

A Wondrous New Day

– The Numerology of Creation and ‘All Things’ in the Badí’

Calendar –

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PREFACE¹

Ever since the beginning of recorded history human beings have devised and used calendars that have helped them to understand and compute time and to organize and structure their lives more efficiently. Most religious communities have their own calendars, which are used to celebrate or commemorate important events that are commonly associated with the founders of their religion. These calendars often begin with the inception of their faith or another episode of similar significance.² Most calendars are based upon three cycles that are readily observable in nature: the day, the lunar month and the solar year.³ Some calendars, however, deviate from these cycles. The Islamic calendar, for example, does not make use of the solar year, while the Mayans of Central America used months that were only twenty days long and thus not synchronized with the phases of the moon.⁴

The Bahá'í Faith also has its own calendar, called the Badí' (new, wondrous) calendar that was devised by the Twin Founding Figures of this religion: the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.⁵ The Badí' calendar, however, is not simply a system that is used to calculate time or commemorate important events associated with the Central Figures

¹ The first part of this work up to and including chapter V.1 was published in a slightly different version under the title "Symbolism in the Badí' Calendar" in *Baha'i Studies Review*. Vol. 12, 2004, pp 15-31.

² For general information about calendars, see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. 'Calendar'; *Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. 'Calendars'; *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, s.v. 'Calendars'. For Iranian calendars, see *Encyclopedia Iranica*, s.v. 'Calendars'.

³ Walbridge, *Sacred* 174.

⁴ *Ibid* 175.

⁵ For a general description of the Badí' calendar and the Bahá'í Holy days see Walbridge, *Sacred* 181-247.

of the Bahá'í Faith. Having been principally created by the Báb but later completed by Bahá'u'lláh, this calendar expresses symbolically a number of concepts that were central to the Báb's perception of the nature of being and the universal laws underlying all of creation. Furthermore, it can also be seen to contain some allusions to the relationship between the two religious systems created by these Twin Manifestations.

The present work aims to explore but some of this symbolism contained in the Badí' calendar.⁶ In doing so, it will examine some of the Shaykhí origins of the Báb's cosmology and ontology, investigate how these Shaykhí concepts are developed in the Báb's Writings and finally explore how they find symbolic expression in the structure and organization of the Badí' calendar. Before commencing with this effort it should be noted, however, that all interpretations of passages from the Bábí and Bahá'í Writings offered here are either my own or those of the authors they are attributed to in the text and thus do not in any way represent official Bahá'í doctrine.⁷

⁶ For an exploration of some other levels of symbolism in the Badí' calendar see Keil, *Time*.

⁷ I am very much indebted to Vahid J. Brown for offering his comments on various drafts of parts of this monograph and for supplying me with information and materials from which it has greatly benefited. The remarks and suggestion offered by Javid Atai, Borhan Borhani, Grover Gonzales, Gerald Keil, David Levick and Bijan Samali have, likewise, been very valuable.

I. SHAYKHÍ ORIGINS

Before converting to the Bábí Faith, most of the early believers including the Báb's childhood teacher Shaykh 'Ábid and many of the Báb's family members had been Shaykhís, i.e. followers of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í and Siyyid Kázim-i-Rashtí. The Báb Himself had also attended some of Rashtí's classes in Karbilá and had referred to him as "My teacher" in some of His early writings.⁸ For this reason, the Báb predictably made frequent use of Shaykhí terminology and theories in His writings. Insofar as it is constructed upon and around a number of metaphysical and cosmological Shaykhí concepts, the Badí' calendar constitutes no exception to this rule. A brief summary of some of these concepts will therefore be necessary for a better understanding of the origin and symbolic significance of various aspects of this calendar.

According to Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í, the founder of the Shaykhí Order, the whole of creation is constituted by divine letters.⁹ Each of the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet corresponds to a divine name or attribute as well as a metaphysical plane or level of existence. In this schema the first letter, Alif, for example, corresponds to the divine name al-Badí' (wondrous, new, first, beginning) and to the metaphysical plane of the Universal Intellect, which is the first emanation from the Divine Will. This Universal Intellect is also called 'the One' (Váḥid).

According to the so-called abjad system, each letter of the Arabic alphabet has a specified numerical value.¹⁰ The numerical value of the first letter, Alif, for example, is one, and that of the word Váḥid

⁸ Lawson, *Interpretation* 21.

⁹ Cole, "Cosmologies".

¹⁰ For an overview of the abjad system, see Lewis, *Abjad*.

(which bears the meaning of one) is nineteen. For this reason, God is said to have uttered nineteen letters on the plane of the Universal Intellect, thereby creating the lower nineteen levels of existence: the nine spheres (of planets), the four elements (fire, air, water, earth), the three kingdoms of nature (mineral, plant and animal kingdom), as well as man, jinn (invisible beings, genies) and angels. These nineteen letters form the invocation ‘Bismi’lláhi’r-Raḥmání’r-Raḥím’¹¹ (In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful) which precedes all chapters of the Qur’án with the exception of the ninth.¹²

Attributing even more importance to the number nineteen, Rashtí, furthermore, states that although the Arabic alphabet has twenty-eight letters, in reality there are only nineteen.¹³ This is because some letters (e.g. the letters Bá’, Tá’ and Thá’) are essentially the same and only distinguished from one another by one or more dots placed above or underneath them. He supports this statement with a saying attributed to Muḥammad which reads “*the letters are nineteen*”¹⁴. For Rashtí, the number nineteen, therefore, constitutes a universal principle, which governs and underlies the whole of creation. This universal law of nineteen is expressed in and signified by the Basmalah, a formula that is said to sum up and contain all levels of contingent being.¹⁵

The Basmalah occupies a central position in Islamic theology. It is regarded as a prayer in its own right and a source of divine knowledge and healing. It is said to have been designated ‘the greatest verse in the Book of God’ by Imám Ja’far-i-Şádiq, the sixth Imám of Shí’ah Islám, and has been described by Rashtí as being closer to the ‘Greatest Name of God’ than the pupil of the eye is to the white.¹⁶ This Greatest Name of God is believed to be a hidden and

¹¹ Hereafter, and in accordance with common practice, this formula will be referred to as the Basmalah.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lawson, “Reading”.

¹⁴ Sayyid Kázim-i-Rashí: *Sharh-i-Qaşidiy-i-Lámiyyih*. Tabriz: n.p., 1853, p 93. Translation adapted from Lawson “Reading”.

¹⁵ Cole, “Cosmologies”. Rashad Khalifa even argues that the whole Qur’án is mathematically based upon the number nineteen (see, for example, Khalifa, *Computer*). This notion has, however, been rejected by most other Muslim scholars.

