

Lights of ‘Irfán

Studies in the Principal Bahá’í Beliefs

*Papers Presented at the
‘Irfán Colloquia and Seminars*



Book Eight

Papers published in *Lights of 'Irfán* represent the views of their authors.

Reproductions from this compilation are permitted provided that the sources and authors are clearly indicated, with the exception of provisional translations, which are not to be further distributed.

'Irfán Colloquia
Bahá'í National Center
1233 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201
Phone: (847) 733-3501
Fax: (847) 733-3527
E-mail: contact@irfancoolloquia.org
www.irfancoolloquia.org

Lights of 'Irfán: Studies in the Principal Bahá'í Beliefs
Papers Presented at the 'Irfán Colloquia and Seminars
Book Eight
General Editor Iraj Ayman
Editing Assistance Omid Nolley
Sponsored by the Haj Mehdi Arjmand Memorial Fund
164 B.E. 2007 C.E.

Copyright © 2007, Haj Mehdi Arjmand Memorial Fund

Artwork by Trey Yancy
Typeset by Jonah Winters, winterswebworks.com

Printed in Canada by Minuteman Press, Vancouver

O My servants! Through the might of God and His power, and out of the treasury of His knowledge and wisdom, I have brought forth and revealed unto you the pearls that lay concealed in the depths of His everlasting ocean. I have summoned the Maids of Heaven to emerge from behind the veil of concealment, and have clothed them with these words of Mine — words of consummate power and wisdom. I have, moreover, with the hand of divine power, unsealed the choice wine of My Revelation, and have wafted its holy, its hidden, and musk-laden fragrance upon all created things. Who else but yourselves is to be blamed if ye choose to remain unendowed with so great an outpouring of God's transcendent and all-encompassing grace, with so bright a revelation of His resplendent mercy?

Table of Contents

Preface.....	i
Chronicles of a Birth: Early References to the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions in Spain (1873-1895)	
Amín E. Egea, translated by Francisco J. Díaz.....	1
Baron Rosen's Archive Collection of Bábí and Bahá'í Materials	
Youli Ioannesian	11
Mysticism East and West	
Farhang Jahanpour.....	35
The Word is the Master Key for the Whole World: The Bahá'í Revelation and the "Teaching and Spirit of the Cause" in Dialogical and Personal Thinking	
Wolfgang A. Klebel.....	53
Buddhism and the Bahá'í Writings: An Ontological Rapprochement	
Ian Kluge.....	125
Why the Bahá'í Faith Is Not Pluralist	
Grant S. Martin.....	179
The Art of Rhetoric in the Writings of Shoghi Effendi	
Jack McLean	203
'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet on the Functioning of the Universal House of Justice: A Provisional Translation and Commentary	
Moojan Momen.....	257
The Bahá'í Covenant	
Ali Nakhjavani	299
Minimalism from a Bahá'í Perspective	
Mahyad Zaerpoor Rahnamaie.....	309
<i>Lawḥ-i-Maryam</i> (Tablet to Maryam) Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh: A Provisional Translation and Commentary	
Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani Mazzoli	323
The Emergence of World Civilization: An Exposition on Excerpts from the Writings of Shoghi Effendi	
James B. Thomas.....	363

(continued on back)

Elucidations

Designation of Mírzá Yahyá Azal in the Writings of the Báb

Part 1: Memorandum from the Research Department..... 387

Part 2: Will and Testament of the Báb..... 392

Part 3: *Making the Crooked Straight* 393

Letters Written on Behalf of the Guardian..... 395

Daniel's Prophecies 405

Appendices

Bibliography of Bahá'í Writings and abbreviations used in this book.... 413

Contents of Lights of 'Irfán Books One-Seven..... 415

Publications of the 'Irfán Colloquia 422

Preface

“If the Bahá’ís want to be really effective in teaching the Cause, they need to discuss intelligently, intellectually, the present condition of the world and its problems. We need Bahá’í scholars, not only people far, far more deeply aware of what our teachings really are, but also well-read and well-educated people, capable of correlating our teachings to the current thoughts of the leaders of society. We Bahá’ís should, in other words, arm our minds with knowledge in order to better demonstrate to, especially, the educated classes, the truths enshrined in our Faith.” (Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 5 July 1949, quoted in *Scholarship* 4)

