested itself above the horizon of mercy, the Day in which the Beauty of the All-Glorious shone forth in the exalted person of 'Alí-Muhammad, the Báb. No sooner did He reveal Himself, than all the people rose up against Him. By some He was denounced as one that hath uttered slanders against God, the Almighty, the Ancient of Days. Others regarded Him as a man smitten with madness, an allegation which I, Myself, have heard from the lips of one of the divines. Still others disputed His claim to be the Mouthpiece of God, and stigmatized Him as one who had stolen and used as his the words of the Almighty, who had perverted their meaning, and mingled them with his own. The Eye of Grandeur weepeth sore for the things which their mouths have uttered, while they continue to rejoice upon their seats. "God," said He, "is My witness, O people! I am come to you with a Revelation from the Lord, your God, the Lord of your fathers of old. Look not, O people, at the things ye possess. Look rather at the things God hath sent down unto you. This, surely, will be better for you than the whole of creation, could ye but perceive it. Repeat the gaze, O people, and consider the testimony of God and His proof which are in your possession, and compare them unto the Revelation sent down unto you in this Day, that the truth, the infallible truth, may be indubitably manifested unto you. Follow not, O people, the steps of the Evil One; follow ye the Faith of the All-Merciful, and be ye of them that truly believe. What would it profit man, if he were to fail to recognize the Revelation of God? Nothing whatever. To this Mine own Self, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, will testify." The more He exhorted them, the fiercer grew their enmity, till, at last, they put Him to death with shameful cruelty. The curse of God be upon the oppressors! A few believed in Him; few of Our servants are the thankful. These He admonished, in all His Tablets--nay, in every passage of His wondrous writings--not to give themselves up in the Day of the promised Revelation to anything whatever, be it in the heaven or in the earth...And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of the Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of

God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all created things. Even towards the end of His own earthly Mission, after the revelation of "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", Bahá'u'lláh did not abrogate the laws of the Báb without explaining that His predecessor had given Him permission to do so, an act of sublime love indeed considering that His own Revelation was infinitely more glorious and powerful than any previous Dispensation, including that of the Báb. In the "Ishraqát" He explains the changes to the Mother Book revealed by the Báb:

TB:132: Our Exalted Herald--may the life of all else besides Him be offered up for His sake--hath revealed certain laws. However, in the realm of His Revelation these laws were made subject to Our sanction, hence this Wronged One hath put some of them into effect by embodying them in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in different words. Others We set aside. He holdeth in His hand the authority. He doeth what He willeth and He ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth.

A perusal of the writings of the Báb -- even those few volumes which have been translated into French (by Nicolas) and those excerpts in English versions (by Shoghi Effendi, and later by a committee of the Bahá'í World Centre) -- will reveal that the essential, the spiritual teachings of the Báb are all reaffirmed in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Certain of His social, His material, His secondary laws and ordinances have been abolished, others reformed or modified, and some adopted without change by Bahá'u'lláh. Every Prophet of God is called upon to reveal new social, material, secondary teachings, adapted to the specific conditions of the age and the circumstances of mankind at the time of their revelation. Bahá'u'lláh has carried out this obligation, and many of those who have impartially investigated His social teachings find them to be entirely in sympathy with the spirit of the age in which we live, and admirably suited to the future upon which we have embarked. But He has also discharged the more essential obligation of the Prophet of God, which is to renew and rephrase while reiterating the perennial truths taught by His predecessor and by all the Prophets of God throughout the ages. This Bahá'u'lláh has also done, as we shall see in the Twenty-third Proof. We have seen already that Bahá'u'lláh affirmed the spiritual authority and mission of His predecessor, and that He proclaimed to one and all that the Báb's Revelation was a Revelation from God, a more magnificent Revelation of the Divine Bounty than any preceding Revelation, exceeding by far

the spiritual intensity of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus Christ and Muhammad.

This is strong medicine for the devotees of the religions centered about these Prophets, for each of these religious communities is centered around one of these Prophets and regards that One as the most important of all, the pre-eminent Prophet, in comparison with whom no other Prophet is of consequence. For Hinduism Krishna is the sun, for Buddhism it is Siddhartha Buddha, for Zoroastrianism it is Zoroaster, for Judaism it is Moshe Rabeinu, for Christianity it is Jesus Christ, for Islám it is the Messenger of Alláh, Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh affirms that the Báb is the King of the Messengers, the greatest Prophet who has arisen from time immemorial, greater than any of these previous Manifestations of God, and, at the same time, One with them all, indivisible from the all. No higher tribute has been paid to any Prophet of God by any of his successors! As for the tributes which men have paid to the Prophets of God whom they worship, these are ultimately of little significance, reflecting these men and not the true nature of the Prophets of God, who are, one and all, vastly exalted above the thoughts and sayings of men.

In the opening pages of "Kitáb-i-Íqán", Bahá'u'lláh affirms that man cannot attain to true knowledge of God and His Prophets through listening to the words of men:

KI:3-4: ...man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious, can never quaff from the stream of divine knowledge and wisdom, can never enter the abode of immortality, nor partake of the cup of divine nearness and favour, unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets.

TWENTIETH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS A MATERIAL, HUMAN AND
SPIRITUAL EDUCATOR

‘Abdu’l-Bahá spells out the criteria for this Proof in a passage from "Some Answered Questions" (1904-06) which has been cited earlier, but to refresh our memories we will review this text as follows:

“Then it is plain and evident that man needs an educator, and this educator must be unquestionably and indubitably perfect in all respects and distinguished above all men. Otherwise, if he should be like the rest of humanity, he could not be their educator, more particularly because he must be at the same time their material and human as well as their spiritual educator -- that is to say, he must teach men to organize and carry out physical matters, and to form a social order in order to establish cooperation and mutual aid in living so that material affairs may be organized and regulated for any circumstances that may occur. In the same way he must establish human education -- that is to say, he must educate intelligence and thought in such a way that they may attain complete development, so that knowledge and science may increase, and the reality of things, the mysteries of beings and the properties of existence may be discovered; that, day by day, instructions, inventions and institutions may be improved; and from things perceptible to the senses conclusions as to intellectual things may be deduced.

“He must also impart spiritual education, so that intelligence and comprehension may penetrate the metaphysical world, and may receive benefit from the sanctifying breeze of the Holy Spirit, and may enter into relationship with the Supreme Concourse. He must so educate the human reality that it may become the center of the divine appearance, to such a degree that the attributes and the names of God shall be resplendent in the mirror of the reality of man, and the holy verse "We will make man in Our image and likeness" [Gen. 1:26] shall be realized.” (SAQ:8-9)

Does Bahá’u’lláh impart physical, human and spiritual education? In His Tablets Bahá’u’lláh has given advice to physicians, indicating that natural and spiritual healing should take precedence over the usage of drugs and advocating certain principles with regard to exercise and

diet; He has greatly encouraged the re-organization and revival of agriculture as the basis for human society; He has called for the establishment of the divine institution to be the center of every town or village, called "Mashriqu'l-Adhkar" (Dawning-place of the praises of God), a house of worship with many dependencies which are related to the service of the people--their healing, education, housing and spiritual upliftment; He has commanded that His followers be as clean as possible, bathing regularly, paring their nails, wearing spotless clothing, sitting on seats rather than on the ground or the floor; He has indicated that semen is clean, He has not indicated that menstrual fluid is unclean, and this is a physical as well as a spiritual teaching because of its implications for marital life; He has forbidden the use of alcohol or drugs unless prescribed by a physician; He has discouraged the smoking of tobacco as unclean and unhealthy; He has encouraged the rigour and simplicity and healthiness of country living and discouraged self-indulgence in the fleeting attractions of the city; He has called for moderation in sexual intercourse -- only within the sanctified relationship of marriage and principally for the engendering of children; He establishes the divine institution of House of Justice, which is allied to the community council and storehouse, these being models of consultative government elected by adult residents of a community, and charged with the responsibility for the care of those citizens and their dependants who are unable to educate, heal, employ, feel, shelter or otherwise care for themselves. In all of these ways He teaches "men to organize and carry out physical matters, and to regulate the form of society with regard to the establishing of help and assistance in life, so that material affairs may be organized and regulated for any circumstances that may occur." (p. 10) These teachings will be discussed in greater detail in the Twenty-third Proof.

Anyone who investigates the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will find that He consistently encourages the study, indeed the mastery of useful arts and sciences, of those which do not begin and end in words. Indeed one of the major themes in His writings is the cultivation of the truly learned, who must be proficient in much practical learning as well as in spiritual matters. The education of "intelligence and thought in such a way that they may attain complete development" is, according to Bahá'u'lláh, one of the aims of His Revelation. He calls for universal education -- training for every human being, for women as well as men, and indeed to favor women over men as these former are the first educators of children and hence if women are well educated their children will have a good start in life. The "complete development" of intelligence and thought is manifested in its application to the

problems of human beings, and hence Bahá'u'lláh stresses deeds rather than words, the application of reason to the betterment of human life rather than to vain and profitless speculations. Scientific research is promoted through His insistence upon the principle of the agreement of science and true religion, of reason and faith. This is the very first divine educator who has stressed this principle, and hence He is indeed a major promoter of human education. As a consequence of this teaching, many of His followers work as scientists, engineers and physicians. On the other hand, none are engaged in partisan politics, and few are theologians -- both of which are fields which are much taken up with words and often less productive of deeds.

Every Prophet of God is a spiritual educator, but only the mystics of the previous Dispensations have generally understood the functions of the spiritual educator. The Prophet is not principally a charismatic leader whose function is to inspire by the force of His personality the obedience and service of His followers -- this is one path, the path of devotion, the path of bhakti yoga -- however, according to the mystics, it is not the highest road. The highest road is that of wisdom, of knowledge of the metaphysical world, and it is this path which is described here: "so that intelligence and comprehension may penetrate the metaphysical world, and may receive benefit from the sanctifying breeze of the Holy Spirit, and may enter into relationship with the Supreme Concourse." (p. 10-11) This "intelligence and comprehension" of spiritual realities is what the Buddhists call "prajnaparamita", what the Hindus call "jnana yoga", what the Jewish kabbalists call "hochmah", what the Christian mystics call "gnosis" and "sophia", what the Sufi Muslims call "hikmat" and "ma'rifa". This is one part of spiritual education, and this Bahá'u'lláh provides in the most authentic, authoritative and systematic fashion, revealing the true nature of all realities, from the lowly mineral to the Unknowable Essence of God. His spiritual teachings are found in the Twenty-third Proof and throughout his Tablets and books.

The other aspect of spiritual education is moral, and the Prophet "must so educate the human reality that it may become the centre of the divine appearance, to such a degree that the attributes and the names of God shall be resplendent in the mirror of the reality of man" (p. 11). The names and attributes of God referred to here are all of the divine qualities which become manifest in man when he practices virtues, such as patience, forbearance, steadfastness, chastity, purity, justice and equity, mercy, loving-kindness, hospitality, forgiveness, generosity, detachment from all save God. Only when man becomes

self-effacing can his heart reflect the grandeur, the wisdom, the love, the power of God. The moral and ethical teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and the methods He reveals whereby children and adults may develop such morals and ethics are described in the Twenty-third Proof. While essentially the moral and ethical teachings found in Bahá'u'lláh's writings are identical to those of Moses, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Krishna and Muhammad -- the ageless Faith of God, eternal in the past and eternal in the future -- the standard engendered upon His followers by Bahá'u'lláh is pre-eminently exalted and in stark and shocking contrast to the lax and dis-spirited morals of our epoch and civilization. We're tired of trying...He calls upon us to try harder than ever, harder than our ancestors ever dreamed of. As difficult as it may be for the monk, the hermit, the ascetic to develop virtues, Bahá'u'lláh calls upon all to abandon asceticism and seclusion and to live and work in the world, to marry and raise families, and for each family to be a living spiritual community in which the parents are equal spiritual partners and the children are spiritual chellas, initiates, disciples. He calls upon all institutions, whether of government or of commerce, of service or trade, of arts or crafts or sciences to contribute to the spiritual environment of the community -- this is no longer the responsibility of professional religionists, it is the work of every human being without exception. This is not a standard revealed for one tribe, one nation, for the elect, the chosen few...this is a moral standard offered to and indeed required of the generality of mankind. Only universal moral education could effect the unification and pacification of the human race, which is the imperative of the Cause of God in this Day, and the central principle animating the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

TWENTY-FIRST PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS A DIVINE PHYSICIAN

Every Prophet is, during His Age, the Divine Physician for all of humanity. He is endowed by God with the cure for all ills. While healing may seem to come from material and human sources which are not directly related to this Divine Physician, in reality all healing has its source in that Prophet, or rather, in the Holy Spirit which works through Him. When men are deprived of the spiritual healing of the Prophet -- the direct influence of His Revelation in all things, the influence upon the souls of believers of faith in Him, and the influence upon all souls of His Teachings, His Laws and Institutions. In a number of His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh refers to his role as Divine Physician for this Age -- here we begin with "Lawh-i-Aqa Mírzá Shad'u'llah":

GL:39-40: Witness how the world is being afflicted with a fresh calamity every day. Its tribulation is continually deepening. From the moment the Suriy-i-Ra'is (Tablet to Ra'is) was revealed until the present day, neither hath the world been tranquillized, nor have the hearts of its peoples been at rest. At one time it hath been agitated by contentions and disputes, at another it hath been convulsed by wars, and fallen a victim to inveterate diseases. Its sickness is approaching the stage of utter hopelessness, inasmuch as the true Physician is debarred from administering the remedy, whilst unskilled practitioners are regarded with favor, and are accorded full freedom to act.

In another Tablet He wrote the following verses:

GL:80-81: The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the

heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy?...The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared.

In "Lawh-i-Manikchi", Bahá'u'lláh returns to this theme once again:

GL:213: The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements. We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

In "Lawh-i-Malakah Victoria" He addresses "the elected representatives of the people in every land" Bahá'u'lláh refers to this point from another angle:

GL:254-55: Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest

remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

In that Tablet He also refers to the remedy prescribed by the Divine Physician for the ailments of humanity, and while we will be studying this remedy in the Twenty-third Proof yet will we read this verse, inasmuch as it differentiates the character of the Divine Physician from that of the "ignorant physicians" with whom he is contrasted:

GL:255: That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá repeats the very same affirmations, first in this Tablet:

“Every divine Manifestation is the very life of the world, and the skilled physician of each ailing soul. The world of man is sick, and that competent Physician knoweth the cure, arising as He doth with teachings, counsels and admonishments that are the remedy for every pain, the healing balm to every wound. It is certain that the wise physician can diagnose his patient's needs at any season, and apply the cure. Wherefore, relate thou the Teachings of the Abha Beauty to the urgent needs of this present day, and thou wilt see that they provide an instant remedy for the ailing body of the world. Indeed, they are the elixir that bringeth eternal health.

“The treatment ordered by wise physicians of the past, and by those that follow after, is not one and the same, rather doth it depend on what aileth the patient; and although the remedy may change, the aim is always to bring the patient back to health. In the dispensations gone before, the feeble body of the world could not withstand a rigorous or powerful cure. For this reason did Christ say: 'I have yet many things to say unto you, matters needing to be told, but ye cannot bear to hear them now. Howbeit when that Comforting Spirit, Whom the Father will send, shall come, He will make plain unto you the truth.' [John 15:26; 16:12-13]” (SWAB:59)

In an address on 26 November 1911, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated the essential condition which makes the remedy of the Divine Physician effective:

“Doctors of religion were instituted to bring spiritual healing to the peoples and to be the cause of unity among the nations. If they become the cause of division they had better not exist! A remedy is given to cure a disease, but if it only succeeds in aggravating the complaint, it is better to leave it alone. If religion is only to be a cause of disunion it had better not exist. All the Divine Manifestations sent by God into the world have gone through their terrible hardships and sufferings for the single hope of spreading Truth, unity and concord among men.” (PT:121)

Again, in an address on 30 May 1912 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reiterated this theme:

“Knowledge of human conditions and the needed remedy for them is not the cause of their betterment. To admit that health is good does not constitute health. A skilled physician is needed to remedy existing human conditions. As a physician is required to have complete knowledge of pathology, diagnosis, therapeutics and treatment, so this World Physician must be wise, skillful and capable before health will result. His mere knowledge is not health; it must be applied and the remedy carried out. The attainment of any object is conditioned upon knowledge, volition and action. Until these three conditions are forthcoming, there is no execution or accomplishment.” (PUP:157)

In another address on 8 June 1912 the need for a Divine Physician is stated in these terms:

“The body politic today is greatly in need of a physician. It is similar to a human body afflicted with severe ailments. A doctor diagnoses the case and prescribes treatment. He does not prescribe, however, until he has made the diagnosis. The disease which afflicts the body politic is lack of love and absence of altruism. In the hearts of men no real love is found, and the condition is such that, unless their susceptibilities are quickened by some power so that unity, love and accord may develop within them, there can be no healing, no agreement among mankind. Love and unity are the needs of the body politic today. Without these there can be no progress or prosperity attained. Therefore, the friends of God must adhere to the power which will create this love and unity in the hearts of the sons of men. Science cannot cure the illness of the body politic. Science cannot create amity and fellowship in human hearts. Neither can patriotism nor racial allegiance effect a remedy. It must be accomplished solely

through the divine bounties and spiritual bestowals which have descended from God in this day for that purpose. This is an exigency of the times, and the divine remedy has been provided. The spiritual teachings of the religion of God can alone create this love, unity and accord in human hearts.” (PUP:11)

Finally, on 17 June 1912 an address was given which is entirely devoted to this theme, and the entirety of this address is cited here:

“We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. In the East it is the custom to call upon the patient often and meet him individually. The people in the East show the utmost kindness and compassion to the sick and suffering. This has greater effect than the remedy itself. You must always have this thought of love and affection when you visit the ailing and afflicted.

“The world of humanity may be likened to the individual man himself; it has its illness and ailments. A patient must be diagnosed by a skillful physician. The Prophets of God are the real Physicians. In whatever age or time They appear They prescribe for human conditions. They know the sicknesses; They discover the hidden sources of disease and indicate the necessary remedy. Whosoever is healed by that remedy finds eternal health. For instance, in the day of Jesus Christ the world of humanity was afflicted with various ailments. Jesus Christ was the real Physician. He appeared, recognized the symptoms and prescribed the real remedy. What was that remedy? It was His revealed teaching especially applicable to that age. Later on many new ailments and disorders appeared in the body politic. The world became sick; other severe maladies appeared, especially in the peninsula of Arabia. God manifested Muhammad there. He came and prescribed for the conditions so that the Arabs became healthy, strong and virile in that time.

“In this present age the world of humanity is afflicted with severe sicknesses and grave disorders which threaten death. Therefore, Bahá'u'lláh has appeared. He is the real Physician, bringing divine remedy and healing to the world of man. He has brought teachings for all ailments -- the Hidden Words, Ishraqát, Tarazat, Tajalliyat, Words of Paradise, Glad Tidings, etc. These Holy Words and teachings are the remedy for the body politic, the divine prescription and real cure for the disorders which afflict the world. Therefore, we must accept and partake of this healing remedy in order that complete recovery may be assured. Every soul who lives according to the teachings of

Bahá'u'lláh is free from the ailments and indispositions which prevail throughout the world of humanity; otherwise, selfish disorders, intellectual maladies, spiritual sicknesses, imperfections and vices will surround him, and he will not receive the life-giving bounties of God.

“Bahá'u'lláh is the real Physician. He has diagnosed human conditions and indicated the necessary treatment. The essential principles of His healing remedies are the knowledge and love of God, severance from all else save God, turning our faces in sincerity toward the Kingdom of God, implicit faith, firmness and fidelity, loving-kindness toward all creatures and the acquisition of the divine virtues indicated for the human world. These are the fundamental principles of progress, civilization, international peace and the unity of mankind. These are the essentials of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, the secret of everlasting health, the remedy and healing for man.

“It is my hope that you may assist in healing the sick body of the world through these teachings so that eternal radiance may illumine all the nations of mankind.” (PUP:204-205)

The remedy of the Prophets of God has been proved effective time after time. The influence of Moses upon the Jewish people, that of Jesus Christ upon the Europeans (East and West), that of Muhammad upon the North Africans and the Asians (as far East as Malaysia, Indonesia, China and India), that of Buddha upon the East Asians (Burmese, Thais, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese) -- all of these are historical examples which are proof of the power of each of the Prophets of God to heal the spiritual ailments of humanity. Also, in each of these historical cases, the power of the remedy depended upon the rigour of its application by the assistants to the Divine Physician, and each professed believer in a Prophet has been an assistant and a practitioner of His divine remedy. When the assistants did not adhere to the application of the divine remedy, when they invented their own remedies and promoted these innovations over the original medicine the body politic under their jurisdiction and direct influence slipped once more into disease and suffering, until it became evident that the healing medicine of true religion had been replaced by the deadly poison of irreligion, wolves in sheep's clothing. The efficacy of the divine treatment as prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh is already evident in the community of Bahá'ís and in the application of many of His teachings in the wider society. In the case of the Bahá'í community, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá often stated, warring peoples have been reconciled through the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, women have been uplifted where before they were depressed, the poor and the privileged have become friends, the

races have been united. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in a number of addresses delivered in the West, pronounced this theme:

“In Persia previous to the middle of the nineteenth century among the various tribes and peoples, sects and denominations there existed the greatest animosity, strife and hatred. At that time, too, all the other nations of the East were in the same condition. Religionists were hostile and bigoted, sects were at enmity, races hated each other, tribes were constantly at war; everywhere antagonism and conflict prevailed...

“In Persia today through the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh you will find people of various beliefs and denominations living together in the utmost peace and agreement. The former enmities and hatred have passed away, and they exercise the utmost love toward all mankind, for they realize and know that all are the creatures and servants of one God. This is directly due to the divine teachings.” (PUP:119, 120-121)

“In the Orient the various peoples and nations were in a state of antagonism and strife, manifesting the utmost enmity and hatred toward each other. Darkness encompassed the world of mankind. At such a time as this Bahá’u’lláh appeared. He removed all the imitations and prejudices which had caused separation and misunderstanding and laid the foundation of the one religion of God. When this was accomplished, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists all were united in actual fellowship and love. The souls who followed Bahá’u’lláh from every nation have become as one family living in agreement and accord, willing to sacrifice life for each other. The Muslim will give his life for the Christian, the Christian for the Jew and all of them for the Zoroastrian. They live together in love, fellowship and unity.” (PUP:202)

In the Bahá’í community peoples of very different ethnic, religious, class, linguistic and racial backgrounds have been living together in love and harmony for over one hundred years, in every nation -- not just in Iran. There is much inter-marriage between people of diverse backgrounds in this community. There is also much emigration, with thousands of believers voluntarily (and involuntarily as a result of the ongoing persecutions in Iran) moving to unfamiliar places in order to promote the Bahá’í teachings and create a new civilization which embodies the supreme remedy of the Divine Physician for humanity: unity, unity, unity. The influence of the remedy of Bahá’u’lláh for the ills of mankind has also revolutionized the life of mankind as a whole, as is evidenced by the impact of the United Nations, by the World

Trade Organization, the World Bank, the virtually universal adoption of English as an auxiliary international language, the emancipation of women and of oppressed races and classes, the Internet with its World-Wide Web. While humanity may not acknowledge the Source of its rehabilitation, while it may not recognize the Physician who has revealed its remedy, perhaps the generality of mankind, at the close of the twentieth century, has come to understand that the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the cause of unity and progress for the entire human race. Some of these teachings are summarized in this short list, and all will be discussed in the Twenty-third Proof:

1. independent investigation of reality by each person
2. oneness of humanity
3. agreement of science and religion
4. religion must be conducive to love and unity
5. equality of men and women
6. abandonment of all prejudices
7. world peace
8. universal education
9. universal auxiliary language
10. foundations of all religions are one
11. reformation of the economy
12. equal rights for all human beings
13. universal employment
14. reconciliation of religious systems
15. religion should not mix with politics
16. divine civilization needed as complement to material culture
17. international parliament and tribunal
18. universal justice
19. promotion of useful arts and sciences

TWENTY-SECOND PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HAS PERFORMED MIRACLES

Miracles are specifically discounted as proofs for the Prophets of God, inasmuch as they are only truly proofs for those who witness them and not for those who hear about them second-hand. Furthermore, what may seem like a miracle to one person will appear to be unremarkable to another, and a convincing miracle for one witness will be unconvincing to another. Many Prophets have been accused of being magicians, sorcerers, and indeed, if they were to seek to prove their Prophetic claims and their divine authority by means of miracles they could be discounted as such. Nevertheless, Prophets do perform miracles, because they have superhuman powers, and are not subject to the laws of nature.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá cites miracles as one of Bahá’u’lláh's "signs" in a Tablet:¹⁰²

“Again among His signs are the extraordinary things He continually did, the miracles He performed, the wonders appearing from Him without interruption like the streaming down of His clouds--and the acknowledgement, even by unbelievers, of His powerful light. By His own life! This was clearly verified, it was demonstrated to those of every persuasion who came into the presence of the living, the self-subsisting Lord.” (SWAB:16)

For a modern reader this is an astonishing claim to encounter. Most of us have a healthy skepticism about such supernatural phenomena and are inclined to interpret reports thereof, even in Scriptures, as later interpolations, as the active imaginations of less learned and more superstitious generations, or as meant to be interpreted metaphorically rather than literally. That such a reasonable and philosophical observer as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá should have attested to the miracles of his father is astounding, to say the least. Indeed, in "Some Answered Questions" miracles are discounted as unlikely to be convincing proofs:

“I do not wish to mention the miracles of Bahá’u’lláh, for it may perhaps be said that these are traditions, liable both to truth and to error, like the accounts of the miracles of Christ in the Gospel,

which come to us from the apostles, and not from anyone else, and are denied by the Jews. Though if I wish to mention the supernatural acts of Bahá'u'lláh, they are numerous; they are acknowledged in the Orient, and even by some non-Bahá'ís. But these narratives are not decisive proofs and evidences to all; the hearer might perhaps say that this account may not be in accordance with what occurred, for it is known that other sects recount miracles performed by their founders. For instance, the followers of Brahmanism relate miracles. From what evidence may we know that those are false and that these are true? If these are fables, the others also are fables; if these are generally accepted, so also the others are generally accepted. Consequently, these accounts are not satisfactory proofs. Yes, miracles are proofs for the eyewitness only, and even he may regard them not as a miracle but as an enchantment. Extraordinary feats have also been related of some conjurors.

“Briefly, my meaning is that many wonderful things were done by Bahá'u'lláh, but we do not recount them, as they do not constitute proofs and evidences for all the peoples of the earth, and they are not decisive proofs even for those who see them: they may think that they are merely enchantments.” (SAQ:37)

Having affirmed this truth, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá does refer to some of the miracles of Bahá'u'lláh in this same text:

“So also foreign peoples, and other sects who were not believers, attributed many wonderful things to Bahá'u'lláh. Some believed that He was a saint, and some even wrote treatises about Him. One of them, Siyyid Davudi, a Sunnite savant of Baghdád, wrote a short treatise in which he related certain supernatural acts of Bahá'u'lláh. Even now, in all parts of the East, there are some people who, though they do not believe in His manifestation, nevertheless believe Him to be a saint and relate miracles attributed to Him.” (SAQ:34)

According to those who have perused the second part of Nabíl-i-A'zam's narrative history, which has yet to be published either in Persian or in translation, Nabíl describes a number of miracles associated with Bahá'u'lláh. Readers of pilgrim's notes written by Western believers during the ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have found accounts of miracles, more often those of the son than of the father. What did Bahá'u'lláh himself say about miracles, and in particular about miracles associated with Him? In His last major book, "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" he wrote:

ESW:33: We entreat Our loved ones not to besmirch the hem of Our raiment with the dust of falsehood, neither to allow references to what they have regarded as miracles and prodigies to debase Our rank and station, or to mar the purity and sanctity of Our name.

The Prophet of God, and, most particularly this Supreme Manifestation of God, come to inaugurate a new Cycle of human history, may be lowered in rank when we make references to His miracles! Far, far exalted is He above the imaginations and understanding and experience of mortal men! On at least three occasions, however, Bahá'u'lláh offered to perform any miracle whatsoever that might be asked of Him. He describes one of these occasions in this passage from a Tablet:

GL:131-132: There hath appeared in this Revelation what hath never appeared before. As to the infidels that have witnessed what hath been manifested, they murmur and say: "Verily, this is a sorcerer who hath devised a lie against God." They are indeed an outcast people.

Tell out to the nations, O Pen of the Ancient of Days, the things that have happened in Iraq. Tell them of the messenger whom the congregation of the divines of that land had delegated to meet Us, who, when attaining Our presence, questioned Us concerning certain sciences, and whom We answered by virtue of the knowledge We inherently possess. Thy Lord is, verily, the Knower of things unseen. "We testify," said he, "that the knowledge Thou dost possess is such as none can rival. Such a knowledge, however, is insufficient to vindicate the exalted station which the people ascribe to Thee. Produce, if Thou speakest the truth, what the combined forces of the peoples of the earth are powerless to produce." Thus was it irrevocably decreed in the court of the presence of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Loving.

"Witness! What is it thou seest?" He was dumbfounded. And when he came to himself, he said: "I truly believe in God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised." "Go thou to the people, and tell them: 'Ask whatsoever ye please. Powerful is He to do what He willeth. Nothing whatsoever, be it of the past or of the future, can frustrate His Will.' Say: 'O ye congregation of the divines! Choose any matter ye desire, and ask your Lord, the God of Mercy, to reveal it unto you. If He fulfil your wish,

by virtue of His sovereignty, believe ye then in Him, and be not of those that reject His truth." "The dawn of understanding hath now broken," said he, "and the testimony of the All-Merciful is fulfilled." He arose and returned unto them that sent him, at the bidding of God, the All-Glorious, the Well-Beloved.

Days passed and he failed to come back to Us. Eventually, there came another messenger who informed Us that the people had given up what they originally had purposed. They are indeed a contemptible people. This is what happened in Iraq, and to what I reveal I Myself am witness. This happening was noised abroad, yet none was found to comprehend its meaning. Thus did We ordain it. Would that ye knew this!