¹⁶ Lawson, “Reading”.

unpronounced name that sums up being in its entirety, thus making it even more all-embracing than the Basmalah, a formula which only contains and manifests the different levels of contingent being.¹⁷ According to Shí'ah traditions, the knowledge of this Name is with the hidden twelfth Imám and will be revealed by him when he returns.¹⁸

According to Imám 'Alí-ibn-i-Abí-Ṭálib, the first Imám of Shí'ah Islám, the Basmalah itself and thereby the entire contingent world is, furthermore, condensed in its first letter Bá': "*All that is in the world is in the Qur'án, and all that is in the Qur'án is condensed in the Fátíḥa [first chapter] of the Book, and all that is in the Fátíḥa is in the Basmalah, and all that is in the Basmalah is in the Bá' and I am the point under the Bá'.*"¹⁹ The "point under the Bá'" is what differentiates this letter from other letters of similar shape and is thus its essence and distinguishing feature. For this reason, it was also called 'Furqán' (distinguisher) by the Báb. The tile 'Furqán' traditionally denotes the Qur'án as the book that distinguishes between believers and unbelievers, but was also applied by the Báb to His own writings, especially His first major work the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'.²⁰ Because all letters are potentially contained within it, this point signifies the Divine Unity and Simplicity²¹ and the Universal Will of God,²² which is the origin of all created things.²³ The Bá' without its dot is, therefore, nothing more than a cloak, shell or exterior for the point.²⁴

¹⁷ Cole, "Cosmologies". Bahá'u'lláh claims that the name 'Bahá'' (glory, splendour) which He chose for Himself is this Most Great Name of God. The Báb also placed great emphasis on the name Bahá' and even instructed His amanuensis to write this name in red ink when preparing manuscript copies of some of His writings while all other words were to be written in black (Faizi, *Explanation*)

¹⁸ MacEoin, *Rituals* 50.

¹⁹ Sayyid Kázim-i-Rashí: *Sharh-i-Qaṣídiy-i-Lámiyyih*. Tabriz: n.p., 1853, 85 f & 92. Translation adapted from Lawson, "Reading".

²⁰ Amanat, *Resurrection* 202 & 216n.

²¹ Lawson, "Reading".

²² MacEoin, *Rituals* 76n.

²³ In this respect, Bahá'u'lláh in His Kitáb-i-Íqán (184) quotes Muḥammad as saying "*Knowledge is one point, which the foolish have multiplied*".

²⁴ Lawson "Reading".

II. THE BÁB'S CONCEPT OF 'ALL THINGS'

The Báb used and expanded these Shaykhí concepts shaping them into a new system, which He made the underlying structure of His Dispensation. After having declared Himself to his first follower, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Buṣhrú'í, on the night corresponding to the Gregorian calendar date of the 22nd of May 1844, He instructed the latter not to divulge His claim to anyone until another seventeen individuals had “*spontaneously and out of their own accord*” accepted Him and recognized the truth of His Revelation.²⁵ These eighteen first disciples He called ‘Letters of the Living’ (Ḥurúf-i-Ḥayy).²⁶ Together with the Báb Himself they formed the first Váhid (unit, unity, one), i.e. unit of nineteen, of the Bábí Dispensation. Each one of them was regarded as the incarnation of one of the nineteen letters of the Basmalah. The Báb Himself was the manifestation of the first letter Bá’, Mullá Ḥusayn represented the second letter Sín, and so on.²⁷

The Báb, furthermore, did not only identify Himself with the Bá’ of the Basmalah but also more specifically with the point under this letter. This is evident from titles such as ‘the Primal Point’ (Nuṣṭiy-i-Úla) or the ‘Point of the Bayán’ (Nuṣṭiy-i-Bayán), which He chose for Himself.²⁸ It is conceivable, in this context that the Báb may have used the term ‘Point’ to refer to Himself as the locus of Divine

²⁵ Nabil, *Dawn-Breakers* 63.

²⁶ The Báb used the term ‘letters’ to refer to the followers of various religions. Al-Ḥayy (the Living) is one of the names of God and was also used by the Báb in reference to His own Person. The title Letters of the Living could therefore be interpreted on a more literal level as simply meaning ‘followers of the Báb’. The numerical value of the word ‘ḥayy’ is eighteen thus specifying the number of letters. This is the reason why Shoghi Effendi translated Ḥurúf-i-Ḥayy as the ‘eighteen Letters of the Living’.

²⁷ Amanat, *Resurrection* 175.

²⁸ Lawson, “Reading”.

Revelation, the source of all knowledge and the manifestation of the Universal Will, while alluding to His physical being (i.e. the carrier of this Revelation) when identifying Himself as the letter Bá', which is the outer shell or cloak of that point.

A very similar interpretation of the Basmalah is also given by the Báb in the context of the Islamic Dispensation. Here the first letter Bá' signifies the 'Point of the Qur'án', the second letter Sín is manifested in the person of the Prophet Muḥammad and the remaining seventeen letters stand for Muḥammad's daughter Fáṭimih, the twelve Imáms of Shí'ah Islám and the four emissaries or abváb (sing. báb) of the hidden twelfth Imám. Together, these nineteen constitute the primary Váhid of the Islamic Dispensation. The reason why the Báb distinguishes in this schema between the Point of the Qur'án and the Prophet Muḥammad is that in Islamic thought only the text of the Qur'án is regarded as the authentic word of God, while the Prophet's other utterances are not necessarily considered a product of direct Divine Revelation.²⁹

Being the incarnations of the same letters of the Basmalah, the Báb and the eighteen Letters of the Living are considered the separate returns of the members of this primary Váhid of the Islamic Dispensation. The Báb is, therefore, the return of the Point of the Qur'án in the form of the Point of the Bayán, Mullá Husayn is the reappearance of Muḥammad, and so on.³⁰ A significant difference in this schema is that the Báb makes no distinction here between His own Person and the Point of the Bayán. This is because the Báb claims that in His case Divine Revelation is continuous and that, therefore, all His writings and utterances are the word of God.³¹ The Person of the Báb is thus identical with His Revelation, which He collectively refers to as the Bayán (utterance, exposition), while the Prophet Muḥammad is not always synonymous with the Qur'án.

²⁹ Saiedi, *Logos* 296 f.

³⁰ This was the Báb's way of fulfilling common Shí'ah expectations relating to the return (raj'a) of the hidden twelfth Imám (the Mahdí) with a certain number of his supporters immediately before the end of the world and the day of Resurrection. For an explanation of these apocalyptic Shí'ah expectations see Amanat, *Resurrection*.

³¹ Saiedi, *Logos* 296 f.

After the first Váhid of the Bábi Dispensation had been formed, the Báb instructed the Letters of the Living to disperse and spread the news of His Revelation. The name of every new believer they enrolled was to be recorded and forwarded to Him. “*I shall classify these lists,*” He explained to them, “*into eighteen sets of nineteen names each. Each set will constitute one Váhid. All these names, in these eighteen sets, will, together with the first Váhid, consisting of My own name and those of the eighteen Letters of the Living, constitute the number of Kull-i-Shay’.*”³² The term ‘Kull-i-Shay’” literally means ‘All Things’ and its numerical value is 361 (19 x 19). In this way, the Báb thus intended to materialize on earth what was an essentially metaphysical concept of Him as the “*Primal Point from which have been generated all created things*”.³³

Being basically an extended version of the Shaykhí theory of ‘nineteen’, this concept of ‘All Things’ (Kull-i-Shay’) constitutes for the Báb a divine and universal principle underlying the whole of creation. Both, the Persian and Arabic Bayán, as well as many of the Báb’s later writings were, therefore, also structured according to this formula, each consisting of nineteen Váhids of nineteen chapters or gates (abváb).³⁴ The Báb thus states in the beginning of the Persian Bayán that God has structured the creation of all things according to the number of ‘All Things’, and that the chapters of the religion of the Bayán have, therefore, also been arranged according to the number of ‘All Things’.³⁵

1. Kull-i-Shay’ and the Computation of Time

³² Nabil, *Dawn-Breakers* 123.

³³ The Báb, *Selections* 12.

