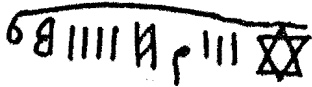


BAHĀ'Ī STUDIES BULLETIN

VOL. 6:2-3 FEBRUARY 1992



CONTENTS

Editorial Note	p.3
B. Todd Lawson, The Structure of Existence in the Bāb's Tafsīr and the Perfect Man Motif	p.4
Stephen Lambden, The Seven Valleys of Bahā'u'llāh : A Provisional Translation with Occasional Notes -- Part 01	p.26
<hr/> PART TWO:	Notes, Communications and Bibliographical Miscellany p.75
Seena Fazel,	Some Observations Regarding Bibliographic Citations p.86

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
ENGLAND
U.K.

certitude" (*'ilm al-yaqīn*), guideth thee unto the "essence of certitude" (*'ayn al-yaqīn*) and causeth thee to realize the "reality of certitude" (*haqq al-yaqīn*)² through the bounty of the Manifest Light. And upon thee be greeting and salutation.

'Abdu'l-Bahā 'Abbas.

**THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE**

Department of the Secretariat

17 November 1988

Mr. Ted A. Cope
1435 Shortridge SE
Albany, OR 97321
USA

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your letter of 28 August 1988 in which you request information concerning the function of that Department, and pose a question regarding the translation of "'álam al-mithál" in Bahá'í Writings.

We are now directed to send you the enclosed copy of the memorandum, and its attachments, prepared in response. It is hoped that a study of this material will provide the enlightenment you seek.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Ethna Archibald

For Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure

² 'Abdu'l-Bahā' is here making use of recognized Sufi terminology which I have placed in quote marks. See A. Schimmel *Mystical Dimensions...* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 1975 p.141-2. This terminology as also present in the *Kitāb-i Īqān* and in other Bābī-Bahā'ī scriptural sources.

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 25 September 1988

From: The Research Department

QUESTIONS FROM MR. TED A. COPE

With reference to the questions contained in the letter dated 28 August 1988 from Mr. Ted A. Cope, the Research Department offers the following comment.

Function of the Research Department

In a letter written on its behalf regarding the function of the Research Department, the Universal House of Justice states:

Among the functions assigned to the Research Department at the World Centre is that of preparing statements at the request of the House of Justice. We are to point out that the statement appearing in the current Bahá'í World Centre Manual in connection with the duties of this Department includes the following:

"...To prepare commentaries on various subjects related to the Faith, as requested by the Universal House of Justice."

These commentaries are sent to believers, where applicable, as separate statements, such as those on the Fourth Epoch of the Formative Age, or on Bahá'í Scholarship, or as memoranda which are enclosures to letters written on behalf of the House of Justice....

To preclude any possibility of their being confused with letters written by the House of Justice, or on its behalf, it is important that such commentaries be distinctly identified. It is also vital that the believers understand clearly that these Research Department statements should be regarded as representing no more than the views of the members of that Department. While such views are very useful as an aid to resolving perplexities or gaining an enhanced understanding of the Bahá'í teachings, they should never be taken to be in the same category as the elucidations and clarifications provided by the House of Justice in the exercise of its assigned functions.... (16 August 1987 to an individual believer)

The House of Justice has thus made the status of the Research Department's statements, such as that previously provided to Mr. Cope, very clear: the contents are the considered views of the departmental staff, provided as "an aid to resolving perplexities or gaining an enhanced

understanding". Such statements, however, cannot have the identical weight as the elucidations given by the Universal House of Justice.

Translation of terms used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Mr. Cope inquires whether the term translated as "the world of exemplars" on page 295 of "Bahá'í Scriptures: Selections from the Utterances of Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha", ed. H. Holley (New York: Brentano's, 1923), and on page 109 of Foundations of World Unity (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), is "'álam al-mithál".

Unfortunately, the Research Department has not yet located the original text of the talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá from which this phrase is taken, and therefore cannot specify which term the Master actually used. The English text of this talk, which was given to the Theosophical Society in New York City on 4 December 1912, first appeared in Star of the West, vol. 7, no. 8 (1 August 1916), pp. 69-71, 74-76, with the following note: "Taken stenographically by Miss Esther Foster from the interpretation of Ish'te al Ebn-Kalanter." The English text was published again in "Bahai Scriptures", and in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Discourses by Abdul Baha Abbas During His Visit to the United States in 1912", vol. 2 (Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1925), pp. 458-64, with the entry: "Notes by Esther Foster". The text from "Promulgation of Universal Peace" was apparently reproduced in "Foundations of World Unity".

The paragraph containing the phrase "world of exemplars" as published in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace" differs slightly from both the version published in "Star of the West" and that in "Bahai Scriptures". We have no information as to why changes were made to the text.

