

SCRIPTUM:

Newsletter for Bahá'í Librarians & Information Professionals

No. 1 (April 1995 = Jalál 152)

Call for Association among Bahá'í Information Professionals

During the past decade there have been several attempts to bring Bahá'í librarians, archivists and other information professionals together in an association. In the latter half of the 1980s, the Bahá'í World Centre Library built a loose network of interested individuals. This network created a mailing list, initiated some correspondence relating to needs of the World Centre Library, and brought some professional librarians in the Faith into contact with one another. As it was difficult to maintain active coordination from the World Centre, a number of Bahá'í librarians in the United States began to hold meetings during conferences of the American Library Association and other professional organizations. Ralph Wagner was one of the coordinators of that short effort. Although a draft constitution was submitted to the Bahá'í National Center for approval, the effort did not reach fruition. Recently, I was asked to assist the Bosch Bahá'í School Library to train its library staff. The trainees echoed a refrain that has been repeated many times: "How can the World Centre Library's database, subject headings and library expertise be shared with the rest of the Bahá'í libraries?" As former director of the World Centre Library, I knew that such assistance is currently constrained by the workload of the World Centre, and by its limited staff resources. The Universal House of Justice has communicated to me, through its secretariat, the following (letter dated 31 January 1995):

"Prior to the establishment of closer links between the World Centre Library and those outside the World Centre, a pool of professional Bahá'í Librarians needs to be identified and organized into some sort of association in order that the necessary human resources are in place to support such a development. The House of Justice...feels that you are well placed to initiate such an association...."

This is clear guidance that networking and resource-sharing by the Bahá'í World Centre Library (and by other World Centre information agencies such as the Archives) depend upon the creation and strengthening of ties among Bahá'í librarians, archivists and other information workers. The Universal House of Justice's suggestion implies that coordination of such an effort could best be undertaken by someone in a position to foster the association's development, free of the constraints of the World Centre's workload.

I have volunteered to make a beginning at establishing this network and association of librarians, archivists and related professionals. At the moment, there is no formal constitution or structure. The present newsletter, entitled Scriptum, will (God willing) appear every three months during a pilot period of one year. The pages of Scriptum are intended for news, articles on information science topics, descriptions of Bahá'í classifications, case studies, sample cataloging for new publications received at the Bahá'í World Centre Library, and any other features that may prove useful. Please send me:

1. Your comments on the content of this newsletter, and contributions for consideration for publication;
2. Thoughts on what this organization should be called and how it should be organized.
3. Volunteers to assist in the future as the network develops.

Please contact the editor at the address, phone or E-mail listed at the end of the newsletter. Also feel free to inform other librarians, archivists and information professionals in the Faith about this effort.

For this project to continue beyond the one-year pilot, we will need to develop an association structure and spread the workload. The legal office at the Bahá'í National Center has provided me with some model constitutions. I will share these in the next newsletter. In the meantime, expressions of support and offers of assistance will be appreciated and gladly accepted.

The Bahá'í Faith in the Dewey Classification

More than a century ago, Melvil Dewey - father of modern librarianship - developed a classification intended to cover the universe of knowledge. The Dewey Decimal Classification has become, during that century, the most widely used library classification system in the world. What originally began as a fixed classification biased toward North America has become an ever more flexible and responsive tool for detailing the world of knowledge, and is standard classification in many of the world's public libraries.

As the Bahá'í Faith grew, the inadequacy of its treatment in library classifications became a cause of concern to Bahá'ís and scholars who sought Bahá'í publications. Before the 15th edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification (1952), there was no location for the Bahá'í Faith in the classification. In 1952 the 15th edition showed the following:

297 MOHAMMEDANISM
 .8 Bahatism

The inclusion of the Faith, while a step forward, essentially called it a sect of Islam. With edition 16 in 1958, other changes reflected adoption of proper names for Islam and the Bahá'í Faith, and formatting conventions indicated that the Bahá'í Faith is separate from Islam, even though the classification number appeared to include it as a sect:

297 Islam
 8 Sects

.89 Bahai faith

For Bahá'ís this still remained inadequate, essentially filing Bahá'í publications with those on Sunni, Shi'ah, Ahmadiyya, Black Muslims, and the like. With editions 17 (1965) through 19 (1979) there was obviously a greater understanding of the Bahá'í Faith as a "religion derived from Islam":

297 Islam and Religions Derived from It

.8 Islamic sects and other religions derived from Islam

297.87-297.89 Religions derived from Islam

.88 Babism

.89 Bahai faith

However, the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths were still within a portion of the classification that associated them with Islam and its sects. With edition 20 in 1989, a significant reassessment had been made, in which the Bahá'í Faith was removed from immediate association with sects of Islam:

297 Islam and religions originating in it

.8 Islamic sects and reform movements

.9 Religions originating in Islam

.92 Babism

.93 Bahai faith

The only headings for "religions originating in Islam" under 297.9 were the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths, thus at least giving tacit recognition to their fundamentally different character from that of the various Islamic sects. The 21st edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification will be released in 1996. While the numbers at 297.92 and 297.93 remain the same, there will be a change of headings in the classification itself that tacitly recognizes the Faith's independent character, and its equality as a revelation with that of Muhammad:

297 Islam, Babism, Bahai faith

.8 Islamic sects and reform movements

.9 Babism, Bahai faith

.92 Babism

.93 Bahai faith

In essence, the Faith is now assigned all numbers within 297.9, and is shown in the formatting as equal to Islam. This is an extremely important achievement for the Faith for several reasons: (1) it clearly separates the Faith from Islamic sects; (2) it shows the Faith's independence by assigning an entire decimal to the Faith; (3) the heading for 297 now includes Bábí and Bahá'í revelations as equal to Islam; (4) it opens the way for future growth of Bahá'í topics; (5) and it ultimately makes possible the complete movement of the Bahá'í Faith to a separate number outside of 297, which growth of the Faith is destined to make necessary.

Over a period of more than a decade, the Bahá'í World Centre Library has cultivated a working relationship with the major library classification agencies. The work with the Dewey Decimal Classification has been very cordial, particularly because the Bahá'í professionals who have conducted the relationship understand the difficulty of fitting all knowledge into a numbering system based upon divisions of ten (thus the "decimal" classification). The Universal House of Justice has assigned to the Bahá'í World Centre Library the responsibility for dealing with library classification agencies, and this remains one of its most important areas of endeavor.

-- William Collins

Bosch Bahá'í School Library

The Bosch Bahá'í School in Santa Cruz, California, is located in a beautiful redwood grove in the mountains above the Pacific. Four volunteers have been assisting the school in developing its library.

For several years, the school has used a classification developed by a volunteer. Recently, the school decided it wanted to investigate the possibility of using the Bahá'í World Centre Library's classification for Bahá'í materials, which is based on the Library of Congress classification. In December 1994, I had the distinct privilege of spending a long weekend training the volunteers in the use of the World Centre's system.

The Bosch Library is undoubtedly going to develop into a rich resource for study. Already, the school has received donations of the libraries of David Hofman (retired member of the Universal House of Justice) and Marzieh Gail (translator and author).

The school's library is undergoing renovation to create a more secure environment for the collections, and to facilitate the provision of reference service to the school's attendees.

Among other projects, the volunteers at the School are researching possible PC-based computer systems for cataloging, with the intent of choosing an inexpensive but flexible program that can serve the current needs of the school.