By My Self! Whoso hath in bygone ages asked Us to produce the signs of God, hath, no sooner We revealed them to him, repudiated God's truth. The people, however, have, for the most part, remained heedless. They whose eyes are illumined with the light of understanding will perceive the sweet savors of the All-Merciful, and will embrace His truth. These are they who are truly sincere.

Shoghi Effendi tells this same story in "God Passes By", and it will be useful to the reader to compare the two accounts:

"Frustrated in their designs, but unrelenting in their hostility, the assembled divines delegated the learned and devout Hájí Mulla Hasan-i-'Ammu, recognized for his integrity and wisdom, to submit various questions to Bahá'u'lláh for elucidation. When these were submitted, and answers completely satisfactory to the messenger were given, Hájí Mulla Hasan, affirming the recognition by the 'ulamás of the vastness of the knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh, asked, as an evidence of the truth of His mission, for a miracle that would satisfy completely all concerned. "Although you have no right to ask this," Bahá'u'lláh replied, "for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request...The 'ulamás must assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture." This clear, challenging and courageous reply, unexampled in the annals of any

religion, and addressed to the most illustrious Shí'ah divines, assembled in their time-honored stronghold, was so satisfactory to their envoy that he instantly arose, kissed the knee of Bahá'u'lláh, and departed to deliver His message. Three days later he sent word that that august assemblage had failed to arrive at a decision, and had chosen to drop the matter, a decision to which he himself later gave wide publicity, in the course of his visit to Persia, and even communicated it in person to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mírzá Sa'id Khán. "We have," Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have commented, when informed of their reaction to this challenge, "through this all-satisfying, all-embracing message which We sent, revealed and vindicated the miracles of all the Prophets, inasmuch as We left the choice to the 'ulamás themselves, undertaking to reveal whatever they would decide upon." (GPB:143-44)

According to Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'u'lláh made a similar challenge to the Sunní khalif, the chief of the majority branch of Islám, as follows:

“He had already flung a daring challenge to the sacerdotal order represented by the eminent ecclesiastics residing in Najaf, Karbila and Kazimayn. He was now, while in the vicinity of the court of His royal adversary, to offer a similar challenge to the recognized head of Sunní Islám, as well as to the sovereign of Persia, the trustee of the hidden Imam.” (GPB:145)

“To this same Sultán He, moreover, as attested by the Suriy-i-Ra'is, transmitted, while in Gallipoli, a verbal message through a Turkish officer named 'Umar, requesting the sovereign to grant Him a ten minute interview, 'so that he may demand whatsoever he would deem to be a sufficient testimony and would regard as proof of the veracity of Him Who is the Truth,' adding that 'should God enable Him to produce it, let him, then, release these wronged ones and leave them to themselves.” (GPB:173)

The third recorded occasion upon which Bahá'u'lláh offered to accomplish any miracle whatsoever in order to demonstrate the truth of His mission was in "Lawh-i-Sultán", revealed in Adrianople:

“To Násiri'd-Dín Sháh He revealed a Tablet, the lengthiest epistle to any single sovereign, in which He...demonstrated the validity of His Mission; expressed the wish to be 'brought face to face with the divines of the age, and produce proofs and testimonies in the presence

of His Majesty,' which would establish the truth of His Cause..." (GPB:173)

In that same Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh once again offered the ultimate challenge to the Sháh and the Shí'í divines, as attested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in "Some Answered Questions":

"If we carefully examine the text of the Bible, we see that the Divine Manifestation never said of those who denied Him, 'Whatever miracle you desire, I am ready to perform, and I will submit to whatever test you propose.' But in the Epistle to the Sháh, Bahá'u'lláh said clearly, 'Gather the 'ulamá and summon me, that the evidences and proofs may be established.'" (SAQ:41)

It is clear that while the actual text of "Lawh-i-Sultán" does not specifically make mention of miracles, 'Abdu'l-Bahá understood it to refer thereto. And 'Abdu'l-Bahá was there, with Bahá'u'lláh, and knew what the Manifestation of God meant, the nature of the offer He was making, and His preparedness to meet any request which might be forthcoming. The cowardice, the weakness, the corruption and worldliness, the cynicism manifest in the universal response of these recipients of the unconditional divine challenge, of the ecclesiastics of Sunní and Islám and the spiritual and temporal leaders of both communities--the Sunní khalif and the Shí'í patron and protector--are so obvious to require no further testimony or proof. Suffice it to say that the Sunní and Shí'í clergy remain, to this day unalterably opposed to the claims of Bahá'u'lláh, and that they have fallen from the near absolute ascendancy they once boasted over the hearts and minds of their fellow religionists; and that the Sunní khalif and with it the Ottoman Sultánate have both been abolished since 1908 while the Qájár dynasty and the Persian monarchy and protectorate of the Shí'í sect have been in ruins beginning at the end of the 19th century and finally falling altogether in 1979. These three instances of Bahá'u'lláh offering to produce any miracle desired are proof enough of the unprecedented capacity of this Prophet of God to carry out supernatural acts. Indeed, the significance of these challenges is above all, that in offering to produce any miracle, Bahá'u'lláh "revealed and vindicated the miracles of all the Prophets" (GPB:144), and inasmuch as His stated purpose has been to champion all the Prophets of God and the station of Prophethood itself, He thus accomplished that purpose in the superlative.

TWENTY-THIRD PROOF THE TEACHINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are revealed in over 17,000 Tablets, the greater portion of which, once collected, would fill one hundred volumes.¹⁰³ Consequently, it is hardly surprising that 'Abdu'l-Bahá should have attested that:

“The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh embody many principles...”
(PUP:394)

“The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are boundless, innumerable...” (PUP:375)

“The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are boundless and without end in their far-reaching benefit to mankind.” (PUP:435)

Some of these teachings are original to Bahá'u'lláh while others confirm truths taught by previous Prophets of God. No study of Bahá'u'lláh's writings can hope to determine the full extent of His teachings, laws, counsels and admonitions. What will be offered here is an introduction to those principles found in certain of His Tablets, revealed after the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" and thus at the full maturity of His Revelation, after its independence had been established from the Bábí Dispensation and from the laws and teachings of the Báb and all previous Prophets. These Tablets are as follows: 1) Bisharat (Glad-tidings); 2) Tarazat (Ornaments); 3) Tajalliyat (Effulgences); 4) Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyih (Words of Paradise: abbreviated--Kalimat); 5) Lawh-i-Dunya (Tablet of the World); 6) Ishraqát (Splendours). The principles described in these Tablets are listed below with the title of the Tablet(s) in which they are found along with the order (numeration) associated in that Tablet with the particular principle. This will be followed with a study of the presentation of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

1. Abrogation of "jihad" (holy war), the war of the faithful of one religion upon those of another (Bisharat:1; Kalimat:11)
2. Cursing and reviling forbidden (Tarazat:5; Ishraqát:8)

3. Association and fellowship with the followers of all religions and the abolition of ritual impurity (Bisharat:2; Tarazat:2; Kalimat:6,7,8; Lawh-i-Dunya:3,8; Ishraqát:6,8,9)
4. Oneness of humanity (Bisharat:3; Kalimat:7,8; Ishraqát:6)
5. Universal language for humanity (Bisharat:3; Kalimat:8; Lawh-i-Dunya:2; Ishraqát:6)
6. Universal language to be taught to children in all schools (Bisharat:3; Lawh-i-Dunya:2; Ishraqát:6)
7. Aid ruler who comes to the support of the Cause of God (Bisharat:4; Kalimat:8; Ishraqát:6)
8. Loyalty to the government where one resides (Bisharat:5)
9. Establishment of the Lesser Peace (Bisharat:6; Kalimat:9; Lawh-i-Dunya:1)
10. Establishment of the Most Great Peace (Ishraqát:2)
11. Man at liberty to choose the style of his beard and clothing with wisdom (Bisharat:7)
12. Recluses called upon to join society (Bisharat:8; Kalimat:10)
13. Ascetics called upon to marry and raise children (Bisharat:8; Kalimat:10)
14. Observe what will cause joy and radiance (Kalimat:10)
15. Guard eyes from that which is not seemly (Ishraqát:8)
16. Confession of sins to God is enjoined (Bisharat:9)
17. Confession of sins to anyone other than God is in error (Bisharat:9)
18. Destruction of books is abrogated and disallowed (Bisharat:10; Lawh-i-Dunya:7)

19. Study of useful sciences, arts and crafts is enjoined (Bisharat:11; Tajalliyat:3)
20. Study of useless sciences which begin and end with words is discouraged (Tarazat:3)
21. Arts and material means are manifested by means of the Revelation of the Book of God (Tarazat:6)
22. In this Day arts and sciences are manifest from the Occident (Tarazat:5)
23. Engagement of every person in a useful and profitable occupation (Bisharat:12; Tarazat:1; Tajalliyat:3)
24. Engagement in occupation has been raised to the rank of worship (Bisharat:12)
25. Protection and preservation of the stations of God's servants (Tarazat:5)
26. Treat craftsmen with deference (Tarazat:5; Tajalliyat:3)
27. Treat scientists with deference (Tajalliyat:3)
28. The most honored profession is that of educators (Tarazat:1)
29. The source of crafts, sciences and arts is the power of reflection (Kalimat:11)
30. Make every effort that from the power of reflection may come forth wisdom and utterance that will benefit all mankind (Kalimat:11)
31. Knowledge gives wings, ladder for the ascent of man (Tajalliyat:3)
32. Knowledge is one of the wondrous gifts from God (Tarazat:6)
33. All must acquire knowledge, universal education (Tarazat:6; Tajalliyat:3)
34. Every father must educate his sons and daughters in reading and writing and the Books of God (Ishraqát:7)

35. If parents unable to educate children themselves then it devolves upon the House of Justice to do so (Ishraqát:7)
36. Schools must train children in the principles of religion but not in such measure that they are injured and become fanatical and bigoted (Kalimat:8)
37. First is needed knowledge of self and of right and wrong (Tarazat:1)
38. Trustworthiness enjoined (Tarazat:4)
39. Mercy enjoined (Kalimat:3)
40. Humility enjoined (Kalimat:3)
41. Wisdom enjoined (Kalimat:5,7; Ishraqát:3)
42. Moderation enjoined (Kalimat:9)
43. Charity enjoined (Kalimat:10)
44. Consultation enjoined (Ishraqát:3)
45. Compassion enjoined (Ishraqát:3)
46. Character, wisdom, knowledge and upright conduct matters more than nationality or rank (Kalimat:7)
47. Upright character and praiseworthy deeds will render the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh victorious (Ishraqát:3)
48. Establishment of the House of Justice (Bisharat:13)
49. Functions of the House of Justice (Bisharat:13,14; Kalimat:9; Lawh-i-Dunya:1,4; Ishraqát:6,7,8,9)
50. Justice and fairness enjoined upon all mankind (Bisharat:13; Tarazat:2,3,4,5,6; Kalimat:3,4,5; Ishraqát:5,8,9)
51. Combination of republican form of government with monarchy is best (Bisharat:15)

52. All manifestations of power and authority called upon to uphold religion (Kalimat:2; Ishraqát:1)
53. All possessed of wealth enjoined to show profoundest regard for religion (Ishraqát:1)
54. Sovereigns are the manifestations of the power of God and the daysprings of His authority (Ishraqát:2)
55. Fear of God is a sure defence, safe stronghold, chief cause of the protection and preservation of mankind (Kalimat:1)
56. Religion is the chief instrument for the order and peace of mankind (Kalimat:2; Ishraqát:9)
57. The civilization of the West has been carried to excess and therefore has proven a source of evil (Kalimat:9)
58. The purging of the corruptions of the world cannot be effected unless humanity unites in pursuit of one aim and in embracing one universal faith (Kalimat:9)
59. Pilgrimages to grave-sites (such as those of saints and Prophets) are no longer required (Bisharat:14)
60. The reformation of agriculture is imperative (Lawh-i-Dunya:5)
61. Extermination of communities and groups (genocide) is disallowed (Lawh-i-Dunya:9)
62. Observation of the Ten Commandments is enjoined (Tarazat:2)
63. The shedding of blood is disallowed (Lawh-i-Dunya:9)
64. Believers enjoined not to allow themselves to become the cause of strife (Kalimat:11; Ishraqát:8,9)
65. Purpose of this Revelation to purge humanity from strife and dissension (Kalimat:11)
66. Knowledge of God in this Day can only be obtained through recognition of Bahá'u'lláh (Tajalliyat:1)

67. Recognition of Bahá'u'lláh can only be attained through the observance of whatsoever has been decreed by Him and set down in His Book (Tajalliyat:1)

68. Steadfastness and unswerving love of God can only be attained through recognition of Bahá'u'lláh (Tajalliyat:2)

69. Incumbent upon everyone to observe the commandments of God (Ishraqát:3)

70. Set forth that which ye possess. If it be favourably received, your end is attained; if not, to protest is vain. Leave that soul to himself and turn unto the Lord (Tarazat:8)

The aim of this study is to provide an exposition of ideas associated with divine philosophy, not to defend these ideas in the anticipation of such critiques as may be forthcoming. Nor is it necessary in this context to effect a full-bodied explanation and elucidation of the principles here listed, most of which are easily understood by the reader without a commentary. However, it may prove useful to the reader to compare the principles found in these Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh chosen by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to bring to the attention of audiences in North America and Europe, that is, to the Western enquirers and believers. The sources for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's expositions were twenty-five in number and are listed as follows:

- 1)Tablet, 3/5/1914; SW:IX:15, p. 172
- 2)Tablet, 7/23/1919; SW:X:12, p. 226
- 3)Tablet, 12/17/1919; SW:XI:8, p. 123-127
- 4)Tablet, 12/9/1920; SW:XII:2, p. 41
- 5)Tablet, n.d.; SW:XI:1, p. 10-11
- 6)Talk, 9/30/1911; ABL, p. 27-30
- 7)Talks, 11/1911; PT, p. 135-166
- 8)Talk, 4/25/1912; PUP, p. 62-63
- 9)Talk, 5/7/1912; PUP, p. 105-110
- 10)Talk, 5/19/1912; PUP, p. 127-129
- 11)Talk, 6/2/1912; PUP, p. 169-170
- 12)Talk, 6/9/1912; PUP, p. 174-176
- 13)Talk, 6/9/1912; PUP, p. 180-182
- 14)Talk, 7/14/1912; PUP, p. 230-233
- 15)Talk, 8/27/1912; PUP, p. 287-289
- 16)Talk, 9/1/1912; PUP, p. 298-301
- 17)Talk, 9/5/1912; PUP, p. 314-318

- 18)Talk, 10/25/1912; PUP, p. 372-375
- 19)Talk, 11/6/1912; PUP, p. 394-395
- 20)Talk, 11/15/1912; PUP, p. 433-435
- 21)Talk, 11/17/1912; PUP, p. 440
- 22)Talk, 12/2/1912; PUP, p. 454-456
- 23)Talk, 12/20/1912; SW:III:17, p. 7
- 24)Talk, n.d.; DP, p. 82-85
- 25)Talk, n.d.; PT, p. 129-134

Some of the principles of Bahá'u'lláh described in these sources are mentioned in several of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets and talks, and the number of listings is presented beside each principle in parentheses. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sometimes simply lists the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in the midst of a Tablet or in the course of an address, and in other instances he describes each principle listed in some detail. The sources previously cited may be consulted for detailed study. To facilitate this, the number of the source is cited alongside each principle:

1. The conformity of true religion to science and reason [25: all]
2. Oneness of humanity [23: all except 15) and 19)]
3. Religion must be conducive to love and unity [22: all except 8), 9), 12)]
4. Equality of men and women [21: all except 8), 10), 15), 16)]
5. Independent investigation of reality/search for truth [19: all except 3), 12), 14), 15), 16), 20)]
6. Abandonment of all prejudices, religious, denominational, racial, patriotic, political, economic, social [17: all except 2), 3), 8), 10), 11), 12), 15), 19)]
7. Universal peace [16: all except 8), 9), 10), 11), 12), 13), 19), 20), 23)]
8. Universal education [14: all except 2), 8), 10), 11), 12), 14), 15), 18), 19), 24), 25)]
9. Dependency upon the Holy Spirit [12: 2), 4), 6), 9), 11), 13), 15), 17), 18), 21), 24), 25)]

10. Universal auxiliary language [12: 4), 5), 6), 7), 13), 14), 16), 17), 20), 21), 23)]
11. International parliament/court [10: 1), 2), 6), 7), 16), 17), 21), 24), 25)]
12. Economic readjustment and reformation [9: 2), 6), 7), 9), 11), 13), 21), 24), 25)]
13. The foundation of all religions is one [8: 2), 4), 12), 14), 15), 21), 22), 23)]
14. Equal rights for all [7: 2), 3), 6), 13), 17), 24), 25)]
15. Religion must be free from dogma and imitation [4: 1), 5), 6), 23)]
16. Heavenly morals and spiritual civilization enjoined [3: 3), 7), 9)]
17. Universal justice [3: 3), 6)]
18. Work in the spirit of service is accounted as worship [3: 3), 20), 23)]
19. Spiritual brotherhood of mankind [3: 3), 6), 11)]
20. Oneness of God [2: 12), 16)]
21. Religion must not mix with politics [2: 7), 25)]
22. Universal employment [2: 20), 24)]
23. Demonstration of Divinity and Inspiration [2: 1), 24)]
24. Religion must be a factor for human progress [1: 4)]
25. Oneness of reality [1: 12)]
26. Reconciliation of religious systems [1: 14)]
27. Reconciliation of science and religion through science and art [1: 23)]
28. Love of animals [1: 2)]

29. Voluntary sharing of property with mankind [1: 3]]
30. Power of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh [1: 1]]
31. True freedom for man is from the world of nature [1: 3]]
32. Establishment of the House of Justice [1: 22]]
33. Social classes and ranks are preserved [1: 24]]
34. Religion is a mighty bulwark [1: 3]]
35. Institution of the Centre of the Covenant [1: 22]]
36. Dawn of the Sun of Reality from Persia [1: 1]]
37. Material civilization needs to be combined with divine civilization [1: 3]]
38. The purpose of the new laws is to destroy antagonism by finding a point of agreement [1: 24]]

All of the principles listed here by 'Abdu'l-Bahá can be found in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. There is no innovation in this list, but this compilation may be useful to demonstrate the range of these teachings, and the considerable variation in frequency of citation, as was pointed out earlier in the citation of teachings found in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh. Inasmuch as the frequency of citation of these teachings in the talks and Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá may be a relevant factor for determining the relative value placed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the relevancy of these individual principles for the audiences of his time, the average ranking of the nineteen most frequently enumerated teachings is set forth as follows (with the actual average and the number of citations noted in parentheses):

- First: Independent investigation of reality/search for truth (1.57:19)
- Second: Oneness of humanity (1.69:23)
- Third: Religion must be free from dogma and imitation (2.5:4)
- Fourth: Religion must be conducive to love and unity (3.45:22)
- Fifth: Religion must be in agreement with science and reason(4.16:25)
- Sixth: Foundation and reality of all religions is one (5.0:8)
- Seventh: Abandonment of all prejudices (5.29:17)
- Eighth: Heavenly morals and spiritual civilization (5.66:3)

- Ninth: Universal peace (6.5:16)
- Tenth: Equality of men and women (6.85:21)
- Eleventh: Economic readjustment and reformation (8.0:9)
- Twelfth: Dependency on the Holy Spirit (8.08:12)
- Thirteenth: Equal rights for all (8.4:7)
- Fourteenth: International parliament/court (8.7:10)
- Fifteenth: Universal auxiliary language (8.83:/12)
- Sixteenth: Universal education (8.85:14)
- Seventeenth: Universal justice (9.0:3)
- Eighteenth: Work in the spirit of service is worship (10:3)
- Nineteenth: Spiritual brotherhood (10:3)

It seems likely that the principles which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasized among the Western enquirers and believers were those which he felt were most accessible and attractive to that audience. While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the appointed interpreter of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings, there is no evidence to suggest that his ranking of these teachings was in the order of their intrinsic importance to humanity, and therefore it would be unwarranted for a student of this Revelation to concentrate his attention upon these principles to the exclusion of other teachings. Indeed, while nearly twice as many principles are cited from the Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh as are enumerated here, these only begin to suggest the comprehensiveness of this Prophet’s message and no list of teachings can adequately summarize the totality of this most recent Revelation from God. We moderns tend to imagine that everything needs to be our size, or should be in any case, and therefore we shrink down what is too big for us to comprehend without expanding our minds; we shrink things down so that we may grasp them, and as our minds and hearts are small indeed, we shrink them down very far until very little of the original, the reality of a thing remains. Writing of man’s incapacity to understand God, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states:

“And that which a human being would conjure up in his mind is but the fanciful image of his human condition, it doth not encompass God’s reality but rather is encompassed by it. That is, man graspeth his own illusory conceptions, but the Reality of Divinity can never be grasped: It, Itself, encompasseth all created things, and all created things are in Its grasp. That Divinity which man doth imagine for himself existeth only in his mind, not in truth. Man, however, existeth both in his mind and in truth; thus man is greater than that fanciful reality which he is able to imagine.” (SWAB:47)

Along the same lines as this argument, it may be affirmed that the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have an independent existence, apart from the conceptions of men, that is, apart from what men may think of them. The equitable and unprejudiced seeker will endeavor to penetrate the meanings of these teachings, to understand what was intended by their Author, rather than to make feeble efforts to compare these teachings with those of philosophers, scientists, politicians of our time, as if the Words of God could be compared with the words of mortal men! Every seeker starts with his own mind and heart, and he has available many volumes written by Bahá'u'lláh, and many more by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi which will assist him in deciphering the meanings of these Words. In one of his addresses 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave this Twenty-third Proof the first rank among the Proofs of the Prophets:

“A supreme proof is the teaching. For instance the precepts of Christ were sufficient proof of his validity. There is no greater proof than these teachings. They were the light of that cycle and the spirit of that age. All that he said accorded with the needs of the humanity of that time. They were peerless and unique.

“Consider His Holiness Baha'o'llah and his teaching. They are the spirit of this cycle - the light of this age. They illumine the dark places of humanity, for they address themselves to the heart of the race. For instance, the greatest evil of this century is war. In the new age Baha'o'llah has prohibited war. The need of this century is universal peace - Baha'o'llah has instituted it. The most urgent requisite of mankind is the declaration of the oneness of the world of humanity - this is the great principle of Baha'o'llah. That which will leaven the human world is a love that will insure the abandonment of pride, oppression and hatred. The principles of Baha'o'llah are the remedy and balm for the wounded world; and without their inculcation, reconciliation between the nations will not be reached. These very teachings of Baha'o'llah are the greatest proofs of his claim. Such a power hath appeared from him as will suffice to convince the whole world.” (ABDP:45-46)

TWENTY-FOURTH PROOF
THIS IS THE SPIRITUAL SPRINGTIME

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has explained that there are spiritual seasons like the annual round of nature:

“In this material world time has cycles; places change through alternating seasons, and for souls there are progress, retrogression and education.

“At one time it is the season of spring; at another it is the season of autumn; and again it is the season of summer or the season of winter.

“In the spring there are the clouds which send down the precious rain, the musk-scented breezes and life-giving zephyrs; the air is perfectly temperate, the rain falls, the sun shines, the fecundating wind wafts the clouds, the world is renewed, and the breath of life appears in plants, in animals and in men. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another. All things are clothed in new garments, and the black earth is covered with herbage; mountains and plains are adorned with verdure; trees bear leaves and blossoms; gardens bring forth flowers and fragrant herbs. The world becomes another world, and it attains to a life-giving spirit. The earth was a lifeless body; it finds a new spirit, and produces endless beauty, grace and freshness. Thus the spring is the cause of new life and infuses a new spirit.

“Afterward comes the summer, when the heat increases, and growth and development attain their greatest power. The energy of life in the vegetable kingdom reaches to the degree of perfection, the fruit appears, and the time of harvest ripens; a seed has become a sheaf, and the food is stored for winter. Afterward comes tumultuous autumn when unwholesome and sterile winds blow; it is the season of sickness, when all things are withered, and the balmy air is vitiated. The breezes of spring are changed to autumn winds; the fertile green trees have become withered and bare; flowers and fragrant herbs fade away; the beautiful garden becomes a dustheap. Following this comes the season of winter, with cold and tempests. It snows, rains, hails, storms, thunders and lightens, freezes and congeals; all plants die, and animals languish and are wretched.

“When this state is reached, again a new life-giving spring returns, and the cycle is renewed. The season of spring with its hosts of freshness and beauty spreads its tent on the plains and mountains with great pomp and magnificence. A second time the form of the creatures is renewed, and the creation of beings begins afresh; bodies

grow and develop, the plains and wildernesses become green and fertile, trees bring forth blossoms, and the spring of last year returns in the utmost fullness and glory. Such is, and such ought to be, the cycle and succession of existence. Such is the cycle and revolution of the material world.

“It is the same with the spiritual cycles of the Prophets -- that is to say, the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.

“Afterward the life-giving spring ends in fruitful summer. The word of God is exalted, the Law of God is promulgated; all things reach perfection. The heavenly table is spread, the holy breezes perfume the East and the West, the teachings of God conquer the world, men become educated, praiseworthy results are produced, universal progress appears in the world of humanity, and the divine bounties surround all things. The Sun of Reality rises from the horizon of the Kingdom with the greatest power and heat. When it reaches the meridian, it will begin to decline and descend, and the spiritual summer will be followed by autumn, when growth and development are arrested. Breezes change into blighting winds, and the unwholesome season dissipates the beauty and freshness of the gardens, plains and bowers -- that is to say, attraction and goodwill do not remain, divine qualities are changed, the radiance of hearts is dimmed, the spirituality of souls is altered, virtues are replaced by vices, and holiness and purity disappear. Only the name of the Religion of God remains, and the exoteric forms of the divine teachings. The foundations of the Religion of God are destroyed and annihilated, and nothing but forms and customs exist. Divisions appear, firmness is changed into instability, and spirits become dead; hearts languish, souls become inert, and winter arrives -- that is to say, the coldness of ignorance envelops the world, and the darkness of human error prevails. After this come indifference, disobedience, inconsiderateness, indolence, baseness, animal instincts and the coldness and insensibility of stones. It is like the season of winter when the terrestrial globe, deprived of the effect of the heat of the sun, becomes desolate and dreary. When the world of intelligence and

thought has reached to this state, there remain only continual death and perpetual nonexistence.

“When the season of winter has had its effect, again the spiritual springtime returns, and a new cycle appears. Spiritual breezes blow, the luminous dawn gleams, the divine clouds give rain, the rays of the Sun of Reality shine forth, the contingent world attains unto a new life and is clad in a wonderful garment. All the signs and the gifts of the past springtime reappear, with perhaps even greater splendor in this new season.

“The spiritual cycles of the Sun of Reality are like the cycles of the material sun: they are always revolving and being renewed. The Sun of Reality, like the material sun, has numerous rising and dawning places: one day it rises from the zodiacal sign of Cancer, another day from the sign of Libra or Aquarius; another time it is from the sign of Aries that it diffuses its rays. But the sun is one sun and one reality; the people of knowledge are lovers of the sun, and are not fascinated by the places of its rising and dawning. The people of perception are the seekers of the truth, and not of the places of its appearance, nor of its dawning points; therefore, they will adore the Sun from whatever point in the zodiac it may appear, and they will seek the Reality in every Sanctified Soul Who manifests it. Such people always attain to the truth and are not veiled from the Sun of the Divine World. So the lover of the sun and the seeker of the light will always turn toward the sun, whether it shines from the sign of Aries or gives its bounty from the sign of Cancer, or radiates from Gemini; but the ignorant and uninstructed are lovers of the signs of the zodiac, and enamored and fascinated by the rising-places, and not by the sun. When it was in the sign of Cancer, they turned toward it, though afterward the sun changed to the sign of Libra; as they were lovers of the sign, they turned toward it and attached themselves to it, and were deprived of the influences of the sun merely because it had changed its place. For example, once the Sun of Reality poured forth its rays from the sign of Abraham, and then it dawned from the sign of Moses and illuminated the horizon. Afterward it rose with the greatest power and brilliancy from the sign of Christ. Those who were the seekers of Reality worshiped that Reality wherever they saw it, but those who were attached to Abraham were deprived of its influences when it shone upon Sinai and illuminated the reality of Moses. Those who held fast to Moses, when the Sun of Reality shone from Christ with the utmost radiance and lordly splendor, were also veiled; and so forth.” (SAQ:73-77)

This is what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls a spiritual proof, and as such it is meant to be perceived by the soul rather than by the rational mind, by way of analogy and symbolism rather than by way of logic and reasoning. In "Lawh-i-Ridwan" Bahá’u’lláh celebrates this spiritual season of springtime:

GL:27-28: The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry.

In another Tablet Bahá’u’lláh hails this season in similar fashion:

GL:84: God grant that, in these days of heavenly delight, ye may not deprive yourselves of the sweet savors of the All-Glorious God, and may partake, in this spiritual Springtime, of the outpourings of His grace.

And in "Lawh-i-Dunya" He writes to Mulla ‘Alí Akbar Ayadi and Abu'l-Hasan Amaban:

TB:86-87: O friends! It behoveth you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favors which in this Divine, this soul-stirring Springtime are being showered upon you. The Day Star of His great glory hath shed its radiance upon you, and the clouds of His limitless grace have overshadowed you. How high the reward of him that hath not deprived himself of so great a bounty, nor failed to recognize the beauty of his Best-Beloved in this, His new attire. (GL:94, 167)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in a Tablet to one of the American believers, reiterates this theme in the most joyous of songs:

“Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name! This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of the Horizons and the beautiful springtime of His Holiness the Eternal One!

“The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; the bounty is overflowing; the mercy universal; the rain is descending from the cloud of mercy; the brilliant Sun is shining; the full moon is ornamenting the horizon of ether; the great ocean-tide is flooding every little stream; the gifts are successive; the favors consecutive; and the refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms. Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings! Lift the hem of thy garment in order to receive it.

“If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look?

“This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance from the Kingdom of Abha; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy!

“Soon shall ye see the friends attaining their longed-for destination and pitching their tents, while we are but in the first day of our journey.