A copy of a Tablet in Persian revealed by Bahá'u'lláh which comments on the phrase "'álam al-mithál" is enclosed for Mr. Cope's interest. We suggest that he seek the assistance of Persian-speaking friends in ascertaining its contents. In this connection, Mr. Cope may also wish to consult the article "'álam" in volume one of "The Encyclopaedia of Islam", new ed. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), pages 349-52; specific reference to the "'álam al-mithál" is made on pages 350-51.

The original text of the Master's talk given on 12 May 1912 at the Unity Church in Montclair, New Jersey was also not located; we therefore do not know which term was translated as "barrier". The English text of His talk was published in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace", vol. 1, pp. 109-12.

A copy of a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Persian which alludes to a Qur'anic verse using the term "barzakh" is enclosed. A similar reference is made in the prayer for marriage revealed by the Master, and published in "Bahá'í Prayers: A Selection of Prayers Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985), pp. 105-6. Mr. Cope may also wish to refer to the article "barzakh" in "The Encyclopaedia of Islam", vol. 1, pp. 1071-72.

Enclosures 2

ENCLOSURE 1 : AN EXTRACT FROM A TABLET OF BAHĀ'U'LLĀH TO VARQĀ' THE MARTYR CONTAINING MATERIAL ON THE 'ĀLĀM AL-MITHĀL.³

" یا ایها الناظر الی الافق الاعلی علیک بها اللہ مولی
 الوری مقصود از ملکوت در رتبه اولی و مقام اول منظر اکبر
 بوده و در مقام آخر عالم مثال است مابین جبروت و ناسوت
 و آنچه در آسمان و زمین است مثالی از آن در آن موجود است
 در قوه بیان مستور و مکنون، بجبروت نامیده میشود- و این اول
 مقام تقیید است و چون بظهور آید بملکوت نامیده میشود
 کسب قدرت و قوت از مقام اول مینماید و بما دونش عطا میکند
 این عوالم و عوالم مشیت و اراده و قدر و قضا و ازل و سرمد
 و دهر و زمان مکرر در بعضی از الواح از قلم اعلی نازل طوسی
 للفاغزین " انتهى .

PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION OF THE TABLET REPRODUCED ABOVE

"O Thou who gazest towards the Supreme Horizon, upon thee be the Glory of God, the Lord of men. The intention of the Kingdom (*malakūt*) in its primary sense and degree is the scene of the transcendent glory (*manzar-i akbar*). In another sense it is the world of similitudes (*'ālām -i mithāl*) which existeth between the Dominion on high (*jabarūt*) and this mortal world (*nāsūt*); whatever is in the heavens or on the earth hath its counterpart [or 'similitude' *mīthālī*] in that world. Whilst a thing remaineth hidden and concealed within the power of utterance it is said to be of the Dominion (*jabarūt*), and this is the first stage of its substantiation [or 'delimitation' *taqyīd*]. Whenever it becometh manifest it is said to be of the Kingdom (*malakūt*). The power and potency it deriveth from the first stage, it bestoweth upon whatever lieth below. These worlds and the worlds of the Divine Will (*mashiyyat*), the Divine Intention (*irāda*), the Divine Power (or Fate *qudra*), the Divine Decree (*qudrā'*), Eternity (*azal*), Perpetuity (*sarmad*), Epoch (*dahr*), and Time (*zamān*) occur frequently in some of the Tablets revealed by the Supreme Pen. Blessed be such as attain."

³ Text in Ishrāq Khāvarī (Ed), *Mā'ida-yi Āsmānī* Vol.1 (Tehran: BPT., 128-9 Badī'/ 1971-2 CE) p.18 The translation below is largely that printed in Moojan Momen, *Relativism: A Basis for Bahá'í Metaphysics*, in M. Momen (Ed.) *Studies in Honour of the Late Hasan M. Balyuzi* (= Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions Vol. 5, Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1988 pp. 185-217), p.192. I have translated the first line of the Tablet to Varqā' and the last sentence (not translated in Momen) and added a few transliterations for the sake of clarity.

