

GLEANINGS
FROM THE WRITINGS OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

*Translated
by
Shoghi Effendi*



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GLOSSARY AND NOTES

‘Abdu’l-‘Azíz, Sulṭán: The sulṭán who decreed each of Bahá’u’lláh’s three banishments.

‘Abdu’lláh Ubayy: An opponent of Muḥammad.

Abhá: The superlative form of Bahá, which means in Arabic glory. Both forms are titles of Bahá’u’lláh and of His Kingdom.

Abraham: Considered by Bahá’ís to be one of the Manifestations of God. He is also recognized as the founder of monotheism and the father of the Jewish and Arab peoples. According to the book of Genesis in the Bible, He left Ur, in Mesopotamia, be-

cause He was called by God to found a new nation (Canaan). He obeyed God without question, receiving repeated promises and a covenant that His seed would inherit the land. Muḥammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh are among His descendants. In Bahá'í texts He is often called the “Friend of God” and the “Father of the Faithful.”

Abú ‘Ámir: An opponent of Muḥammad.

Adam: Considered by Bahá'ís to be the first Manifestation of God to have appeared in recorded religious history.

Afnán: Literally twigs; denotes relatives of the Báb.

‘Akká: The prison-city in Palestine where Bahá'u'lláh was exiled. He arrived there on 31 August 1868.

‘Alí: The first Imám; cousin and first disciple of Muḥammad and married to His daughter Fáṭimih.

‘Alí-Muḥammad: Siyyid ‘Alí-Muḥammad, born in Shíráz, Persia, on 20 October 1819

and martyred 9 July 1850; known to Bahá'ís as “the Báb” and the “Point of the Bayán,” He was the precursor of Bahá'u'lláh and a Manifestation of God in His own right.

Ancient Beauty: Refers to Bahá'u'lláh.

Ancient of Days: A title of God, peculiar in the Bible to the book of Daniel.

Annas: High priest of the Jews and father-in-law to Caiaphas (see John 18:13).

Aqdas: Refers to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the chief repository of Bahá'u'lláh's laws and the Mother Book of His revelation. Revealed in 'Akká circa 1873, it is believed by Bahá'ís to be “the Charter of the future world civilization.”

Ashraf: Siyyid Ashraf, born in the Fort of 'Alí-Mardán Khán at Zanján, Persia, where a large number of Bábís sought refuge during the hostilities that erupted against them after one of the town's religious leaders became a follower of the Báb.

Báb, the: See 'Alí-Muḥammad.

Bábí: Follower of the Báb, or pertaining to His Faith.

Babel: The Hebrew name for Babylon, an ancient city that was located about fifty-five miles south of present-day Baghdad on the Euphrates River. It was the site of the episode in Genesis 11:9 that recounts the origin of separate languages.

Bahá: Literally glory, splendor, or light. A title given to Bahá'u'lláh by the Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh: (1817–92) The Founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

Balál: An Ethiopian slave in Mecca, illiterate and despised, who was transformed by his recognition of Muḥammad.

Bayán, the: The greatest doctrinal work of the Báb, the Founder of the Bábí Dispensation. It means, literally, Exposition.

Burning Bush: See Exodus 3:2. Symbolic of God's presence in the heart of Moses.

Caiaphas: High priest and president of the court that condemned Jesus.

Canaan: An area of ancient Palestine, situated between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean; sometimes refers to all of Palestine.

Carmel: Refers to Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel, on which Bahá'u'lláh pitched His tent and revealed the Tablet of Carmel, the charter of the world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith. Home to the prophet Elijah, the mountain was extolled by Isaiah as the “mountain of the Lord” to which “all nations shall flow.” Today the mountain is the site of the Shrine of the Báb and the Bahá'í World Center.

City of Certitude: A condition of high spiritual attainment.

Concourse on high: The company of holy souls in the spiritual world.

Constantinople: Present-day Istanbul, Turkey. The former capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Covenant: Generally, an agreement or contract between two or more people, usually formal, solemn, and binding. There are two types of religious covenant. First there is the Greater Covenant. According to Bahá'u'lláh, God has promised always to guide and instruct humanity through a succession of Divine Messengers, Whom humanity has the obligation to accept and obey. Every Manifestation has promised His followers that in the fullness of time a new Manifestation will be sent. There is also a Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him. If they do so, the religion remains united and pure; if they do not, it becomes divided.