-- William Collins

Library-of-Congress Based Bahá'í Classification

The Library of Congress Classification system was inadequate for the Bahá'í World Centre to use in its current form. Its classification numbers were as follows:

BP300 PERIODICALS

BP310 SOCIETIES

COLLECTIONS. COLLECTED WORKS

BP320 Several authors

BP325 Individual authors

BP327 DICTIONARIES. ENCYCLOPEDIAS

HISTORY

BP330 General works

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BP330 GENERAL WORKS

BP340 Babism

HISTORY By region or country

BP350 United States

BP352 By state, A-W

BP355 Other regions or countries, A-Z

BP360 WRITINGS OF THE BAB, BAHÁ'U'LLAH AND 'ABDU'L-BAHA

BP365 GENERAL WORKS

BP370 GENERAL SPECIAL

BP375 ADDRESSES, ESSAYS, LECTURES

BP377 MISCELLANEOUS

BP380 DEVOTIONS. DIRECTIONS, etc.

BIOGRAPHY

BP390 Collective

Individual

BP391 The Báb

BP392 Bahá'u'lláh

BP393 'Abdu'l-Bahá

BP395 Other individual, A-Z

Because of the inadequacy of the Library of Congress's existing classification, the World Centre undertook a revision of the Bahá'í section to make it more palatable in a Bahá'í library.

Following is a summary of the main classification numbers of the World Centre's classification, based upon the Library of Congress Classification. Users of the classification should obtain the full schedule.

BP300 PERIODICALS

BP302 STATISTICS

BP303 PROGRAMS

Collections of Bahá'í programs to be used in Bahá'í feasts, holy days, commemorations, etc.

BP304 CONGRESSES, CONVENTIONS, REGIONAL MEETINGS

BP305 DIRECTORIES

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- BP305 DIRECTORIES
- BP306 EXHIBITIONS
- BP309 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- BP310 SOCIETIES, CLUBS, ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.
- BP320 COLLECTIONS: Several authors
- BP325 COLLECTIONS: Individual authors
- BP327 DICTIONARIES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, YEARBOOKS, THESAURI
- BP329 CHRONOLOGIES, READY REFERENCES, REFERENCE COMPILATIONS
- BP330 HISTORY
- BP356 TRAVELOGUES
- BP358 PILGRIMS' NOTES
- BP360 HOLY TEXTS AND INTERPRETATION
Compilations from works by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi; class compilations on specific topics with those topics.
- BP361 Writings of the Báb
- BP362 Writings of Bahá'u'lláh
- BP363 Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- BP364 Letters and works by Shoghi Effendi
- BP365 GENERAL WORKS
- BP366 DOCTRINES, THEOLOGY
- BP367 BAHAI' LAW
- BP368 Laws of personal status
- BP369 Devotional practices; worship
- BP370 SPECIAL SUBJECTS
- BP371 BAHAI' EDUCATION
- BP372 BAHAI' FAITH AND OTHER RELIGIONS
- BP373 TEACHING-PROPAGATING THE BAHAI' FAITH
- BP374 SOCIAL TEACHINGS
- BP375 ADDRESSES, ESSAYS, LECTURES

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- BP376 SPECIFIC CLASSES OF PEOPLE
 - BP377 JUVENILE (CHILDREN'S) LITERATURE
 - BP378 FOLKLORE, LEGENDS, MYTHOLOGY, ORAL TRADITION
 - BP380 ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER; GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH
 - BP381 Guardianship
 - BP382 Rulers
 - BP383 Learned
 - BP384 Other institutions
 - BP385 MEDITATIONS
 - BP386 INSPIRATIONAL WORKS
 - BP387 MUSIC
 - BP388 ART AND ARTISTS (VISUAL ARTS)
 - BP389 ARCHITECTURE
 - BP390 BIOGRAPHY
 - BP391 The Báb
 - BP392 Bahá'u'lláh
 - BP393 'Abdu'l-Bahá
 - BP394 Shoghi Effendi
 - BP395 Other individuals
 - BP397 MISCELLANEA
 - BP398 OPPOSITION, DEFENSE
 - BP399 COVENANT-BREAKER WORKS
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Sample Catalog Records from the Bahá'í World Centre

It is my hope to include, on a regular basis, sample cataloging prepared by the World Centre Library for recent publications.

Bahá'u'lláh, 1817-1892.