“This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the "Resurrection Day" and now is the great "Day of Judgment." Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.” (TAB:I:641; BWF:351-352)

Mystics, psychics, astrologers, occultists, poets have been declaring this a New Age for over a century now. Scientists acknowledge that

inventions, discoveries and the systemization of knowledge have all increased exponentially and at a fantastic and constantly accelerating rate since the middle of the last century. In this century what attracts attention, what matters is what is new, what is young--the old values, old institutions, old laws, old technologies, old arts, old sciences have been largely abandoned and forgotten and all the signs have been manifested of a Brave New World. This was at one time a warning and a curse, but has been transformed into a hope, the greatest hope of humanity, the hope that we have entered a new beginning, a spiritual springtime in the fortunes of the human race. How often our springtime seemed like the dead of winter, stark with death and hopelessness all about! But in reality the snows were melting and the buds were starting to bloom...

TWENTY-FIFTH PROOF
THE SUN OF REALITY HAS RISEN

The second spiritual proof of the Prophet of God is the allegory of the sun cycle. The sun has been taken as a symbol of the Manifestation of God since prehistory, and the sun-god of each civilization has been later identified with the Person and the Prophetic gift of the Divine Messenger -- Ra in Egypt, Ahura Mazda in Persia, Mithra in the Roman Empire, Indra in India, Apollo in Greece. Also, the sun is the most prominent source of light and therefore metaphorically of wisdom and truth in many esoteric and philosophical traditions, and in the theology of the Zoroastrians in particular. In the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet of God is often denominated the Sun of Reality, and at other times the Prophetic reality is called the Perfect Mirror reflecting the attributes of the Sun of Reality. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá employs this symbolism in "Some Answered Questions":

“The spiritual cycles of the Sun of Reality are like the cycles of the material sun: they are always revolving and being renewed. The Sun of Reality, like the material sun, has numerous rising and dawning places: one day it rises from the zodiacal sign of Cancer, another day from the sign of Libra or Aquarius; another time it is from the sign of Aries that it diffuses its rays. But the sun is one sun and one reality; the people of knowledge are lovers of the sun, and are not fascinated by the places of its rising and dawning. The people of perception are the seekers of the truth, and not of the places of its appearance, nor of its dawning points; therefore, they will adore the Sun from whatever point in the zodiac it may appear, and they will seek the Reality in every Sanctified Soul Who manifests it. Such people always attain to the truth and are not veiled from the Sun of the Divine World. So the lover of the sun and the seeker of the light will always turn toward the sun, whether it shines from the sign of Aries or gives its bounty from the sign of Cancer, or radiates from Gemini; but the ignorant and uninstructed are lovers of the signs of the zodiac, and enamored and fascinated by the rising-places, and not by the sun. When it was in the sign of Cancer, they turned toward it, though afterward the sun changed to the sign of Libra; as they were lovers of the sign, they turned toward it and attached themselves to it, and were deprived of the influences of the sun merely because it had changed its place. For example, once the Sun of Reality poured forth its rays from the sign of Abraham, and then it dawned from the sign of Moses and illuminated the horizon. Afterward it rose with the greatest power and brilliancy

from the sign of Christ. Those who were the seekers of Reality worshiped that Reality wherever they saw it, but those who were attached to Abraham were deprived of its influences when it shone upon Sinai and illuminated the reality of Moses. Those who held fast to Moses, when the Sun of Reality shone from Christ with the utmost radiance and lordly splendor, were also veiled; and so forth.

“Therefore, man must be the seeker after the Reality, and he will find that Reality in each of the Sanctified Souls. He must be fascinated and enraptured, and attracted to the divine bounty; he must be like the butterfly who is the lover of the light from whatever lamp it may shine, and like the nightingale who is the lover of the rose in whatever garden it may grow.

“If the sun were to rise in the West, it would still be the sun; one must not withdraw from it on account of its rising-place, nor consider the West to be always the place of sunset. In the same way, one must look for the heavenly bounties and seek for the Divine Aurora. In every place where it appears, one must become its distracted lover. Consider that if the Jews had not kept turning to the horizon of Moses, and had only regarded the Sun of Reality, without any doubt they would have recognized the Sun in the dawning-place of the reality of Christ, in the greatest divine splendor. But, alas! a thousand times alas! attaching themselves to the outward words of Moses, they were deprived of the divine bounties and the lordly splendors!” (SAQ:76-77)

Writing specifically of the Sun of Reality manifested in the dawning-points of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states:

“The Revelation of the Báb may be likened to the sun, its station corresponding to the first sign of the Zodiac--the sign Aries--which the sun enters at the vernal equinox. The station of Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation, on the other hand, is represented by the sign Leo, the sun's mid-summer and highest station. By this is meant that this holy Dispensation is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory.” (GPB:99-100; WOB:127)

In another Tablet the following reference is found:

“Centuries, nay ages, must pass away, ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory.” (GPB:99; WOB:110, 167)

This cyclical pattern of Revelation is further elucidated in another passage:

“Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future 'in the shadows of the clouds,' know verily, that in so far as their relation to the source of their inspiration is concerned they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them 'doeth whatsoever He willeth.' (GPB:99; WOB:111)

By no means are these references to the signs of the Zodiac meant to be taken as a vindication of the claims of astrologers, either in the past or in the present. Indeed, the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, like those of all the preceding Prophets, discourage the seekers after Truth from reliance upon astrologers, magicians, alchemists, necromancers and others who engage in pseudo-sciences which begin and end with words. The astrologer claims to come to a true understanding of reality which is to be found only with reference to the planets, the sun and moon and other celestial bodies and according to the elaborate systems which have been worked out through hundreds and possibly thousands of years, in China, India, Persia, Egypt and other lands. The Prophet of God cannot brook such impudent, such arrogant, such ignorant presumption on the part of lowly mortal man! The Truth comes from God alone, he affirms, and the only sure standard of that Truth is found in what the Prophet himself reveals, his utterances and his writings. However, the terminology of the Zodiac is useful, if interpreted according to its usage by the Prophets and Holy Ones, to convey to limited human minds and imaginations the spiritual reality of the appearances of the Prophetic Word.

Bahá'u'lláh uses a different analogy to arrive at the same teaching, here describing the manifestation of the sun during the course of a day, rather than to its different dawning-points during the course of centuries and millennia, in "Lawh-i-Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil Qazvini Mashhurbih Maballagh":

GL:87-88: Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed unto men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appeareth above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approacheth its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How

steadily it declineth until it reacheth its setting point. Were it, all of a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things.... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist. (WOB:59, 117)

Hence, through this analogy we understand that the Prophethood and Revelation of Adam may be likened to the dawn of the religion of God, while the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh represents the noon-tide glory of that same religion of God. How appropriate the imagery, the mid-summer appearance when the sun is at its most brilliant and hottest during the course of the year, and the mid-day hour when it is also at its apex during the daily cycle. Also, noon is the hour of luncheon, of the ingathering of the people to sit at the table and feed and drink. The writings of Bahá'u'lláh are replete with imagery of feasting, of gathering souls together, of supping at one table, of partaking of the divine food and the choice and sealed wine. These references undoubtedly echo and interpret the symbolic language of the Holy Scriptures --the Hebrew Tanakh¹⁰⁴, the Greek Evangel¹⁰⁵ and the Arabic Qur'án in particular-- which includes many of these same images. Also, this imagery is found in the poetry of Hafiz, Sa'adi, Umar Khayyam and other mystical versifiers.

TWENTY-SIXTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS THE MYSTIC HERALD

Another proof of every Prophet, and of Bahá'u'lláh in particular, is the spiritual proof which is made manifest in the heart of the true seeker. Bahá'u'lláh describes the qualities of spiritual life which must characterize such a seeker in "Kitáb-i-Íqán", and in "Haft Vádí" (Seven Valleys) and elsewhere in His writings are found descriptions of this wayfarer. We will compare excerpts from both of these named sources with the hope of coming to some understanding of this proof:

KI:19: Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. At that hour will the mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of negligence. Then will the manifold favours and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of divine Revelation and the evidences of an everlasting manifestation.

SV:7,7-8,11-12,17: The true seeker hunteth naught but the object of his quest, and the lover hath no desire save union with his beloved...And if, by the help of God, he findeth on this journey a trace of the traceless Friend, and inhalet the fragrance of the long-lost Joseph from the heavenly messenger, he shall straightway step into the valley of love and be dissolved in the fire of love...And if, confirmed by the Creator, the lover escapes from the claws of the eagle of love, he will enter the valley of knowledge and come out of doubt into certitude, and turn from the darkness of illusion to the

guiding light of the fear of God. His inner eyes will open and he will privily converse with his Beloved; he will set ajar the gate of truth and piety, and shut the doors of vain imaginings. He in this station is content with the decree of God, and seeth war as peace, and findeth in death the secrets of everlasting life. With inward and outward eyes he witnesseth the mysteries of resurrection in the realms of creation and the souls of men, and with a pure heart apprehendeth the divine wisdom in the endless Manifestations of God...After passing through the Valley of knowledge, which is the last plane of limitation, the wayfarer cometh to the valley of unity and drinketh the cup of the Absolute, and gazeth on the Manifestations of Oneness. In this station he pierceth the veils of plurality, fleeth from the worlds of the flesh, and ascendeth into the heaven of singleness. With the ear of God he heareth, with the eye of God he beholdeth the mysteries of divine creation.

The true seeker of "Kitáb-i-Íqán" and the true seeker of "Haft Vádí" are one and the same although depicted in somewhat different language and in an entirely different style--the former is in the form of an apologetic work in answer to the questions of a maternal uncle of the Báb, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad (GPB:138), and the latter is a mystical treatise in reply to the questions of the Qadí (Muslim religious judge) of Kháníqayn, Shaykh Muhyi'd-Dín (GPB:140). In both cases this true seeker is described as having undertaken his search with purity of heart and single-minded resolve; he has detached himself from the world, and he has attached himself to God. Prior to his new birth he must already have practiced renunciation of one world and adoration of the Beloved. When the mystic Herald is revealed to him, he will see "with the eye of God" (KI:196, SV:17) and no longer with human vision. This is the most convincing proof of the Prophet of God, the inner revelation of his truth in the heart --that is, the seat of spiritual consciousness-- of the seeker. It is the also the most rarely experienced of the proofs of the Prophets, "for many are called but few are chosen." (Mt 20:16,22:14)

The highest station to which man may aspire is that station wherein he has become utterly transformed, in which he has been reborn into a spiritual life which is eternal. In this new life he perceives limitless and infinite proofs of the spiritual realities including the reality of the Prophets of God. Speaking of this second birth, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

“Such resuscitation is impossible except through a heavenly potency, a supernatural power, the divine power of the Holy Spirit. Through a natural and mere human power this is impossible. Therefore, the question arises: How is this resuscitation to be accomplished? There are certain means for its accomplishment by which mankind is regenerated and quickened with a new birth. This is the second birth mentioned in the heavenly Books. Its accomplishment is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The resuscitation or rebirth of the spirit of man is through the science of the love of God.” (PUP:277)

Bahá'u'lláh describes this second birth and rebirth in "Kitáb-i-Íqán" (this begins where the last text left off):

KI:196-200: I swear by God! Were he that treadeth the path of guidance and seeketh to scale the heights of righteousness to attain unto this glorious and supreme station, he would inhale at a distance of a thousand leagues the fragrance of God, and would perceive the resplendent morn of a divine Guidance rising above the dayspring of all things. Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow. If in the uttermost corners of the East the sweet savours of God be wafted, he will assuredly recognize and inhale their fragrance, even though he be dwelling in the uttermost ends of the West. He will likewise clearly distinguish all the signs of God -- His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds -- from the doings, words and ways of men, even as the jeweller who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn and heat from cold. When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude. Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree -- which flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and his outer ear he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of

"return" and "revival." How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendours which He Who is the King of names and attributes hath destined for that City! The attainment of this City quengeth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable wisdom, and upon every rose-bush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody. Its wondrous tulips unfold the mystery of the undying Fire in the Burning Bush, and its sweet savours of holiness breathe the perfume of the Messianic Spirit. It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In every leaf ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden.

They that valiantly labour in quest of God's will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, will be so attached and wedded to that City that a moment's separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned.

Wherefore, O my friend, it behooveth Us to exert the highest endeavour to attain unto that City, and, by the grace of God and His loving-kindness, rend asunder the "veils of glory"; so that, with inflexible steadfastness, we may sacrifice our drooping souls in the path of the New Beloved. We should with tearful eyes, fervently and repeatedly, implore Him to grant us the favour of that grace. That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation. In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus the Gospel; in the days of Muhammad the Messenger of God the Qur'án; in this day the Bayan; and in the dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest His own Book -- the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book which standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme. In these cities spiritual sustenance is bountifully provided, and incorruptible delights have been ordained. The food they bestow is the bread of heaven, and the Spirit they impart is God's imperishable blessing. Upon detached souls they bestow the gift of Unity, enrich the destitute, and offer the cup of knowledge unto them who wander in the wilderness of ignorance. All the guidance, the

blessings, the learning, the understanding, the faith, and certitude, conferred upon all that is in heaven and on earth, are hidden and treasured within these Cities.

Bahá'u'lláh has also described this state in "Kalimat al-Maknuniyyat al-'Arabiyyat":

HWA:#1: O son of spirit!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

HWA:#2: O son of spirit!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily Justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

TWENTY-SEVENTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS THE GARDENER OF HUMANITY

Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá often refer to gardens and to their cultivation, and these have come to symbolize the education of mankind as well. The Garden of Eden was not just an idyllic environment for man to live in, it was also his training ground --it was where he learned to name and to govern the creatures of the earth, and also where he learned the consequences of disobedience to the divine command:

Gen. 1:26: And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Gen. 2:15-17: And the Lord God took the man, and put him in the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of the first man, and his development in horticultural terms, in "Some Answered Questions":

“Man from the beginning was in this perfect form and composition, and possessed capacity and aptitude for acquiring material and spiritual perfections, and was the manifestation of these words, 'We will make man in Our image and likeness.' He has only become more pleasing, more beautiful, and more graceful. Civilization has brought him out of his wild state, just as the wild fruits which are cultivated by a gardener become finer, sweeter, and acquire more freshness and delicacy. The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God.” (SAQ:XLIX:225-226; BWF:309-310)

In his last "Tablet to America" there is the following reference to the "Divine Gardener":

“The Divine Gardener cuts off the dry or weak branch from the good tree and grafts to it, a branch from another tree. He both

separates and unites. This is that which His Holiness Christ says: that from all the world they come and enter the Kingdom, and the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out.” (BWF:438)

In another Tablet, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that the death of a youth seemingly before his time is actually according to an "inscrutable divine wisdom" which is known only to the Divine Gardener:

“The inscrutable divine wisdom underlies such heart-rending occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener transfers a fresh and tender shrub from a narrow place to a vast region. This transference is not the cause of the withering, the waning or the destruction of that shrub, nay rather it makes it grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy and attain verdure and fruition. This hidden secret is well-known to the gardener, while those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener in his anger and wrath has uprooted the shrub. But to those who are aware this concealed fact is manifest and this predestined decree considered a favor. Do not feel grieved and disconsolate therefore at the ascension of that bird of faithfulness, nay under all circumstances pray and beg for that youth forgiveness and elevation of station.” (BWF:379)

He describes the ideal garden of humanity, in one of the "Tablets of the Divine Plan":

“When the rain, the heat, the sun and the gentle zephyrs cooperate with each other, what beautiful gardens are produced! How the various kinds of hyacinths, flowers, trees and plants associate with each other and are conducive to the adornment and charm of one another! Hence the oneness of the bounty of the sun, the oneness of rain and the oneness of the breeze have so overcome all other considerations, that the variety of hues, fragrances and tastes have increased the adornment, the attraction and sweetness of the whole. In a similar manner, when the divine Collective Center and the outpouring of the Sun of Reality and the breaths of the Holy Spirit are brought together, the variety of races and the differences existing between countries will become the cause of the embellishment, decoration and elegance of the world of humanity.” (BWF:420)

In his address at the Unitarian Church in Dublin, New Hampshire, on 11 August 1912, the Manifestations of God generally (and Jesus Christ specifically) are likened to Divine Gardeners and Divine Farmers:

“Man though he progress materially, is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit, of divine education, of the outpourings of the Kingdom. Not until man receives this bounty can he become perfect. Therefore the holy, divine Manifestations have appeared in every cycle and dispensation so that they may give the human souls this divine education, may banish the imperfections of the human world and make manifest ideal perfections. The world of nature is like a jungle. His Holiness the Christ was the Divine Gardener. He made this jungle to be a rose garden, these fruitless trees fruitful. These lands which according to the laws of nature should bring forth weeds and tares He filled with roses and tulips. This Divine Farmer sowed the earth with seeds; the worthless grass He threw away. The thorn bushes which according to the law of nature should grow He rooted out, and through divine education the thorny place became a rose garden. Had it remained in its original state it would have been either a jungle or a bramble patch.

“The point is this, that man, however much he may progress materially, however much he may acquire of material perfection belongs, still, to the animal world and is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit, of divine education. If man partakes of the breaths of the Holy Spirit then the divine reality appears in the human world in utmost perfection and man becomes as the image and likeness of God.” (SW:XIV:2:43)

In an address delivered on 10 November 1912, Bahá'u'lláh is likened to a Gardener of humanity:

“The love of Bahá'u'lláh is in your hearts. Your souls are rejoicing in the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh. My hope is that the white and the black will be united in perfect love and fellowship, with complete unity and brotherhood. Associate with each other, think of each other, and be like a rose garden...Although different in colors, yet--praise be to God!--you receive rays from the same sun. From one cloud the rain is poured upon you. You are under the training of one Gardener, and this Gardener is kind to all. Therefore, you must manifest the utmost kindness towards each other, and you may rest assured that whenever you are united, the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abha will reach you, the heavenly favors will descend, the bounties of God will be bestowed, the Sun of Reality will shine, the cloud of mercy will pour its showers, and the breeze of divine generosity will waft its fragrances upon you.” (PUP:427-428)

The need and function of the Gardener of humanity is explained in other addresses of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

“If a piece of ground is left in its natural state, wild weeds, thorns and trees of the jungle will grow upon it. But if we cultivate that same piece of ground, the result will be that it will rid itself of natural imperfections and become transformed into a beautiful rose garden or an orchard of fruitful trees. This is a proof that the world of nature is defective.” (Address of 7 November 1912, in PUP:400)

“When we look upon the kingdoms of creation below man, we find three forms or planes of existence which await education and development. For instance, the function of a gardener is to till the soil of the mineral kingdom and plant a tree which under his training and cultivation will attain perfection of growth. If it be wild and fruitless, it may be made fruitful and prolific by grafting. If small and unsightly, it will become lofty, beautiful and verdant under the gardener's training, whereas a tree bereft of his cultivation retrogresses daily, its fruit grows acrid and bitter as the trees of the jungle, or it may become entirely barren and bereft of its fruitage.” (Address of 2 May 1912, in PUP:77)

“If we should relegate this plot of ground to its natural state, allow it to return to its original condition, it would become a field of thorns and useless weeds, but by cultivation it will become fertile soil, yielding a harvest. Deprived of cultivation, the mountain slopes would be jungles and forests without fruitful trees. The gardens bring forth fruits and flowers in proportion to the care and tillage bestowed upon them by the gardener. Therefore, it is not intended that the world of humanity should be left to its natural state. It is in need of the education divinely provided for it. The holy, heavenly Manifestations of God have been the Teachers. They are the divine Gardeners Who transform the jungles of human nature into fruitful orchards and make the thorny places blossom as the rose.” (Address of 8 October 1912, in PUP:353)

In all of these passages, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has likened humanity to a garden, and the Prophet of God as the Divine Gardener of humanity. In keeping with this symbolism, he also affirms the oneness of humanity in the imagery of flowers in a garden:

“Be as one spirit, one soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean...The difference in adornment of color and capacity of reflection among the flowers gives the garden its

beauty and charm. Therefore, although we are of different individualities, different in ideas and of various fragrances, let us strive like flowers of the same divine garden to live together in harmony.” (Address of 17 April 1912, in PUP:24)

“Flowers may be variegated in colors, but they are all flowers of one garden. Trees differ though they grow in the same orchard. All are nourished and quickened into life by the bounty of the same rain, all grow and develop by the heat and light of the one sun, all are refreshed and exhilarated by the same breeze that they may bring forth varied fruits. This is according to the creative wisdom. If all trees bore the same kind of fruit, it would cease to be delicious. In their never-ending variety man finds enjoyment instead of monotony.

“And now as I look into your faces, I am reminded of trees varying in color and form but all bearing luscious and delectable fruits, fragrant and delightful to the inner and outer senses.” (Address of 23 April 1912, in PUP:51-52)

“All mankind are the fruits of one tree, flowers of the same garden, waves of one sea.” (Address of 12 May 1912, in PUP:118)

“May you become as the waves of one sea, stars of the same heaven, fruits adorning the same tree, roses of one garden in order that through you the oneness of humanity may establish its temple in the world of mankind, for you are the ones who are called to uplift the cause of unity among the nations of the earth.” (Address of 29 June 1912, in PUP:214-215)

“O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love.” (Address of 14 July 1912, in PUP:235)

“My hope is that the white and the black will be united in perfect love and fellowship, with complete unity and brotherhood. Associate with each other, think of each other, and be like a rose garden. Anyone who goes into a rose garden will see various roses, white, pink, yellow, red, all growing together and replete with adornment. Each one accentuates the beauty of the other. Were all of one color, the garden would be monotonous to the eye. If they were all white or yellow or red, the garden would lack variety and attractiveness; but when the colors are varied, white, pink, yellow, red, there will be the greatest beauty. Therefore, I hope that you will be like a rose garden.” (Address of 10 November 1912, in PUP:427)

As will have been noted by the reader, the garden is a symbol for the physical reality of humanity --our variety and essential harmony-- and also for the spiritual reality of humanity, which is being realized among the believers at present and which will be more fully and universally manifested in the world of humanity in the future. In one of his addresses, dated 8 November 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reads from an Epistle written by Bahá’u’lláh to the Sultán of the Ottoman Empire, which ends with these Prophetic words:

PUP:399: Verily, the Servant hath assuredly come to vivify the world and bring to union whosoever is upon the surface of the whole earth. That which God willeth shall overcome, and thou shalt see the earth as the garden of Abha. Thus hath it been written by the pen of command in an irrevocable Tablet.

In an ecstatic Tablet written to celebrate the New Age and at the time of the vernal equinox, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addresses these words to his followers:

“The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.” (TAB:I:641; BWF:352)

He also uses this imagery to describe the hearts of men, each one of which is a garden which must be properly tended by the Divine Gardener in order to yield the most beauty and fragrance:

“Be like a well-cultivated garden wherein the roses and variegated flowers of heaven are growing in fragrance and beauty. It is my hope that your hearts may become as ready ground, carefully tilled and prepared, upon which the divine showers of the bounties of the Blessed Perfection [Bahá’u’lláh] may descend and the zephyrs of this divine springtime may blow with quickening breath. Then will the garden of your hearts bring forth its flowers of delightful fragrance to refresh the nostril of the heavenly Gardener.” (Address of 17 April 1912, in PUP:24)

Bahá'u'lláh has used the image, the symbol of the garden to describe a number of phenomena, all of which are related to the Divine Gardener, the Prophet of God. In the prologue to the "Haft Vadi", He writes of the "green garden" of holiness and the "garden" of man's being:

SV:3,4: ...the bird of thy soul shall...gather the fruits of communion in the gardens of "Then feed on every kind of fruit.' [Qur'án 16:71] By My life, O friend, wert thou to taste of these fruits, from the green garden of these blossoms which grow in the lands of knowledge, beside the orient lights of the Essence in the mirrors of names and attributes...thou wouldst soar in the air even as thou walkest upon the earth, and move over the water as thou runnest on the land. Wherefore, may it rejoice Me, and thee, and whosoever mounteth into the heaven of knowledge, and whose heart is refreshed by this, that the wind of certitude hath blown over the garden of his being, from the Sheba of the All-Merciful.

Bahá'u'lláh revealed "Kalimat-i-Maknuneh" at about the same time as "Haft Vadi" and in the Persian work by this name He writes:

HWP:#1: The first call of the Beloved is this: O mystic nightingale! Abide not but in the rose-garden of the spirit...

HWP:#2: O friend! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love...

HWP:#18: O ye dwellers in the highest paradise! Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realms of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new garden hath appeared...

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh also refers to the "garden" of man's heart:

KI:211: The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the garden of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding.

In the same book He affirms that these spiritual treasures can only be found in "the ideal Garden":

KI:191: O my brother! A divine Mine only can yield the gems of divine knowledge, and the fragrance of the mystic Flower can be inhaled only in the ideal Garden, and the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart.

During twelve days in the month of April (1863 C.E.), while residing in the garden of Najīb Páshá, situated in the midst of an island in the Tigris River, adjoining the city of Baghdád, Bahá'u'lláh declared His Prophethood to a select group of His followers. Afterwards He referred to this period as "Ridván," which originally means "garden" in Arabic, but has come to mean "paradise" in both Persian and Arabic. In one of the works which commemorates that season, which is the Most Great Festival for His followers, entitled "Lawh-i-Ridván" (GL:XIV), Bahá'u'lláh compares the presence of the Manifestation of God to a "garden of delight":

GL:31: Guide, then, the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise.

Another Tablet, also written to honor the Festival of Ridván (GL:CLI), sounds the same theme:

GL:319: Release yourselves, O nightingales of God, from the thorns and brambles of wretchedness and misery, and wing your flight to the rose-garden of unfading splendor. O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation.

GL:320-321: Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breath the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory.

TWENTY-EIGHTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS NOT WITHOUT HONOUR, SAVE IN
HIS OWN COUNTRY, AND IN HIS OWN HOUSE

Bahá'u'lláh affirms that all of the Prophets of God have been opposed by the people in whose midst they were manifested, as was formerly attested by Jesus Christ in all four of the canonical Gospels:

Mt:13:57: A Prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

Mk:6:4: A Prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

Lk:4:24: No Prophet is accepted in his own country;

Jn:4:44: a Prophet hath no honour in his own country.

In "Lawh-i-'Abbas Faruq" Bahá'u'lláh writes these words:

GL:57-58: At no time, in no Dispensation, have the Prophets of God escaped the blasphemy of their enemies, the cruelty of their oppressors, the denunciation of the learned of their age, who appeared in the guise of uprightness and piety. Day and night they passed through such agonies as none can ever measure, except the knowledge of the one true God, exalted be His glory.

In this same Tablet Bahá'u'lláh describes His own sufferings as a result of the opposition and repudiation of the people of His time:

GL:58: Consider this wronged One. Though the clearest proofs attest the truth of His Cause; though the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language, hath made have been fulfilled; though, in spite of His not being accounted among the learned, His being unschooled and inexperienced in the disputations current among the divines, He hath rained upon men the showers of His manifold and Divinely-inspired knowledge; yet, behold how this generation hath rejected His authority, and rebelled against Him! He hath, during the greater part of His life, been sore-tried in the clutches of His enemies. His sufferings have now reached their culmination in this afflictive Prison, into which His oppressors have so unjustly thrown Him.

Bahá'u'lláh here refers to two proofs of the truth of His Cause, the first being His prophecies which have been fulfilled, and the second the evidences of His divinely-inspired knowledge. He identifies His enemies and oppressors as those who have held Him and sore-ried Him in their clutches for the better part of His life and who have caused His imprisonment in 'Akká, where this Tablet was written. As has been earlier discussed, the opposition to Bahá'u'lláh included his half-brother Mírzá Yahyá and this one's followers (the Azalí Bábís), the Sháh of Iran and the Sultán of the Ottoman Empire and some of their ministers, the religious leaders including some in positions of considerable influence, and the populace in general. Mírzá Yahyá, as the leader of the Bábí community -- appointed by the Báb and affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh -- upon the passing of its Founder does not seem to have been directly involved in the plot hatched by a few deeply troubled Bábís to assassinate Násiri'd-Dín Sháh. It was this same Sháh who had permitted and formally ordered the execution of the Báb on 9 July 1850. However, the general attitude of Mírzá Yahyá towards the employment of violence in the solution of difficulties, and his intense hostility towards his personal enemies, as evidenced by his ordering the assassination of at least two prominent members of the Bábí community -- Dayyan and Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar (GPB:124-25) -- and his command that Mírzá Áqa Ján attempt to assassinate Násiri'd-Dín Sháh (GPB:124), in complete contrast to the gentleness and forbearance and reliance upon discourse of both the Báb Himself and his own half-brother Bahá'u'lláh, may have permitted the Bábí who made the fateful attempt of 15 August 1852 to feel justified in his choice of approach to the establishment of justice. Certainly Bahá'u'lláh testifies that He discouraged His fellow believers from carrying out such a plot (Dawn-Breakers, p. 599), but then, while He was greatly respected, admired and loved by the Bábís at that time, it was Mírzá Yahyá -- His half-brother -- and not He Himself who had been appointed leader of the Bábís by their Prophet, and hence Mírzá Yahyá's judgment and his approval may have been more important to these Bábís than that of Bahá'u'lláh. However, there is no account implicating Mírzá Yahyá in this folly and so it can not be attributed to him with no evidence of such involvement. However, it might also be stated that Mírzá Yahyá's weak leadership of the Bábí community -- or perhaps more accurately, in 1852, his utter lack of leadership of that community -- precipitated the ill-considered adventures of Mulla Shaykh 'Alí as well as the astonishing fact that fully twenty-five of the followers of the Báb claimed to be "Him Whom God shall manifest" during this period, from 1850 to 1863. There is no evidence however that Mírzá Yahyá was either directly or indirectly involved in the

actions which led to the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh in the Siyah-Chal and subsequently to His expulsion from the country of His birth.