³⁴ The Persian as well as the Arabic Bayán, however, were left unfinished by the Báb and thus end in the middle of the ninth and after the eleventh Váhid respectively. The Báb left the completion of these works up to ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’ (Man-Yuzhiruhu’lláh), the promised future Manifestation repeatedly mentioned in the Báb’s writings. Bahá’is believe that Bahá’u’lláh is this Promised One and that His Kitáb-i-Íqán constitutes the completion of the Báb’s Bayáns (Saiedi, *Logos* 126 ff)

³⁵ Browne, *Selections* 316.

The universal principle of ‘All Things’ does not only occupy a central position in the Báb’s cosmology and ontology but is also used by Him in the computation of time. The Báb thus grouped the years following His Revelation into cycles of nineteen years, each of which He again called a Váhid. The first nineteen Váhids, i.e. 361 years, constitute the first Kull-i-Shay’ of the Bábi/Bahá’í Era. The nineteen years that make up one Váhid were given names whose numerical value is identical with their position within the Váhid. The first year of each Váhid is thus named ‘Alif’, which is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and has a numerical value of one. The names of the nineteen years of each Váhid are as follows:³⁶

1	Alif (The letter ‘A’)	11	Bahháj (Delightful)
2	Bá’ (The letter ‘B’)	12	Javáb (Answer)
3	Ab (Father)	13	Ahad (Single)
4	Dál (The letter ‘D’)	14	Vahháb (Bountiful)
5	Báb (Gate)	15	Vidád (Affection)
6	Váv (The letter ‘V’)	16	Badí‘ (Beginning)
7	Abad (Eternity)	17	Bahí (Luminous)
8	Jád (Generosity)	18	Abhá ³⁷ (Most Luminous)
9	Bahá’ (Splendour)	19	Váhid (Unity)
10	Hubb (Love)		

In His writings, the Báb put special emphasis on the years nine (Bahá’) and nineteen (Váhid) and linked them to the coming of ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’. Shoghi Effendi summarizes some of these references as follows:

³⁶ See Walbridge, *Sacred* 187. It is of interest to note that these Váhids are also of some astrological significance, as a period of nineteen years marks the common multiple of the orbital periods of the earth and the moon. In other words, it takes nineteen years for the phases of the moon to fall again on the same days of the solar year. These cycles of nineteen years are called Metonic cycles after their discoverer Meton of Athens (fl. 432 BC).

³⁷ The final Alif Maqsúra of the word Abhá is given the numerical value of the usually orthographically indistinguishable letter Yá’ (10) instead of that of the letter Alif (1) here, which gives this word a numerical value of eighteen. This name could thus also be read as Abhí.

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"In the year nine," He, referring to the date of the advent of the promised Revelation, has explicitly written, *"ye shall attain unto all good."* *"In the year nine, ye will attain unto the presence of God."* And again: *"After Ĥin (68)³⁸ a Cause shall be given unto you which ye shall come to know."* *"Ere nine will have elapsed from the inception of this Cause,"* He more particularly has stated, *"the realities of the created things will not be made manifest."* [...] *"Wait thou,"* is His statement to Azím, *"until nine will have elapsed from the time of the Bayán. Then exclaim: 'Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers!'"* *"Be attentive,"* He, referring in a remarkable passage to the year nineteen, has admonished, *"from the inception of the Revelation till the number of Váhíd (19)."* *"The Lord of the Day of Reckoning,"* He, even more explicitly, has stated, *"will be manifested at the end of Váhíd (19) and the beginning of eighty (1280 A.H.)."*³⁹

The year nine of the Bahá'í Era (1852-53 A.D.), i.e. the year of Bahá', is the year in which Bahá'u'lláh, Whom Bahá'ís believe to be the Object of these prophesies, according to His own testimony received His Divine Revelation while lying in chains in an underground dungeon in Tihrán. Another interesting reference to this year can be found in the Báb's Arabic Bayán 6:15: *"Ye should all rise up in respect upon hearing the mention of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest', and ye should watch the difference between the Qá'im and the Qayyúm, for in the Year Nine ye shall attain unto all good."*⁴⁰

The Qá'im ('He Who arises'), whom the Báb identified with His own Person, is the awaited Mihdí or return of the twelfth Imám of Shí'ah Islám. Bahá'ís believe that the term Qayyúm (superlative of Qá'im and often translated as 'the Self-Subsisting' by Shoghi Effendi) which is used as an attribute of God in the Qur'án is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh.⁴¹ In an interpretation of this phrase from the Arabic

³⁸ This is a reference to the year 1268 A.H. (1851-52 A.D.), which is the year eight of the Bahá'í Era. *"After Ĥin"* therefore refers to the year nine after the Declaration of the Báb.

³⁹ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 29.

⁴⁰ Trans. adapted from a provisional rendering by Khazeh Fananapazir posted to the Bahá'í translation list Tarjuman (<http://listserv.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=tarjuman-list>), 2 December 2003. Reproduced here in an amended version with permission of the translator.

⁴¹ see, for example, Nabil *Dawn-Breakers* 42n

Bayán, Bahá'u'lláh explains that the difference in numerical value between these two terms is nine (Bahá'). He arrives at this value by giving the hamzih in the word Qá'im the numerical value of six (instead of the usual value of one) due to its orthographical similarity to the equivalent Persian numeral.⁴²

The first Váhid after the Báb's Declaration alluded to in the Guardian's above assemblage of quotations ended in March 1863, and the year 1280 A.H. began in June of the same year. Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration to His followers assembled in the Garden of Najíb Páshá, which was later designated by Him as the Garden of Ridván, took place on the 22nd of April 1863 and, therefore, fell exactly between these two dates mentioned by the Báb.

2. 'All Things' and the Badí' Calendar

The principle of Kull-i-Shay' that governs the flow of time on the macrocosmic level of years, decades and centuries also regulates the microcosm of days and months within each year. The new calendar devised by the Báb thus consists of nineteen months of nineteen days each, thereby forming one Kull-i-Shay' within each year.⁴³ To constitute a whole solar year, however, four to five intercalary days needed to be added to these nineteen months. The Báb Himself did not specify where within the year these intercalary days should be placed and, in this way, rendered His calendar practically unusable until the coming of Him Whom God shall make manifest, Who was the only One with the authority to complete the Báb's design. This Promised One of the Báb was to complete the Badí' calendar in a similar way as He was expected to conclude the Persian and Arabic Bayán. With omissions of this kind, the Báb apparently aimed to demonstrate that His own Revelation and that of Him Whom God shall make manifest

⁴² See, Bahá'u'lláh, *Iqtidárát* 65. I am indebted to Khazeh Fananapazir for bringing this reference to my attention.

⁴³ The Badí' calendar therefore displays a strong element of fractality with the number nineteen being the organizing component on all levels of computation.

are essentially one and the same and cannot be separated from each other.⁴⁴

The name of the Báb's new calendar is also of symbolic significance. As mentioned above, the Arabic word *Badí'* can be variously translated as 'first', 'beginning', 'new', 'wondrous', etc.⁴⁵ and thus connotes the act of divine creation.⁴⁶ We have also seen that in *Shaykhí* cosmology *al-Badí'* stands for the Universal Intellect which in turn is often referred to as the One (*Váhid*). The terms *Váhid* and *Badí'* are therefore somewhat interchangeable and both signify the Universal Intellect which is the first emanation from the Divine Will. This Divine Will is in turn manifested in the Person of the Báb, Who is the Primal Point from which all things (*Kull-i-Shay'*), including the 'All Things' of the *Badí'* calendar, have been generated.

