Dar rumûz-i ism-i a`żam of Shaykh Bahá’í

or

Bahá’ al-Dín al-‘Amlí (d. Isfahan c. 1031/1622)

ON THE SECRETS OF THE MIGHTIEST NAME [OF GOD]:

A POEM OF SHAYKH BAHA’I

Trans. Stephen N. Lambden (2006-7)

Textual corrections or better mss. of the Dar rumûz-i ism-i a`żam of Shaykh Bahá’í

or of corrections to the translation would be greatly appreciated and should be sent to slambden@ucmerced.edu

Text translated from that printed in Kulliyát-i ash’âr va âthâr-i fârsî. ed. Ghulâm Husayn Javâhiri. [Tehran]: Intishârát-i Maḥmûdî, 1372/1993, pages 93-99. Many thanks to Dr. Sholeh Quinn and Manijeh Samandari-Quinn and others for assistance with the translation. Errors, of course, remain my own. Further good mss. need to be consulted and the text of a good critical edition established before an assured translation can be made. The text and translation typed below remain very provisional and the latter will be constantly revised and corrected. In due course a commentary on this work of Shaykh Bahá’í will also be posted.

It will be evident from the poem translated below that though Shaykh Bahá’í believed himself privy to the secrets mystery of the al-ism al-a`zam (Per. ism-i a`zam), the Mightiest Name of God, he gave out wide-ranging intimations of its secrets and nature (see line 102). His many different statements are based on variant traditions about the Mightiest Name that cannot all, if at all, be conflated. They are different facets of a larger divine secret which through contemplation he believed he had penetrated. On reading his poem one remains in a state of awe over this matter but with plenty to contemplate and puzzle over. A good many of the cryptic remarks of Shaykh Bahá’í are rooted in variant Shi`i traditions about the nature and power ism-i a`zam. The mystery of this Name is related to the Islamic basmala ("In the Name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate") and to various Qur’anic verses and Attributes of God such as al-Qayyûm (loosely, "The Self-Subsisting"). For some it is the personal Name of God Allah but for many it is something beyond that as variously spelled out in perhaps fifty or more statements attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and various of the twelve Imams. For most it remains an impenetrable
eschatological mystery. Shaykh Bahá’í and other Shi’i writers and initiates however, such as Raḍí al-Dín ‘Alī ibn Músā ibn Ṭawús al-Hasaní al-Ḥilli (d. 664/1226), claimed knowledge of the secret of the Mightiest Name of God.

Shaykh Bahá’í often dwelt on the fact that Names including the Mightiest Name of God are composed of letters of the alphabet which, when configured appropriately, can unleash tremendous power and bestow untold blessings. How many letters there are in the al-ism al-a’zam, what they are, and in which script(s) they might be written is variously stated in arcane texts and often conflicting traditions. In Islamic gnosis the power of the Mightiest Name is said to be supreme. The poem of Shaykh Bahá’í often repeats this well-known fact and meditates upon its mystical implications. The great Prophets performed miracles through knowledge and recitation of the Mightiest Name. Noah, Jethro, Amram-‘Imrān, Moses, Jesus and others are counted among these initiates by Shaykh Bahá’í. He himself revealed his own thoughts on this matter perhaps when around 71 years of age (see line 64). He hoped that sincere supplicants of God might pray for him in gratitude for his communicating his mystical insights on the Mightiest Name.

In Shi’i treatises and traditions the Mightiest Name of God is sometimes expressed in graphic forms often rooted in a somewhat cryptic poem ascribed to of Imam `Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 40/661). One of its forms is made up of seven or eight sigla (with something like 14 elements) which has been drawn out as follows:

Prayer to God with the Mightiest Name is reckoned most effective and powerful. It is stated that it ever brings speedy answers or results (cf. Dar Rumuz line 8).

Last corrected Feb. 11th 2009

[1]

ای دو عالم بیک امر از تو تمام
کاینات از تو به تنسيق و نظام

O two worlds!
With a single command from Thee were we complete;
for through Thee the realms of existence (kāīnāt) were ordered (tansīq) and arranged (niẓām)!

[2]

هَرْجَهُ بِرَخَاطَتِ اِز اِیَن تَسِع بِسَاطَ وَ اَنْچِهُ بِبِدَاطَتِ اِز اِیَن هَفَت رَبَاطَ

Whatsoever came to be of these nine extended zones (bisāt);
And whatsoever was generated through these seven way stations (ribāt),

[3]

پیش ذاتت بركوع و بسجود
همه از جود تو دارند وجود

Through Thy Bounty (jūd) do they all have existence (wujūd);
Before Thine Essence are they all genuflected (bi-rukū`) and prostrate (bi-sujūd).