On the other hand, Mírzá Yahyá and his accomplice Siyyid Muhammad were together without doubt the principal and possibly the only cause of Bahá'u'lláh's abrupt disappearance from Baghdád on 10 April 1854. Only He and His one companion, a Muslim attendant named Abu'l-Qasim-i-Hamadani (GPB:120) knew what His destination was and to what locale He had retired. Shoghi Effendi describes the opposition from within the Bábí ranks which provoked his departure:

“A clandestine opposition, whose aim was to nullify every effort exerted, and frustrate every design conceived, by Bahá'u'lláh for the rehabilitation of a distracted community, could now be clearly discerned. Insinuations, whose purpose was to sow the seeds of doubt and suspicion and to represent Him as a usurper, as the subverter of the laws instituted by the Báb, and the wrecker of His Cause, were being incessantly circulated. His Epistles, interpretations, invocations and commentaries were being covertly and indirectly criticized, challenged and misrepresented. An attempt to injure His person was even set afoot but failed to materialize.” (GPB:117)

Shoghi Effendi (GPB:119-120) quotes a number of passages from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh revealed during this period just prior to His disappearance including this excerpt from "Kitáb-i-Iqán", written in 1861, some five years after his return to Baghdád, including the following:

KI:251: The one object of Our retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful, a source of disturbance unto Our companions, the means of injury to any soul, or the cause of sorrow to any heart. Our withdrawal contemplated no return, and Our separation hoped for no reunion.

The reader may ask himself whether these are the words and the actions of a self-promoting, an arrogant, a Machiavellian personality, or if they are rather those of a selfless, a superlatively humble and kindly, a Christ-like personality such is very rarely encountered in the entire course of human history. Certainly it is evident that Mírzá Yahyá and his henchman Siyyid Muhammad were largely responsible for his withdrawal from Bábí society. They were also responsible for

his return to Baghdád. During his absence the fortunes of the Bábí community sunk to the lowest levels, and under the pernicious leadership of Mírzá Yahyá it acquired a reputation not to be wished upon the followers of any religion. Besides the assassinations which Mírzá Yahyá ordered during this period, and the presumptuous declarations of twenty-five persons as "Him Whom God shall manifest" in the absence of any real moral or intellectual leadership from the Báb's appointed vice-regent, there were the acts of "Siyid Muhammad, now given free rein by his master, Mírzá Yahyá" who "had surrounded himself, as Nabíl who was at that time with him in Karbila categorically asserts, with a band of ruffians, whom he allowed, and even encouraged, to snatch at night the turbans from the heads of wealthy pilgrims who had congregated in Karbila, to steal their shoes, to rob the shrine of the Imam Husayn of its divans and candles, and seize the drinking cups from the public fountains." (GPB:125) This behavior, in such revolting contrast to that of the followers of the Báb during His earthly ministry did not persuade Bahá'u'lláh to return to Baghdád. That He was moved by the terrible gravity of this situation is evident from this statement of His quoted in Nabíl's narrative (from the untranslated portion not included in "The Dawn-breakers"):

GPB:126: But for My recognition of the fact that the Blessed Cause of the Primal Point was on the verge of being completely obliterated, and all the sacred blood poured out in the path of God would have been shed in vain, I would in no wise have consented to return to the people of the Bayán, and would have abandoned them to the worship of the idols their imaginations had fashioned.

Neither did the letters which Mírzá Yahyá wrote to him induce him to leave his place of retreat. "Mírzá Yahyá, realizing full well to what a pass his unrestrained leadership of the Faith had brought him, had, moreover, insistently and in writing, besought Him to return." (GPB:126) The only motive which would persuade Bahá'u'lláh to leave the wilderness of Kurdistán is that referred to in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:251: From the Mystic Source there came the summons bidding Us return whence We came. Surrendering Our will to His, We submitted to His injunction. (cited GPB:126)

Once again, these are the thoughts and actions of a Man of God, not of a pretentious and self-aggrandizing man of the world. However,

inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh had already received His Prophetic call, in the Siyah-Chal in fall of 1852, how is it that He did not proclaim His Prophethood to the disillusioned Bábís, and establish Himself as their Savior, as their true and only authentic Leader? Two factors seem to be involved in this decision to withhold His declaration at this time. First, and most important of the two factors is that Bahá'u'lláh had not yet received the command of God to make such a declaration...it was not yet timely, and as a Prophet of God He was constrained to follow the Will of God and to eschew His own personal will. The second factor is that the Bábí community was not ready for such an announcement; it was disorganized, dis-spirited, corrupted by the actions of Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad and their sympathizers, confused by the twenty-five pretenders to the station of "Him Whom God shall manifest", and in such a condition it was entirely unprepared to receive the second of the Twin Manifestations of God for this New Age and Cycle. As Bahá'u'lláh wrote prior to His disappearance from Baghdád, as cited by Shoghi Effendi:

GPB:119: These creatures are the same creatures who for three thousand years have worshipped idols, and bowed down before the Golden Calf. Now, too, they are fit for nothing better. What relation can there be between this people and Him Who is the Countenance of Glory? What ties can bind them to the One Who is the supreme embodiment of all that is lovable?

And He advised Mírzá Áqa Ján, His amanuensis as follows:

GPB:119: Bid them recite: "Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants and all abide by His bidding!" Tell them to repeat it five hundred times, nay, a thousand times, by day and by night, sleeping and waking, that haply the Countenance of Glory may be unveiled to their eyes, and tiers of light descend upon them.

If the reader will peruse any of the extant accounts of Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn in Baghdád following His return from Kurdistán, he will come to the conclusion that during this period, from 1856 to 1863, the Bábí community of Baghdád was prepared by the Manifestation of God to recognize His station, and that a number of these co-religionists were blessed with having the "Countenance of Glory...unveiled to their eyes" prior to His first open declaration of Prophethood, during

twelve days in April 1863 which will be called henceforth the Days of Paradise (*ayyam-i-ridwan*).

Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad did not, as far as we know, precipitate the fatwa of the Ottoman Sultán which occasioned the forced departure of Bahá'u'lláh and his family from Baghdád and to take up residence in Constantinople. Neither were these opponents of Bahá'u'lláh apparently responsible in any way for the further displacement of the Prophet and His companions to Adrianople. Both of these events were initiated by the ecclesiastical and governmental authorities of the Persian Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire, representing, between them, the combined forces of the two most powerful Islámic states and the two most widespread and numerous sects of Islám, the Ithná 'Asharí Shí'í and the Sunní. However, it is very likely that the final dispersal of this community of believers was effected in part because of the machinations of Mírzá Yahyá and his followers, who made a definite break with Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople.

Shoghi Effendi describes these events:

“Wishing to allay the fierce animosity that blazed in the bosom of His enemies, and to assure to each one of the exiles a complete freedom to choose between Him and them, Bahá'u'lláh withdrew with His family to the house of Rida Big (Shavval 22, 1282 A.H.), which was rented by His order, and refused, for two months, to associate with either friend or stranger, including His own companions. He instructed Aqay-i-Kalim to divide all the furniture, bedding, clothing and utensils that were to be found in His home, and send half to the house of Mírzá Yahyá; to deliver to him certain relics he had long coveted, such as the seals, rings, and manuscripts in the handwriting of the Báb; and to insure that he received his full share of the allowance fixed by the government for the maintenance of the exiles and their families. He, moreover, directed Aqay-i-Kalim to order to attend to Mírzá Yahyá's shopping, for several hours a day, any one of the companions whom he himself might select, and to assure him that whatever would henceforth be received in his name from Persia would be delivered into his own hands...” (GPB:167)

“The calumnies with which both Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad now loaded their letters, which they disseminated in Persia and 'Iráq, as well as the petitions, couched in obsequious language, which the former had addressed to Khurshid Páshá, the

governor of Adrianople, and to his assistant ‘Azíz Páshá, impelled Bahá’u’lláh to emerge from His retirement. He was soon after informed that this same brother had despatched one of his wives to the government house to complain that her husband had been cheated of his rights, and that her children were on the verge of starvation, an accusation which spread far and wide and, reaching Constantinople, became, to Bahá’u’lláh's profound distress, the subject of excited discussion and injurious comment in circles that had previously been greatly impressed by the high standard which His noble and dignified behavior had set in that city. Siyyid Muhammad journeyed to the capital, begged the Persian Ambassador, the Mushiru'd-Awlih, to allot Mírzá Yayha and himself a stipend, accused Bahá’u’lláh of sending an agent to assassinate Násiri’-d-Dín Sháh, and spared no effort to heap abuse and calumny on One Who had, for so long and so patiently, forborne with him, and endured in silence the enormities of which he had been guilty.” (GPB:167-68)

In reference to the various influences which led to the final expulsion of Bahá’u’lláh and most of His companions to the Prison City of ‘Akká, Shoghi Effendi writes that the officials of the Ottoman Empire were provoked and encouraged in their hostility to the Prophet by the letters addressed to them by Mírzá Yahyá:

“The petitions of Mírzá Yahyá which reached them through Siyyid Muhammad, his agent, had provoked them. Anonymous letters (written by this same Siyyid and by an accomplice, Áqa Ján, serving in the Turkish artillery) which perverted the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, and which accused Him of having conspired with Bulgarian leaders and certain ministers of European powers to achieve, with the help of some thousands of His followers, the conquest of Constantinople, had filled their breasts with alarm. And now, encouraged by the internal dissensions which had shaken the Faith, and irritated by the evident esteem in which Bahá’u’lláh was held by the consuls of foreign powers stationed in Adrianople, they determined to take drastic and immediate action which would extirpate that Faith, isolate its Author and reduce Him to powerlessness. The indiscretions committed by some of its over-zealous followers, who had arrived in Constantinople, no doubt, aggravated an already acute situation.

“The fateful decision was eventually arrived at to banish Bahá’u’lláh to the penal colony of ‘Akká, and Mírzá Yahyá to Famagusta in Cyprus. This decision was embodied in a strongly worded Farman, issued by Sultán ‘Abdu'l-‘Azíz.” (GPB:179)

The schemes of Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad and their accomplices certainly contributed to the determination of the Ottoman Sultán to send Bahá'u'lláh and the other "Bábís" --who were by this time either Bahá'ís or Azalís in actuality-- as far away as possible, and to subject them to conditions which would almost certainly lead to the destruction of their community and the extinction of their faith. But the hostility of this rebel and his fellow devils backfired. As a result of their opposition Bahá'u'lláh and His family and most of His companions were exiled to Palestine, to the Holy Land, thereby fulfilling the prophecies of the Hebrew Prophets. Shoghi Effendi cited the remark of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, one of the company exiled along with Bahá'u'lláh:

“It is difficult to understand how Bahá'u'lláh could have been obliged to leave Persia, and to pitch His tent in this Holy Land, but for the persecution of His enemies, His banishment and exile.” (GPB:183)

The followers of Mírzá Yahyá, the Azalí Bábís continued to oppose themselves to His Revelation, to His followers, to His own Person, and they agitated both in Iran and in Palestine. Indeed, certain of the Azalí Bábís, including Siyyid Muhammad and Áqa Ján were exiled to 'Akká along with Bahá'u'lláh and his followers, and they exerted themselves to poison the authorities and populace of 'Akká against the Bahá'ís, causing great suffering to Bahá'u'lláh and His people. A few years after their arrival in 'Akká, Siyyid Muhammad and Áqa Ján were assassinated, but while this brought relief from their machinations, it increased beyond description the sorrows of Bahá'u'lláh inasmuch as those who took part in the murders associated themselves with His Cause, a Cause which sought to bring only peace to the world, and never violence and bloodshed. In "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf", revealed in 1891, shortly before His passing, He reiterates His distress at the defection and opposition of Mírzá Yahyá and the Azalís (whom He addresses as "people of the Bayán"), and His call for His half-brother to repent and return to the true Faith of God. Hence, it would be fair to say that Mírzá Yahyá and the division and animosity which he sowed and cultivated among the Bábís continued to afflict Bahá'u'lláh to the end. Nevertheless He affirmed that this opposition was one of the proofs of the His prophetic claims...perhaps His account of His sufferings may recall the words of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemany:

Lk:22:42: Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

The Prophet of God is a human being; He is also the Manifestation of God, and in His latter function He submits His independent human will to the All-Compelling Will of God. As it is revealed in the prayer cited earlier: "All are His servants and all abide by His bidding." The Prophet of God is the perfect servant of God, He who abides perfectly by the bidding of God, who is nothing of Himself and everything of His Maker. But suffer He does, and indeed, He suffers more than do ordinary human beings, as He is more sensitive, more feeling, more perceptive, more caring than any other sort of human being. His human nature is superlative, and therefore His suffering is also superlative. It is in this light that the reader might read the many passages in His writings in which He bewails His plight and calls to all hearts to be sympathetic to His sorrows. If we cannot be touched to the depths by these pleas, how will we listen with compassion to the hungry cries of starving children, to the terrified screams of the victims of violence, to the incessant moaning of the beaten and downtrodden amongst humanity? For surely the Prophet of God has suffered more deeply and more unjustly than any of these poor ones, for His innocence is perfect and complete, and His love for His fellow men is universal and holds within it the power to transform human nature.

Shoghi Effendi refers to this proof in "God Passes By", when he compares the rejection of various earlier Prophets with that endured by Bahá'u'lláh:

“More odious than the unrelenting hostility which Abu-Jahl, the uncle of Muhammad, had exhibited, more shameful than the betrayal of Jesus Christ by His disciple, Judas Iscariot, more perfidious than the conduct of the sons of Jacob towards Joseph their brother, more abhorrent than the deed committed by one of the sons of Noah, more infamous than even the criminal act perpetrated by Cain against Abel, the monstrous behavior of Mírzá Yahyá, one of the half-brothers of Bahá'u'lláh, the nominee of the Báb, and recognized chief of the Bábí community, brought in its wake a period of travail which left its mark on the fortunes of the Faith for no less than half a century.” (GPB:163)

H.M. Balyuzi reports that Bahá'u'lláh was opposed by other members of His family. Not only was Bahá'u'lláh opposed by His half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá, son of Mírzá Buzurg's first concubine, named Kuchik Khánúm¹⁰⁶; but also by three of the offspring of Mírzá Buzurg's third wife, Kulthúm Khánúm-i-Núri: His half-sister, Sháh-Sultán Khánúm, also called 'Izziyih Khánúm; His half-brother, Mírzá Taqí; and His

half-sister Fatimih-Sultán Khánum. Another son of Mírzá Buzurg's third marriage, named Mírzá Rida-Quli, tried to conceal the fact that he was related to Bahá'u'lláh, although his wife, Maryam, was greatly devoted to Him¹⁰⁷. Indeed, among all of His brothers and sisters -- and they numbered at least fifteen, born of Mírzá Buzurg's four wives and three concubines -- there were only two who were faithful to Bahá'u'lláh: His full brother Mírzá Musa, entitled Aqay-i-Kalim, and His half-brother Mírzá Muhammad-Quli. These betrayals and family travails did not end with His siblings. Bahá'u'lláh married three times¹⁰⁸: first, Asiyih Khánum, surnamed Navváb by Bahá'u'lláh, in Tíhrán in 1835; second, Fatimih Khánum, called Mahd-i-Ulya, in Tíhrán in 1849; and third, Gawhar Khánum, in Baghdád prior to 1863. Of the children of His first marriage, four died in childhood, and the three who survived -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahiyih Khánum, and Mírzá Mihdi -- remained faithful to His wishes throughout their lives. The children of His second marriage numbered six, of whom four survived into adulthood -- Samadiyyih, Muhammad-'Alí, Diya'u'llah and Badi'u'llah, all of whom, together with their mother, violated the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, established in His "Kitab-i-'Ahd" (and in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas," and "Lawh-i-Ghusn"), which appointed His eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be the head of His Faith, and thus, the head of His family upon His demise. His third wife, Gawhar Khánum remained in Baghdád with her brother, Mírzá Mihdiy-i-Kashani when Bahá'u'lláh left that city in 1863; she later joined Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká. She gave birth to one daughter, Furughiyyih, and after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, both mother and daughter turned against 'Abdu'l-Bahá¹⁰⁹. Although the second and third wives of Bahá'u'lláh and their children did not openly oppose Bahá'u'lláh during His lifetime, they nevertheless ultimately turned away from Him, in fulfillment of the Prophetic proof. During the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the following members of the family of Bahá'u'lláh disobeyed the Centre of his Covenant and were expelled from the community of his believers:

1. Mahd-i-'Ulya, second wife of Bahá'u'lláh¹¹⁰
2. Gawhar Khánum, third wife of Bahá'u'lláh¹¹¹
3. Muhammad-'Alí, son of Mahd-i-'Ulya¹¹²
4. Badi'u'llah, son of Mahd-i-'Ulya¹¹³
5. Diya'u'llah(*), son of Mahd-i-'Ulya¹¹⁴
6. Samadiyyih, daughter of Mahd-i-'Ulya and wife of Majdu'd-Din¹¹⁵
7. Furughiyyih, daughter of Gawhar Khánum¹¹⁶ and wife of Hájí Siyyid 'Alí Afnan¹¹⁷, mother of Nayyir Afnan, Hasan Afnan and Faydi Afnan¹¹⁸

8. Majdu'd-Din, son of Mírzá Musa, Aqay-i-Kalim, the faithful brother of Bahá'u'lláh¹¹⁹
9. Shu'a'u'llah, son of Muhammad-'Alí¹²⁰
10. Musa, son of Muhammad-'Alí¹²¹
11. Sadhijih, daughter of Badi'u'llah¹²²

(*) Diya'u'llah died in 1898, and after his death, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that he was forgiven his vacillation in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.¹²³

It is stated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his "Will and Testament" that Muhammad-'Alí, one of Bahá'u'lláh's sons and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brother, interpolated passages into various manuscripts of Bahá'u'lláh's writings. This is also confirmed in the "epistle of repentance"¹²⁴ written by Mírzá Badi'u'llah, another half-brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which was cited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his "Will and Testament" and independently published in the Bahá'í periodical "Star of the West." It is reported that Muhammad-'Alí had so mastered Bahá'u'lláh's style of handwriting that it was impossible to tell the difference between his hand and that of his father. He was discovered by Bahá'u'lláh Himself to be carrying out such forgeries, and severely reprimanded by his father. Furthermore, at the instigation of Majdu'd-Din and Muhammad-'Alí, two cases containing some of Bahá'u'lláh's most precious writings and seals which He alone had used, which served to authenticate the issue of His pen, and which He intended to go to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, were stolen and appropriated by members of His household who were opposed to the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Centre of His Covenant.¹²⁵ While these writings and seals may be discovered at some time in the future, given Muhammad-'Alí's reputation for forgery and interpolation of his father's Writings, it is somewhat unlikely that any of them could be recognized as unquestionably attributable to Bahá'u'lláh Himself. This is a tragedy of considerable proportions, considering that included among these writings there were, according to the eye-witness testimony of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the corrected version of Nabíl's Narrative with Bahá'u'lláh's annotations, the emendation of certain laws in the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" and the text of the obligatory prayer which is referred to in that book.

'Abdu'l-Bahá appointed his eldest grandson¹²⁶, Shoghi Effendi, himself a son of Diya'iyyih¹²⁷, one of the four daughters of 'Abdu'l-Bahá¹²⁸, and Aqa Mírzá Hadí¹²⁹, son of Siyyid Muhammad-Husayn, maternal relation to the Báb¹³⁰ as Guardian of the Cause of God, its authoritative leader for life. The eldest daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the mother of Shoghi Effendi, Diya'iyyih, wife of Mírzá Hadí, was the

only one of his daughters who remained faithful to the Covenant.¹³¹ It should be understood that those family members who had rebelled against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during his ministry, were unanimously opposed to Shoghi Effendi during his Guardianship, and were joined by all of their descendants in this act. Among those family members who rebelled against the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh during his ministry were the following:

1. Tuba Khánum, daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, wife of Mírzá Muhsin¹³²
2. Ruha Khánum, daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, wife of Mírzá Jalál¹³³
3. Munavvar Khánum, daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, wife of Ahmad Yazdí¹³⁴
4. Husayn Rabbani, son of Diya’i’yyih Khánum, the faithful daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá¹³⁵
5. Riaz Rabbani, son of Diya’i’yyih Khánum, the faithful daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá¹³⁶
6. Ruhangiz Rabbani¹³⁷ daughter of Diya’i’yyih Khánum, the faithful daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá¹³⁸, wife of Nayyir Afnan¹³⁹
7. Mehrangiz Rabbani¹⁴⁰, son of Diya’i’yyih Khánum, the faithful daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá¹⁴¹, wife of Hasan Afnan¹⁴²
8. Ruhi Afnan, son of Tuba Khánum¹⁴³
9. Suhayl Afnan, son of Tuba Khánum¹⁴⁴
10. Fu’ád Afnan, son of Tuba Khánum¹⁴⁵
11. Thurayya Afnan¹⁴⁶, daughter of Tuba Khánum¹⁴⁷, wife of Faydí Afnan¹⁴⁸
12. Munib Sháhídh, son of Ruha Khánum¹⁴⁹
13. Hasan Sháhídh¹⁵⁰, son of Ruha Khánum¹⁵¹
14. Maryam Sháhídh, daughter of Ruha Khánum¹⁵²
15. Zahra Sháhídh, daughter of Ruha Khánum¹⁵³

Although the "Will and Testament" of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stipulated that Shoghi Effendi appoint his own eldest son or some other male descendant of Bahá’u’lláh to the institution of the Guardianship upon his own demise, Shoghi Effendi was utterly unable to do so because his marriage was without issue, and there were no appropriate candidates left. By breaking the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, whether in one ministry or the other, all of the male descendants of Bahá’u’lláh had disqualified themselves from consideration for so high an office in the Bahá’í Faith. While Muhammad’s descendants assumed the office

of religious leadership for at least a faction of His followers for up to 12 generations, in the case of Bahá'u'lláh the family assumed His office for only two generations—His son and His great-grandson.

So far only the family of Bahá'u'lláh has been mentioned in connection with the fulfillment of this proof. The tragic opposition of His people is also incontestable. Although thousands, certainly tens of thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iranians (then called Persians) embraced the Faith of the Báb and later that of Bahá'u'lláh, and while there have been many hundreds of thousands of conversions to that Faith, numbering the offspring of believers as well as new converts, since His passing, nevertheless, over ninety-percent of the Iranian people have consistently opposed the Manifestation of God who was born and brought up in their midst. The persecution of the Bahá'ís, from the time of Bahá'u'lláh until our own day, is a clear testimony to Bahá'u'lláh's fulfillment of this proof of Prophethood. For every act of cruelty and even of disapproval towards the Bahá'ís is actually an act of opposition towards Bahá'u'lláh. The people of Iran do not hate their fellow children, women and men of Persian descent and culture-- they hate Bahá'u'lláh, and anyone associated with Him incurs their wrath.

The systematic campaign of the clergy and government of Iran to eradicate the Bahá'í community, and thereby to efface all memory of Bahá'u'lláh in His own homeland has already been discussed separately in the Sixteenth Proof, and for more details pertaining to this campaign one may consult the internet, where a daily update is accessible on multiple sites.

TWENTY-NINTH PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WAS EXILED FROM HIS HOMELAND

Every Prophet of God has not only been rejected by His people, the neighbors and associates and often the very family into which He has been born, but every One has been exiled from His homeland. This is one of the signs of Prophethood. In one of his Tablets, translated by Shoghi Effendi and quoted in a letter dated 9 April 1923 and addressed to a National Spiritual Assembly, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states the following:

“Abraham's migration from his native land caused the bountiful gifts of the All-Glorious to be made manifest, and the setting of Canaan's brightest star unfolded to the eyes the radiance of Joseph. The flight of Moses, the Prophet of Sinai, revealed the Flame of the Lord's burning Fire, and the rise of Jesus breathed the breaths of the Holy Spirit into the world. The departure of Muhammad, the Beloved of God, from the city of His birth was the cause of the exaltation of God's Holy Word, and the exile and banishment of the Sacred Beauty led to the diffusion of the Light of His Divine Revelation throughout all regions. Take ye good heed, O people of insight!” (SWAB:281)

The author is deeply grateful to the Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre for bringing this statement to his attention. In "Some Answered Questions" (chapter IV, pp. 15-16) 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes of the exile of Abraham:

“In consequence of His exile the descendants of Abraham became powerful, and the Holy Land was given to them. In consequence of His exile a Moses and a being like Christ were manifested from His posterity, and Hagar was found from whom Ishmael was born, one of whose descendants was Muhammad. In consequence of His exile the Báb appeared from His posterity, and the Prophets of Israel were numbered among the descendants of Abraham. And so it will continue for ever and ever. Finally, in consequence of His exile the whole of Europe and most of Asia came under the protecting shadow of the God of Israel. See what a power it is that enabled a man who was a fugitive from His country to found such a family, to establish such a faith, and to promulgate such teachings. Can any one say that this occurred accidentally? We must be just--was this man an Educator or not?

“Since the exile of Abraham from Ur to Aleppo in Syria produced this result, we must consider what will be the effect of the exile of Bahá’u’lláh in His several progresses from Tíhrán to Baghdád, from thence to Constantinople, to Roumelia, and to the Holy Land.” (SAQ:15-16)

Shoghi Effendi refers to this proof of Prophethood in "God Passes By", and follows his comments with the citation of the last paragraph of this quotation from "Some Answered Questions" (which will not be repeated here):

“This enforced and hurried departure of Bahá’u’lláh from His native land, accompanied by some of His relatives, recalls in some of its aspects, the precipitate flight of the Holy Family into Egypt; the sudden migration of Muhammad, soon after His assumption of the Prophetic office, from Mecca to Medina; the exodus of Moses, His brother and His followers from the land of their birth, in response to the Divine summons, and above all the banishment of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to the Promised Land--a banishment which, in the multitudinous benefits it conferred upon so many divers peoples, faiths and nations, constitutes the nearest historical approach to the incalculable blessings destined to be vouchsafed, in this day, and in future ages, to the whole human race, in direct consequence of the exile suffered by Him Whose Cause is the flower and fruit of all previous Revelations.” (GPB:107)

Bahá’u’lláh exemplifies this proof of Prophethood. First, He was forced to leave His homeland by the Imperial government of Iran, in early January 1853¹⁵⁴, choosing to repair to ‘Iráq (rather than to Russia, as offered by the Czar's Minister in Tíhrán). Second, after about ten years' residence in the land of ‘Iráq, He was compelled to leave Baghdád and repair to Constantinople¹⁵⁵, at the instigation of the Persian Ambassador and hence, once again, at the behest of the Persian Imperial government. Third, shortly after arriving in Constantinople, Bahá’u’lláh and His companions were once more obliged to leave their home, and to settle in the city of Adrianople¹⁵⁶. Nor did this exile complete His banishment and uprooting! Fourth, after around five years in Adrianople, Bahá’u’lláh and His family were sent to ‘Akká, and it was in the vicinity of that prison-city in the Ottoman province of Syria that He lived out the balance of his earthly existence. Shoghi Effendi has written of this last exile, to clarify the context:

“His arrival at the penal colony of ‘Akká, far from proving the end of His afflictions, was but the beginning of a major crisis, characterized by bitter suffering, severe restrictions, and intense turmoil, which, in its gravity, surpassed even the agonies of the Siyah-Chal of Tíhrán, and to which no other event, in the history of the entire century can compare, except the internal convulsion that rocked the Faith in Adrianople. "Know thou," Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to emphasize the criticalness of the first nine years of His banishment to that prison-city, has written, "that upon Our arrival at this Spot, We chose to designate it as the 'Most Great Prison.' Though previously subjected in another land (Tíhrán) to chains and fetters, We yet refused to call it by that name. Say: Ponder thereon, O ye endued with understanding!"” (GPB:185)

While this series of banishments, this humiliating and heart-rending exile from His homeland and from the company of His lifelong friends, certainly entailed great suffering and sacrifice for Bahá'u'lláh and His family, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá has affirmed that this same sequence of exile and ostracism led to the fulfillment of prophecies and to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Shoghi Effendi quotes ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and the Hebrew Prophets to demonstrate this fulfillment in "God Passes By":

“"It is difficult," declares ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, "to understand how Bahá'u'lláh could have been obliged to leave Persia, and to pitch His tent in this Holy Land, but for the persecution of His enemies, His banishment and exile." Indeed such a consummation, He assures us, had been actually prophesied "through the tongue of the Prophets two or three thousand years before." God, "faithful to His promise," had, "to some of the Prophets" "revealed and given the good news that the 'Lord of Hosts should be manifested in the Holy Land.'" Isaiah had, in this connection, announced in his Book: "Get the up into the high mountain, O Zion that bringest good tidings; lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings. Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him.'" David, in his Psalms, had predicted: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory." "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." Amos had, likewise, foretold His coming: "The Lord will roar from Zion, and

utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."” (GPB:183-184)

For more details pertaining to Bahá'u'lláh's fulfillment of prophecies, please turn to the First Proof.

THIRTIETH PROOF

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH CAME FROM THE EAST

Every one of the Prophets of God has arisen in the East. 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that this has always been the case, and hence this is also one of the proofs of every Prophet. Shoghi Effendi quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statement to this effect in "God Passes By":

“From the beginning of time until the present day," is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own testimony, "the light of Divine Revelation hath risen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West. The illumination thus shed hath, however, acquired in the West an extraordinary brilliancy. Consider the Faith proclaimed by Jesus, though it first appeared in the East, yet not until its light had been shed upon the West did the full measure of its potentialities become manifest." "The day is approaching," He has affirmed, "when ye shall witness how, through the splendor of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, the West will have replaced the East, radiating the light of Divine guidance."” (GPB:253-254)

While 'Abdu'l-Bahá only cites two Prophets in this passage in relation to this proof, Jesus and Bahá'u'lláh, in similar statements he refers to other Prophets who fulfilled this proof:

“In the Holy Books it is recorded that when the Sun of Truth dawns, it will appear in the East, and its light will be reflected in the West. Already its dawning has taken place in the East, and its signs are appearing in the West. Its illumination shall spread rapidly and widely in the Occident. The Sun of Truth has risen in Persia, and its effulgence is now manifest here in America. This is the greatest proof of its appearance in the horizon of the world, as recorded in the heavenly Books. Praise be to God! That which is prophesied in the Holy Books has been fulfilled.