The nineteen Bahá'í months are all named after attributes or names of God which are derived from the dawn prayer that *Shí'ah* Muslims recite during the month of the fast (*Ramadán*). This prayer is attributed to either the fifth (*Muhammad-Báqir*) or sixth (*Ja'far-i-Šádiq*) Imám of *Shí'ah* Islam. The opening words of this prayer read: *"O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy Bahá' (Splendor) at its most Splendid (abhá') for all Thy Splendor (bahá') is truly resplendent (bahí). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the fullness of Thy Splendor (bahá')."*⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Saiedi, *Logos* 127 f.

⁴⁵ The Arabic root of the word *Badí'* is *Bá'-Dál-'Ayn* (B-D-') meaning (he) created, invented, contrived, introduced, said something new, did something for the first time, excelled, etc.

⁴⁶ Walbridge, *Sacred* 193. This is probably why Bahá'u'lláh gave the name *Badí'* to *Áqá Buzurg-i-Khurásání*, the youth who delivered His letter to *Násiri'd-Dín Sháh*. Bahá'u'lláh states that He had created *Badí'* anew in order to fulfill this mission and had sent him out as a ball of fire (*Taherzadeh, Revelation* 179). Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh also used the adjective *Badí'* to describe both His 'wondrous Cause' (*Amr-i-Badí'*) and His 'New World Order' (*Naẓm-i-Badí'*).

⁴⁷ Adapted from a provisional translation by Stephen Lambden. Online at <http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/03-Biblical-islam-BBst/dawnP.htm> [accessed 25 April 2005]. Imám *Ridá*, the eighth Imám of *Shí'ah* Islam, is believed to have said that the Most Great Name is found in this prayer (*Faizi, Explanation*). For a complete translation of this prayer see Appendix II.

The names of the nineteen months, which are also the names of the nineteen days of each month, are:⁴⁸

1	Bahá' (Splendour): 21 March – 8 April
2	Jalál (Glory): 9–27 April
3	Jamál (Beauty): 28 April – 16 May
4	'Azamat (Grandeur): 17 May – 4 June
5	Núr (Light): 5–23 June
6	Rahmat (Mercy): 24 June – 12 July
7	Kalimát (Words): 13–31 July
8	Kamál (Perfection): 1–19 August
9	Asmá' (Names): 20 August – 7 September
10	'Izzat (Might): 8–26 September
11	Mashíyyat (Will): 27 September – 15 October
12	'Ilm (Knowledge): 16 October – 3 November
13	Qudrat (Power): 4–22 November
14	Qawl (Speech): 23 November – 11 December
15	Masá'il (Questions): 12–30 December
16	Sharaf (Honour): 31 December – 18 January
17	Sultán (Sovereignty): 19 Jan.–6 Feb.
18	Mulk (Dominion): 7 February –1 March
19	'Alá' (Loftiness): 2–20 March

Being a solar calendar with months named after divine attributes, the Badí' calendar is much more similar to the Zoroastrian calendar, which has twelve months bearing the names of angels, than to the lunar calendar of Islám. Muḥammad had explicitly forbidden the Arabian practice of intercalation that served to keep the lunar calendar

⁴⁸ The dates given for the beginning and end of each month here are reflective of current Bahá'í practice. According to Bahá'u'lláh, Naw-Rúz is to be celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox, which does not always fall on the 21st of March. This means that the beginning and end of each month does not always fall on the same Gregorian calendar date. Pending further clarification by the Universal House of Justice, which would have to involve the choice of a particular spot that can serve as the standard for the fixing of the time of the vernal equinox, however, western Bahá'í communities always celebrate Naw-Rúz on the 21st of March (See Bahá'u'lláh, *Aqdas* 177).

II. THE BÁB'S CONCEPT OF 'ALL THINGS' 15

of twelve months in accordance with the solar year.⁴⁹ This is why the Islamic year only consists of 354 or 355 days. By re-introducing intercalary days into His calendar the Báb, therefore, asserted the independence of His Revelation from that of Muḥammad.

The Badí' calendar also contains a seven-day week like that of Judaism, Christianity and Islám. Following Persian custom this Bahá'í week starts on Saturday, with Friday being the day of rest⁵⁰. Each day of the week is again named after a divine attribute, the first three of which are identical to the names of the second, third and eighth month respectively, while the remaining four names are unique. The names of the days of the week are:⁵¹

- 1 Saturday: Jalál (Glory)
- 2 Sunday: Jamál (Beauty)
- 3 Monday: Kamál (Perfection)
- 4 Tuesday: Fiḍál (Grace)
- 5 Wednesday: 'Idál (Justice)
- 6 Thursday: Istijlál (Majesty)
- 7 Friday: Istiqlál (Independence)

Similar to Christian liturgical as well as Islamic and Judaic practice, the day of the Bábí/Bahá'í day starts at sunset.

⁴⁹ Walbridge, *Sacred* 177.

⁵⁰ The Islamic week does not have a designated day of rest, but Friday is the day when Muslims perform their congregational prayer (Walbridge, *Sacred* 177).

⁵¹ Walbridge, *Sacred* 186.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEVEN-DAY WEEK

The use of the seven-day week finds its origin in the Old Testament's Book of Genesis, where God is said to have created the world in six days, after which He rested on the seventh.

These seven days of creation mentioned in the Bible and also in the Qur'án are linked by Bahá'u'lláh to the appearance of cycles of Divine Manifestations. In an interpretation of the Qur'anic version of this account of creation⁵² He thus states that the coming of the Báb signified the rolling up like a scroll of the 'heavens' of the religions 'raised in the Qur'án'.⁵³ According to Shí'ah Islám, the number of 'prophets endowed with constancy' that were sent down to earth by God is six: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad.⁵⁴ This cycle of six Divine Messengers is signified for Bahá'u'lláh by the first six days of creation. The Báb is, therefore, the seventh Manifestation of God and above and beyond that also the completion of the entire six-thousand year long cycle of Divine Revelation that started with Adam.⁵⁵

This same principle of religious cycles is also signified for the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh by the letter Váv of the Arabic alphabet, a letter on which Shaykh Ahmad had placed great emphasis.⁵⁶ If spelled out this letter is written as Váv-Alif-Váv (V-A-V). Having a numerical value of six, the first one of these two Váv's symbolizes for the Báb and

⁵² See for example Qur'án 50:38; cf. 7:54; 10:3; 11:7; 25:59; 32:4; 57:4

⁵³ MacEoin, *Rituals* 148.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ This schema only includes the major religions accepted by Shí'ah Islám and, therefore, does not take into account figures such as Krishna, Buddha and Zoroaster, which are also regarded as Divine Manifestations in the Bahá'í Writings.

⁵⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, *Aqdas* 240.

Bahá'u'lláh the six Manifestations that appeared before the Báb. The Báb Himself is signified by the second letter, the 'Upright Alif' (al-Alifu'l-Qá'imat), while Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, being as potent as those of the first six Manifestations together, is referred to by the second Váv.⁵⁷ This is why Bahá'u'lláh states in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: "*Well is it with him whom God hath aided to recognize the 'Six' [Bahá'u'lláh] raised up by virtue of this 'Upright Alif'*" [the Báb].⁵⁸

The seven days of creation, and by implication possibly also the seven days of the week, are thus a symbol for the religious cycle begun by Adam and completed by the Báb.