[4]

چشم بر لطف عمیمت داریم
چون بِه هَسْتی زتَوْ در آثارِیم

Since existence derives from Thee, in our own image-identities (āthār),
Does the eye seek the benevolence of Thine Abundance (luṭf-i ṣamīmat).

[5]

حرف جم و عدد اوسط چو چان
نُزَد اَهْل خَرْد و اَهْل عِیان
For the people of wisdom (ahl-i khirad) and the people of insight (ahl-i `ayān);

The letter “J” (jīm) and its number (= abjad 3) betoken Soul-Spirit-Life (chū jān).

That is to say, if the Names of the Letters (asmā`-i ḥurūf) did not exist (a[g]a[r nabūd),

The depth of [our] supplications (sirr-i da`wāt) would in no wise be established.

The trace-image configurations of the Name (āthār-i ism) [would be evident] in every measure (bi-har andāza);

No matter what melody (bi-har āvāza) you should sing it in.

For no doubt (shakk) is there that, in the quickest fashion (asra-i ḥāl) would the [Divine] response (iğābat) [to the supplicants prayer] be attained, without [the slightest] inattention (bi-ihmāl)

[on the part of God]!
The treasure of the Divine Mysteries (ganj-i asrār-i ilāhī) are [expressed] in (a) letter(s) (ḥarf)!

The Jewel of the Kingly Treasury (jawhar-i makhzan-i shāhī) are indeed a/the letter (s) (ḥarf)!

Thirty six letters (ḥarf) [= 29 + 7 = 36 = 3x12], [there are] whether spoken or heard;

A person could never attain the limits of their secret configurations [ciphers] (rumūz-ash).

The infinitude (nāmutanāhī) of their [alphabetical] configurations (āthār-ash)

are inexhaustible;

The one who makes advantageous utilization (muntafi`) thereof [will benefit]

whether [they be] of the elect (khwāsṣ) or common folk (`avāmm),
[Such shall be even as] The Legislator of the World (shārī-yi `ālam), the Locus [Elect One] of Jabarūt

(the “Empyrean heaven”) (khāṣṣ-i jabarūt);

The Conqueror of the World (fāṭih-i ālam), the King-Angel of Lāhūt- (“the Divine realm”)

(malak-i lāhūt)!

[13]

سر ناسوت از این در خطر است جان ملکوت از این در حذر است

The Mind of this world (sar-i nāsūt) is in danger [turmoil] (khaṭar) over that;

The very Soul-Life of the Kingdom (jān-i malakūt) is in dread (ḥadhar) thereof.

[14]

نطق هر ذره از این در قال است داند این هر که زاهل حال است

The articulation of every [human] potential [atom] (har dharra) is utterance (qāl)

through that [Ultimate Reality];

Whoever is of the people of ecstasy [Sufis] (ahl-i ḥāl) is well aware of that.

[15]

هر چه پیداست در این دیردو راه نیست بی جلوه اسماء الله

Whatsoever is evident in this mortal world (dayr) of twofold ways (dū-rāh);

Is not deprived of the Splendor of the Names of God (jilwah-i asmā’ Allāh).
[16]

The [trace-image] configurations are many in this world of dust;
Such are understood by the custodians of mystic meaning (ahl-i ma`ānī).

[17]

The Mightiest Name (ism-i a`żam) is that which is hidden from [mortal]
understanding (naẓar);
For the totality of human Intellects are uninformed about it.

[18]

One thousand and one Names (alif va yek nām) has the Justice Distributor [God];
Each one being a benefit when so required.

[19]

One of these [Names] is allotted to [each] one of the Prophets (payghambar);
[Including] The father of the mother [maternal grandfather] of Moses from the desert (az barr) [= Jethro].

[20]

مادر موسى عمران چون زاد پدر ان نام بدختیر بنهاد

The mother of Moses (mādar-i mūsā) when she beget ʿImrān [Amran];
The father that Name on a daughter bestowed [= Mary = Daughter of ʿImrān]

[21]

لیک میداشت نهان ازهمه کس پدرش بود از ان واقف و بس

Nevertheless He kept it hidden from every [other] person;
Although her father [ʿImrān = Amran] was assuredly well-aware thereof?