“On Sunday last at Carnegie Hall the revered soul who introduced 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave voice to the statement that according to tradition demons would appear from the land of the sunrise, but now we find angels appearing instead. At the time this statement was made a reply was not possible, but today we will speak of it. The great spiritual lights have always appeared in the East. The Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, appeared in the East. Jesus Christ dawned upon the horizon of the East. Moses, Aaron, Joseph and all the Israelitish prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and others

appeared from the Orient. The lights of Muhammad and the Báb shone from the East. The eastern horizon has been flooded with the effulgence of these great lights, and only from the East have they risen to shine upon the West. Now -- praise be to God! -- you are living in the dawn of a cycle when the Sun of Truth is again shining forth from the East, illumining all regions." (Address on 17 April 1912, in PUP:23)

"Therefore, it is shown that the divine Manifestations, the holy Mouthpieces of God, are the Collective Centers of God. These heavenly Messengers are the real Shepherds of humanity, for whenever They appear in the world They unite the scattered sheep. The Collective Center has always appeared in the Orient. Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad were Collective Centers of Their day and time, and all arose in the East. Today Bahá'u'lláh is the Collective Center of unity for all mankind, and the splendor of His light has likewise dawned from the East." (Address on 2 June 1912, in PUP:164-165)

"I have come from distant countries of the Orient where the lights of heaven have ever shone forth, from regions where the Manifestations of God have appeared and the radiance and power of God have been revealed to mankind." (Address on 9 June 1912, in "Khitabat," p. 432; PUP:172)

"In the Books of the Prophets certain glad tidings are recorded which are absolutely true and free from doubt. The East has ever been the dawning point of the Sun of Reality. All the Prophets of God have appeared there. The religions of God have been promulgated, the teachings of God have been spread and the law of God founded in the East. The Orient has always been the center of lights. The West has acquired illumination from the East, but in some respects the reflection of the light has been greater in the Occident." (Address on 29 August 1912, in PUP:289)

"And ye who are the people of the Orient -- the Orient which has ever been the dawning point of lights from whence the Sun of Reality has ever shone forth, casting its effulgence upon the West -- ye, therefore, must become the manifestations of lights. Ye must become brilliant lamps. Ye must shine as stars radiating the light of love toward all mankind. May you be the cause of love amongst the nations. Thus may the world become witness that the Orient has ever been the

dawning point of illumination, the source of love and reconciliation.”
(Address on 7 October 1912, "Khitabat," p. 600; PUP:348)

It is an evident proof that, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh was born in Tíhrán, Iran; and that He declared His mission in Baghdád, 'Iráq; and that both of these cities are located in the East, that is, in the Middle East, He fulfills this proof of the Prophets of God. Furthermore, while He began His life in Iran, and His ministry in Baghdád, He continued to move Westward in the course of that ministry (to Constantinople, then Adrianople, then 'Akká) and hence even in the course of His lifespan He moved from the East to the West.

THIRTY-FIRST PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH APPEARED AMONG THE MOST
SPIRITUALLY DEPRIVED AND DEGRADED OF
MANKIND

In "Bhagavad-Gita", the Lord Krishna is reputed to have pronounced these famous words pertaining to the appearance of the Divine Educators¹⁵⁷:

BG:IV:7: Whenever there is a decline of righteousness [dharma] and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata [Arjuna], then I send forth Myself.

This verse is echoed in "Bhagavata"¹⁵⁸:

BH:IX:24:56: Whenever righteousness [dharma] wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself.

If we look for examples of this state of degradation at the time of the appearance of the Prophets, we find plenty of them in the Bible. For example, in the Book of Genesis (Bereshit), in the sixth chapter it is written:

Gen. 6:5-8: And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Shoghi Effendi has written eloquently in "The Advent of Divine Justice"¹⁵⁹, of other Prophets who were associated with dark ages and ignorant peoples:

“How often have the Prophets of God, not excepting Bahá'u'lláh Himself, chosen to appear, and deliver their Message in countries and amidst peoples and races, at a time when they were either fast declining, or had already touched the lowest depths of

moral and spiritual degradation. The appalling misery and wretchedness to which the Israelites had sunk, under the debasing and tyrannical rule of the Pharaohs, in the days preceding their exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses; the decline that had set in in the religious, the spiritual, the cultural, and the moral life of the Jewish people, at the time of the appearance of Jesus Christ; the barbarous cruelty, the gross idolatry and immorality, which had for so long been the most distressing features of the tribes of Arabia and brought such shame upon them when Muhammad arose to proclaim His Message in their midst; the indescribable state of decadence, with its attendant corruption, confusion, intolerance, and oppression, in both the civil and religious life of Persia, so graphically portrayed by the pen of a considerable number of scholars, diplomats, and travelers, at the hour of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh -- all demonstrate this basic and inescapable fact. To contend that the innate worthiness, the high moral standard, the political aptitude, and social attainments of any race or nation is the reason for the appearance in its midst of any of these Divine Luminaries would be an absolute perversion of historical facts, and would amount to a complete repudiation of the undoubted interpretation placed upon them, so clearly and emphatically, by both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

“How great, then, must be the challenge to those who, belonging to such races and nations, and having responded to the call which these Prophets have raised, to unreservedly recognize and courageously testify to this indubitable truth, that not by reason of any racial superiority, political capacity, or spiritual virtue which a race or nation might possess, but rather as a direct consequence of its crying needs, its lamentable degeneracy, and irremediable perversity, has the Prophet of God chosen to appear in its midst, and with it as a lever has lifted the entire human race to a higher and nobler plane of life and conduct. For it is precisely under such circumstances, and by such means that the Prophets have, from time immemorial, chosen and were able to demonstrate their redemptive power to raise from the depths of abasement and of misery, the people of their own race and nation, empowering them to transmit in turn to other races and nations the saving grace and the energizing influence of their Revelation.

“In the light of this fundamental principle it should always be borne in mind, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the primary reason why the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh chose to appear in Persia, and to make it the first repository of their Revelation, was because, of all the peoples and nations of the civilized world, that race and nation had, as so often depicted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, sunk to such ignominious depths,

and manifested so great a perversity, as to find no parallel among its contemporaries. For no more convincing proof could be adduced demonstrating the regenerating spirit animating the Revelations proclaimed by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh than their power to transform what can be truly regarded as one of the most backward, the most cowardly, and perverse of peoples into a race of heroes, fit to effect in turn a similar revolution in the life of mankind. To have appeared among a race or nation which by its intrinsic worth and high attainments seemed to warrant the inestimable privilege of being made the receptacle of such a Revelation would in the eyes of an unbelieving world greatly reduce the efficacy of that Message, and detract from the self-sufficiency of its omnipotent power. The contrast so strikingly presented in the pages of Nabil's Narrative between the heroism that immortalized the life and deeds of the Dawn-Breakers and the degeneracy and cowardice of their defamers and persecutors is in itself a most impressive testimony to the truth of the Message of Him Who had instilled such a spirit into the breasts of His disciples. For any believer of that race to maintain that the excellence of his country and the innate nobility of its people were the fundamental reasons for its being singled out as the primary receptacle of the Revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh would be untenable in the face of the overwhelming evidence afforded so convincingly by that Narrative." (ADJ:17-19)

Shoghi Effendi's emphatic formulation of this proof of Prophethood appears to be applicable to all Prophets, inasmuch as he affirms it to be "a fundamental principle." As for Bahá'u'lláh's fulfillment of this proof, what was the condition of the people and society of Iran in the mid-19th century? Rather than stating his own views on the subject, Shoghi Effendi has published extracts from Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question"¹⁶⁰ in the Introduction to his translation of Nabil-A'zam's chronicle, published as "The Dawn-breakers":

“In a country so backward in constitutional progress, so destitute of forms and statutes and charters, and so firmly stereotyped in the immemorial traditions of the East, the personal element, as might be expected, is largely in the ascendant; and the government of Persia is little else than the arbitrary exercise of authority by a series of units in a descending scale from the sovereign to the headman of a petty village. The only check that operates upon the lower official grades is the fear of their superiors, which means can usually be found to assuage; upon the higher ranks the fear of the sovereign, who is not always closed against similar methods of pacification; and upon the

sovereign himself the fear, not of native, but of foreign opinion, as represented by the hostile criticism of the European Press.... The Sháh, indeed, may be regarded at this moment as perhaps the best existing specimen of a moderate despot; for within the limits indicated he is practically irresponsible and omnipotent. He has absolute command over the life and property of every one of his subjects. His sons have no independent power, and can be reduced to impotence or beggary in the twinkling of an eye. The ministers are elevated and degraded at the royal pleasure. The sovereign is the sole executive, and all officials are his deputies. No civil tribunals are in existence to check or modify his prerogative.

“...Of the general character and accomplishments of the ministers of the Persian Court, Sir J. Malcolm, in his History, wrote as follows in the early years of the century: 'The Ministers and chief officers of the Court are almost always men of polished manners, well skilled in the business of their respective departments, of pleasant conversation, subdued temper, and very acute observation; but these agreeable and useful qualities are, in general, all that they possess. Nor is virtue or liberal knowledge to be expected in men whose lives are wasted in attending to forms; whose means of subsistence are derived from the most corrupt sources; whose occupation is in intrigues which have always the same objects: to preserve themselves or ruin others; who cannot, without danger, speak any language but that of flattery and deceit; and who are, in short, condemned by their condition to be venal, artful, and false. There have, no doubt, been many ministers of Persia whom it would be injustice to class under this general description; but even the most distinguished for their virtues and talents have been forced in some degree to accommodate their principles to their station; and, unless where the confidence of their sovereign has placed them beyond the fear of rivals, necessity has compelled them to practice a subserviency and dissimulation at variance with the truth and integrity which can alone constitute a claim to the respect all are disposed to grant to good and great men.' These observations are marked by the insight and justice characteristic of their distinguished author, and it is to be feared that to a large extent they hold as good of the present as of the old generation...

“...I now come to that which is the cardinal and differentiating feature of Iranian administration. Government, nay, life itself, in that country may be said to consist for the most part of an interchange of presents. Under its social aspects this practice may be supposed to illustrate the generous sentiments of an amiable people; though even here it has a grimly unemotional side, as, for instance, when, congratulating yourself upon being the recipient of a gift, you find that

not only must you make a return of equivalent cost to the donor, but must also liberally remunerate the bearer of the gift (to whom your return is very likely the sole recognized means of subsistence) in a ratio proportionate to its pecuniary value. Under its political aspects, the practice of gift-making, though consecrated in the adamant traditions of the East, is synonymous with the system elsewhere described by less agreeable names. This is the system on which the government of Persia has been conducted for centuries, and the maintenance of which opposes a solid barrier to any real reform. From the Sháh downwards, there is scarcely an official who is not open to gifts, scarcely a post which is not conferred in return for gifts, scarcely an income which has not been amassed by the receipt of gifts. Every individual, with hardly an exception, in the official hierarchy above mentioned, has only purchased his post by a money present either to the Sháh, or to a minister, or to the superior governor by whom he has been appointed. If there are several candidates for a post, in all probability the one who makes the best offer will win.

“...The 'madakhil' is a cherished national institution in Persia, the exaction of which, in a myriad different forms, whose ingenuity is only equalled by their multiplicity, is the *xliv* crowning interest and delight of a Persian's existence. This remarkable word, for which Mr. Watson says there is no precise English equivalent, may be variously translated as commission, perquisite, *douceur*, consideration, pickings and stealings, profit, according to the immediate context in which it is employed. Roughly speaking, it signifies that balance of personal advantage, usually expressed in money form, which can be squeezed out of any and every transaction. A negotiation, in which two parties are involved as donor and recipient, as superior and subordinate, or even as equal contracting agents, cannot take place in Persia without the party who can be represented as the author or the favour or service claiming and receiving a definite cash return for what he has done or given. It may of course be said that human nature is much the same all the world over; that a similar system exists under a different name in our own or other countries, and that the philosophic critic will welcome in the Persian a man and a brother. To some extent this is true. But in no country that I have ever seen or heard of in the world, is the system so open, so shameless, or so universal as in Persia. So far from being limited to the sphere of domestic economy or to commercial transactions, it permeates every walk and inspires most of the actions of life. By its operation, generosity or gratuitous service may be said to have been erased in Persia from the category of social virtues, and cupidity has been elevated into the guiding principle of human conduct.... Hereby is instituted an arithmetical progression of

plunder from the sovereign to the subject, each unit in the descending scale remunerating himself from the unit next in rank below him, and the hapless peasant being the ultimate victim. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that office is the common avenue to wealth, and that cases are frequent of men who, having started from nothing, are found residing in magnificent houses, surrounded by crowds of retainers and living in princely style. 'Make what you can while you can' is the rule that most men set before themselves in entering public life. Nor does popular spirit resent the act; the estimation of any one who, enjoying the opportunity, has failed to line his own pockets, being the reverse of complimentary to his sense. No one turns a thought to xlv the sufferers from whom, in the last resort, the material for these successive 'madakhils' has been derived, and from the sweat of whose uncomplaining brow has been wrung the wealth that is dissipated in luxurious country houses, European curiosities, and enormous retinues.

“...Among the features of public life in Persia that most quickly strike the stranger's eye, and that indirectly arise from the same conditions, is the enormous number of attendants and retainers that swarm round a minister, or official of any description. In the case of a functionary of rank or position, these vary in number from 50 to 500. Benjamin says that the Prime Minister in his time kept 3,000. Now, the theory of social and ceremonial etiquette that prevails in Persia, and indeed throughout the East, is to some extent responsible for this phenomenon, personal importance being, to a large extent, estimated by the public show which it can make, and by the staff of servants whom on occasions it can parade. But it is the institution of 'Madakhil' and of illicit pickings and stealings that is the root of the evil. If the governor or minister were bound to pay salaries to the whole of this servile crew their ranks would speedily dwindle. The bulk of them are unpaid; they attach themselves to their master because of the opportunities for extortion with which that connection presents them, and they thrive and fatten on plunder. It may readily be conceived how great a drain is this swarm of blood-suckers upon the resources of the country. They are true types of unproductive labourers, absorbing but never creating wealth; and their existence is little short of a national calamity.... It is a cardinal point of Persian etiquette when you go out visiting to take as many of your own establishment with you as possible, whether riding or walking on foot; the number of such retinue being accepted as an indication of the rank of the master...

“Those philosophers are right who argue that moral must precede material, and internal exterior, reform in Persia. It is useless to graft new shoots on to a stem whose own sap is exhausted or

poisoned. We may give Persia roads and railroads; we may work her mines and exploit her resources; we may drill her army and clothe her artisans; but we shall not have brought her within the pale of civilized nations until we have got at the core of the people, and given a new and a radical twist to the national character and institutions. I have drawn this picture of Persian administration, which I believe to be true, in order that English readers may understand the system with which reformers, whether foreigners or natives, have to contend, and the iron wall of resistance, built up by all the most selfish instincts in human nature, that is opposed to progressive ideas. The Sháh himself, however genuine his desire for innovation, is to some extent enlisted on the side of this pernicious system, seeing that he owes to it his private fortune; while those who most loudly condemn it in private are not behind their fellows in outwardly bowing their heads in the temple of Rimmon. In every rank below the sovereign, the initiative is utterly wanting to start a rebellion against the tyranny of immemorial custom; and if a strong man like the present king can only tentatively undertake it, where is he who shall preach the crusade?" (DB:xli-xlviii passim.)

In two of his public addresses in 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá confirmed this picture of the Persian people in the early and mid-19th century:

“In the early part of the nineteenth century the horizon of Persia was shrouded in great darkness and ignorance. The people of that country were in a condition of barbarism. Hatred and bigotry prevailed among the various religions; bloodshed and hostility were frequent among sects and denominations of belief. There were no evidences of affiliation and unity; violent prejudice and antagonism ruled the hearts of men. At such a time as this Bahá’u’lláh proclaimed the first principle of His mission and teaching--the oneness of the world of humanity.” (Address on 25 September 1912, in PUP:341)

“Similar deplorable conditions prevailed in Persia in the nineteenth century. Darkness and ignorant fanaticism were widespread; no trace of fellowship or brotherhood existed amongst the races. On the contrary, human hearts were filled with rage and hatred; darkness and gloom were manifest in human lives and conditions everywhere. At such a time as this Bahá’u’lláh appeared upon the divine horizon, even as the glory of the sun, and in that gross darkness and hopelessness of the human world there shone a great light.” (Address on 6 November 1912, in PUP:392)

THIRTY-SECOND PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HAS FOUNDED A NEW CIVILIZATION

In "The Secret of Divine Civilization"¹⁶¹, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, regarding the founding of true civilization:

“By the Lord God, and there is no God but He, even the minutest details of civilized life derive from the grace of the Prophets of God. What thing of value to mankind has ever come into being which was not first set forth either directly or by implication in the Holy Scriptures?” (SDC: 96)

This same principle is found affirmed in some of his talks in North America, published in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace":

“For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.

“All the Prophets have come to promote divine bestowals, to found the spiritual civilization and teach the principles of morality. Therefore, we must strive with all our powers so that spiritual influences may gain the victory. For material forces have attacked mankind. The world of humanity is submerged in a sea of materialism. The rays of the Sun of Reality are seen but dimly and darkly through opaque glasses. The penetrative power of the divine bounty is not fully manifest.

“In Persia among the various religions and sects there were intense differences. Bahá'u'lláh appeared in that country and founded the spiritual civilization.” (PUP:12)

“Material civilization has reached an advanced plane, but now there is need of spiritual civilization. Material civilization alone will not satisfy; it cannot meet the conditions and requirements of the present age; its benefits are limited to the world of matter. There is no limitation to the spirit of man, for spirit in itself is progressive, and if the divine civilization be established, the spirit of man will advance. Every developed susceptibility will increase the effectiveness of man. Discoveries of the real will become more and more possible, and the influence of divine guidance will be increasingly recognized. All this is

conducive to the divine form of civilization. This is what is meant in the Bible by the descent of the New Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem is none other than divine civilization, and it is now ready.” (PUP:101-102)

“It is the province of man to confer life, not death. It behooves him to be the cause of human welfare, but inasmuch as he glories in the savagery of animalism, it is an evidence that divine civilization has not been established in human society. Material civilization has advanced unmistakably, but because it is not associated with divine civilization, evil and wickedness abound. In ancient times if two nations were at war twelve months, not over twenty thousand men would be killed; now the instruments of death have become so multiplied and perfected that one hundred thousand can be destroyed in a day. In three months during the Russo-Japanese War one million perished. This was undreamed of in former cycles. The cause is the absence of divine civilization.” (PUP:103)

“All this is the outcome of material civilization; therefore, although material advancement furthers good purposes in life, at the same time it serves evil ends. The divine civilization is good because it cultivates morals. Consider what the Prophets of God have contributed to human morality. Jesus Christ summoned all to the Most Great Peace through the acquisition of pure morals. If the moral precepts and foundations of divine civilization become united with the material advancement of man, there is no doubt that the happiness of the human world will be attained and that from every direction the glad tidings of peace upon earth will be announced.” (PUP:109)

“The Prophets of God have founded the laws of divine civilization.” (PUP:142)¹⁶²

“Christ ratified and proclaimed the foundation of the law of Moses. Muhammad and all the Prophets have revoiced that same foundation of reality. Therefore, the purposes and accomplishments of the divine Messengers have been one and the same. They were the source of advancement to the body politic and the cause of the honor and divine civilization of humanity, the foundation of which is one and the same in every dispensation. It is evident, then, that the proofs of the validity and inspiration of a Prophet of God are the deeds of beneficent accomplishment and greatness emanating from Him. If He proves to be instrumental in the elevation and betterment of mankind, He is undoubtedly a valid and heavenly Messenger.” (PUP:366)

“Bahá'u'lláh teaches that material civilization is incomplete, insufficient and that divine civilization must be established. Material civilization concerns the world of matter or bodies, but divine civilization is the realm of ethics and moralities. Until the moral degree of the nations is advanced and human virtues attain a lofty level, happiness for mankind is impossible. The philosophers have founded material civilization. The Prophets have founded divine civilization. Christ was the Founder of heavenly civilization. Mankind receives the bounties of material civilization as well as divine civilization from the heavenly Prophets. The capacity for achieving extraordinary and praiseworthy progress is bestowed by Them through the breaths of the Holy Spirit, and heavenly civilization is not possible of attainment or accomplishment otherwise. This evidences the need of humanity for heavenly bestowals, and until these heavenly bestowals are received, eternal happiness cannot be realized.” (PUP:375)

In the application of this proof to each of the Prophets of God, we may well find that all of the Prophets have been the founders of great civilizations--Moses the founder of Israelite and Jewish civilization; Zoroaster the founder of Persian civilization; Krishna the founder of Hindu civilization; Buddha the founder of Buddhist civilization; Jesus the founder of Christian civilization; Muhammad the founder of Islámic civilization. On the basis of the fulfillment of this proof by the other Prophets of God, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms that the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh are co-founders of a universal human civilization which is gradually emerging during our own lifetimes.

What evidence do we have that Bahá’u’lláh is the Founder of such a universal civilization, when there are only a few million Bahá’ís scattered throughout the world over a hundred years after His passing? If He is the Founder of such a civilization, when can we expect that it will come into existence? In a number of his letters to the Bahá’ís of the world, and in particular in his letter now entitled "The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh" and published in the collection entitled "The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh," Shoghi Effendi explains that the Bahá’í Administrative Order -- which is presently composed of hundreds of thousands of Local Spiritual Assemblies, hundreds of Regional Bahá’í Councils, over 180 National Spiritual Assemblies, and one Universal House of Justice -- is the foundation of that universal human civilization which has been ushered in and firmly established by Bahá’u’lláh:

“A word should now be said regarding the theory on which this Administrative Order is based and the principle that must govern the operation of its chief institutions. It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, this divinely-conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions. Such an attempt would in itself betray a lack of complete appreciation of the excellence of the handiwork of its great Author. How could it be otherwise when we remember that this Order constitutes the very pattern of that divine civilization which the almighty Law of Bahá'u'lláh is designed to establish upon earth? The divers and ever-shifting systems of human polity, whether past or present, whether originating in the East or in the West, offer no adequate criterion wherewith to estimate the potency of its hidden virtues or to appraise the solidity of its foundations.

“The Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islám -- none of these can be identified or be said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned.” (WOB:151)

Shoghi Effendi also asserts that the foundations of that divine civilization are found in the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" of Bahá'u'lláh and the "Will and Testament" of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

“It would, however, be helpful and instructive to bear in mind certain basic principles with reference to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which together with the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, constitutes the chief repository wherein are enshrined those priceless elements of that Divine Civilization, the establishment of which is the primary mission of the Bahá'í Faith.” (WOB:3)

“I strongly feel the urge to elucidate certain facts, which would at once reveal to every fair-minded observer the unique character of that Divine Civilization the foundations of which the unerring hand of Bahá'u'lláh has laid, and the essential elements of

which the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has disclosed.”
(WOB:16)

This “Divine Civilization” will be embodied in a vast tapestry of institutions, laws and practices which are described succinctly and in one overarching overview by Shoghi Effendi:

“The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá’u’lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve center of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will

be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

“National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and cooperation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

“A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation -- such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.” (WOB:203-204)

The fact is, that some 6 million Bahá'ís are governed by laws, are guided and inspired by principles, and are administered by institutions which they believe to constitute the very pattern of the divine civilization which Bahá'u'lláh has envisioned. The civilization which will ultimately embrace the entire planet and all of its peoples they believe to be already operating in our midst. Inasmuch as the Bahá'í Faith is among the most widespread of religious movements, the fundamentals of this divine civilization have already been established throughout the planet. The Bahá'í Commonwealth already exists, in microcosm, in miniature, and in stark and resplendent contrast to the crumbling mores, regulations and organizations associated with previous and present civilizations. The reader has only to come into

contact with Bahá'í communities in order to ascertain the truth for himself. And Bahá'ís have only to implement the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in order to demonstrate this new pattern in all of its implications and applications.

THIRTY-THIRD PROOF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH MANIFESTS THE GLORY OF GOD

Mírzá Husayn 'Alí assumed a new name when He became a follower of the Báb. This name, "Bahá'," may have been conferred upon Him by the Báb Himself. That this name was approved of by the Báb is attested by the scroll in the form of a pentacle which He entrusted to Mírzá Husayn 'Alí, which contained about five hundred verses containing 361 derivatives of this new name. This scroll was entrusted to Mírzá Husayn 'Alí by the Báb via His secretary Mírzá Ahmad at some time during the spring of 1849.¹⁶³ Mírzá Husayn 'Alí assumed this name for the first time at the conference of Badasht, which He organized in 1848. At that conference, he conferred new names on some of His fellow disciples, "Quddus" to Muhammad 'Alí Barfurushí and "Tahirih" to Qurratu'l-'Ayn.

The name "Bahá'" is an Arabic word which means "glory, splendour, light, brilliancy, radiance, beauty"; its superlative form "most glorious, most splendiferous, most brilliant..." is "Abha". This name was identified by the great Muslim scholar Shaykh Muhammad 'Amili (952-1030 A.H.) as the "Greatest Name of God," based upon the appearance of this illustrious name in the dawn-prayer, Du'ay-i-Sahar, recited during Ramadan, the month of fasting. Two of the Imams of the Ithná 'Asharí Shí'í Muslims, the fifth, named Muhammad-i-Báqir, and the sixth, named Ja'far-i-Sadiq, had earlier indicated that the Greatest Name of God could be found in either this prayer or Du'ay-i-Umm-i-Davud.

The Báb, in the Bayán-i-fársí, revealed a new calendar and new greetings for men and women. The name of the first day of every month was to be "Bahá'" and the name of the first month was to be "Bahá'" and one of the greetings of women believers was to be "Alláh'u'Abha'". The greatest festival of the year was to be the first day of the first month, and this was to fall on the spring equinox, corresponding to the Persian holiday Naw-Rúz. Hence, according to the Báb's new calendar, the greatest day of the year, what he called the Day of God, and which he associated with "Him Whom God shall manifest" (his promised Prophetic successor) was called "Bahá'-Bahá'", for it was the day Bahá' of the month Bahá'. Mírzá Husayn 'Alí was known among the Bábís, from the Badasht conference onwards, as "Bahá'" or "Jinab-i-Bahá'". Subsequently, he came to be called "Bahá'u'lláh," which name has become the standard manner of referring to him, in all languages. His eldest son and appointed successor, 'Abbas Effendi, is best known by the name he assumed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Servant of Bahá') in order to affirm his inferior station and servitude to the Manifestation of the Greatest Name. This name which Mírzá Husayn 'Alí assumed is of great consequence for all students of his claims.

The Torah and other books of the Tanakh contain many references to "Kavod Elohei," the "Glory of God." Dr. Solomon Mandelkern's Concordance¹⁶⁴ defines the Biblical Hebrew word "Kavod" with the Latin words "honor, gloria, magnificentia, splendor, maiestas" and usually this Hebrew word has been translated as "Glory" in English translations of the Bible. In the book of Exodus, the Prophet Moses has a conversation with the Lord God, which speaks directly to the heart of this subject and is therefore pertinent of a full citation here:

Exo 33:12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 33:13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 33:14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 33:15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 33:16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. 33:18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory [Kavod]. 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. 33:21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: 33:22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory [Kavod] passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: 33:23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Now before we investigate the meaning of [Kavod] in the Tanakh, let us remember that one of the prophecies deemed fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh and cited by Him in some of His Tablets is the following, from Isaiah:

Isa 2:10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory [Kavod] of his majesty.

Why would the Prophet Moses ask the Lord God for the privilege of seeing His "Kavod" if He has seen it before? He is evidently asking the Lord God for something new and wonderful and rare. And yet, the Lord God had already appeared in His "Kavod" to Moses, and to the children of Israel, as reported in earlier chapters of this narrative:

Exo 16:7: And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory [Kavod] of the Lord...

Exo 16:10: And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory [Kavod] of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

In fact, even earlier than this sequence, the Lord God spoke with Moses for the first time, at Horeb, the mountain of the Lord, from the midst of a Burning Bush. The account in Exodus reads as follows:

Exo 3:2: And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush...

Exo 3:4: And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses...

The fire of God's presence is reiterated in another passage, which describes His appearance on Mount Sinai:

Exo 19:17: And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 19:18: And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Is this fire of God's presence the same as His "Kavod"? In a later sequence, the "Kavod" of God makes an appearance on mount Sinai:

Exo 24:15: And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 24:16: And the glory [Kavod] of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the

cloud. 24:17: And the sight of the glory [Kavod] of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

In the book of Deuteronomy (Devarim), and towards the close of the journey to the promised land, Moses recalls the words of the Lord God to Him and to the Israelites, and refers to the appearance of the Lord God in the midst of the fire:

Deu 4:15: Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: 4:36: Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee: and upon earth He showed thee His great fire; and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire.

Now, to make the connection with the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, in the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá', revealed in the year 1844, the Báb writes:

WOB:126: I am the Mystic Fane which the Hand of Omnipotence hath reared. I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit within its niche and caused to shine with deathless splendour. I am the Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai in the gladsome Spot, and lay concealed in the midst of the Burning Bush.

In Lawh-i-Ibn-i-Dh'ib, Bahá'u'lláh recalls a prophecy of the Imam 'Alí with regard to the manifestation of the Promised One:

ESW:42: The Commander of the Faithful (Imam 'Alí)--peace be upon him--moreover, saith in the Khutbiy-i-Tutunjiyyih: 'Anticipate ye the Revelation of Him Who conversed with Moses on Sinai.

In the Suratu'l-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh addresses Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, with this stupendous proclamation:

ESW:47: Give ear, O King, unto the Voice that calleth from the Fire which burneth in this verdant Tree, on this Sinai which hath been raised above the hallowed and snow-white Spot, beyond the Everlasting City: 'Verily, there is none other God but Me, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful!'