Some additional clues relating to the significance of the number seven can be found in one of the Báb's Tablets in which He gives instructions on how to construct a circular talisman called *Dá'ira*⁵⁹. This *Dá'ira* consists of seven concentric circles which are each divided into nineteen sections. These sections contain various signs, letters and words many of which are derived from the Basmalah. In the centre of these circles, a square consisting of seven by seven compartments or 'houses' (bayt) is located.⁶⁰ As it is thus constructed upon basically the same elements as the *Badí'* calendar, a study of the Báb's *Dá'ira* might also shed some light on the significance of various aspects of this calendar itself.

In His instructions on how to construct such a talisman the Báb states:

... and the seven circles are together the light of the Night of Decree, for the geometry of the shape of the Decree is this: 304; and when you put the two of them [i.e. the 3 and 4] together, there appears the number seven. What is written there is what has been decreed here. And these are the gates of all good ... for the seven letters have been sent down in

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid 75

⁵⁹ See Mázandarání, Mírzá Asad Alláh Fáḍil-i: *Asrárul-athár*. Vol. 4. Tihrán: Mu'assisiy-i-Milliy-i-Maṭbú'át-i-Amri, 1967–73, p 115 ff. A provisional translation of this text is published in MacEoin, *Rituals* 101 f.

⁶⁰ A representation of such a *Dá'ira* can be accessed at http://bahai-library.com/visuals/dairal/dairal_full.jpg [accessed 25 April 2005].

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the four words and when you join it there appears the number of the word *huva* [“he” = 11 = 7+4], for that is the mention of the Seal of the Point from the beginning of its mystery in the letters of the Basmalah until the end of its descent unto its centre, which is the Point itself⁶¹

The ‘Night of Decree’ (Laylatu’l-Qadr) is the night in which, according to the Qur’án, Muḥammad received His Divine Revelation from the angel Gabriel. As indicated in the above quotation, the numerical value of the word Qadr is 304, the cross total of which is seven. For this reason, the Báb states that the light of this Night is represented by the seven circles of His talisman. The ‘seven letters’ are probably a reference to the Báb Himself, Whose name ‘Alí Muḥammad consist of seven Arabic letters, while the ‘four words’ might signify the words of the Basmalah, which are four in number. Referring to the four words and nineteen letters of this phrase, the Báb has, therefore, stated that the entire structure of the Qur’án and of the Islamic Dispensation is based upon the identity of four and nineteen.⁶²

The Báb’s assertion that “*the seven letters have been sent down in the four words*” might thus imply that He (the ‘seven letters’) has revealed Himself (been sent down) through the four words of the Basmalah. This interpretation appears reasonable if we consider that the structure of the Basmalah also constitutes the underlying principle and order of His Own Revelation and Dispensation.

The ultimate origin of both, the Báb and His Revelation, is God or the ‘Seal of the Point’. Being the creator of the numbers seven (representing the Báb) as well as four (ostensibly symbolising the Báb’s Revelation through the structure of the Basmalah) God is thus signified by the number eleven, which is the grand total of both of these numbers and the numerical value of the word *Huva* (He). As implied by the above quotation, this number thus descends from God in the form of four and seven until it reaches the Point, which signifies the Báb as the Revealer of Divine Verses and the Origin of all things.

⁶¹ Adapted from MacEoin, *Rituals* 104.

⁶² Saiedi, *Logos* 295.

Being a reference to both the Divine Decree as sent down upon the Manifestations of God and the Person of the Báb Himself, the number seven might, therefore, signify these Manifestations in their role as the recipients of the Divine Decree or Revelation. In this context it is, moreover, of interest to note that the title Bahá'u'lláh as well as the Latter's birth name Ḥusayn 'Alī both also have seven Arabic letters.⁶³

Reiterating a Shí'ah concept, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, furthermore, assert that “*the completion of every existence [is] realized through the seven stages of Will (Mashíyyat), Purpose (Irádih), Predestination (Qadar), Fate (Qadá'), Permission (Idhn), Fixed time (Ajál), and the Book (Kitáb)*”.⁶⁴ In this schema we can thus discern another indication of the significance of the number seven in the process of Divine Revelation. It seems to be through these seven stages that God's Will is communicated to the Divine Manifestation in order to be finally revealed to mankind in the form of ‘the Book’.⁶⁵

In such a numerical representation of the act of Divine Revelation, God Himself is thus represented by the number eleven (Huva), while the process of the communication of the Divine Will to the Person of the Manifestation of God and the Latter's role as the recipient of this Revelation appear to be symbolized by the number seven. In His function as the source of revelation in the human world, however, the Divine Manifestation is, as explained above, signified by the number one. This number is in turn represented by the Point from which all things are created through the structure of Váḥids (19) and Kull-i-Shay's (361).

⁶³ This is the reason why 'Abdu'l-Bahá states in one of His Tablets that “*the seven spirits and the seven stars mentioned in the Apocalypse refer to the seven letters of the alphabet which constitute the Most Great Name*”. (From a letter on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believe, dated 7 August 1978)

⁶⁴ Adapted from a provisional translation by Keven Brown from a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh published in Ishráq Khávarí, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd: *Má'idiy-i Ásmání*. Vol. 8. Tihrán: Mu'assisiy-i-Milliy-i-Maṭbú'át-i-Amrí, 1972-74, p 191. Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

⁶⁵ For a more in depth treatment of these seven stages of creation refer to chapters VI.1, 2 and 3 below.

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While the number nineteen, through the principle of *Kull-i-Shay'*, thus governs the process of the Báb's (as well as Muḥammad's) Revelation to humanity, the number seven appears to play a significant role in the process of the communication of Divine Revelation to the Manifestations of God. Together, the two principles of seven and nineteen might, therefore, describe the entire process of Divine Revelation, which could be another reason why both of these numbers feature so prominently in the Báb's Dá'ira as well as the Badí' calendar.

Another indication of the significance of the number seven can be found in the Báb's interpretation of the seven verses of the Fátihā. In a schema similar to that of the association of the primary Váhid of both, the Islamic and the Bábí Dispensations with the nineteen letters of the Basmalah, the seven verses of this Súrīh are linked by Him to the 'Fourteen Pure' or 'Infallible Ones' (Ma'ṣumún) of Shí'ah Islām: Muḥammad, Fátimih and the twelve Imáms. This association works for the Báb because these fourteen figures only have seven different names, as four of them are called Muḥammad, four 'Alí and two Ḥasan, while the remaining four (Fátimih, Ḥusayn, Ja'far-i-Šádiq and Músá-Kázim) have unique names.⁶⁶ Through this pattern of association the Báb offers a novel interpretation of one of the more common names of the Qur'án's opening chapter, namely 'the seven oft repeated' or 'the seven doubled' (as-Sab'u'l-Mathání).⁶⁷ Linking this pattern back to the process of creation He thus also states that one of the results of this process is that seven becomes fourteen.⁶⁸

Considering that the Báb also associated the seven days of the week with these fourteen Ma'ṣumún in several of His writings,⁶⁹ the Holy Family of Islām, which in *Shaykhí* thought symbolically represents the Divine Will,⁷⁰ therefore, forms a link between the seven days of the Bahá'í week and the first Súrīh of the Qur'án. As shown in the quotation from Imám 'Alí cited above, this opening chapter in turn

⁶⁶ Lawson, "Interpretation" 26.

⁶⁷ Ibid 27.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Personal communication from Vahid J. Brown, dated 20 December 2003.