[22]

یافت عمران شرف وصلت ان تا بفرمان خداوند جهان

Through the decree (firmān) of the God of this world (khudāvand-i jahān),
Did ʿImrān achieve the honor of attainment (sharaf-i vāslat) thereto

[23]

که بود اعظم اسماء الله شد از ان اسم مقدس آگاه
He was made aware of that Sanctified Name

Which is the Mightiest of the Names of God (a`żam asmā’ Allāh)

[24]

بِحَقَ حَرْمَتِ ذَاتِ اِنْ اسم

He said, ‘O Lord! Through the attributes of this [Mightiest] Name (bi-ṣifāt-i in ism),
Nigh the Real One (bi-ḥaqq) [do I pray] in reverence (ḥurmat) for the quintessence of this
[Mightiest] Name (dhāt-i ism) [saying]:

[25]

صَاحِبُ مَعْرِفَتِ وَ عَلْمٍ وَ وَقَار

‘Give me then a son (pesārī) with Powerful capacity (bā miqdār);
[= Moses son of ʾImrān = Amram]
A Master of deep Gnosis (ma`rifat), knowledge (ʿilm) and modesty too (waqār).

[26]

مَرْسَلُ خَوْدَ سَاَز او را

Make him a Prophet (nabī), a Sent-Messenger (mursal) of Thine,
In every circumstance (bāb) do Thou nurture him.’

http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/BIBLIOGRAPHY-HYP/15-SAFAVID/Shay...
So the Lord of Glory (rabb-i jalîl) did give him a son (pisarî) [e.g. Moses].

He cast his [Moses’] Pharaonic garments into the Nile (cf. “mournig”, St. 351).

Noah, through the Blessing of this Name (ism) and [its] Attributes (ṣifāt),

Was saved (najāt) from the destruction of water (maḥlaka-i āb).

Moses through [the power of but] a Sunbeam (partū) of this Name

attained unto the Mount [Sinai] (ṯūr).

[There] He found that [theophanic] conversation [with God] (guftār)

to be a theophany of Light (tajallī bā nūr).

When Jesus through this Name addressed the dead;
They found life (ḥayāt) through but a vestige of the Name (athar-i ism).

[31]

هرچه در عالم از این اسم بپیامَ کنوز الاسمیات

Whatever is in the world is upstanding (bīpā) through this [Mightiest] Name,
Because this Name upholds the treasures of the Names (kunūz al-asma‘).

[32]

این درازنده صدف اسرار است

بی بدل چون گهر شهر هم این است

This Pearl (durr) is of the nine gems of the mysteries (ṣadaf-i asrār).
Changeless (bī badal) are they as a royal jewel without peer (gahar- i shahvār).

[33]

و ه چ اسم است که بسیار کسی

نیستش بر سر این دسترست

Oh! What a Name it is that many persons,
Cannot even hope to attain the ability to penetrate this mystery.

[34]
Its characteristics (khāšiyathā-esh) are without end;
The mystic knowers (ārifān) are wise ones (dānāyyān) on its account.

[35]

زائ توان يافت بسنچ اجمل

The setting of the horizons, be they of good or bad omen;
Through that [Name] one may discover the most auspicious [all-beautiful] of outcomes
(bi-sinaj-i ajmal).

[36]

سم خاصی استکه اسرار جهان

The chosen [Mightiest] Name it is whereby the Mysteries of Existence (asrār-i jahān);
Are hidden within the Treasury of its Letters (kanz-i hurūf-esh).

[37]

کس چه داند که چه اسرارست این

Who then is aware of what mysteries they are?
Tis this the chosen [Name] among the multitude of the pious ones (zumra(t)-yi abrār).

[38]
The pronunciation of this Name, when you repeat it;
When you apply it to letters and numbers,

You [thereby] open the lock of every matter through intent
Through its Bounty (fayḍ) you shall achieve eternal happiness (ma-dămā an delshad)

Fourteen benefits are bestowed through this Name;
The first (avvalīn) is thine ability to open the talisman.

Thine enemy will be scattered like mercury (sīmāb);
You can stop [through the Mightiest Name] a flood with your blowing.
If you should recite it [the Mightiest Name] with veracity and certitude;
All of the treasure(s) of the earth (ganj-i zamīn) would be revealed.

The jinn then become thy associates (muṣāḥib);
Saints (awliyā’), one and all, join with thee.

All creation becomes subservient before thee;
[Even] Ceasar of Rome would become thy servant (bandah).

All creatures become obedient to thee;
Alchemy also would become your share (naṣīb).
[46]

هیچ علمی بتو مشکل نشود
یکمی حق ز تو غافل نشود

No science (‘ilmī) will be difficult for you;
The One True [God] (ḥaqq) will not forget you for a moment.