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, has written the following words about the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, related also to the Burning Bush:

“The Báb, the Exalted One, is the Morn of Truth, the splendor of Whose light shineth throughout all regions. He is also the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abha Luminary. The Blessed Beauty [Bahá’u’lláh] is the One promised by the sacred books of the past, the revelation of the Source of light that shone upon Mount Sinai, Whose fire glowed in the midst of the Burning Bush.” (WOB:127)

Immediately after retelling the story of the revelation of God to Moses from the midst of the Burning Bush, quoting a passage on this topic from the Qur’án¹⁶⁵, in “Epistle to the Son of the Wolf” Bahá’u’lláh explains the true meaning of this fire and this Bush:

ESW:118: In all the Divine Books the promise of the Divine Presence hath been explicitly recorded. By this Presence is meant the Presence of Him Who is the Dayspring of the signs, and the Dawning-Place of the clear tokens, and the Manifestation of the Excellent Names, and the Source of the attributes, of the true God, exalted be His glory. God in His Essence and in His own Self hath ever been unseen, inaccessible, and unknowable. By Presence, therefore, is meant the Presence of the One Who is His Viceregent amongst men.

This explanation of the Presence of God recalls the first-cited verses from the book of Exodus:

Exo 33:14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 33:15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

"Kavod Elohei" does not simply reside either in a Bush, or on a mountain top, or in a tabernacle and then in the Temple. He is found manifested in many of the Prophetic writings, in Tehillim (Psalms), in Isaiah, in Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

Psa 24:7: Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory [Kavod] shall come in. 24:8: Who is this King of glory [Kavod]? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. 24:9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors. 4:10 Who is this

King of glory [Kavod]? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory [Kavod].

Shoghi Effendi has written in "God Passes By" that Bahá'u'lláh is referred to in this Psalm:

"Of Him David had sung in his Psalms, acclaiming Him as the 'Lord of Hosts' and the 'King of Glory.'" (GPB:95)

There are many references to "Kavod Elohei" in the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and some we know to have a relationship, with Bahá'u'lláh:

Isa 35:1: The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. 35:2: It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the Kavod of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the Hadar of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the Kavod of the Lord, and the Hadar of our God.

This passage is cited in full in Bahá'u'lláh's "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf", and followed by these lines, which clearly imply that the verses of Isaiah are fulfilled in his revelation:

ESW:146: These passages stand in need of no commentary. They are shining and manifest as the sun, and glowing and luminous as light itself. Every fair-minded person is led, by the fragrance of these words, unto the garden of understanding, and attaineth unto that from which most men are veiled and debarred.

This was a mystery to me until I examined the original Arabic quotes from the Bible in the otherwise Persian original text of "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf." Lo, and behold! The Arabic cited refers to the **Bahá'** of Carmel and Sharon and the **Bahá'** of our God! I would have to agree with Bahá'u'lláh that "these passages stand in need of no commentary"!

We may be accustomed to thinking of Kavod Elohei as either a symbolic figure, a metaphor for God's presence or a literal, physical manifestation of that presence, in fire and light, in glory and splendor, in majesty and beauty. Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that both interpretations are wrong inasmuch as votaries of both of these theories have failed to recognize the truth; on the other hand, His explanation of Kavod Elohei satisfies both the symbolists and the literalists, inasmuch as He proclaims that

Kavod Elohei is symbolically represented in His Prophethood and in His revelation, and also literally manifested in His name and in His divine personality. It is this capacity to confuse small minds and to excite flexible thinkers that particularly characterizes Bahá'u'lláh, whether for the believer or the skeptic. The reader will have to reach his own conclusion as to whether this name of God, Kavod, and in the Arabic language, **Bahá'**, is the Greatest Name of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote a Tablet in which he sets forth this proof of Prophet in the case of Bahá'u'lláh:

“And among His signs [ayatih] are His splendours [anwarhi], rising [al-mashriqih] above the horizon of oneness [min afaq al-tawhid, His lights [ish'atahi] streaming out [as-salTa'ih] from the dayspring of might [min al-matala' al-majid]...” (SWAB:15)¹⁶⁶

In "Some Answered Questions," ‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers to Bahá'u'lláh as "this great Light¹⁶⁷ and "the evident Light".¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the Most Great Name (Ism-i-A'zam), "Bahá'" or "Abha" in its superlative form, is rendered as "light, radiance, brilliancy" as well as "splendor, glory' beauty". But there is yet a more tangible sign of this proof in Bahá'u'lláh, and for a report in confirmation of this we go to the testimony of Aqa Siyyid Isma'il-i-Zavari'i, known as Dhabih, who described this meeting with Bahá'u'lláh to Muhammad Zarandi, Nabil-i-A'zam:

“What I have seen cannot be described. After I asked Him for spiritual sustenance, and He said that it had been granted to me, door after door opened upon my heart, and my soul became acquainted with thoughts not of this world. One night, in His biruni, His Blessed Person asked for a candle to peruse a paper, and I, as usual lost in wonderment at my own condition, suddenly thought: 'Is it possible that that visage, the sight of which the Chosen Ones and the Messengers of God had longed to behold, could be unveiled in a human temple?' and as soon as this thought passed through my mind, His blessed voice called out to me: 'Aqa Siyyid Isma'il, look!' and when I gazed at His blessed face, I saw that which no word can ever describe. All that I can say is this: it seemed as if a hundred thousand seas, vast and sunlit, billowed upon that Blessed Face. What happened then, I do not know. My last word to you is this: never ask for anything like this and be contented with what is given unto you, and always say, 'O God! Allow it all to end well with us!--and pray for me that my own end shall be well.'”¹⁶⁹

It is essential that students of the proofs of Prophethood recognize that the divine "glory" is not manifest in one Prophet to the exclusion of others. No matter how much we may esteem Moses or Jesus, Muhammad or Krishna, Zoroaster or Buddha, the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh, we would fail to understand this proof if we were to regard any one of these Prophets of God as the only manifestation of divine "glory"; likewise, if we allege that any one of the Prophets of God is deprived of this attribute, we have failed to understand. This, then, is one of the proofs of every Prophet of God. If it is true of one Prophet, then of all the Prophets.

THIRTY-FOURTH PROOF
TESTING OF THE BELIEVERS IN EVERY
DISPENSATION

In many verses of the "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh indicates that those who claim to believe in God and in His Prophets are tested in every Dispensation, and hence it appears that this testing is, in itself, a proof of authentic Prophethood. He explains that there are two kinds of language employed in the holy Scriptures, and that the symbolic language is one of the means whereby the believers are tested, whereby their faith in God and His Prophets is found to be true or false, depending upon their understanding of the symbolic terms, and their fulfillment in the appearance of the new Prophet of God:

KI:254-255: It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a twofold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled; that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed. Thus hath Sadiq, son of Muhammad, spoken: "God verily will test them and sift them." This is the divine standard, this is the Touchstone of God, wherewith He proveth His servants. None apprehendeth the meaning of these utterances except them whose hearts are assured, whose souls have found favour with God, and whose minds are detached from all else but Him. In such utterances, the literal meaning, as generally understood by the people, is not what hath been intended. Thus it is recorded: "Every knowledge hath seventy meanings, of which one only is known amongst the people. And when the Qá'im shall arise, He shall reveal unto men all that which remaineth." He also saith: "We speak one word, and by it we intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these meanings we can explain."

Bahá'u'lláh has based this exposition upon Súrat al-Imrán (3:7), in which it is revealed that there are two kinds of verses, *muhkamatum* and *mutashabihatun*, and that it is the latter which tests the hearts of men. He cites one of the traditions of Muhammad al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam, a male descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. The principle of this proof, which Bahá'u'lláh here articulates as "This is the divine standard, this is the Touchstone of God, wherewith He proveth His

servants" is referred to in various other verses of "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:49: Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books.

KI:52-53: Yea, such things as throw consternation into the hearts of all men come to pass only that each soul may be tested by the touchstone of God, that the true may be known and distinguished from the false. Thus hath He revealed after the breach amongst the people: "We did not appoint that which Thou wouldst have to be the Qiblih, but that We might know him who followeth the Apostle from him who turneth on his heels."¹⁷⁰ "Affrighted asses fleeing from a lion."¹⁷¹

Were you to ponder, but for a while, these utterances in your heart, you would surely find the portals of understanding unlocked before your face, and would behold all knowledge and the mysteries thereof unveiled before your eyes. Such things take place only that the souls of men may develop and be delivered from the prison-cage of self and desire. Otherwise, that ideal King hath, throughout eternity, been in His Essence independent of the comprehension of all beings, and will continue, for ever, in His own Being to be exalted above the adoration of every soul. A single breeze of His affluence doth suffice to adorn all mankind with the robe of wealth; and one drop out of the ocean of His bountiful grace is enough to confer upon all beings the glory of everlasting life. But inasmuch as the divine Purpose hath decreed that the true should be known from the false, and the sun from the shadow, He hath, therefore, in every season sent down upon mankind the showers of tests from His realm of glory.

One example of this test in action, the literal rather than symbolic understanding which most Muslims have of the title, "Seal of the Prophets" given to Muhammad in the Qur'án¹⁷², which literal understanding has prevented them from recognizing the Báb:

KI:161-163: Notwithstanding the obviousness of this theme,

in the eyes of those that have quaffed the wine of knowledge and certitude, yet how many are those who, through failure to understand its meaning, have allowed the term "Seal of the Prophets" to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties! Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am all the Prophets?" Hath He not said as We have already mentioned: "I am Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus?" Why should Muhammad, that immortal Beauty, Who hath said: "I am the first Adam" be incapable of saying also: "I am the last Adam"? For even as He regarded Himself to be the "First of the Prophets" -- that is Adam -- in like manner, the "Seal of the Prophets" is also applicable unto that Divine Beauty. It is admittedly obvious that being the "First of the Prophets," He likewise is their "Seal."

The mystery of this theme hath, in this Dispensation, been a sore test unto all mankind. Behold, how many are those who, clinging unto these words, have disbelieved Him Who is their true Revealer. What, We ask, could this people presume the terms "first" and "last" -- when referring to God -- glorified be His Name! -- to mean? If they maintain that these terms bear reference to this material universe, how could it be possible, when the visible order of things is still manifestly existing? Nay, in this instance, by "first" is meant no other than the "last" and by "last" no other than the "first."

Bahá'u'lláh affirms that God can compel all of humanity to embrace His Cause ("a single breeze...one drop..."), but that the purpose of God is to test the souls of men, and that this is the pattern in every Dispensation. He further indicates that if certain of the symbolic verses to be fulfilled in the literal sense which many believers expect to happen, this would so overwhelm the consciousness of men that they would be unable either to accept or reject the new Prophet of God; thereby God's purpose would be frustrated:

KI:80-81: They have even failed to perceive that were the signs of the Manifestation of God in every age to appear in the visible realm in accordance with the text of established traditions, none could possibly deny or turn away, nor would the blessed be distinguished from the miserable, and the transgressor from the God-fearing. Judge fairly: Were the

prophecies recorded in the Gospel to be literally fulfilled; were Jesus, Son of Mary, accompanied by angels, to descend from the visible heaven upon the clouds; who would dare to disbelieve, who would dare to reject the truth, and wax disdainful? Nay, such consternation would immediately seize all the dwellers of the earth that no soul would feel able to utter a word, much less to reject or accept the truth. It was owing to their misunderstanding of these truths that many a Christian divine hath objected to Muhammad, and voiced his protest in such words: "If Thou art in truth the promised Prophet, why then art Thou not accompanied by those angels our sacred Books foretold, and which must needs descend with the promised Beauty to assist Him in His Revelation and act as warners unto His people?"

He also indicates that there is a way for each soul to pass this test, to discover the true meaning of the symbolic verses of Scripture:

KI:68-69: Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbolic terms revealed by the all-embracing Word of God made manifest in every Dispensation, and wouldst discover the mysteries of divine knowledge. Not, however, until thou consumest with the flame of utter detachment those veils of idle learning, that are current amongst men, canst thou behold the resplendent morn of true knowledge.

Have the followers of Bahá'u'lláh been tested in this day and age? Anyone who follows current events in the news has come across references to the persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran and in Egypt. What is not well known are the gravity and range of their sufferings and losses. Over the course of the last century, tens and perhaps even hundreds of thousands of Bahá'ís have lost their properties, their savings, their investments, their precious heirlooms, everything they have accumulated by inheritance and hard work, to the confiscatory tentacles of hostile governments, clerics and vigilantes. While they have suffered proscriptions and restrictions in many lands apart from Iran and Egypt, their existence has been most precarious in these two nation-states. In hundreds of documented cases, and probably thousands of undocumented ones, Bahá'ís have been imprisoned, tortured and killed...for one reason, and one reason only...their faith in Bahá'u'lláh. In 1903 the Bahá'ís of Yazd came under attack, in 1955 the Bahá'ís of Shiraz and elsewhere in Iran were targeted, and since

1979 the persecutions have been without respite:

“Amnesty International¹⁷³ and others report that 202 Bahá'ís have been killed since the Islamic Revolution, with many more imprisoned, expelled from schools and workplaces, denied various benefits or denied registration for their marriages.¹⁷⁴ Additionally, several Bahá'í holy sites were destroyed in the revolution's aftermath, including the house of the Báb in Shiraz, the house of Bahá'u'lláh at Takur (in Mazindaran), and the house of Muhammad-Ali Barfurushi (Quddus) in Tihran.”

Among those killed by the Islamic government of Iran were these young women¹⁷⁵:

“On the night of Saturday, June 18th, 1983, they were driven to a polo field on the edge of Shiraz where gallows had been set up. The youngest was Mona Mahmudnizhad, 17. Her father had been hanged some months earlier for his beliefs. At the execution site she asked to die last so that she could pray for the other women. Before she was hanged she kissed the noose and recited a prayer. Roya Ishraqi, 23, a promising veterinary student, was hanged with her mother, Izzad Ishraqi, 50. Akhtar Sabit, 20, was a graduate nurse who had taught children's religious classes. Mahshid Nirumand, 28, was a physics graduate. She had remained resolute in prison, sharing her food with other prisoners and encouraging them to remain steadfast. Shirin Dalvand was a sociology graduate and an expert in the Bahá'í faith. Under torture she was asked whether she would give up her religion. She replied: “I will hold to my faith until my death. I hope that divine mercy will enable me to remain firm until the last breath of my life.” Tahirih Siyaushi, 32, a nurse, was a member of the local spiritual assembly of Shiraz. Her husband had been hanged two days earlier. She cared for the other prisoners while they were in custody. Simin Sabiri, 20, and Zarrin Muqimi, 28, were both students of Bahá'í. The oldest of the 10 women, Mrs. Nosrat Yalda'i, owned a house regarded as the headquarters of the Bahá'í in Shiraz. She was viciously whipped while in prison and her wounds were still visible after her hanging. Her husband and her son had also been executed.”

This is one kind of test.

Many Bahá'ís resident in Iran have -- encouraged by the principled Bahá'í endorsement of education and of professions that are of service both to nation and to humanity -- become counselors to members of government, and have accumulated considerable fortunes in business,

engineering, medicine and other lucrative employments. Inasmuch as they are already regarded with disdain and antipathy by the masses of their compatriots, this ascent to high position and high regard in prestigious circles of Iranian society engendered envy and suspicion, in the always antagonistic Imami Shi'i clerical establishment. This resulted in tragic and reoccurring pogroms that targeted prominent Bahá'ís, especially the leadership of the community. These attacks have occurred with the full knowledge and approval of the Supreme Leader Ayatu'llah Khamenei:¹⁷⁶

“Starting in late 1979 the new government of the Islamic Republic of Iran systematically targeted the leadership of the Bahá'í community by focusing on the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) and Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSA). In November 1979, Ali Murad Davudi, the secretary of the NSA, was kidnapped and never seen again.¹⁷⁷ In August 1980 all nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly were arrested while meeting at a private home.¹⁷⁸ ...There has been no further news regarding the nine NSA members since their arrest in 1980, and their fate remains unknown, although there are reports that they were at some point held in Elvin prison; they are now presumed dead. After the disappearance of the NSA members, the Iranian Bahá'í elected a new NSA. On December 13, 1981, eight of the nine new NSA members were arrested by the Iranian authorities, and were executed on December 27, 1981, without trial.

“In addition to the execution of the members of two National Spiritual Assemblies, the members of Local Spiritual Assemblies throughout the country were also killed. Between April 1979 and December 1980 at least eight prominent Tehran Bahá'ís were killed. In September 1980 in Yazd, fifteen Bahá'ís were arrested, and after a graphic trial that was partially televised, seven of the Bahá'ís were executed; the remaining eight were released after four months. In Tabriz in 1979 two prominent Bahá'ís were executed and then in 1981 all nine members of the Tabriz LSA were executed. In Hamadan seven members of the LSA of Hamaden were executed by firing squad, and while the bodies were being prepared for the funeral it was found that six of the men were physically tortured before their death. In Shiraz between 1978 and 1981, the House of the Bab, a Bahá'í holy place, was destroyed, five prominent Bahá'ís were executed, and more than 85 Bahá'ís were arrested for interrogations; then in 1983 sixteen more Bahá'ís were executed.

“On August 29, 1983 the government announced a legal ban on all administrative and community activities of the Bahá'í

community, which required the dissolution of the third National Spiritual Assembly and about 400 Local Spiritual Assemblies. The Bahá'í community complied with the ban, but the former members of the LSAs were routinely harassed, and seven members of the third NSA were eventually arrested and executed.

“...On May 14, 2008, members of an informal body known as the Friends that oversaw the needs of the Bahá'í community in Iran were arrested and taken to Evin prison.¹⁷⁹ Officers from the Ministry of Intelligence in Tehran searched and raided the homes of the six people in the early hours of May 14.¹⁸⁰ The arrest of the six follow the detention of another Bahá'í leader in March,¹⁸¹ who was originally taken to answer questions relating to the burial of a Bahá'í in the Bahá'í cemetery in Mashad.¹⁸² The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center has stated that they are concerned for the safety of the Bahá'ís, and that the recent events are similar to the disappearance of 25 Bahá'í leaders in the early 1980s.¹⁸³ In May [2008] Amnesty International also announced an Action Alert about the arrests.¹⁸⁴ At year's end all seven members of the Bahá'í national leadership and a total of at least 40 Bahá'ís were imprisoned in Iran.¹⁸⁵ On February 17, 2009, Iranian state run news agency, IRNA, reported that the Bahá'í leaders had been officially accused of espionage.¹⁸⁶”

The extermination of community leadership...this is another kind of test. Have the Bahá'ís passed these tests? With flying colors.

THIRTY-FIFTH PROOF
EVERY AGE THE LIGHT IS SEEMINGLY QUENCHED

Bahá'u'lláh points out that in every Age, that is, in every Dispensation

associated with an independent Manifestation of God, it seems that the combined forces of the temporal world positively eclipse the radiance of that new Prophet:

KI:73: You must undoubtedly have been informed of the tribulations, the poverty, the ills, and the degradation that have befallen every Prophet of God and His companions.

KI:126-127: Were the verse 'And verily Our host shall conquer'¹⁸⁷ to be literally interpreted, it is evident that it would in no wise be applicable to the chosen Ones of God and His hosts, inasmuch as Husayn, whose heroism was manifest as the sun, crushed and subjugated, quaffed at last the cup of martyrdom in Karbila, the land of Taff. Similarly, the sacred verse 'Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths: But God hath willed to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it.'¹⁸⁸ Were it to be literally interpreted it would never correspond with the truth. For in every age the light of God hath, to outward seeming, been quenched by the peoples of the earth, and the Lamps of God extinguished by them. How then could the ascendancy of the sovereignty of these Lamps be explained? What could the potency of God's will to 'perfect His light' signify? As hath already been witnessed, so great was the enmity of the infidels, that none of these divine Luminaries ever found a place for shelter, nor tasted of the cup of tranquillity. So heavily were they oppressed, that the least of men inflicted upon these Essences of being whatsoever he listed. These sufferings have been observed and measured by the people. How, therefore, can such people be capable of understanding and expounding these words of God, these verses of everlasting glory?

TB:215: How numerous the oppressors before thee who have arisen to quench the light of God, and how many the impious who murdered and pillaged until the hearts and souls of men groaned by reason of their cruelty? The sun of justice hath been obscured, inasmuch as the embodiment of tyranny hath been established upon the throne of hatred, and yet the people understand not." (Lawh-i-Burhan)

Bahá'u'lláh does not restrict His references to the sufferings of the Prophets, but the followers of the Prophets, includes the Imam Husayn, the third Imam among the "chosen Ones" and "Lamps of

God":

KI:73: You must have heard how the heads of their followers were sent as presents unto different cities, how grievously they were hindered from that whereunto they were commanded. Each and every one of them fell a prey to the hands of the enemies of His Cause, and had to suffer whatsoever they decreed.

GL:XXIII:56-58: Consider the former generations. Witness how every time the Day Star of Divine bounty hath shed the light of His Revelation upon the world, the people of His Day have arisen against Him, and repudiated His truth. They who were regarded as the leaders of men have invariably striven to hinder their followers from turning unto Him Who is the Ocean of God's limitless bounty.

Behold how the people, as a result of the verdict pronounced by the divines of His age, have cast Abraham, the Friend of God, into fire; how Moses, He Who held converse with the Almighty, was denounced as liar and slanderer. Reflect how Jesus, the Spirit of God, was, notwithstanding His extreme meekness and perfect tender-heartedness, treated by His enemies. So fierce was the opposition which He, the Essence of Being and Lord of the visible and invisible, had to face, that He had nowhere to lay His head. He wandered continually from place to place, deprived of a permanent abode. Ponder that which befell Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, may the life of all else be a sacrifice unto Him. How severe the afflictions which the leaders of the Jewish people and of the idol-worshippers caused to rain down upon Him, Who is the sovereign Lord of all, in consequence of His proclamation of the unity of God and of the truth of His Message! By the righteousness of My Cause! My Pen groaneth, and all created things weep with a great weeping, as a result of the woes He suffered at the hands of them that have broken the Covenant of God, violated His Testament, rejected His proofs, and disputed His signs. Thus recount We unto thee the tale of that which happened in days past, haply thou mayest comprehend.

Thou hast known how grievously the Prophets of God, His Messengers and Chosen Ones, have been afflicted. At no time, in no Dispensation, have the Prophets of God escaped the blasphemy of their enemies, the cruelty of their

oppressors, the denunciation of the learned of their age, who appeared in the guise of uprightness and piety. Day and night they passed through such agonies as none can ever measure, except the knowledge of the one true God, exalted be His glory.

Consider this Wronged One. Though the clearest proofs attest the truth of His Cause; though the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language, hath made have been fulfilled; though, in spite of His not been accounted among the learned, His being unschooled and inexperienced in the disputations current among the divines, He hath rained upon men the showers of His manifold and Divinely-inspired knowledge; yet, behold how this generation hath rejected His authority, and rebelled against Him! He hath, during the greater part of His life, been sore-tried in the clutches of His enemies. His sufferings have now reached their culmination in this afflicted Prison, unto which His oppressors have so unjustly thrown Him.

In this passage, Bahá'u'lláh refers to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and Himself as examples of "the Prophets of God", not one of Whom has "escaped the blasphemy of their enemies, the cruelty of their oppressors, the denunciation of the learned of their age...such agonies as none can ever measure, except the knowledge of the one true God , exalted be His glory."

GL:XLVII:101-102: O Jews! If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He hath once more, in My person, been made manifest unto you. Deal with Me as ye wish, for I have vowed to lay down My life in the path of God. I will fear no one, though the powers of earth and heaven be leagued against Me. Followers of the Gospel! If ye cherish the desire to slay Muhammad, the Apostle of God, seize Me and put an end to My life, for I am He, and My Self is His Self. Do unto Me as you like, for the deepest longing of Mine heart is to attain the presence of My Best-Beloved in His Kingdom of Glory. Such is the Divine decree, if ye know it. Followers of Muhammad! If it be your wish to riddle with your shafts the breast of Him Who hath caused His Book the Bayán to be sent down unto you, lay hands on Me and persecute Me, for I am His Well-Beloved, the revelation of His own Self, though My name be not His name. I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and

am invested by God with invincible sovereignty. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. I, verily, anticipate from you the treatment ye have accorded unto Him that came before Me. To this all things, verily, witness, if ye be of those who hearken. O people of the Bayán! If ye have resolved to shed the blood of Him Whose coming the Báb hath proclaimed, Whose advent Muhammad hath prophesied, and Whose Revelation Jesus Christ Himself hath announced, behold Me standing, ready and defenseless, before you. Deal with Me after your own desires.

In this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh, personally affirming the station of "essential unity" of the "Manifestations of God"¹⁸⁹, "the standpoint of their oneness and sublime detachment"¹⁹⁰, specifically identifies Himself as one and the same as Jesus, as Muhammad, as the Báb, and as Him Whom God shall manifest.

WOB:118-119: Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God, for the wondrous revelations of Thine inscrutable decree and the manifold woes and trials Thou hast destined for myself. At one time Thou didst deliver me into the hands of Nimrod [1]; at another Thou hast allowed Pharaoh's rod to persecute me [2]. Thou alone canst estimate, through Thine all-encompassing knowledge and the operation of Thy Will, the incalculable afflictions I have suffered at their hands. Again Thou didst cast me into the prison-cell of the ungodly for no reason except that I was moved to whisper into the ears of the well-favored denizens of Thy kingdom an intimation of the vision with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired me and revealed to me its meaning through the potency of Thy might [3]. And again Thou didst decree that I be beheaded by the sword of the infidel [4]. Again I was crucified for having unveiled to men's eyes the hidden gems of Thy glorious unity, for having revealed to them the wondrous signs of Thy sovereign and everlasting power [5]. How bitter the humiliations heaped upon me, in a subsequent age, on the plain of Karbila [6]! How lonely did I feel amidst Thy people; to what state of helplessness I was reduced in that land! Unsatisfied with such indignities, my persecutors decapitated me and carrying aloft my head from land to land paraded it before the gaze of the unbelieving multitude and deposited it on the seats of the perverse and faithless. In a later age I was suspended and my breast was made the target

to the darts of the malicious cruelty of my foes [7]. My limbs were riddled with bullets and my body was torn asunder. Finally, behold how in this day my treacherous enemies have leagued themselves against me, and are continually plotting to instill the venom of hate and malice into the souls of Thy servants [8]. With all their might they are scheming to accomplish their purpose...Grievous as is my plight, O God, my Well-beloved, I render thanks unto Thee, and my spirit is grateful for whatsoever hath befallen me in the path of Thy good-pleasure. I am well-pleased with that which Thou didst ordain for me, and welcome, however calamitous, the pains and sorrows I am made to suffer.

Again, in this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself as the One persecuted in the past in the Person of Abraham [1], Moses [2], Joseph [3], John the Baptist [4], Jesus [5], the Imam Husayn [6], and the Báb [7], as well as indicating that He is made to suffer the most grievous afflictions in this Age with the name Bahá'u'lláh [8]. The identification of these persons is confirmed in a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi by his secretary¹⁹¹:

“The names of those cited in Bahá'u'lláh's Prayer in the Dispensation¹⁹² are quite correct as you gave them (Abraham, Moses, Joseph, John the Baptist, Christ, Muhammad, Imam Husayn, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh)...In the prayer mentioned above, Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself with Imam Husayn. This does not make him a Prophet, but his position was very unique, and we know Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the 'return' of the Imam Husayn. He, in other words, identifies His Spirit with these Holy Souls gone before, that does not, of course, make Him any way their re-incarnation. Nor does it mean all of them were Prophets.”

There is no doubt that Bahá'u'lláh's opponents believed that by exiling Him to Baghdád, and then further to Adrianople, and certainly for sure to 'Akká, that He could not possibly assure the continuation let alone the expansion of His movement. Weren't these opponents also confident that the persistent mistreatment of His followers would dissuade most of them to abandon Him and return to Islám? It must have seemed to them that they won the day and that He was utterly routed. Please refer to the Twelfth Proof.

THIRTY-SIXTH PROOF
PEOPLE KNOWN BY THEIR COUNTENANCE

In "Kitáb-i-Íqán" Bahá'u'lláh refers to another sign of each Dispensation, which might consequently serve as a proof of

Prophethood when fulfilled:

KI:173-174: And it came to pass that on a certain day a needy man came to visit this Soul, craving for the ocean of His knowledge...We then asked him saying: 'Hast thou not read the Qur'án, and art thou not aware of this blessed verse: 'On that day shall neither man nor spirit be asked of his Sin?'¹⁹³ Dost thou not realize that by 'asking is not meant asking by tongue or speech, even as the verse itself doth indicate and prove it?' For afterward it is said: 'By their countenance shall the sinners be known, and they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet.'¹⁹⁴

Thus the peoples of the world are judged by their countenance. By it, their misbelief, their faith, and their iniquity are all made manifest. Even as it is evident in this day how the people of error are, by their countenance, known and distinguished from the followers of divine Guidance.

While it may not be apparent from the literal wording of this text, that Bahá'u'lláh associates this sign with every Dispensation, when one takes into account the references to this theme in the Qur'án (one of which is cited here by Bahá'u'lláh), in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, it becomes clear that this sign is universal. Some selections from these Scriptures are cited below:

Exo 13:9: And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth...

Exo 13:16: And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes...

Deu 6:5: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6:6: And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart...6:8: And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

Deu 11:18: Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

The Torah speaks here of the sign upon the forehead, between the eyes, of the children of God, denoting their obedience to His law.

Likewise, some of the other Hebrew Prophets speak of the same principle, albeit in a broader context:

Proverbs 1:7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction. 1:8: My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: 1:9: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Eze 9:3: And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; 9:4: And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 9:5: And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 9:6: Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark...

The frontlets between the eyes of the Israelites are not sufficient any longer to redeem them from the destruction of disbelief. Ezekiel indicates nonetheless that it is a mark upon the forehead which distinguishes the righteous from the unrighteous, those who are condemned to death from those who are saved for life. In the Christian Scriptures are found verses which point to the mark of the righteous and also the mark of the unrighteous. In this excerpt from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus counsels His followers to put on the "phylacteries" which are the traditional response to the Torah's commandment to wear the Word of God as "frontlets" between the eyes:

Mat 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 23:2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of

their garments, 23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 23:9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 23:10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

The most copious source of verses on the importance of the human countenance is the Book of Revelation. The first such reference is to those who are "sealed" with the "seal of the living God...in their foreheads":

Rev 7:2: And I saw another angel descending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 7:3: Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Rev 9:4: And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Rev 14:1: And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand¹⁹⁵, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

These verses do not seem to have a parallel in the Jewish Scriptures, although the association of the "chosen people"¹⁹⁶ with the tribes of Israel, and with the number of those tribes –twelve -- multiplied by itself and then by one thousand certainly has roots in the Torah, and in other books of the Tanakh.