⁷⁰ Lawson, "Interpretation" 27.

“contains, in potentia, all creation”.⁷¹ Such a pattern of association would thus, in several ways, be similar to that of the correlation between the Primary Váhid̄s of the Islamic and Bábí Dispensations with the days of the months and the months of the year as well as the letters of the Basmalah.

Finally, the number seven also plays a central role in various other hierarchies described in the writings of the Báb. Some of these heptads include, for example, the concept of seven spiritual grades or levels (*marátib*) each occupied by a different people (*ahl*), seven hells each being the shadow of a paradise (plus the eighth paradise of ‘the Absolute’ which has no infernal counterpart), seven classes of people, seven grades of lordship (*rubúbiyat*), as well as seven heavens and seven earths.⁷²

In concluding this discussion of the significance of the number seven in the Báb’s writings it will be of interest to note that, while the ‘law of nineteen’ features especially prominently in His later works, the principles of seven and fourteen, which appear to be mainly based on the Báb’s interpretation of ‘the seven oft repeated’ (*as-Sab‘u’l-Mathání*), are mostly of importance in His earlier texts. Many of the abovementioned heptadic structures were, indeed, introduced in a work titled *Tafsír Súratu’l-Baqara* (Commentary on the Súrih of the Cow) which even predates the Báb’s Declaration to Mullá Ḥusayn in 1844.⁷³ A number of the early writings of the Báb that were revealed after his Declaration are, furthermore, based on a fourteen-fold structure, and in His *Khuṭbih-i-Dhikriyyih* (Sermon of Remembrance), He does not only confirm this fact but also dedicates His first fourteen works to the fourteen *Ma’sumún*.⁷⁴

One could thus state that the order in which the Báb revealed His writings seems to reflect His perception of the processes of creation and Divine Revelation in general. As described above, in the act of God’s Revelation to mankind the number seven may be seen as

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid 31 ff.

⁷³ Ibid 25.

⁷⁴ Personal communication from Vahid J. Brown, dated 20 December 2003.

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describing the process by which the divine Will is communicated to His Manifestations, which are Themselves also symbolized by this number. This number is then 'doubled' and revealed to mankind in the form of fourteen, which symbolizes the fourteen Pure Ones, before it finds its final and complete expression in the number nineteen signifying the primary Váhid of the Islamic as well as of the Bábi Dispensation. Possibly in an effort to mirror this pattern, the Báb thus placed great emphasis on the number seven before the time of His Declaration, did then structure His Revelation according to the number fourteen before finally making the principle of nineteen the underlying and organizing element of His Dispensation.

IV. THE COMING OF HIM WHOM GOD SHALL MAKE MANIFEST

The details of the Badí‘ calendar were introduced by the Báb in a number of His later writings, most notably the Persian Bayán and the Kitáb-i-Asmá’ (Book of Names). Consisting of nineteen Váhids of nineteen chapters each, this latter work also follows in its structure the law of Kull-i-Shay’. Like many other writings of the Báb, including the Persian Bayán itself⁷⁵, the main theme of the Kitáb-i-Asmá’ is the coming of Him Whom God shall make manifest. Preparing His followers for the appearance of this Promised Manifestation was one of the Báb’s major objectives, and this overall aim of His ministry also appears to underlie the design of the Badí‘ calendar. In the Persian Bayán 5:3, the Báb states:

...the Lord of the Universe hath created all the years by His command, and by the manifestation of the Bayán hath appointed ‘the Number of All Things’ [361] as the number of every year, and hath appointed it [to consist of] nineteen months, and hath appointed each month nineteen days [...]. And He hath called the first month *Bahá’* and the last ‘*Alá*’....

And the first month is the month of the ‘Point,’ and around it revolve the months of ‘the Living’ [18]; and it is like unto the sun amidst the months, the other months being like mirrors wherein shineth forth the light of that month, and wherein naught is seen save that month. And it hath been named by the Lord the month of *Bahá’* in this sense, that the brightness of all the months is in that month. And [God] hath set it apart for ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’, and hath assigned every day of it to one of the ‘Letters of the Living’. And the first day [thereof], which is the *Naw-Rúz*, is the day of ‘there is no god but God’;

⁷⁵ The Persian Bayán mentions He Whom God shall make manifest more than 300 times (Taherzadeh, *Child* 98).

the like of that day is as the ‘Point’ in the *Bayán*, from which all are created, and unto which all return⁷⁶. And He hath made the manifestation thereof in the ‘Point of the Bayán’, the ‘Person of the Seven Letters’, and hath made it the throne of ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’ in this manifestation.⁷⁷

The structure of the Badi‘ calendar thus reflects and represents the primary Váhid of the Bábí Dispensation on two levels: On the level of the months, the first month (Bahá’) signifies the Point⁷⁸ (i.e. the Báb) while the remaining eighteen months symbolize the Letters of the Living. The same schema is then repeated on the level of the days of each month, where the first day (the day of Bahá’) again stands for the Báb while the other days are similarly dedicated to the eighteen Letters of the Living. Both the first month of the year and the first day of each month, i.e. the month of Bahá’ as well as the day of Bahá’, however, are not only dedicated to the Báb, but also to Him Whom God shall make manifest. This may denote on the one hand that the Revelation of the Báb and That of Him Whom God shall make manifest are essentially one and the same and on the other hand suggest that the Latter promised Manifestation is expected to appear in the name of Bahá’. By giving the name of Bahá’ to the day from which ‘All Things’ of the Badi‘ calendar originate, the Báb thus essentially equated this name with the Primal Point of the promised future Revelation. This is also evident from another *Kull-i-Shay’* created by the Báb, which is a pentacle consisting of 360 derivatives of

⁷⁶ It can be argued that this idea of the Point “*from which all are created, and unto which all return*” is also expressed mathematically through the concept of *Kull-i-Shay’*. The Point is represented by the number one, which is the origin of all numbers. As explained above, from this number the numbers nineteen (Váhid) and 361 (*Kull-i-Shay’*) are generated. Both of these numbers have a cross total of ten and the essence of ten is one again, so that in the end ‘All Things’ have returned to the Point. (I am indebted to David Levick for alerting me to this interpretation.)

⁷⁷ Adapted from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Narrative* 421 f.

⁷⁸ As indicated above, the term ‘Point’ signifies the Divine Unity and Universal Intellect as manifested in the Person of the Manifestation of God. The day of Naw-Rúz is thus also dedicated to the Unity of God which is evident from the Báb’s assertion quoted above that it is the day of “*there is no God but God*”. Probably also for that reason, every Bábí was to recite 361 times the verse “*God beareth witness that there is no God but Him, the Ineffable, the Self-Subsistent*” during the night of Naw-Rúz; and during the day, “*God beareth witness that there is no God but Him, the Precious, the Beloved*” (Walbridge, *Sacred* 215).

the name Bahá' that He had sent to Bahá'u'lláh together with some of His writings, His pen-case, seals and rings shortly before His martyrdom.⁷⁹ In this context of the association of the Point with the name Bahá' and the coming of Him Whom God shall make manifest it is also of interest to note the presence of a tradition attributed to Imám Ja'far-i-Šádiq which reads: "*the Bá' of the Basmalah is the glory of God (Bahá'u'lláh).*"⁸⁰

'Abdu'l-Bahá confirms the Báb's abovementioned identification of the day of Naw-Rúz⁸¹, which falls on the day of Bahá' of the month of Bahá', with the Revelation of Him Whom God shall make manifest. For Him, Who obviously regards Bahá'u'lláh as this Promised One of the Báb, the day of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation marks the beginning of a new era in the religious history of mankind in a similar way in which the day of Naw-Rúz is the first day of the new year and thus signifies the start of a new cycle in nature:

The rising of the sun at the equinox is the symbol of life, and likewise it is the symbol of the Divine Manifestation of God, for the rising of the Sun of Truth in the heaven of Divine Bounty established the signal of Life for the world. The human reality begins to live, our thoughts are transformed and our intelligence is quickened. The Sun of Truth bestows eternal Life, just as the solar sun is the cause of terrestrial life.⁸²

The other month mentioned in the above quotation from the Persian Bayán is the month of 'Alá' (Loftiness), which is the last month of the year. In the Bahá'í Writings, the name 'Alá' is associated with the

⁷⁹ Balyuzi, *Báb* 151.