In the Bahá'í Dispensation the Greater Covenant refers to the renewal of God's ancient Covenant through the appearance of the twin Manifestations of God—the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh—and the promise of another Manifestation yet to come in the future after the passage of at least a thousand years. The Lesser Covenant, in this case, refers to Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant with His followers, which establishes His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Center of the

Covenant. It confers upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the authority to interpret Bahá’u’lláh’s writings in order to perpetuate the influence of the Bahá’í Faith and to ensure its integrity, safeguard it from division, and stimulate its worldwide growth. The Lesser Covenant also establishes the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice as the twin successors of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Daystar of Muḥammad: An allusion to Muḥammad’s spiritual reality.

Dhabíḥ: Ishmael, famous Bahá’í and brother of Mírzá Jání of Káshán (see *The Dawn-Breakers*).

Divine Elixir: An allusion to the power of faith to confer eternal life upon man; from elixir, traditionally a potion supposed to prolong life indefinitely.

Divine Messenger: Prophet of God; the Great Soul, the All-Perfect One through Whom such a Revelation is given.

Divine Messiah: The Divine King and Deliverer expected by the Hebrews.

Evangel: Refers to the Gospel, the first four books of the New Testament.

Gabriel: Said to be the highest of the angels and to hover over the throne of God and shelter it with his wings.

Ḥusayn: The third Imám, the Martyr of Karbilá.

Imám Ḥusayn: (d. 680 A.D.) In Shí'ih Islam, the third Imám, son of 'Alí and Fáṭimih, grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Imám 'Alí: The first Imám, son-in-law of Muḥammad.

Imáms: The twelve legitimate, hereditary successors of Muḥammad according to Shí'ih Islam.

Isaiah, Book of: See Isaiah 2:10.

Ishmael: The son of Abraham and Hagar; an outcast according to the account in Genesis.

Islám: Literally Obedience to the will of God, the name given to the religion of Muḥammad.

Javád: Ḥájí Siyyid Javád, one of the earliest followers of the Báb, extolled by both the Báb and later by Bahá'u'lláh, Whom he met in Baghdád.

Jesus: (6–4 B.C.—A.D. 30) Recognized by Bahá'ís as a Manifestation of God and the Founder of Christianity. The Bahá'í writings often refer to Jesus as “the Spirit of God” and “the Son.”

Joseph: The son of Jacob, and in the Qur'án an inspired prophet.

Júk, book of: A collection of early historical records, probably Yoga in origin, familiar to Persians of Bahá'u'lláh's time.

Kaaba: The shrine that holds the Black Stone in the Great Mosque at Mecca.

Ka‘b-ibn-i-Ashraf: An implacable foe of Muḥammad, Whose life he sought.

Kamál: Ḥájí Mírzá Kamál, a famous Bábí of high education who met and recognized the station of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdád before His declaration. He wished to tell the news to everyone and was sent back to Persia.

Karbilá: The city in Iraq where the Imám Ḥusayn was martyred and where he is buried. One of the two “supreme shrines,” the other being Najaf.

Kawthar: A river in Paradise; the source of all other rivers.

Kumayl, tradition of: The record of a query on the part of Kumayl, and the responses of Imám ‘Alí, the first Shí‘ih Imám and the fourth Caliph, regarding the nature and definition of truth.

Lamp of God, the: A reference to the Manifestation of God.

Land of Mystery (Adrianople): Present-day Edirne, Turkey, to which Bahá’u’lláh was

exiled in 1863. Designated by Him as the “remote prison,” it was the furthest point from His homeland that He reached, making it the first time in known history that a Messenger of God lived on the European continent.

Letter of the Living: The title given by the Báb to each of His first eighteen disciples.

Manifestation: One who is the “express image” of the perfections and attributes of God.

Mecca: The city where Muḥammad was born and where He declared Himself.

Medina: The city that sheltered Muḥammad and where He is buried; esteemed as second only to Mecca in sanctity.

Mihdí: The title of the Manifestation expected by Islám.

Mosaic Dispensation: In Bahá’í usage, dispensation refers to the divinely ordained period associated with each successive Manifestation of God; hence the Mosaic Dispen-

sation is that period of time associated with Moses up to the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Moses: (circa 1300 B.C.) Founder of Judaism, regarded by Bahá'ís as a Manifestation of God. The Bahá'í writings sometimes refer to Moses as “He who conversed with God.”