[Kitáb-i-aqdas. English]

The Kitáb-i-aqdas = The Most Holy Book / Bahá'u'lláh -- Haifa : Bahá'í World Centre, c1992 (Ann

The Kitáb-i-Aqdas – The Most Holy Book / Bahá'u'lláh. – Haifa : Bahá'í World Centre, 1992 (Ann Arbor, Mich. : Edward Brothers).

viii, 296 p. ; 23 cm.

I. Title. II. Title: The Most Holy Book. III. Title: A Synopsis and codification of the laws and ordinances of the Kitáb-i-aqdas. V. Bahá'u'lláh, 1817-1892. / [Su'ál va javáb. English] BP 362 .K6 A2 ENG 1992

Nelson, Lee, 1955-.

A Concordance to the Kitáb-i-aqdas / compiled by Lee Nelson. -- Golden, Colo. : Diversity Press, c1993.

[6], 250 p. ; 28 cm.

1. BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, 1817-1892. / KITAB-I-AQDAS -- CONCORDANCES 2. BAHAI FAITH -- SCRIPTURES -- CONCORDANCES. I. Title.

BP 362 .K64 N55 1993

Hatcher, John S.

The Arc of ascent : the purpose of physical reality II / by John S. Hatcher. -- Oxford : George Ronald, c1994.

xiii, [1] 385 p. ; 22 cm.

1. THEODICY. 2. BAHAI FAITH -- DOCTRINE -- JUSTICE. 3. BAHAI FAITH -- DOCTRINE -- CREATION. 4. BAHAI FAITH -- DOCTRINE -- NATURE. 5. COSMOLOGY. 6. BAHAI FAITH -- DOCTRINE -- LIFE AFTER DEATH. 7. BAHAI FAITH -- DOCTRINE -- GOOD AND EVIL. I. Title. II. Title: The Purpose of physical reality II.

BP 366.4 .H381 1994

Publications of interest

1. *The Bahá'í World Centre Library*. -- Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre Library, 1989.

Introductory brochure explaining collections and policies of the library, available from the World Centre.

2. *A Classification for the Bahá'í Faith*. -- Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre Library, 1988.

Early version of the World Centre Library's Bahá'í classification based upon the Library of Congress system; copies of the most recent version are available from the editor.

3. "The Bahá'í World Centre Library," *Journal of Religious and Theological Information*, v.1 no.2 (1993), pp. 77-89.

Introduction to the World Centre's library, intended for an audience of theological librarians.

4. "Classification for Materials on the Bahá'í Religion: A B200' Schedule Based on the Dewey Decimal Classification - Part 1," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, v.16 no.4 (1993), pp. 103-121; "Classification for Materials on the Bahá'í Religion: A B200' Schedule Based on the Dewey Decimal Classification - Part 2" *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, v.18 no.2 (1993), pp. 71-86

Journal Classification: Part 2, *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, v.10 no.2 (1989), pp. 171-80.

Sample classification for the Faith based upon Dewey Decimal Classification.

5. "Effects of Computerization Requirements on the Bahá'í Classification Scheme in Use at the Bahá'í World Centre," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, v.11 no.2 (1990), pp. 69-83.

Study of the relationship between automation and subject classification.

6. Guidelines for Bahá'í Archives. -- Wilmette, Ill.: National Bahá'í Archives, Bahá'í National Center, 1983.

Excellent introduction to the management of archival collections, especially geared to non-professionals in local communities.

Editorial Contact

William Collins
6819 Stoneybrooke Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306 USA

The editor has been a Bahá'í for 26 years. He has an M.S.L.S. from Syracuse University, and an M.S.Sc. from Syracuse University. He has worked at the Middlebury College Library (1973-1976), the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (1976-1977), the Bahá'í World Centre Library (1977-1990), and the Library of Congress (1991-present). He is the author of a bibliography of works on the Faith covering 1844-1985.

Telephone:
1-703-765-9115 (home)
1-202-707-8044 (work)

Email:
wpc09@hotmail.com

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