⁸⁰ Sayyid Hashímu'l-Bahráni: *Kitábu'l-Burhán fi tafsíru'l-Qur'án*. Vol. 1. Tihrán: Aftab, 1955, p 43 f. Trans. adapted from Lawson, "Reading". The number of letters in the Basmalah (nineteen), which is the organizing element of the Badí' calendar, can in itself also be read as a reference to the name Bahá'u'lláh, as it consists of the two numbers one, which signifies the Divine Unity and thus God (Alláh) and nine, which is the numerical equivalent of Bahá' (Glory). Put together these two words form the name Bahá'u'lláh (Glory of God). The same holds true for the number 361, as three plus six equals nine (Bahá'), while one, again, stands for Alláh. (I am indebted to Grover Gonzales for bringing this interpretation to my attention.)

⁸¹ Naw-Rúz, which falls on the day of the vernal equinox (usually 21st of March) and thus marks the beginning of the spring season in the northern hemisphere is the oldest new year's day in recorded history. It has been celebrated for over 5000 years in some parts of the Middle East.

⁸² 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Talk* 4.

Person of the Báb, which is evident from commonly used titles such as ‘His Holiness the Exalted One’ (Ḥadrat-i-‘Alá).⁸³ This month was designated by the Báb as the month of the fast.⁸⁴ Bahá’u’lláh accepted this placement of the fast⁸⁵ but changed some of the specific regulations related to it.⁸⁶

In the writings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the fast is described as a symbol of restraint, detachment and spiritual purification:

...this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God.⁸⁷

And again:

These are the days whereon Thou hast bidden all men to observe the fast, that through it they may purify their souls and rid themselves of all attachment to any one but Thee.... Cleanse Thou by its means the hearts of Thy servants... .⁸⁸

Being the last month of the year, the month of ‘Alá’ therefore serves as a period during which the believers cleanse themselves from the burdens of past attachments and appetites and thereby purify their hearts in preparation for the coming of the next year.

⁸³ Walbridge, *Sacred* 190.

⁸⁴ *Ibid* 70.

⁸⁵ According to the Báb, the laws of the Bayán were dependent upon the acceptance of Him Whom God shall make manifest (Balyuzi, *Báb* 154).

⁸⁶ The Bábí fast was, for example, compulsory for believers from the age of eleven, which is numerically equivalent to and thus signifies the word ‘Huva’ (He = God) until the age of forty-two which stand for the word ‘balá’ (yea!) indicating humanity’s response to the Divine Covenant. Bahá’u’lláh changed this law making the fast binding for believers between the age of fifteen and seventy (Walbridge, *Sacred* 70).

⁸⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections* 69.

⁸⁸ Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers* 79

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The last nineteen days (Váḥid) of each year are thus associated with the Báb and constitute a period of preparation for the next cycle (year), while the first day of the new year signifies the coming of Him Whom God shall make manifested in the name of Bahá'. This seems to suggest that the month of the fast symbolizes the first Váḥid (i.e. nineteen years) of the Bábí/Bahá'í Era, the end of which, according to the Báb, would witness the Revelation of His Promised One.

During these first nineteen years after the Báb's Declaration, which, for Bahá'ís, mark the duration of the Bábí Dispensation, thousands of believers gave up their rank, possessions and oftentimes even their lives for their new Faith, thus demonstrating the ultimate degree of sacrifice and detachment. The month of the fast could, therefore, be considered a symbolic re-enactment of this early period of Bábí/Bahá'í history.

In a similar way in which the fast prepares the believer for the start of the next year this first Váḥid of the Bahá'í Era, according to the Báb, served the purpose of preparing His followers for the coming of Him Whom God shall make manifest and thus the beginning of a new religious cycle. The Báb, therefore, states that the faith of His followers is dependent upon the acceptance of Him Whom God shall make manifest and begs the Latter to grant a period of nineteen years to prepare them for His Revelation:

I, indeed, beg to address Him Whom God shall make manifest, by Thy leave in these words: "Shouldst Thou dismiss the entire company of the followers of the Bayán in the Day of the Latter Resurrection by a mere sign of Thy finger even while still a suckling babe, Thou wouldst indeed be praised in Thy indication. And though no doubt is there about it, do Thou grant a respite of nineteen years as a token of Thy favour so that those who have embraced this Cause may be graciously rewarded by Thee. Thou art verily the Lord of grace abounding."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ the Báb, *Selections* 7.

V. THE COMPLETION OF THE BADI‘ CALENDAR

1. The Badi‘ Calendar and the Formative Age of the Bahá’í Faith:

During the early years of the Bábí/Bahá’í Era there was considerable confusion about the proper use of the Badi‘ calendar. As already mentioned, the Báb had not specified the placement of the intercalary days, and it was also not quite clear which name corresponded to which month and with which year the calendar was supposed to have started. The Azalís⁹⁰ had, for example, placed the intercalary days at the end of the year just before the festival of Naw-Rúz, and some Bahá’ís believed that 1863, the year of Bahá’u’lláh’s Declaration, marked the commencement of the calendar. In 1870 Bahá’u’lláh thus instructed one of His loyal followers, Nabíl-i-A‘zam, to prepare a summary of the Badi‘ calendar which would help clarify some of these questions. Bahá’u’lláh Himself then specified that the calendar was to begin with Naw-Rúz of the year 1844, the year of the Báb’s Declaration. Furthermore, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas He later ruled that the intercalary days should be placed before the month of the fast and designated them as ‘Ayyám-i-Há’, the ‘Days of (the letter) Há’. These days were to be dedicated to hospitality and charity or, as explained by Shoghi Effendi, to the giving of gifts:⁹¹

We have ordained that these, amid all nights and days, shall be the manifestations of the letter Há, and thus they have not been bounded by the limits of the year and its months. It behoveth the people of Bahá’, throughout these days, to provide good cheer for themselves, their

⁹⁰ Followers of Mírzá Yaḥyá (Subḥ-i-Azal), a half-brother and the main rival and adversary of Bahá’u’lláh.