[47]

دین و دنیای تو گردید اباد
متصل بالب خندان دل شاد

Lips always smiling and thy heart happy;
Your religion (dīn) and the world (dunyā) become eternal (ābād) [for you].

[48]

لیک هر کس بطراطی دیگر
دارد از حالت این اسم خبر

But everybody has another way;
Of knowing the nature of this [Mightiest] Name.

[49]

سر اسماء حروفش پتمام
نتوان گفت مبادا که عوام

The mystery of the Names, all of their Letters;
Should not be communicated on account of the common folk (‘avāmm).

[50]

خلق را بهده آزار کند مطلع گشته بدان کار کند

For they, on becoming aware (mutala’) [of this secret],
Would want to utilize it and vainly damage creation (khalq).

[51]

تا نیاید اثرش جاهل خام امر خاصان نتوان گفت بعام

One should not communicate the concern (amr) of the elite ones (khāşān)
to the common folk (‘āmm);
Such that crude, ignorant persons (jāhil) are prevented from discovering its trace
configurations (āthār).

[52]

چو بیابند از این اسم مجال باشد از حسن عمل اهل کمال

It is appropriate to the excellence (ḥusn) of the people of perfection (ahl-i kamāl);
That they find strength through this [Mightiest] Name.

[53]
They go not out from the path of equity;
Neither do they commit bad things.

In action they do not pursue bad things;
They ponder not over the way of troublesome things (bāb-i īdhā).

Each person has indicated this [Mightiest] Name,
In a way that is clear to him.

Jochebed [? Bukheva?] said that the Truth [of the Name] (ḥaqq) is in the Torah [Bible] (tawrāt);
In the Šuḥuf ("scriptural leaves") her God called [her name] Yochwāt

[= Jochebed = the wife of Moses?]:

[54]
[55]
[56]
[57]
Read [about] Ḥānna [bint Fāqūdh] (= Anna mother of Mary) [see Q. 3:35] in the Sūrahs of the Evangel (injil);

In truth it is both this and that!

Twas read Ṭayyūm and by another Qayyūm (Ar. Self-Subsisting);

A Maghribi (N-African) said, ‘He is Ḥayyūm’.

He is famous among the Arabs as Bar Jānah;

The Persians say that He is Bar Khānah

A Daylamite inscribed Kāflnā.

Yet another group had Rāḥalnā.
Another people the Najiyya [have] Jāhirshā;
The Bukhanites [of Khurasan?] are another [who say] Ṭāhirshā.

The traditions (aḥadīth), the transmitted matters (ravāyyāt) and the things announced (khabar);
Each one prefers a different Way- Path (taʿrīqī).

Although this Name is very famous;
But here this is not the purpose.

When seventy and one years of my life have transpired;
In contemplation of Thee the veil surrounding this cipher (ramz) will be removed.
Through the treasures (dhakā’ir) which are now the Names (asmā’);
This servant brought forth the truth of this [Greatest] Name.

[66]

For the sake of simplicity for the masters of search;
I performed this task according the law of piety (adab).

[67]

I desired this science (‘ilm) from the depth of my heart;
Place my footsteps in their pathway.

[68]

Unto God be praise that the assistance of the One;
Gave eternal grace (fayḍ) through this talent of mine.

[69]
I suffered a lot in the pursuit of this science;

Until I uncovered the talismans from this Treasury (ganj).

I unlocked the secret (sirr) of this Treasury (ganj)

I gazed at its treasure therein.

I took part in mining the treasury;

I uncovered the veil from its countenance

The reward for the man who, from this specific mine (ma’dan),

Manages to discover its special jewel.
عمل خير به بنیاد کند

He will inaugurate a goodly deed (`amal khayr);
And will remember [Shaykh] Bahá’í in his supplication (du`ā).

غرض اینست که ارباب طلب

The purpose is this, that the masters of search (arbāb-i ṭalab)
Will not suffer in their pursuit thereof.

این قواعد چو سراسر خوانند

These supporting words [guidelines] (qawā’id) when they read them from beginning to end;
They will recite an Opening - Fātiḥa [Q.1] on our behalf.

چون از این اسم بیابند اثر

When of this [Mightiest] Name they find trace configurations (āthār);
They will never stray on the path of equity (raḥ-i inṣāf).
What you should [ardently] desire is intelligence and right action; Such that through this science you find a solution to your problem.

Open the ear of your soul and the eye of the heart; So that I will solve this problem on thy behalf.