ENCLOSURE 2 : A PERSIAN TABLET OF 'ABDU'L-BAHĀ CONTAINING REFERENCE TO A QUR'ĀNIC USE OF THE WORD BARZAKH.⁴

که مصدر آثار بدیع و واقف حقائق و خولها بشا، شود از
 این بجل معانی معطر اولک نما *
 امة الله الخیبر المشتعلة بنا بحب الله صیه من اولک
 لقاء سیر حضرت ذبیح صبح را از قبل من نهایت برآورد آفت
 ابدیخ دار از الطاف الهی امید چنانست که محفل آما، چمن
 نهایت انتظام حاصل نماید و بهمت ایشان مدولیت تام نموده
 خدمات شکوه از آن محفل ظاهر گردد. بهیچ آن آما، چمن
 بشارة الطاف الهی برشا و علیلک البهار الأبرق ع ع

﴿ رَوْحِ انْسَانِي ﴾

آبادہ میرزا قابل
 هو الله

ای بنده آتان مقدس نامه شما رسید و در وقتیکه در
 محیط اعظم مشاغل و غمائل و تحایر متفرقات جوایب
 سله فی که خزانته بودید بتفصیل تمنع و تسخیل است
 لهذا جزایب مختصر نمیشود که روح انشا و بعبارة اخرى
 نفس ناطقه در عالم وجود واسطه مابین مجردات و تجزئات
 است یعنی روحانیات و جسمانیات از جبهتی لطافت
 روحانی دارد و از جبهتی کثافت شهودت جویانی و شئون
 مادی نه مجرد تام دارد نه تجزئات بلکه جمع الحیزین
 و بینخ بین لامیزات اگر جهت روحانیه غلبه کند
 علوی گردد نزلی شود روحانی گردد مطنه شود لضم
 گردد مضیه شود و اگر بشئون لکانی مادی آله
 شود متفرق بظلمات گردد لوامه شود آما، بالسرگرد
 و در اسفل عالم وجود مفریابد لهذا وجبه دارد چون
 جنبه نزلی عقل بر عالم طبیعت غالب گردد قوه کاشفه فی یابد

⁴ This Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahā (reproduced above, slightly enlarged) was printed in *Najm-i Bākhtar* ("Star of the West") Vol. 5 No. 7 (Persian Section), Kalimāt 1, 70 BE = July 13th 1914.

TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE TABLET OF 'ABDU'L-BAHĀ TO MĪRZĀ QĀBIL OF ĀBĀDIH (IRAN).

He is God

O servant of the sanctified threshold! Your letter was received at a time when the most great ocean of tasks, tribulations and literary communications is wellnigh overwhelming. The answer to the question which you requested cannot possibly be entered into in any great detail; a brief answer, therefore, is being written.

The human spirit (*rūh-i insānī*), in other words the rational soul (*nafs-i nātiqa*), in the world of existence is the intermediary between things incorporeal ('disengaged' *mujarradāt*) and delimited worldly things (*mutahayyizāt*); that is to say, between realities spiritual and things corporeal. From one vantage point it possesses spiritual refinement while from the other it exhibits the crassness of carnality, animalistic traits and worldly characteristics. It is neither an absolute abstraction nor is it completely of the world but is the confluence of two seas (*majma' al-bahrayn*) and a *barzakht* ("barrier", "isthmus") between two realities (*amrayn*). If the spiritual aspect predominates it becometh lofty, luminous, merciful, tranquil (*mutma'inna*), contented (*rādiya*) and approved (*mardiyya*). And if it is contaminated with contingent, worldly concerns, it becometh immersed in the ocean of darknesses, reproachful (*lawwāma*), commanding to evil (*ammāra*) and residing in the nethermost regions of the world of existence.⁵

It is thus the case that the human spirit has two aspects. If the luminous aspect of the human intellect overcometh the world of nature, it will acquire the power of discovery which is the basis for wondrous insights, and become informed about the realities and the characteristics of things. From this brief explanation perceive the detailed significances.

The enraptured maidservant of God, enkindled with the fire of the love of God, daughter of the One Who attained the Meeting with his Lord; convey on my behalf to his eminence Dhabīh, the resplendent, the utmost kindness and compassion. The hope is that, on account of the Divine Grace, the assembly of the maidservants of the Merciful may attain perfect organization, and, through their efforts in achieving complete continuity, realize their much-appreciated services. Convey the glad-tidings of the Divine Grace to those maidservants of the Merciful. And upon you be the glory of the All-Glorious.

⁵ The terms used in these lines to refer to the higher and lower nature of the human spirit are mostly Qur'ānic and are used in Sufi and other Islāmīc literatures to categorize the varieties of *nafs* ("soul"/"spirit"). Bahā'u'llāh uses these Sufi psychological terms in responding to a question about the *nafs* ("soul") in his Arabic *Sūrat al-ra'īs* (Arabic = *Sūra-yi Ra'īs*) which is addressed to Mehmet Emin Āli Paşa (= 'Alī Pashā 1815-1871). The text of this Tablet can be found in *Alwāh nāzilīh khitāb blh mulūk wa ru'āsa-yi ard*, Tehran: BPT., 125 Badī' (see pp. 98-99). In the above translation I have largely utilized the translations of these Qur'ānic-Sufi terms given by J. Spencer Trimmingham in his *The Sufi Orders of Islam* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. For further details see my *The Bahā'ī Doctrine of Soul, Spirit and Mind* (forthcoming).