St. John also relates a vision of another sort of mark, one which identifies those who are unrighteous:

Rev 13:11: And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon...

Rev 13:15: And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 13:16: And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 13:17: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Rev 14:9: And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 14:10: The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 14:11: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

In another verse, the Apocalypse specifically distinguished the righteous from those who have received the mark of the beast upon their foreheads:

Rev 20:4: And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The last reference to this theme in the Apocalypse is to the righteous and to their reward from God for remaining steadfast.

In the course of its description of the heavenly Jerusalem which will be established upon earth, the Book of Revelation affirms:

Rev 22:3: And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 22:4: And they shall see his face; and his name shall

be in their foreheads.

Can the Bahá'ís be recognized by their countenances, by their faces? Can the name of Bahá'u'lláh be discerned on their foreheads? If we are looking for theology or history to explain this mystery to us, we may be out of luck. But it happens that we have a better ally altogether, in science:¹⁹⁷

“A series of experiments by Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov reveal that all it takes is a tenth of a second to form an impression of a stranger from their face, and that longer exposures don't significantly alter those impressions (although they might boost your confidence in your judgments). Their research is presented in their article "First Impressions," in the July¹⁹⁸ issue of Psychological Science.

“Like it or not, judgments based on facial appearance play a powerful role in how we treat others, and how we get treated. Psychologists have long known that attractive people get better outcomes in practically all walks of life. People with "mature" faces receive more severe judicial outcomes than "baby-faced" people. And having a face that looks competent (as opposed to trustworthy or likeable) may matter a lot in whether a person gets elected to public office.”

Whether we bear the mark of the Beast or the mark of the Lord, the mark is upon our foreheads, and we read this mark instantly, whether we know it or not:

Isa 6:9: Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Mat 13:14: By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Mar 8:18: Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

John 12:40: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

THIRTY-SEVENTH PROOF
LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD

In every Age and Dispensation, the learned in religion and their followers interpret the Scriptures in a literal fashion, and this results in

them failing to recognize the new Prophet of God. Bahá'u'lláh refers to this sign of the new Prophetic Dispensation in these words, first in reference to the Jews, then to Christians, subsequently to Muslims, and finally to Bábís:

KI:17-19: And when the days of Moses were ended, and the light of Jesus, shining forth from the dayspring of the Spirit, encompassed the world, all the people of Israel arose in protest against Him. They clamoured that He Whose advent the Bible had foretold must needs promulgate and fulfil the laws of Moses, whereas this youthful Nazarene, who laid claim to the station of the divine Messiah, had annulled the law of divorce and of the sabbath day--the most weighty of all the laws of Moses. Moreover, what of the signs of the Manifestation yet to come? These people of Israel are even unto the present day still expecting that Manifestation which the Bible hath foretold! How Manifestations of Holiness, how many Revealers of the light everlasting, have appeared since the time of Moses, and yet Israel, wrapt in the densest veils of satanic fancy and false imaginings, is still expecting that the idol of her own handiwork will appear with such signs as she herself hath conceived! Thus hath God laid hold on them for their sins, hath extinguished in them the spirit of faith, and tormented them with the flames of the nethermost fire. And this for no other reason except that Israel refused to apprehend the meaning of such words as have been revealed in the Bible concerning the signs of the coming Revelation. As she never grasped their true significance, and, to outward seeming, such events never came to pass, she, therefore, remained deprived of recognizing the beauty of Jesus and of beholding the face of God. And they still await His coming! From time immemorial even unto this day, all the kindreds and peoples of the earth have clung to such fanciful and unseemly thoughts, and thus have deprived themselves of the clear waters streaming from the springs of purity and holiness.

KI:80-83: As the adherents of Jesus have never understood the hidden meaning of these words, and as the signs which they are the leaders of their Faith have expected have failed to appear, they therefore refused to acknowledge, even until now, the truth of those Manifestations of Holiness that have since the days of Jesus been made manifest. They have thus deprived themselves of the outpourings of God's

holy grace, and of the wonders of His divine utterance. Such is their low estate in this, the Day of Resurrection! They have even failed to perceive that were the signs of the Manifestation of God to appear in every age in the visible realm in accordance with the text of established traditions, none could possibly deny or turn away, nor would the blessed be distinguished from the miserable, and the transgressor from the God-fearing. Judge fairly: Were the prophecies recorded in the Gospel to be literally fulfilled; were Jesus, Son of Mary, accompanied by angels, to descend from the visible heaven upon the clouds; who would dare to disbelieve, who would dare to reject the truth, and wax disdainful? Nay, such consternation would immediately seize all the dwellers of the earth that no soul would feel able to utter a word, much less to reject or accept the truth. It was owing to their misunderstanding of these truths that many a Christian divine hath objected to Muhammad, and voiced his protest in such words: 'If Thou art in truth the promised Prophet, why then art Thou not accompanied by those angels our sacred Books foretold, and which must needs descend with the promised Beauty to assist Him in His Revelation and act as warners unto His people?' Even as the All-Glorious hath recorded their statement: 'Why hath not an angel been sent down to him, so that he should have a warner with Him?'¹⁹⁹ Such objections and differences have persisted in every age and century. The people have always busied themselves with such specious discourses, vainly protesting: 'Wherefore hath not this or that sign appeared?' Such ills befell them only because they have clung to the ways of the divines of the age in which they lived, and blindly imitated them in accepting or denying these Essences of Detachment, these holy and divine Beings. These leaders, owing to their immersion in selfish desires, and their pursuit of transitory and sordid things, have regarded these divine Luminaries as being opposed to the standards of their knowledge and understanding, and the opponents of their ways and judgments. As they have literally interpreted the Word of God, and the sayings and traditions of the Letters of Unity, and expounded them according to their deficient understanding, they have therefore deprived themselves and all their people of the bountiful showers of the grace and mercies of God. And yet they bear witness to this well-known tradition: 'Verily Our Word is abstruse, bewilderingly abstruse.' In another instance, it is said: 'Our

Cause is sorely trying, highly perplexing; none can bear it except a favorite of heaven, or an inspired Prophet, or he whose faith God hath tested.' These leaders of religion admit that none of these three conditions is applicable to them. The first two conditions are manifestly beyond their reach; as to the third, it is evident that at no time have they been proof against those tests that have been sent by God, and that when the divine Touchstone appeared, they have shown themselves to be naught but dross.

KI:213-215: Even as thou dost witness how the people of the Qur'án, like unto the people of old, have allowed the words 'Seal of the Prophets' to veil their eyes. And yet, they themselves testify to this verse: 'None knoweth the interpretation thereof but God and they that are well-grounded in knowledge.'²⁰⁰ And when He Who is well-grounded in all knowledge, He Who is the Mother, the Soul, the Secret, and the Essence thereof, revealeth that which is the least contrary to their desire, they bitterly oppose Him and shamelessly deny Him. These thou hast already heard and witnessed. Such deeds and words have been solely instigated by leaders of religion, they that worship no God but their own desire, who bear allegiance to naught but gold, who are wrapt in the densest veils of learning, and who, enmeshed by its obscurities, are lost in the wilds of error. Even as the Lord of being hath explicitly declared: 'What thinkest thou? He who hath made a God of his passions, and whom God causeth to err through a knowledge, and whose ears and whose heart He hath sealed up, and over whose sight He hath cast a veil -- who, after his rejection by God, shall guide such a one? Will ye not then be warned?'²⁰¹ Although the outward meaning of 'Whom God causeth to err through a knowledge' is what hath been revealed, yet to Us it signifieth those divines of the age who have turned away from the Beauty of God, and who, clinging unto their own learning, as fashioned by their own fancies and desires, have denounced God's divine Message and Revelation. 'Say: it is a weighty Message, from which ye turn aside!'²⁰² Likewise, He saith: 'And when Our clear verses are recited to them, they say, "This is merely a man who would fain pervert you from your father's worship." And they say, "This is none other than forget falsehood."²⁰³ Give ear unto God's holy Voice, and heed thou His sweet and immortal melody. Behold how He hath solemnly warned

them that have repudiated the verses of God, and hath disowned them that have denied His holy words.

KI:248: We entreat the learned men of the Bayán not to follow in such ways, not to inflict, at the time of Mustagháth, upon Him Who is the divine Essence, the heavenly Light, the absolute Eternity, the Beginning and End of the Manifestations of the Invisible, that which hath been inflicted in this day. We beg them not to depend upon their intellect, their comprehension and learning, nor to contend with the Revealer of celestial and infinite knowledge.

This theme, of the literal interpretation of Scripture, is discussed by Bahá'u'lláh in "Kitáb-i-Íqán"²⁰⁴; by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in "Some Answered Questions"²⁰⁵, in "Foundations of World Unity"²⁰⁶, and in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace"²⁰⁷ and in "Bahá'í World Faith"²⁰⁸. Shoghi Effendi also wrote regarding the limitations of literal interpretations of Scripture, in letters quoted in "Directives from the Guardian"²⁰⁹, "Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand"²¹⁰, "Dawn of a New Day"²¹¹, "Unfolding Destiny"²¹², "Lights of Divine Guidance"²¹³, and in his book, "God Passes By"²¹⁴. While most of the references in these works critique the literal interpretation of Scriptural verses, particularly by the clergy of every religion, and the obstacle which such interpretations have been, in every Age, to the recognition of the new Prophet of God, this should not be taken as a statement of blanket approval for a metaphorical interpretation of all Scriptural language. As was indicated by Bahá'u'lláh in "Kitáb-i-Íqán"²¹⁵, and in the Surat al-Imran (Qur'án 3:7), there are two kinds of divine verses, and some of them are meant to be interpreted in a literal fashion. Bahá'u'lláh affirmed this to be the case in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas," as follows:

K144²¹⁶: Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor...Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

It is evident, from the language associated with this statement, that the literal interpretation of the divine verses may be a test to the believers and an obstacle to their recognition of the new Prophet of God in yet

another fashion from that which has been described heretofore. If the believers fail to adhere to the literal interpretation of those verses which are mean to be understood according to their "obvious meaning" then that literal interpretation becomes a test of their faith, inasmuch as the one who strays from the authentic literal interpretation is "assuredly a lying impostor" and "is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy". Likewise, if the believer does not adhere to this literal interpretation when intended by God, he will be tempted to consider the claims of Prophetic pretenders who arise "ere the expiration of a full thousand years"--and as most readers will readily recognize, there have been a host of such pretenders who have arisen during the century since the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. If those believers are seduced by such pretenders, they will fail to recognize the station of Bahá'u'lláh, whose divine authority reigns supreme over humankind until the coming of the next Prophet of God. Literal interpretation is a double-edged sword: when it is adhered to when the divine intention is symbolic, and when it is not adhered to when the divine intention is straightforward, in both cases it may result in souls failing to recognize the new Prophet.

As Bahá'u'lláh has not fulfilled the expectations of millions of Jews, Christians, Muslims...their expectations are based upon a literal interpretation of Scriptural verses and denominationally specific elaborations of those interpretations that are so deeply ingrained and so powerfully habitual that they are captives of the imaginations, the conceptions and the emotions of others. Rather than seeing with their own eyes and hearing with their own ears they see through the eyes of others and hear through their ears. Literalism could be described as a disease, an obsession, or as one of the facets of materialism, the religion of the animal. The animal only knows the physical and that is the way things are supposed to be...but the human being was created for something else, to know more than the physical. When we physicalize the spiritual we are reducing reality to the dimensions that the animal can perceive, and denying the existence of those dimensions that are imperceptible to the animal. Bahá'u'lláh challenges every person to break free of literalism and discover the infinite dimensions of the spiritual.

THIRTY-EIGHTH PROOF
OPPRESSION IN THIS DISPENSATION

One of the proofs of the Prophets of God, is that there will come a time when, to employ the words of Krishna in the "Bhagavad-Gita"²¹⁷:

BG:IV:7: Whenever there is a decline of righteousness [dharma] and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata [Arjuna], then I send forth Myself.

This verse is echoed in "Bhagavata"²¹⁸:

BH:IX:24:56: Whenever righteousness [dharma] wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself.

It is at this time that the new Prophet of God becomes manifest in the world of creation. Bahá'u'lláh cites from the Gospel of Matthew in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:24: In the first Gospel according to Matthew it is recorded: And when they asked Jesus concerning the signs of His coming, He said unto them: 'Immediately after the oppression of those days shall the sun be darkened...'

The King James Version gives the following version of this verse:

Mat 24:29: Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened...

Bahá'u'lláh translates this verse from its Arabic version (which He has earlier cited) into Persian as follows:

KI:25: When the oppression and afflictions that are to befall mankind will have come to pass, then shall the sun be withheld from shining...

He then explains this verse some pages later:

KI:29: As to the words--'Immediately after the oppression of those days' -- they refer to the time when men shall become oppressed and afflicted, the time when the lingering traces of the Sun of Truth and the fruit of the Tree of knowledge and wisdom will have vanished from the midst of men, when the reigns of mankind will have fallen into the grasp of the foolish and ignorant, when the portals of divine unity and understanding -- the essential and highest purpose in creation -- will have been closed, when certain knowledge will have given way to idle fancy, and corruption will have usurped the

station of righteousness.

Even as He has affirmed that all of the signs of the return of Jesus cited in the Gospels refer not only to the appearance of Muhammad, but to the advent of all of the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh seems to affirm that this "oppression" takes place prior to the coming of every Prophet of God. He continues His interpretation, relating it to His own time:

KI:29-30: Such a condition as this is witnessed in this day when the reigns of every community have fallen into the grasp of foolish leaders, who lead after their own whims and desire. On their tongue the mention of God hath become an empty name; in their midst His holy Word a dead letter. Such is the sway of their desires, that the lamp of conscience and reason hath been quenched in their hearts, and this although the fingers of divine power have unlocked the portals of the knowledge of God, and the light of divine knowledge and heavenly grace hath illumined and inspired the essence of all created things, in such wise that in each and every thing a door of knowledge hath been opened, and within every atom traces of the sun hath been made manifest...

KI:31-32: What 'oppression' is greater than that which hath been recounted? What 'oppression' is more grievous than that a soul seeking the truth, and wishing to obtain unto the knowledge of God, should know not where to go for it and from whom to seek it? For opinions have sorely differed, and the ways unto the attainment of God have multiplied. This 'oppression' is the essential feature of every Revelation. Unless it cometh to pass, the Sun of Truth will not be made manifest. For the break of the morn of divine guidance must needs follow the darkness of the night of error. For this reason, in all the chronicles and traditions reference hath been made unto these things, namely that iniquity shall cover the surface of the earth and darkness envelop mankind.

The "oppression" of this day is greater than that ever encountered in the past. Which one of us has not been perplexed, "wishing to obtain unto the knowledge of God" but "know not where to go for it and from whom to seek it"? In the digital age, we have not only the familiar traditions of our families, our neighborhoods, even our regions and nations. Just among Christians there are already over

33,000 denominations in 238 countries, and every year there is a net increase of about 300 denominations²¹⁹. All of us, regardless of our religious instruction and proclivity are challenged by the atheism, skepticism and naturalism favored by the champions of all-powerful science and technology. If we search beyond the confines of a specific religious tradition and outside the boundaries of the three heads of the beast of materialism, there are so many choices that we may well be utterly bewildered, and abandon our search altogether. And many of us do just that. I pray this book will lift the “oppression” of its readers.

THIRTY-NINTH PROOF
RETURN OF THE PROPHETS AND CHOSEN ONES

Bahá'u'lláh indicates that the Scriptural language which pertains to spiritual life is not meant to be understood literally, and that this has always been the case, in every Dispensation:

KI:116-117: Nay, by ‘trumpet’ is meant the trumpet-call of Muhammad’s Revelation, which was sounded in the heart of the universe, and by ‘resurrection’ is meant His own rise to proclaim the Cause of God. He bade the erring and wayward arise and speed out of the sepulchres of their bodies, arrayed them with the beauteous robe of faith, and quickened them with the breath of a new and wondrous life.

KI:118-119: Such things have come to pass in the days of every Manifestation of God. Even as Jesus said: ‘Ye must be born again.’²²⁰ Again He saith: ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’²²¹ The purport of these words is that whatsoever in every dispensation is born of the Spirit and is quickened by the breath of the Manifestation of Holiness, he verily is of those that have attained unto ‘life’ and ‘resurrection’ and have entered into the ‘paradise’ of the love of God. And whosoever is not of them, is condemned to ‘death’ and ‘deprivation,’ to the ‘fire’ of unbelief, and to the ‘wrath’ of God. In all the scriptures, the books and chronicles, the sentence of death, of fire, of blindness, of want of understanding and hearing, hath been pronounced against those whose lips have tasted not the ethereal cup of true knowledge, and whose hearts have been deprived of the grace of the holy Spirit in their day. Even as it hath been previously recorded: ‘Hearts have they with which they understand not.’²²²

In another passage of the Gospel it is written: ‘And it came to pass that on a certain day the father of one of the disciples of Jesus had died. That disciple reporting the death of his father unto Jesus, asked for leave to go and bury him. Whereupon Jesus, that Essence of Detachment, answered and said: “Let the dead bury their dead.”’²²³

KI:120-121: In every age and century, the purpose of the Prophets of God and their chosen ones hath been no other than to affirm the spiritual significance of the terms ‘life,’ ‘resurrection,’ and ‘judgment.’...Wert thou to attain to but a dewdrop of the crystal waters of divine knowledge, thou wouldst readily realize that true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit. For the life of the flesh is common

to both men and animals, whereas the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith and partaken of the fruit of certitude. This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality. Even as it hath been said: 'He who is a true believer liveth both in this world and in the world to come.' If by 'life' be meant this earthly life, it is evident that death must needs overtake it.

Bahá'u'lláh has indicated that even as these terms relating to spiritual life in the Scriptures are to be understood symbolically, relating to the life of faith and not to the life of the mortal flesh, likewise He has affirmed that the references to the 'return' of the Prophets and their chosen ones are to be understood in a similar fashion. He begins by demonstrating the absurdity of a literal interpretation of certain Qur'anic verses which refer to this twofold 'return':

KI:148-149: And it came to pass that on a certain day a number of the opponents of that peerless Beauty, those that had strayed far from God's imperishable Sanctuary, scornfully spoke these words unto Muhammad: 'Verily, God hath entered into a covenant with us that we are not to credit an apostle until he present us a sacrifice which fire out of heaven shall devour.'²²⁴ The purport of this verse is that God hath covenanted with them that they should not believe in any messenger unless he work the miracle of Abel and Cain, that is, offer a sacrifice, and the fire from heaven consume it; even as they had heard it recounted in the story of Abel, which story is recorded in the scriptures. To this, Muhammad, answering, said: 'Already have Apostles before me come to you with sure testimonies, and with that of which ye speak. Wherefore slew ye them? Tell me, if ye are men of truth.'²²⁵ And now, be fair; how could those people living in the days of Muhammad have existed, thousands of years before, in the age of Adam or other Prophets? Why should Muhammad, that Essence of truthfulness, have charged the people of His day with the murder of Abel or other Prophets? Thou hast none other alternative except to regard Muhammad as an impostor or a fool -- which God forbid! -- or to maintain that those people of wickedness were the self-same people who in every age opposed and caviled at the Prophets and Messengers of God, till they finally caused them all to suffer martyrdom.

KI:150-152: Likewise, Muhammad, in another verse, uttereth His protest against the people of that age. He saith: "Although they had before prayed for victory over those who believed not, yet when there came unto them, He of Whom they had knowledge, they disbelieved in Him. The curse of God on the infidels!"²²⁶ Reflect how this verse also implieth that the people living in the days of Muhammad were the same people who in the days of the Prophets of old contended and fought in order to promote the Faith, and teach the Cause, of God. And yet, how could the generations living at the time of Jesus and Moses, and those who lived in the days of Muhammad, be regarded as being actually one and the same people? Moreover, those whom they had formerly known were Moses, the Revealer of the Pentateuch, and Jesus, the Author of the Gospel. Notwithstanding, why did Muhammad say: "When He of Whom they had knowledge came unto them" -- that is Jesus or Moses -- "they disbelieved in Him?" Was not Muhammad to outward seeming called by a different name? Did He not come forth out of a different city? Did He not speak a different language, and reveal a different Law? How then can the truth of this verse be established, and its meaning be made clear?

Strive therefore to comprehend the meaning of "return" which hath been so explicitly revealed in the Qur'án itself, and which none hath as yet understood. What sayest thou? If thou sayest that Muhammad was the "return" of the Prophets of old, as is witnessed by this verse, His Companions must likewise be the "return" of the bygone Companions, even as the "return" of the former people is clearly attested by the text of the above-mentioned verses. And if thou deniest this, thou hast surely repudiated the truth of the Qur'án, the surest testimony of God unto men. In like manner, endeavour to grasp the significance of "return," "revelation," and "resurrection," as witnessed in the days of the Manifestations of the divine Essence, that thou mayest behold with thine own eyes the "return" of the holy souls into sanctified and illumined bodies, and mayest wash away the dust of ignorance, and cleanse the darkened self with the waters of mercy flowing from the Source of divine Knowledge; that perchance thou mayest, through the power of God and the light of divine guidance, distinguish the Morn of everlasting splendour from the darksome night of error.

KI:152-153: Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur'án, revealed: 'I am all the Prophets.' Likewise, He saith: 'I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.'

KI:153-154: It is clear and evident to thee that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Cause of God, Who have appeared clothed in divers attire. If thou wilt observe with discriminating eyes, thou wilt behold them all abiding in the same tabernacle, soaring in the same heaven, seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith. Such is the unity of those Essences of being, those Luminaries of infinite and immeasurable splendour. Wherefore, should one of these Manifestations of Holiness proclaim saying: "I am the return of all the Prophets," He verily speaketh the truth. In like manner, in every subsequent Revelation, the return of the former Revelation is a fact, the truth of which is firmly established. Inasmuch as the return of the Prophets of God, as attested by verses and traditions, hath been conclusively demonstrated, the return of their chosen ones also is therefore definitely proven. This return is too manifest in itself to require any evidence or proof.

KI:158-160: O brother, behold how the inner mysteries of "rebirth," of "return," and of "resurrection" have each, through these all-sufficing, these unanswerable, and conclusive utterances, been unveiled and unravelled before thine eyes. God grant that through His gracious and invisible assistance, thou mayest divest thy body and soul of the old garment, and array thyself with the new and imperishable attire. Therefore, those who in every subsequent Dispensation preceded the rest of mankind in embracing the Faith of God, who quaffed the clear waters of knowledge at the hand of the divine Beauty, and attained the loftiest summits of faith and certitude, these can be regarded, in name, in reality, in deeds, in words, and in rank, as the "return" of those who in a former Dispensation had achieved similar distinctions. For whatsoever the people of a former Dispensation have manifested, the same hath been shown by the people of this latter generation. Consider the rose: whether it blossometh in the East or in the West, it is none the less a rose. For what mattereth in this respect is not the outward shape and form of the rose, but rather the smell and

fragrance which it doth impart. Purge thy sight, therefore, from all earthly limitations, that thou mayest behold them all as the bearers of one Name, the exponents of one Cause, the manifestations of one Self, and the revealers of one Truth, and that thou mayest apprehend the mystic "return" of the Words of God as unfolded by these utterances. Reflect for a while upon the behaviour of the companions of the Muhammadan Dispensation. Consider how, through the reviving breath of Muhammad, they were cleansed from the defilements of earthly vanities, were delivered from selfish desires, and were detached from all else but Him. Behold how they preceded all the peoples of the earth in attaining unto His holy Presence -- the Presence of God Himself -- how they renounced the world and all that is therein, and sacrificed freely and joyously their lives at the feet of that Manifestation of the All-Glorious. And now, observe the "return" of the self-same determination, the self-same constancy and renunciation, manifested by the companions of the Point of the Bayan.[the Bab] Thou hast witnessed how these companions have, through the wonders of the grace of the Lord of Lords, hoisted the standards of sublime renunciation upon the inaccessible heights of glory. These Lights have proceeded from but one Source, and these fruits are the fruits of one Tree. Thou canst discern neither difference nor distinction among them. All this is by the grace of God! On whom He will, He bestoweth His grace.

KI:160-162: From these statements therefore it hath been made evident and manifest that should a Soul in the "End that knoweth no end" be made manifest, and arise to proclaim and uphold a Cause which in "the Beginning that hath no beginning" another Soul had proclaimed and upheld, it can be truly declared of Him Who is the Last and of Him Who was the First that they are one and the same, inasmuch as both are the Exponents of one and the same Cause. For this reason, hath the Point of the Bayan -- may the life of all else but Him be His sacrifice! -- likened the Manifestations of God unto the sun which, though it rise from the "Beginning that hath no beginning" until the "End that knoweth no end," is none the less the same sun. Now, wert thou to say, that this sun is the former sun, thou speakest the truth; and if thou sayest that this sun is the "return" of that sun, thou also speakest the truth. Likewise, from this statement it is made evident that the

term "last" is applicable to the "first," and the term "first" applicable to the "last;" inasmuch as both the "first" and the "last" have risen to proclaim one and the same Faith. Notwithstanding the obviousness of this theme, in the eyes of those that have quaffed the wine of knowledge and certitude, yet how many are those who, through failure to understand its meaning, have allowed the term "Seal of the Prophets" to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties! Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am all the Prophets?" Hath He not said as We have already mentioned: "I am Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus?" Why should Muhammad, that immortal Beauty, Who hath said: "I am the first Adam" be incapable of saying also: "I am the last Adam"? For even as He regarded Himself to be the "First of the Prophets" -- that is Adam -- in like manner, the "Seal of the Prophets" is also applicable unto that Divine Beauty. It is admittedly obvious that being the "First of the Prophets," He likewise is their "Seal."

KI:179: Viewed in this light, they are all but Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim: 'I am the Seal of the Prophets,' they verily utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation.

KI:213: Even as thou dost witness how the people of the Qur'án, like unto the people of old, have allowed the words "Seal of the Prophets" to veil their eyes. And yet, they themselves testify to this verse: "None knoweth the interpretation thereof but God and they that are well-grounded in knowledge."²²⁷ And when He Who is well-grounded in all knowledge, He Who is the Mother, the Soul, the Secret, and the Essence thereof, revealeth that which is the least contrary to their desire, they bitterly oppose Him and shamelessly deny Him.

FORTIETH PROOF
REJECTION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BECAUSE HE DOES
NOT CONFORM TO CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF
SCRIPTURE

In "Kitáb-i-Iqán" Bahá'u'lláh addresses the diversity of the claims

made by the Prophets of God and concludes with this weighty affirmation:

KI:181-182: Those words uttered by the Luminaries of Truth must needs be pondered, and should their 182 significance be not grasped, enlightenment should be sought from the Trustees of the depositories of Knowledge, that these may expound their meaning, and unravel their mystery. For it behooveth no man to interpret the holy words according to his own imperfect understanding, nor, having found them to be contrary to his inclination and desires, to reject and repudiate their truth. For such, today, is the manner of the divines and doctors of the age, who occupy the seats of knowledge and learning, and who have named ignorance knowledge, and called oppression justice. Were these to ask the Light of Truth concerning those images which their idle fancy hath carved, and were they to find His answer inconsistent with their own conceptions and their own understanding of the Book, they would assuredly denounce Him Who is the Mine and Wellhead of all Knowledge as the very negation of understanding. Such things have happened in every age.

Bahá'u'lláh issues a challenge to each of us, that we do our utmost to comprehend the reason for the rejection of the Prophets of God in every Dispensation:

GL:82-83: Ponder a while. What is it that prompted, in every Dispensation, the peoples of the earth to shun the Manifestation of the All-Merciful? What could have impelled them to turn away from Him and to challenge His authority? Were men to meditate on these words which have flowed from the Pen of the Divine Ordainer, they would, one and all, hasten to embrace the truth of this God-given, and ever-enduring Revelation, and would testify to that which He Himself hath solemnly affirmed. It is the veil of idle imaginations which, in the days of the Manifestations of the Unity of God and the Day Springs of His everlasting glory, hath intervened, and will continue to intervene, between them and the rest of mankind. For in those days, He Who is the Eternal Truth manifesteth Himself in conformity with that which He Himself hath purposed, and not according to the desires and expectations of men. Even as He hath revealed:

"So oft, then, as an Apostle cometh to you with that which your souls desire not, do ye swell with pride, and treat some as impostors, and slay others." [Qur'án 2:87] There can be no doubt whatever that had these Apostles appeared, in bygone ages and cycles, in accordance with the vain imaginations which the hearts of men had devised, no one would have repudiated the truth of these sanctified Beings. Though such men have been, night and day, remembering the one true God, and have been devoutly engaged in the exercise of their devotions, yet they failed in the end to recognize, and partake of the grace of, the Day Springs of the signs of God and the Manifestations of His irrefutable evidences. To this the Scriptures bear witness. Thou hast, no doubt, heard about it.

KI:13-15: And now, ponder upon these things. What could have caused such contention and conflict? Why is it that the advent of every true Manifestation of God hath been accompanied by such strife and tumult, by such tyranny and upheaval? This notwithstanding the fact that all the Prophets of God, whenever made manifest unto the peoples of the world, have invariably foretold the coming of yet another Prophet after them, and have established such signs as would herald the advent of the future Dispensation. To this the records of all sacred books bear witness. Why then is it that despite the expectation of men in their quest of the Manifestations of Holiness, and in spite of the signs recorded in the sacred books, such acts of violence, of oppression and cruelty, should have been perpetrated in every age and cycle against all the Prophets and chosen Ones of God? Even as He hath revealed: "As oft as an Apostle cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, ye swell with pride, accusing some of being impostors and slaying others." [Qur'án 2:87] Reflect, what could have been the motive for such deeds? What could have prompted such behaviour towards the Revealers of the beauty of the All-Glorious? Whatever in days gone by hath been the cause of the denial and opposition of those people hath now led to the perversity of the people of this age. To maintain that the testimony of Providence was incomplete, that it hath therefore been the cause of the denial of the people, is but open blasphemy. How far from the grace of the All-Bountiful and from His loving providence and tender mercies it is to single out a soul from amongst all men for the guidance of His creatures, and, on one hand, to

withhold from Him the full measure of His divine testimony, and, on the other, inflict severe retribution on His people for having turned away from His chosen One! Nay, the manifold bounties of the Lord of all beings have, at all times, through the Manifestations of His divine Essence, encompassed the earth and all that dwell therein. Not for a moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His loving-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind. Consequently, such behaviour can be attributed to naught save the petty-mindedness of such souls as tread the valley of arrogance and pride, are lost in the wilds of remoteness, walk in the ways of their idle fancy, and follow the dictates of the leaders of their faith. Their chief concern is mere opposition; their sole desire is to ignore the truth. Unto every discerning observer it is evident and manifest that had these people in the days of each of the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth sanctified their eyes, their ears, and their hearts from whatever they had seen, heard, and felt, they surely would not have been deprived of beholding the beauty of God, nor strayed far from the habitations of glory. But having weighed the testimony of God by the standard of their own knowledge, gleaned from the teachings of the leaders of their faith, and found it at variance with their limited understanding, they arose to perpetrate such unseemly acts.

