

**SELECT ABSTRACTS**

■ **Morten Bergsmo**

**Some remarks on the foundational study of terms pertinent to the philosophy of law--such as “law,” “justice,” and “commandment” in Babi-Baha’i scriptural texts--as an introduction to a discourse on ways interested academics can co-operate to prepare the ground for systematic study of what may amount to a concept of law in Baha’i writings.**

■ **Stephen Lambden (Univ. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK).**

**Cosmological, Scriptural and Theophanological Dimensions of *Lawh* (“Tablet”) and *Lawh al-mahfuz* (“Preserved Tablet”) in Abrahamic and Babi-Baha’i Scripture.**

■ **Moojan Momen (Sandy, UK).**

**Messianic Concealment and Theophanic Disclosure.**

In this paper, I start by discussing a controversy that has erupted recently over the issue of the exact point in time that Bahá'u'lláh became aware of his mission. The controversy revolves around the translation of a phrase in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which appear to state that he does not have any "amr". One side to the controversy claims that the translation of this phrase indicates that Bahá'u'lláh had no thought of advancing any claim as late as 1857, while the opposing party contends that this is a mistranslation of the phrase and that Bahá'u'lláh was fully aware of his mission from at least the time of his imprisonment in the Siyáh-Chál. I intend to show in this paper that the whole controversy is an illusory one caused by the specific nature of the meaning of the word "amr" and that the phrase that is the subject of dispute proves neither side's case, however it is translated. Evolving out of my discussion of this issue, is a theological schematic of the stages of the evolution of the mission of those persons that Bahá'ís call Manifestations of God. I then putatively impose this schematic upon the dispensation of the Báb creating a new interpretation of his ministry.

■ **Roger Prentice (Burnlaw, UK).**

**“But How Do You See.....? Dialogue as the Core Process, Relationship and Reality in Manifesting the Potential of the Baha’i Revelation”**

Starting with a distinction apparently upheld by Baha’u’llah, between His Revelation and His Revealed Word, in this passage from *Gleanings*:

“Say the first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self.  
Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either

the one or the other He hath established the words He hath revealed as proof of His reality and truth.” (GI 105)

I will sketch out the view that, in the process of manifesting the potentialities of His Revelation, dialogue is the process and relationship, and therefore reality. I will suggest that this is so, at at least three levels; the interpersonal, the intra-personal and the cosmic. At the interpersonal - I will suggest that dialogue is the means by which we come to know within social milieu. At the intrapersonal - I will suggest that it is ‘inner dialogue’ that ‘Abdu’l-Baha describes as mediation. At the cosmic level - I will suggest that there are some grounds for considering that the first two are ‘in the image’ of God’s dynamic relationship with His creation. I will suggest the dialogic process is not only the given instrument in human reality for individual learning but also the indispensable means for the progress of the Baha’i Faith and of humankind as a whole. In addition to Baha’i writings, and other academic writers, I will draw on the work of Nicholas C. Burbules, Professor, Dept. Of Educational Policy Studies, University of Illinois, especially his book *Dialogue in Teaching; theory and practice*, (1993), pub. Teacher College Press, Columbia University, NY & London.

■ **Sholeh A. Quinn (Ohio University).**

#### **The Conversion of Sayyid Yahya Darabi, Vahid: a Historiographical Analysis.**

What happens when a historian is confronted with several versions of the same historical episode? Several Babi writers narrate the conversion Sayyid Yahya Darabi “Vahid” after his meeting with the Bab. This paper will examine the various narratives, noting significant similarities and differences. Particular attention will be focused on Mulla Ja’far Qazvini’s account, including a discussion of the importance of local histories.

■ **Ismael Velasco (Edinburgh, UK).**

#### **Bleak heartbreak, royal challenge, Baha'u'llah's First Tablet to Napoleon.**

Baha'u'llah's first tablet to Napoleon III remains unpublished, and consequently relatively unknown, notwithstanding its historic importance. In an out of print edition of 'Abdu'l-Baha's French disciple, Hippolyte Dreyfus Barney, a translation of the most crucial passages of this tablet are found. Comparison with the excerpts of this tablet translated by Shoghi Effendi in his *The Promised Day is Come*, shows the Dreyfus translation to have been exceptionally faithful, and therefore relatively reliable - in the absence of an original language source. This paper will translate into English this partial French translation of the tablet, discuss the treatment of this tablet by Baha'u'llah, 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi, and contextualise it against its historical backdrop. Further questions will be formulated for future clarification and research.

---