Most Great Name, the: Refers to the name Bahá'u'lláh (meaning in Arabic the Glory of God) and its derivative forms, such as Alláh-u-Abhá (meaning God is Most Glorious) and Bahá (meaning glory, splendor, or light).

Most Great Prison: The prison-barracks and prison-city of 'Akká, Israel, in which Bahá'u'lláh, His family, and companions were confined from 31 August 1868 until June 1877.

Muḥammad: Literally The Praised One. The Founder of Islám, the son of 'Abdu'lláh of the family of Hášim, born in Mecca in (it is said) the year 570 A.D.

Mustagháth: Literally He who is invoked. By reference to the numerical value of this

word, the Báb reveals the ninth year of this Era (A.D. 1853) as the date of Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation.

Nabíl-i-A'zam: The Bahá'í title of Muḥammad-i-Zarandí, a devoted follower of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, author of the historical work known as "Nabíl's Narrative."

Nadr-ibn-i-Ḥáarith: An opponent of Muḥammad.

Nimrod: The persecutor of Abraham.

Noah: A Prophet of God; see Gen. 6:10 and Qur'án 11 and 71 for accounts of his life and of the Flood.

Parán: A mountain range north of Sinai; alludes to a place of revelation.

Pentateuch: The first five books of the Bible, attributed to Moses.

Qá'im: The Promised One of Islám.

Qayyúmu'l-Asmá': One of the chief works of the Báb; the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph (Qur'án 12). Regarded by the Bábís as their Qur'án.

Quintessence: The last or highest essence of an object.

Qur'án: (Koran) The holy scripture of Islam, revealed by Muḥammad in Arabic.

Revelation: The unveiling by God to human-kind of something that hitherto was hidden.

Riḍván: Literally Paradise. The name given by Bahá'u'lláh to the garden in Baghdád where He declared His mission; also the name of the annual festival that commemorates the declaration of His mission.

Sadratu'l-Muntahá: Literally The Furthest Tree; a symbol of the Manifestation of God; the name of a tree planted at the end of a road to serve as a guide.

Salmán or **Shaykh Salmán:** Born in southern Persia, an illiterate; he became one of the most beloved and most devoted disciples of

Bahá'u'lláh, Who entrusted him with many dangerous and important missions.

Salsabíl: A fountain in Paradise.

Seal of the Prophets: A title of Muḥammad referring to the close of the Prophetic Cycle.

Sháh: Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh.

Shaykh: Herein, a reference to Shaykh Salmán.

Shí'ih Islám: A sect of Islám distinguished by its spiritual doctrine of the Imámate and represented by the Sháh.

Shoghi Effendi: The title by which Shoghi Rabbani (1 March 1897–4 November 1957), great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh and eldest grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is generally known to Bahá'ís. (Shoghi is an Arabic name meaning “the one who longs”; Effendi is a Turkish honorific signifying “sir” or “master.”) He was appointed Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament and assumed the office upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing in 1921.

Sinai: The mountain where God gave the tables of the Law to Moses; sometimes an emblem of the human heart, which is the place of God's descent.

Sulṭán: Sulṭán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz.

Sunní: Branch of Islám that accepts the authority of the caliphs as leaders of Islám and rejects the claims of the hereditary imáms.

Súriy-i-Ra'ís: A tablet of Bahá'u'lláh in which He addresses 'Alí Páshá, the Grand Vazir of Ottoman Turkey.

Ṭá, Land of : An allusion to Ṭihrán, Ṭá being the initial letter of the name.

Tablet: A term for a sacred epistle containing a revelation. The giving of the Law to Moses on tables or tablets is mentioned in Qur'án 7:142: "We wrote for him (Moses) upon tables (alwah, pl. of lauh) a monition concerning every matter."

Talisman: Literally a charm that drew down the power of heaven to protect its wearer. A symbol of man protected by the power of God.

Torah: The Pentateuch of Moses.

year sixty: Refers to 1260 A.H. / A.D. 1844, the year the Báb declared His mission.

Zá, Land of: An allusion to Zanján, Ẓá being the initial letter of the name.

Zanján: Capital of the district of Khamsih and scene of the martyrdom of some 1,800 followers of the Báb.

Zion: A hill in Jerusalem, the site of the royal residence of David and his successors.

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