Bahá'u'lláh has alluded to this fact, that devout adherence to religious obligations does not specialize souls for recognizing the new Prophet of God, in "Kitáb-i-Iqán":

KI:238-239: The wine of renunciation must needs be quaffed, the lofty heights of detachment must needs be attained, and the meditation referred to in the words "One hour's reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship" must needs be observed, so that the secret of the wretched behaviour of the people might be discovered, those people who, despite the love and yearning for truth which they profess, curse the followers of Truth when once He hath been made manifest. To this truth the above-mentioned tradition beareth witness. It is evident that the reason for such behaviour is none other than the annulment of those rules, customs, habits, and ceremonials to which they have been subjected. Otherwise, were the Beauty of the Merciful to comply with those same rules and customs, which are current amongst the people, and

were He to sanction their observances, such conflict and mischief would in no wise be made manifest in the world. This exalted tradition is attested and substantiated by these words which He hath revealed: "The day when the Summoner shall summon to a stern business." [Qur'án 54:6]

In every age and Dispensation, the followers of the Prophets of old have permitted their own understandings to veil them from the truth, revealed in the Person and Teachings of the new Prophet of God. They have failed to understand that the Manifestation is not bound by human standards and limitations, that He doeth whatsoever He willeth:

KI:170-171: But apart from all these things, had this people attained unto a drop of the crystal streams flowing from the words: "God doeth whatsoever He willeth, and ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth," [Qur'án 5:1; cf Qur'án 13:41] they would not have raised any unseemly cavils, such as these, against the focal Center of His Revelation. The Cause of God, all deeds and words, are held within the grasp of His power. "All things lie imprisoned within the hollow of His mighty Hand; all things are easy and possible unto Him." [Qur'án 67:1] He accomplisheth whatsoever He willeth, and doeth all that He desireth. "Whoso sayeth 'why' or 'wherefore' hath spoken blasphemy!" [cf Qur'án 8:13,20] Were these people to shake off the slumber of negligence and realize that which their hands have wrought, they would surely perish, and would of their own accord cast themselves into fire -- their end and real abode. Have they not heard that which He hath revealed: "He shall not be asked of His doings?" [Qur'án 21:23] In the light of these utterances, how can man be so bold as to question Him, and busy himself with idle sayings? Gracious God! So great is the folly and perversity of the people, that they have turned their face toward their own thoughts and desires, and have turned their back upon the knowledge and will of God -- hallowed and glorified be His name!

As Bahá'u'lláh affirmed, in language of the most unmistakable clarity and spiritual potency in "Kitáb-i-Aqdas":

KI:#99: Say: O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established

amongst men. In this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.

KI:#101: O ye leaders of religion! Who is the can amongst you that can rival Me in vision or insight? Where is he to be found that dareth to claim to be My equal in utterance or wisdom? No, by My Lord, the All-Merciful! All on the earth shall pass away; and this is the face of your Lord, the Almighty, the Well-Beloved. [Qur'án 55:26-27]

The editor of this collection of proofs has attempted to adhere to this high standard, and to remain faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's affirmation, in "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiih":

TB:74: In this day the verses of the Mother Book are resplendent and unmistakable even as the sun. They can in no wise be mistaken for any of the past or more recent utterances. Truly this Wronged One desireth not to demonstrate His Own Cause with proofs produced by others. He is the One Who embraceth all things, while all else besides Him is circumscribed.

REFLECTIONS

With the fortieth proof we do not come to the end of this study. Undoubtedly other proofs of Prophethood will be discovered and, God willing, these will ultimately be added to this collection. Indeed,

while Bahá'u'lláh has articulated many such proofs in His writings, and while 'Abdu'l-Bahá has cited many such proofs in his writings and addresses, and while Shoghi Effendi has referred to many proofs in his letters and books, yet there are innumerable proofs which have never been written down. Bahá'u'lláh speaks of these proofs in "Tafsir Surat v'al-shams" (Gleanings, LXXXIX:176):

GL:LXXXIX:176-177: How great the multitude of truths which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusions can be made! How manifold are the truths which must remain unuttered until the appointed time is come! Even as it hath been said: "Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it." Of these truths some can be disclosed only to the extent of the capacity of the repositories of the light of Our knowledge, and the recipients of Our hidden grace. We beseech God to strengthen thee with His power, and enable thee to recognize Him Who is the Source of all knowledge, that thou mayest detach thyself from all human learning, for, "what would it profit any man to strive after learning when he hath already found and recognized Him Who is the Object of all knowledge?" Cleave to the Root of Knowledge, and to Him Who is the Fountain thereof, that thou mayest find thyself independent of all who claim to be well versed in human learning, and whose claim no clear proof, nor the testimony of any enlightening book, can support.

'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to this same sage advice in one of his letters:

"Follow thou the way of thy Lord, and say not that which the ears cannot bear to hear, for such speech is like luscious food given to small children. However palatable, rare and rich the food may be, it cannot be assimilated by the digestive organs of a suckling child. Therefore unto every one who hath a right, let his settled measure be given.

"Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those

who hear it.' Such is the consummate wisdom to be observed in thy pursuits. Be not oblivious thereof, if thou wishest to be a man of action under all conditions. First diagnose the disease and identify the malady, then prescribe the remedy, for such is the perfect method of the skilful physician." (SWAB:268-269)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers to the suitability of proofs to various human capacities in relation to human recognition of the existence of God:

“These obvious arguments are adduced for weak souls; but if the inner perception be open, a hundred thousand clear proofs become visible. (SAQ:II:7)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá makes this statement with regard to the sufficiency of the proofs provided by Bahá’u’lláh:

“If you had come to this blessed place in the days of the manifestation of the evident Light, if you had attained to the court of His presence, and had witnessed His luminous beauty, you would have understood that His teachings and perfection were not in need of further evidence.

“Only through the honour of entering His presence, many souls became confirmed believers; they had no need of other proofs. Even those people who rejected and hated Him bitterly, when they had met Him, would testify to the grandeur of Bahá’u’lláh, saying: 'This is a magnificent man, but what a pity that he makes such a claim! Otherwise all that He says is acceptable.' But now, as the Light of Reality has set, all are in need of proofs; so we have undertaken to demonstrate logical proofs of His claim...

“If there be justice this will be acknowledged; but there are some people who, even if all the proofs in the world be adduced before them, still will not judge justly!” (SAQ:43,44)

In "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" Bahá’u’lláh affirms that He has indeed established proofs in support of His claims:

KA:#136: This is a Revelation around which every proof and testimony doth circle.

KA:#165: Ye glory in My Name, yet ye recognized Me not at the time your Lord, the All-Merciful, appeared amongst you with proof and testimony.

KA:#167: Through this Cause the day-star of testimony hath dawned, and the luminary of proof hath shed its radiance upon all that dwell on earth.

In "Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih," Bahá'u'lláh declares:

TB:74: In this day the verses of the Mother Book are as resplendent and unmistakable even as the sun. They can in no wise be mistaken for any of the past or more recent utterances. Truly this Wronged One desireth not to demonstrate His Own Cause with proofs produced by others. He is the One Who embraceth all things, while all else besides Him is circumscribed.

And in the last verses of "Kalimat-i-Maknunihi-i-Farsi" (Persian Hidden Words), Bahá'u'lláh affirms:

PHW:#82: The mystic and wondrous Bride, hidden ere this beneath the veiling of utterance, hath now, by the grace of God and His divine favor, been made manifest even as the resplendent light shed by the beauty of the Beloved. ***I bear witness, O friends! That the favor is complete, the argument fulfilled, the proof manifest and the evidence established.***

In these verses from "Kitáb-i-Iqán" Bahá'u'lláh challenges the reader to weigh the evidence and make up his mind:

KI:143-44: Having thus conclusively demonstrated that no day is greater than this Day, and no revelation more glorious than this Revelation, and having set forth all these weighty and infallible proofs which no understanding mind can question, and no man of learning overlook, how can man possibly, through the idle contention of the people of doubt and fancy, deprive himself of such a bountiful grace?

KI:147: Therefore, it hath been said: "To seek evidence, when the Proof hath been established is but an unseemly act..."

And in His "Lawh-i-Ahmad" Bahá'u'lláh writes, and we conclude with these words:

BP:130: Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message.

Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside from this counsel and whosoever desireth let him choose the path to his Lord.

ENDNOTES

¹Bahá'u'lláh, in Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice [ADJ]:77

²Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in Summons of the Lord of Hosts [SLH]:242

³Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in SLH:223

⁴Bahá'u'lláh, Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih, in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed

after the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* [TB]:74

⁵Bahá'u'lláh, *Kalimat-i-Firdawsiyyih*, in TB:79

⁶Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* [ESW]:115

⁷E.G. Browne, in the Introduction to *A Traveler's Narrative*, volume II, pp. xxxix-xl; cited in H.M. Balyuzi, *E.G. Browne and The Bahá'í Faith*, pp. 56-57; and in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* [GPB]:194

⁸*Star of the West* [SW]: IX:3 (4/28/1918), p. 32-34

⁹Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* [SWAB]:13-17

¹⁰Qur'án 17:81

¹¹Qur'án 15:72

¹²Qur'án 39:68; ESW:133

¹³Qur'án 74:8

¹⁴Qur'án 39:68

¹⁵Qur'án 79:6

¹⁶Qur'án 22:2

¹⁷Qur'án 34:39

¹⁸Qur'án 29:19

¹⁹Qur'án 79:34

²⁰First Proof. 'Abdu'l-Bahá includes "the appearance of omens and joyous prophecies, of hints and clues, the spreading of many and various tidings, and the anticipations of the righteous" and this encompasses far more than the fulfillment of prophecies to be found in the Scriptures.

²¹This is likely to be a reference to Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsá'í and Siyyid Kázim Rashtí.

²²The announcement of Bahá'u'lláh by His Herald, the Báb. One of the principal themes of the *Bayán-i-fársí* and other Writings of the Báb is the advent of Him Whom God shall make manifest, Bahá'u'lláh. Eleventh Proof, and particularly significant in His case because His Herald is a Manifestation of God Himself.

²³Fourth and Fifth Proofs.

²⁴Seventh Proof.

²⁵Second and Third Proofs.

²⁶Fourteenth Proof.

²⁷This is a particular Proof of Bahá'u'lláh which does not apply to all other Manifestations of God.

²⁸Sixth and Seventh Proofs.

²⁹Qur'án 6:91; 52:12

³⁰This is a Proof particular to Bahá'u'lláh, Who addressed the kings of the earth in His *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. It should be noted however that Muhammad sent letters to certain kings of His time, and that the Báb

addressed epistles to certain kings. However, Bahá'u'lláh addressed the monarchs of the earth collectively and many by name in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, His Book of Laws, as well as in other Tablets such as the Suriy-i-Muluk.

³¹Napoleon III.

³²Thirty-Third Proof. Bahá'u'lláh has demonstrated this glory in superlative form, through His proclamation to the rulers of the world from the midst of a Prison ('Akka).

³³Twenty-Second Proof.

³⁴Third Proof.

³⁵The original text of this statement by 'Abdu'l-Bahá is found, in Persian, in Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá, III:99-100: [avval dánistan ast va ba'da 'amal namúdan/ímán dánistan ast va 'amal khayr majrí dáshtan]; and in English translation, in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá [TAB]:III:549 and Bahá'í World Faith [BWF]:383: "By faith is meant, first, conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds."

³⁶SAQ:110:Note: "In these conversations, as the reader will have already observed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá desires rather to indicate the meaning of certain passages of the Scriptures than to quote the exact text."

³⁷SAQ:110:Note: "Masikh -- i.e., the monster. In Arabic there is a play upon the words Masih, the Messiah, and masikh, the monster."

³⁸SAQ:110:Note: Cf. 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10.

³⁹ESW:145, 178-81.

⁴⁰'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tadhkirat al-Wafa' fi Tarjamat Hayat Qudama al-Ahibba', published in Haifa, 1924; translated by Marzieh Gail and published as Memorials of the Faithful [MF], Wilmette:BPT, 1971.

⁴¹Zuhur al-Haqq by Fadl Mazandarani, Volume III (published in Tihrán, c. 1944).

⁴²al-Kawakib al-Durriya by 'Abd al-Husayn Ayati, known to Baha'is as Avarih, published in Cairo, 1923-24.

⁴³Tarikh-i Shuhada-yi Amr by Malik Khusravi, published in Tihrán, 1972.

⁴⁴Núrayn-i Nayyirayn by 'Adb al-Hamid Ishraq Khavari, published in Tihrán, 1970.

⁴⁵Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh, by Hasan M. Balyuzi, published posthumously, in UK:George Ronald, 1985.

⁴⁶Miracles and Metaphors, translated by JRI Cole, published in Los Angeles:Kalimat, 1981.

⁴⁷Letters and Essays, 1886-1913, translated by JRI Cole, published in Los Angeles:Kalimat, 1985.

⁴⁸The Bahá'í Proofs, translated by Ali Kuli Khan, reprinted in Wilmette:BPT, 1983, with preface by JRI Cole.

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- ⁴⁹Letters and Essays, 1886-1913, p. xi, preface by JRI Cole.
- ⁵⁰Translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi and reported in SW:IX:3, p. 25,26,29.
- ⁵¹L'Oeuvre de Bahá'u'lláh [LB], translated by Hippolyte Dreyfus, published in Paris:Leroux, 1924; Volume II.
- ⁵²The Prisoner and the Kings, by William Sears, published in Toronto, 1971.
- ⁵³The Universe Around Us: Through Space and Time, by James Hopwood Jeans, published in UK, 1934, p. 154.
- ⁵⁴Thief in the Night, pp. 194-95.
- ⁵⁵The International Cyclopaedia, 1898: II, p. 530
- ⁵⁶The International Cyclopaedia, 1898: IV, p. 179.
- ⁵⁷The International Cyclopaedia, 1898: II, p. 530.
- ⁵⁸Thief in the Night, p. 154.
- ⁵⁹Thief in the Night, p. 154.
- ⁶⁰Encyclopedia Americana (1944 edition), Volume III: p. 690.
- ⁶¹The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, by LeRoy Edwin Froom, Volumes I-IV, 1946-1954.
- ⁶²Thief in the Night, 1961.
- ⁶³ESW:151.
- ⁶⁴God Passes By [GPB] by Shoghi Effendi, p. 104.
- ⁶⁵Tablet of Ahmad, in most anthologies of Baha'i Prayers.
- ⁶⁶From the French translation of Hippolyte Dreyfus, L'Oeuvre de Bahá'u'lláh [LOB], Volume I, p. 133
- ⁶⁷ESW:132.
- ⁶⁸GPB:161.
- ⁶⁹GPB:180.
- ⁷⁰GPB:158.
- ⁷¹The International Cyclopaedia (1898), IX, p. 751.
- ⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 752.
- ⁷³Thief in the Night, 1961, p. 188.
- ⁷⁴*The American Journal of Science*, Vol. XXV,1834, p.372.
- ⁷⁵Thief in the Night, pp. 186-87.
- ⁷⁶TB:164.
- ⁷⁷Shoghi Effendi quoting Bahá'u'lláh in The Promised Day is Come [PDC], 1961, p. 19.
- ⁷⁸Abdu'l-Bahá, Maqala-yi Shakhshi Sayyah ki dar Tafsil-i Qaziya-yi Báb Nivishtih Shudih, published in Persian in 1891, along with an English translation by Professor E.G. Browne with the title A Traveler's Narrative written to illustrate the episode of the Báb (reprinted by Philo Press, Amsterdam in 1975 and without Browne's annotations and related documents by BPT, Wilmette, 1982), pp. 32-33.

⁷⁹GPB:57.

⁸⁰Included in the 1955 edition of The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh [WOB], BPT:Wilmette, reprinted in 1969, p. 123.

⁸¹GPB:319-20.

⁸²Queen Victoria quoted in Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh, London: George Ronald, 1963, reprint 1972, p. 51.

⁸³The Dawn-Breakers, p. 111.

⁸⁴The famous Sunni Muslim midrasah, called Takyiy-i-Mawlana Khalid, as identified in GPB:121.

⁸⁵Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions [SAQ], Chapter IX, pp. 29-30.

⁸⁶Tarikh-i-Jadid by Mírzá Husayn-i-Hamadani, quoted by E.G. Browne in a footnote to his translation of A Traveler's Narrative, p.274.

⁸⁷Isaac Asimov (1920-1992), author of over 500 books and 9000 letters and postcards.

⁸⁸GPB:138.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰H.M. Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh, 1963, reprint 1972, p. 51.

⁹¹The Prisoner and the Kings, 1971, p. 201.

⁹²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_monarchs_who_lost_their_thrones_in_the_20th_century

⁹³Ibid.; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qing_Dynasty

⁹⁴<http://www.findalbanian.com/albanian-flags/>

⁹⁵http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Hungary

⁹⁶<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia>

⁹⁷http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_monarchs_who_lost_their_thrones_in_the_20th_century

⁹⁸Bahá'u'lláh cited in GPB:230

⁹⁹Tablet translated by Shoghi Effendi on 22 July 1919, and published in *Star of the West* (X:18, p. 330)

¹⁰⁰Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary, p. 140.

¹⁰¹Shoghi Effendi, High Endeavours - Messages to Alaska, p. 71)

“The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent. The soul of Christ existed in the spiritual world before His birth in this world. We cannot imagine what that world is like, so words are inadequate to picture His state of being.” (Shoghi Effendi, High Endeavours - Messages to Alaska, p. 71)

¹⁰²Tablet first translated by Dr. Zia Bagdadi (SW IX:3, pp. 32-34, 4/28/1918) and then retranslated and published in SWAB:16.

¹⁰³ESW:115,165.

¹⁰⁴Hebrew abbreviation denoting the Torah, Ketuvim and Neviim (Pentateuch, Writings and Prophets), the traditional arrangement of

the Biblical books in the Hebrew language canon.

¹⁰⁵Evangels are the four canonical Gospels.

¹⁰⁶Balyuzi, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁸The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, Adib Taherzadeh, Oxford: George Ronald, 1992, p. 117)

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 117.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 150-151, 164.

¹¹³Ibid., pp. 152, 165.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 117, 165.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 117, 164.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 357.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 359.

¹¹⁹Ibid., pp. 148, 164.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 152-153.

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 340, 364.

¹²²Ibid., p. 365.

¹²³Ibid., p. 165.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 153-154.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 152-153.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 358.

¹²⁷DB, p. lviii, Genealogy of the Báb.

¹²⁸The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 357.

¹²⁹Balyuzi, p. 406.

¹³⁰DB, p. lviii, Genealogy of the Báb.

¹³¹The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 358.

¹³²Ibid., pp. 358, 360, 363.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 358, 363.

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 358, 363.

¹³⁵Ibid., pp. 358, 361-362.

¹³⁶Ibid., pp. 358, 364.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 365.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 358.

¹³⁹Ibid., pp. 359.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 365.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 358.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 359.

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 358, 360.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 358, 360.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 358, 360.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 365.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 358.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 359, 360.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 358, 360, 362.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 365.

¹⁵¹Ibid., pp. 358, 360.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 358.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴GPB:106-108.

¹⁵⁵GPB:146-149.

¹⁵⁶GPB:158-161.

¹⁵⁷Bhagavad-Gita, translation of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, IV:7.

¹⁵⁸Bhagavata, translation of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, volume IX, chapter 24, verse 56, p. 154.

¹⁵⁹From a letter dated 25 December 1938 and addressed to the Bahá'ís of Canada and the United States of America.

¹⁶⁰Persia and the Persian Question, Lord Curzon, London, 2 vols, 1892.

¹⁶¹Abdu'l-Bahá, ar-Risalah al-Madaniyyah as-Sadirah fi sanat 1292. Cairo: Matba'ah Kurdistan al-'Ilmiyyah, 1329/1911. Photocopy of the Egyptian 1911 edn. Also: Risalih-i Madaniyyih. Hofheim-Langenhain: Baha'i-Verlag, 1984.

¹⁶²Abdu'l-Bahá to Unitarian Conference, Boston, 24 May 1912, Khatirat, pp. 393/394.

¹⁶³"Mulla Baqir delivered the trust into the hands of Mirza Ahmad, who, at the insistence of Shaykh Azim, opened it before us. We marvelled when we beheld, among the things which that coffer contained, a scroll of blue paper, of the most delicate texture, on which the Báb, in His own exquisite handwriting, which was a fine shikastih script, had penned, in the form of a pentacle, what numbered about five hundred verses, all consisting of derivatives from the word "Baha." That scroll was in a state of perfect preservation, was spotlessly clean, and gave the impression, at first sight, of being a printed rather than a written page. So fine and intricate was the penmanship that, viewed at a distance, the writing appeared as a single wash of ink on the paper. We were overcome with admiration as we gazed upon a masterpiece which no calligraphist, we believed, could rival. That scroll was replaced in the coffer and handed back to Mirza Ahmad, who, on the very day he received it, proceeded to Tihran. Ere he departed, he informed us that all he could divulge of that letter was the injunction that the trust was to be delivered into the hands of

Jinab-i-Baha in Tihiran.” (DB:505)

¹⁶⁴Concordance, Dr. Solomon Mandelkern, Leipzig: Veit and Co., 1896.

¹⁶⁵Qur’án 28:30; recapitulating Exodus 3:2-6: 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3:3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 3:4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 3:5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 3:6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

¹⁶⁶Munkhatabati az Makatib ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, No. 4, p. 14; SWAB:#4:15.

¹⁶⁷SAQ:IX:35.

¹⁶⁸SAQ:X:43.

¹⁶⁹Balyuzi, Bahá’u’lláh, King of Glory, pp. 132-133.

¹⁷⁰Qur’án 2:143.

¹⁷¹Qur’án 74:50.

¹⁷²Qur’án 33:49.

¹⁷³Amnesty International (1996-10). "[Dhabihullah Mahrami: Prisoner of Conscience](#)". AI INDEX: MDE 13/34/96.

<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/MDE130341996?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES%5CIRAN>. Retrieved on 2006-10-20

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Bah%C3%A1'%C3%ADs#cite_note-amnesty1-19]

¹⁷⁴Affolter, Friedrich W. (2005). "[The Specter of Ideological Genocide: The Bahá’ís of Iran](#)" (PDF). *War Crimes, Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* 1 (1): 59– 89. <http://www.aa.psu.edu/journals/war-crimes/articles/V1/v1n1a3.pdf>.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Bah%C3%A1'%C3%ADs#cite_note-affolter-1]

¹⁷⁵https://theta.securesllhost.net/~truecri/crime_series_show.php?id=684&series_number=13

¹⁷⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Bah%C3%A1'%C3%ADs

¹⁷⁷Doostdar, Novin (1999/2000). "[Obituaries](#)". *Bahá’í Studies Review* 9 (1). http://bahai-library.org/bsr/bsr09/9G1_obituaries.htm.

¹⁷⁸Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (2007). "[A Faith Denied: The Persecution of the Baha’ís of Iran](#)" (PDF). Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/pdfs/Reports/bahai_report.pdf.

Retrieved on 2008-04-27.

¹⁷⁹CNN (2008-05-16). "[Iran's arrest of Baha'is condemned](http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/05/16/iran.bahais/)". CNN.

Retrieved on 2008-05-17. Daragahi, Borzou (2008-05-15). "[IRAN: Bahais rounded up](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2008/05/iran-bahais-rou.html)". Los Angeles Times.

¹⁸⁰Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (2008-05-14). "[IHRDC Condemns the Arrest of Leading Bahá'ís](http://www.iranhrdc.org/httpdocs/english/pdfs/PressReleases/Press-05-15-08.pdf)" (PDF). Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

¹⁸¹CNN (2008-05-16). "[Iran's arrest of Baha'is condemned](http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/05/16/iran.bahais/)". CNN.

Retrieved on 2008-05-17. ¹⁸²Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (2008-05-14). "[IHRDC Condemns the Arrest of Leading Bahá'ís](http://www.iranhrdc.org/httpdocs/english/pdfs/PressReleases/Press-05-15-08.pdf)" (PDF). Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

¹⁸³Ibid.

¹⁸⁴"[Document - Iran: Further Information on Arbitrary Arrests/Prisoners of Conscience](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/068/2008/en/25f1bbd2-2339-11dd-89c0-51e35dab761d/mde130682008eng.html)", *Amnesty International Action Alert* (Amnesty International), 2008-05-15,

"[Document - Iran: Further Information on Arbitrary Arrests/Prisoners of Conscience](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/109/2008/en/32281935-6476-11dd-9756-f55e3ec0a600/mde131092008eng.html)", *Amnesty International Action Alert* (Amnesty International), 2008-08-06,

¹⁸⁵Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (2009-02-25). "[2008 Human Rights Report: Iran](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119115.htm)". United States State Department.

Retrieved on 2009-03-01. ¹⁸⁶Erdbrink, Thomas (2009-02-18), "[Iran Accuses 7 Jailed Leaders of Bahai Faith of Espionage](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/17/AR2009021703011_pf.html)", *Washington Post*,

¹⁸⁷Qur'án 37:173.

¹⁸⁸Qur'án 9:32.

¹⁸⁹KI:152,176.

¹⁹⁰KI:177.

¹⁹¹Cited as #100 in Directives from the Guardian, New Delhi: BPT, n.d., p. 57.

¹⁹²“The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh”, in WOB:97-157.

¹⁹³Qur’án 55:39.

¹⁹⁴Qur’án 55:41.

¹⁹⁵Book of Revelation 7:4: And I hear the number of them which were sealed: 7:5: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

¹⁹⁶Gospel of Matthew:20:16,2:14: "many are called, but few are chosen"

¹⁹⁷<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/getArticle.cfm?id=2010>; the continuation of the online article is here:

“Willis and Todorov conducted separate experiments to study judgments from facial appearance, each focusing on a different trait: attractiveness, likeability, competence, trustworthiness, and aggressiveness. Participants were shown photographs of unfamiliar faces for 100 milliseconds (1/10 of a second), 500 milliseconds (half a second), or 1,000 milliseconds (a full second), and were immediately asked to judge the faces for the trait in question (e.g., "Is this person competent?"). Response time was measured. Participants were then asked to rate their confidence in making their judgments. Participants' judgments were compared with ratings of the same photographs given by another group of participants in a preliminary study, in which there were no time constraints for judging the personality traits of the faces. (In that preliminary study, there was strong agreement among the various participants about the traits of the people in the photographs.)

“For all five of the traits studied, judgments made after the briefest exposure (1/10 of a second) were highly correlated with judgments made without time constraints; and increased exposure time (1/2 or a full second) didn't increase the correlation. Response times also revealed that participants made their judgments as quickly (if not more quickly) after seeing a face for 1/10 of a second as they did if given a longer glimpse.

“Longer exposure times did increase confidence in judgments and facilitated more differentiated trait impressions (that is, less correlation between the different traits for a given person).

“All the correlations between judgments made after a 1/10-second glimpse and judgments made without time constraints were high, but of all the traits, trustworthiness was the one with the highest correlation. Along with attractiveness, this was also the trait that participants were able to assess most quickly. The authors suggest,

based on evolutionary psychology, that an accelerated and accurate ability to judge trustworthiness in others may have evolved as an important survival mechanism.

“But before you rest secure in the knowledge that at least you have a whole 1/10 of a second to make that great first impression at your next job interview, the authors acknowledge that future research may well close that window even smaller. Other researchers recently revealed in *Psychological Science* that objects are categorized as soon as they are perceived; something similar, Willis and Todorov suggest, may be true of certain trait judgments.

“It may be that, to impress a prospective employer with your competence and trustworthiness, or a prospective mate with your attractiveness, you can do it in, well, no time. That may be a good or bad thing, depending.”

¹⁹⁸July 2006, vol. 19, no. 7.

¹⁹⁹Qur’án 25:7.

²⁰⁰Qur’án 3:7.

²⁰¹Qur’án 45:22.

²⁰²Qur’án 38:67.

²⁰³Qur’án 34:43.

²⁰⁴KI:26, 32, 80-84, 126-127, 220, 255-256.

²⁰⁵SAQ:38, 85, 100, 106, 111, 123.

²⁰⁶FWU:74, 75, 108.

²⁰⁷PUP:199, 245, 246, 291-293, 370, 416, 459, 460, 463.

²⁰⁸BWF:280.

²⁰⁹DG:65.

²¹⁰Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, p. 41.

²¹¹Dawn of a New Day, pp. 79-80, 200, 202.

²¹²Unfolding Destiny, p. 427.

²¹³LG:II:66, 66-67.

²¹⁴GPB:151-152.

²¹⁵KI:254-255.

²¹⁶GL:CLXV:346.

²¹⁷Bhagavad-Gita, translation of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, IV:7.

²¹⁸Bhagavata, translation of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, IX:24, verse 56, p. 154.

²¹⁹World Christian Encyclopedia.

²²⁰Gospel of John 3:7.

²²¹Gospel of John 3:5-6.

²²²Qur’án 7:178.

²²³Gospel of Luke 9:60.

²²⁴Qur’án 3:183.

²²⁵Qur'án 3:182.

²²⁶Qur'án 2:89.

²²⁷Qur'án 3:7.