If you desire to know what I have to communicate; Open then your ears for it is the time for discourse.

Make my speech to be the ornament of the ear of your heart; Obtain then the ornament of the ear of wisdom!
If, that is, of the knowledge of the divine viceregent (‘ilm-i vali-yi ilāhī)
Thou desire [to know] without previous instruction.

For students (tulāb) of this copious manuscript (nashi’ zharf).
[Know] that perfect ones (kāmilān) stand in awe (shigarf) of it.

I am ahead of this faction (tāīfa);
For I have read directives (waraqī) unto them!

Regarding the ciphers (rumūzāt) about which my mind is clear;
This on account of the bestowals of the Prophet [Muhammad] (‘aṭā-hā-yi nabi)
and the viceregent [‘Alī] (valī).

In the Book [Qur‘ān] (muṣḥaf) after three “M’s (mīm), they are; In the midst of the sūrahs, in Ḥā-Mīm (Q. 41 = al-Sajdah).

Its number with surahs Qur’ānic (suwar Qur‘ānī) [=114] Corresponds if you did but know.

They are eight letters (hasht ḥarf) in order-layout and arrangement (bi-tarīb va nizām); When outstretched (bast) their letters compute to forty complete.

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Its locus-point (nuqtah) is altogether (jumal) nineteen [= the basmala];

This since these [letters] are the nexus of far reaching activity (bāsit bi-`amal).

[89]

اولش میم و چهارم لام است

Seanb a month and a year.

Its first is Mīm ("M") and its fourth is Lām ("L");

Its third is well-known during these days.

[90]

گوش دل باز کنی گر نیکو

A plucked heart, a puffed cheek.

The [letter] Ta’ (ط) was the last of the six letters within it;

If you open up completely the ear of the heart.

[91]

در سه چا مصدر اسمش دال است

In three places the source-word (maṣdar) of its-His Name is the [letter] "D" (dāl);

At the outset is a verse from [the Sūrat al-] Anfāl ("Plunder-Spoils" = Q. 8).

[92]

اولش هفده آخرسین است

Its commencement is seventeen its termination [the letter] "S" (sīn) [ = abjad 60];
It is linked up (muttaṣil) in the centre of [Surat al-] Yā’-Sīn
(Q. 36 = [Meccan, 5 sections, 83 verses] abjad 70).

Its heart (qalb) is the originator of all manner of happiness;
Commencement [Victory] (fātḥ) and its realization (nāṣb) are all
Light (nūr) and Splendor (diyā).

It consists wholly of the letters (dār-i ḥurūf);
The nexus of causality (jām`-i īllat) [results from] the letters (āṯār-i ḥurūf).

The number of its explanation is seventy;
This also is from the directive of the master (qā`ida-yi ustād).
I call that heart which discovers this cipher (ramz);
The clear allusion of the ciphers (rumūzāt) beckons.

O Bahāʾī! Since you did unveil these ciphers (rumūz);
And thus discovered the coinage of the treasures (naqḍ-i kanūz).

Do not be the discloser of this secret (rāz) any further;
Hide the secret (rāz) and do not be an informer (ghamāz).

Anyone who is among the custodians of this [secret] matter;
[Know that] In supplication there is realization of [the mystery of] its Pronunciation (qawl).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>نشود زین روشن خاص خبر</td>
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<tr>
<td>دم فرو بند که نا اهل شریک</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be silent then! that the people of wickedness;</td>
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<tr>
<td>May not become informed of this specific Directive.</td>
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<thead>
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<th>101</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>طالبان را نمودند غفور</td>
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<td>من به توفیق خداوند غفور</td>
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<tr>
<td>I, through the favour (tawfiq) of the God of Forgiveness;</td>
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<td>Showed the seekers (tālibān) the rule.</td>
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<thead>
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<th>102</th>
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<tr>
<td>فاش کردم بههمه نقد کنوز</td>
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<tr>
<td>اصل و فرعش نمودم به رموز</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Foundation (ašl) and its aspects (far`) have I given out in ciphers (rumūz).</td>
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<td>I disclosed to all the coinage of the treasures (naqd-i kunūz).</td>
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<th>103</th>
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<tr>
<td>به (بهایی) همه از صدق و صفا</td>
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<tr>
<td>بکنند از سر اخلاص دعا</td>
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<tr>
<td>For [Shaykh] Bahā’ī all, [in gratitude] with righteousness and purity,</td>
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<td>should supplicate with pure sincerity (sar al-ikhlaş).</td>
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