

■ FRIDAY

7:30 Doing and understanding Bahā'ī scholarship: open forum discussion.

8.00 Todd Lawson (Montreal, Canada).
The Hidden Words and the Hidden Words

Bahā'u'llāh's *Hidden Words* (originally known as *The Hidden Book of Fāṭimah*) is one of the most beloved works of Bahā'ī scripture. In this brief presentation I would like to compare this work with an early work entitled *The Hidden Words* by one of the more influential scholars of later Shi'ism, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d.1680). It is suggested that the differences between the two works point to essential differences between the Teachings of Bahā'u'llāh and the general nature of Shi'ī orthodoxy. This is not to say that all of the ideas and teachings in Fayḍ Kāshānī's *Hidden Words* have been rejected or condemned by Bahā'u'llāh. Rather, many of them live on in this later work but in a more universalized and accessible form. It is suggested that the title of Bahā'u'llāh's Work actually invites such a comparison in order to emphasize that the Islam of His time and place had become far too parochial and communalistic, and that the true spirit of Islam had been disguised and hidden beneath an excessive Imam-worship that was pressed into the service of a xenophobic and nationalistic religio-political identity. It is of the utmost importance, however, to observe that the Bahā'ī teachings insist upon an informed and sincere respect for Islamic intellectual history. This is most clearly exemplified in the many references to this earlier Shi'ī work of Fayḍ Kāshānī by the prolific and influential Bahā'ī scholar 'Abdu'l-Ḥamīd Isḥrāq-Khāvarī who frequently cites it in the process of commenting on such central books as the *Kitāb-i Ṭqān*.

■ SATURDAY

10.00 Barney Leith (Sec. NSA. UK)
The More We Are Together: the Politics and Practicalities of Bahā'ī Involvement in Inter-religious Collaboration.

On 3rd November Prime Minister Tony Blair attended a gala Diwālī celebration in London, where he spoke positively about the increasingly multi-faith nature of the UK. Increasingly the leaders of the faith communities understand the importance of co-existence, dialogue and collaboration. A growing number of interfaith organizations provide for a setting in which dialogue can take place and collaboration be planned. This raises a number of important questions for Bahā'ī involvement in what is essentially an inter-religious 'political' process. For example: Is there a tension between Bahā'ī hegemonist aspirations and the need for co-existence? Does the 'equal value' or 'many paths to one goal' position (necessary for co-existence and collaboration) compromise the Bahā'ī theological position of religion as a historically evolving process? This paper will raise these and other questions and attempt some preliminary answers.

11.30 Sholeh A. Quinn, Dept. of History, Ohio University
Persian Historiography and the Bābī-Bahā'ī Chronicle Tradition: Some Preliminary Observations

Although the study of Bābī and Bahā'ī historiography is still in its very early stages, a number of scholars, going back to E.G. Browne, have written about, translated, and analyzed a number of Bābī and Bahā'ī chronicles. Some preliminary and essential work, such as establishing the relationship between some of the more important narratives, has been done. Furthermore, scholars have presented theories regarding the nature of Bābī and Bahā'ī historiography. This paper seeks to situate that scholarship within the context of earlier chronicle traditions of Persian historical writing: namely, Safavid and post-Safavid historiography. Safavid historiography is itself a continuation of earlier traditions of Timurid historical writings. To what extent did these traditions survive in Bābī/Bahā'ī historiography? How do recent conclusions made by a number of scholars regarding the nature of pre-modern and early modern Persian historiography compare with conclusions reached by scholars of the Bābī/Bahā'ī tradition?

1.00 LUNCH

2.30 Necati Alkan. (Germany, Ruhr University Bochum; currently SOAS)
Young Ottomans, Young Turks and the Bahā'ī Faith, 1860s-1922.