The main goal of the Irfán Colloquia and publications is to facilitate and promote what is recommended by Shoghi Effendi in the above-mentioned guidance. In addition to individual efforts in acquiring deeper and systematic knowledge of the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith and contemporary trends of thoughts of leaders of society, certain collective and cooperative actions are also necessary in order to maximize the benefits of such endeavors. Irfán activities attempt to provide various opportunities and vehicles for such collaborative efforts and presentation and discussion of the end results of deeper and systematic studies in the fundamental principles of the Bahá’í belief system, their application to the current challenges facing humanity, and comparative studies of various religious trends and different schools of thought from a Bahá’í perspective.

Irfán Colloquia are annually organized and conducted in Europe and North America in English, Persian and German. These gatherings provide open forums for exchanges of studies and research findings, as well as team-building among those interested and engaged in such scholarly activities. The abstracts of all the presentations and the text of selected papers delivered at those colloquia are published in three series of

Abstracts booklets and annual collections of articles in English, Persian and German.

This volume presents a collection of 12 research papers. Four of the papers present studies in the Bahá'í scriptural texts: Bahá'u'lláh's "Lawḥ-i-Maryam" by Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "Tablet on the Functioning of the Universal House of Justice" by Moojan Momen, Shoghi Effendi's "Enfoldment of World's Civilization" by James Thomas, and "Art of Rhetoric in the Writings of Shoghi Effendi" by Jack McLean. The articles on Lawḥ-i-Maryam and Tablet on the Functioning of the Universal House of Justice include a provisional translation of those Tablets.

Fundamental principles of the Bahá'í belief system are dealt with in the articles on "Bahá'í Covenant" by Ali Nakhjavani, "Word is the Master Key" by Wolfgang Klebel, and "Bahá'í Faith and Pluralism" by Grant Martin.

Comparative studies are presented in "Buddhism and the Bahá'í Writings" by Ian Kluge, "Minimalism from Bahá'í Perspective" by Mahyad Rahnamaie, and "Mysticism East and West" by Farhang Jahanpour. These papers attempt to deal with various religious trends and schools of thought.

The fourth category of papers is archival studies. Youli Ioannessyan introduces the content of one of the richest collections of documents on early development of the Bahá'í Faith that were collected by famous Russian Orientalist, Baron Rose. "Chronicle of a Birth" by Amin Egea is the third section of introducing references to the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions in Spain. The first two sections were published in the *Lights of Irfán*, Books Five and Seven.

The section on ELUCIDATIONS includes three memoranda from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice providing clarifying information on the following subjects: Tablet of the Báb addressed to Mírzá Yahyá Azal, authenticity of the contents of the letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, and Daniel's prophecies. These memoranda and their enclosed documents present the results of careful search in the Writings and provide clarifying responses to some

important questions. They offer valuable information for research and studies in Bahá'í Faith.

For those readers interested to know the topics of the papers published in previous volumes of the *Lights of Irfán*, Appendix II presents a list of all those papers. Listing of the papers published in various volumes of the *Lights of Irfán* provides preliminary familiarity with the range, types, methodological approaches and quality of the papers that are welcome to be presented at the Irfán Colloquia and published in the *Lights of Irfán*. In addition to the papers presented at the Irfán Colloquia, research papers related to the main goals of the Irfán Colloquium may also be directly submitted for publication in the *Lights of Irfán*.

Starting from Book Six we have adopted two changes in the 'Irfán Colloquia's style guide. All "authoritative" publications are cited by an abbreviation; see Appendix I, "Bibliography of the Bahá'í Writings and Their Abbreviations Used in This Book." Words of Prophets/Manifestations, i.e. quotations from Sacred Writings, (not including statements by Shoghi Effendi or the Universal House of Justice), are italicized.

All papers in this volume present the views and understandings of their authors. The texts of the papers are published as provided by the authors. The writing styles and scholarly approaches are therefore different. Articles are published in this volume according to the alphabetical order of the author's last names.

Iraj Ayman

Chicago, May 2007