This research attempts to examine the contacts and convergence of ideas between the Young Ottoman and Young Turkish reform movements and the Bahā'īs. The Young Ottomans, a group of Western educated Ottoman intellectuals in the 1860s who were influenced by current European ideologies like liberalism and constitutionalism criticised and opposed the "Tanzimat" or reforms which they thought were not democratic and imposed from above by some Pashas imitating the West. During their banishment to different places certain Young Ottomans came in contact with the Bahā'īs in the 1870s which they mention in their letters or memoirs. An important role among the Young Turks who inherited the ideas of the Young Ottoman movement, was played by Abdullah Cevdet, a radical freethinker who wrote an article in which he attacked Islam and suggested the Bahā'ī Faith as a world religion. Due to his "anarchist" thoughts he put on trial and thus aroused considerable public attention.

4.00 Moojan Momen (UK).
An Account of the Activities and an Analysis of the Role of Jamāl Effendi in the Propagation of the Bahā'ī Faith in Asia*

Jamāl Effendi (Sulaymān Khān Tunukābunt) was the first to teach the Bahā'ī Faith extensively throughout India. There have been widely differing opinions about him in the Bahā'ī community. Some have praised his efforts and expressed admiration for the teaching of the Bahā'ī Faith that he carried through India, South-East and Central Asia. Others have expressed scepticism about his efforts, pointing out that comparatively few people became confirmed Bahā'īs through his activities and have even hinted at questions about his probity. In this paper, there is an attempt to marshal the facts that are known about his life and activities. Some new sources of information are introduced. In summary, it may be said that, although ideas about the success of the efforts of Jamāl Effendi may have been exaggerated in certain accounts, he did

nevertheless succeed in establishing the Bahā'ī Faith in the hearts of individuals and small groups of people across a very wide area of the Indian sub-continent as well as proclaiming the Bahā'ī Faith across a much wider area including Central Asia and South-East Asia. Some analysis is carried out of Jamāl Effendi's methods of propagating the Bahā'ī Faith and a comparison is made with certain other Baha'is who carried out similar activities in other parts of the world.

5.30 PANEL DISCUSSION.

■ 8.00 'BARBEQUE', ASCETICISM, WHIRLING?

■ SUNDAY

11.00 Stephen Lambden (Dept. Relig. Stud. Univ. Newcastle upon Tyne).
End-time Catastrophe and Millennium: Some aspects of Apocalyptic
Eschatology and its Bābī-Bahā'ī interpretation.

The first part of this paper will focus upon Biblical and Islamic prediction of eschatological catastrophe and their Bābī-Bahā'ī interpretations. This as expected in the Abrahamic religions; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Bible, the Qur'ān and various associated traditions indicate that a divine theophany, a messianic theophany will take place in the 'last days'. There will be various accompanying "signs" and portents signaling the 'end of the world' and precipitating the partial or wholesale reordering of existing earthly and/or cosmic order. The Bābī-Bahā'ī interpretation and/or demythologisation of such expectations will be sketched. The second part of this paper will consider recurrent Abrahamic millennial chronologies in the light of claims of eschatological, millennial fulfilment. The abandonment and/or (successive) reinterpretation(s) of these millennial chronologies by diverse religionists will be reviewed as will the Bahā'ī adoption and (re-) interpretation of millennial chronological schemes.

1.00 Lunch & Visit to the grave of E.G. Browne.

2.30 Roger Prentice (UK)
Black Rain on the temple roof.

The Bahā'ī Faith is a re-statement of the ancient truths of religion. It is also an agency for the spiritualization of humankind:

O peoples of the world! The Sun of Truth hath risen to illumine the whole earth, and to spiritualize the community of man. (SWAB:1)

This presentation explores some possibilities for how the Bahā'ī Teachings might guide the process of spiritualizing education. It suggests what is wrong with education and what conceptual framework might define spiritualized education and provide a re-alignment of educational aims. Spiritualization as being synonymous with humanization and holization is explored in relation to meaning-making as the core element..

4.00 OPEN FORUM & FUTURE SEMINARS.