⁹¹ Walbridge, *Sacred* 182.

kindred and, beyond them, the poor and needy, and with joy and exultation to hail and glorify their Lord, to sing His praise and magnify His Name; and when they end – these days of giving that precede the season of restraint – let them enter upon the Fast.⁹²

The letter Há, in the term Ayyám-i-Há, can have a number of different meanings. Having a numerical value of five it could, on the one hand, be meant to indicate the highest possible number of intercalary days.⁹³ On the other hand, the number five is also associated with the numerically equivalent title, Báb. Being shaped like a human body, the five-pointed star, which the Báb called ‘Haykal’ (temple), is, furthermore, a symbol for the human frame of the Manifestation of God and is thus, according to Shoghi Effendi, the symbol not only of the Bábí but also of the Bahá’í Faith.⁹⁴ Moreover, the letter Há also stands for the terms ‘Huva’ (He), which signifies God,⁹⁵ and ‘Huvíyyah’ (essence, ipseity) denoting the unknowable Divine Essence.⁹⁶ Finally, according to the Bahá’í Writings, this Divine Essence is contained within the divine realm of Háhút⁹⁷, a name that is probably derived from a combination of the letter Há and the word Huva.⁹⁸

When Bahá’u’lláh states in the above quotation that these days “*shall be the manifestations of the letter Há, and thus they have not been bounded by the limits of the year and its months*”, this might, therefore, indicate that, while all the other days and months of the year are dedicated to divine attributes, the Days of Há signify the unknowable Essence of Divinity (Huvíyyah). In the same way in which this Divine Essence is outside the range and limits of human understanding, these days are, then, not part of the Kull-i-Shay’ (All Things) of the year and thus beyond the limits of time and names.

⁹² Bahá’u’lláh, *Aqdas* 25.

⁹³ Ibid 178.

⁹⁴ Hornby, *Lights* 110.

⁹⁵ Walbridge, *Sacred* 216

⁹⁶ Bahá’u’lláh, *Summons* 237.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of the five realms of Háhút, Láhút, Jabarút, Malakút and Nasút see chapters VI.1 ff below.

⁹⁸ Glasse, *Encyclopedia* 128.

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If we were to place the Festival of Ayyám-i-Há into the framework of the interpretation of the Badí‘ calendar as a symbolic re-enactment of early Bábí/Bahá’í history suggested above, it would denote the time immediately preceding the Declaration of the Báb. According to Amanat, it was during this time, especially the year before His Declaration to Mullá Husayn, that the Báb started to make allusions to His family members regarding the claims He was to announce publicly later on.⁹⁹ It would thus appear that this was the time when the Báb first came to the conviction that He had been chosen by God to become the bearer of a new Divine Revelation.

In light of this interpretation we could, therefore, argue that the letter Há, because of its numerical value of five and its association with the Haykal (temple), signifies the Person of the Báb as the recipient of Divine Revelation and at the same time, due to its association with God (Huva) and the Divine Essence (Huvíyyah), symbolizes the Divinity which is the source of this Revelation. This is also confirmed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ Who explains the significance of the letter Há by stating that “[t]his Há is the Há of the reality (Huvíyyah) and essence of the Most Merciful, which is manifest and clear in the number five, which is the numerical equivalent of the word Báb”¹⁰⁰. The dreams and visions in which the Divine Will was communicated to the Báb and which caused Him to become convinced of His divinely ordained mission were, then, not part of this world in the same way as the Days of Há are not part of the nineteen months of the year and thus beyond All Things. In this context it is also of interest to note that the phrase Ayyám-i-Há is numerically equivalent to fifty-nine, which, according to the Islamic calendar, corresponds to the year before the Báb’s Declaration.¹⁰¹

By specifying the day of Naw-Rúz 1844 as the beginning of the Badí‘ calendar and by placing the intercalary days before the month of the Fast and designating them as Ayyám-i-Há Bahá’u’lláh, therefore, completed this calendar in such a way that its structure now reflects

⁹⁹ Amanat, *Resurrection* 149 ff.

¹⁰⁰ Adapted from a provisional translation by Denis MacEoin of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Lawh-i Ism-i A’zám. Cited in MacEoin, *Rituals* 143.

¹⁰¹ The Báb’s Declaration took place in the year 1260 A.H.

the chronology of some of the major events associated with the early years of the Bábí/Bahá'í Era. Whether this was done intentionally or not I cannot, at this stage, ascertain; but the precision of this match between the organization of the Bábí calendar and the sequence of events surrounding the birth of the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions suggests that it is not a mere coincidence.

2. Naw-Rúz and the Creation of the World:

The sequence of Ayyám-Há, the fast and Naw-Rúz appears to contain yet another level of symbolic meaning as an allusion to and a replay of the divine act of creation. This act of creation is described by Bahá'u'lláh as follows:

Indeed He was a hidden treasure. This is a station that can never be described nor even alluded to. And in the station of "I did wish to make Myself known", God was, and His creation had ever existed beneath His shelter from the beginning that hath no beginning, apart from its being preceded by a Firstness which cannot be regarded as firstness and originated by a Cause inscrutable even unto all men of learning.

That which hath been in existence had existed before, but not in the form thou seest today. The world of existence came into being through the heat (harára) generated from the interaction between the active force (al-fá'il) and that which is its recipient (al-munfa'il). These two are the same, yet they are different. Thus doth the Great Announcement inform thee about this glorious structure. Such as communicate the generating influence (al-fá'ilayn) and such as receive its impact (al-munfa'ilayn) are indeed created through the irresistible Word of God which is the Cause of the entire creation, while all else besides His Word are but the creatures and the effects thereof. Verily thy Lord is the Expounder, the All-Wise.¹⁰²

The first part of this account is a reference to the famous Islamic hadith "*I was a Hidden Treasure and loved to be known. Therefore I created the Creation that I might be known.*" In His celebrated commentary on this tradition, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that the station of

¹⁰² Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets* 140.

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the ‘Hidden Treasure’ is the same as the Divine Essence or Ipseity (Huvvíyat).¹⁰³ As we have already seen, the days of Ayyám-i-Há are dedicated to the remembrance of this Divine Essence contained within the world of Háhút.

The next stage in the process of divine creation described by Bahá’u’lláh is that of the interaction of the active force with its recipient, both of which are said to be created by the Word of God.¹⁰⁴ Through this interaction a heat (harára) is generated that, in turn, brings forth the world of existence. According to Bahá’u’lláh, the same kind of heat is also produced by the fast: “*Grant, O my Lord, that the fire of Thy love and the heat (harára) produced by the fast enjoined by Thee may inflame them in Thy Cause, and make them to be occupied with Thy praise and with remembrance of Thee.*”¹⁰⁵ In a similar way in which the heat of the cosmogony brings forth a new creation, this heat of the fast can, therefore, inflame the believers in the Cause of God and thus create a renewed and strengthened faith within them.

In the third and last stage of Bahá’u’lláh’s account of the process of divine creation, this cosmogenic heat brings about the entire world of existence. This process can, therefore, be linked to the concept of the Primal Point from which all things (Kull-i-Shay’) have been generated. This Primal Point, of course, is, in turn, signified by the Festival of Naw-Rúz. While the days of Ayyám-i-Há symbolize the Divine Essence which precedes the existence of all created things, the month of the fast, therefore, seems to signify the heat of the cosmogony and the Festival of Naw-Rúz the beginning of the coming into being of the entire world of existence.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “Commentary”.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of these two forces see chapter VI.2 below.

¹⁰⁵ Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers* 67.

¹⁰⁶ I am indebted to Vahid J. Brown for bringing this level of symbolism to my attention.

3. The Badí' Calendar and the Shrine of the Báb:

Interestingly, this link between the Festival of Naw-Rúz and the act of creation also seems to be reflected in the process of the erection of the Báb's Shrine on Mount Carmel. Almost all important stages and landmarks in this process were achieved on various Naw-Rúz days. On the day of Naw-Rúz 1953, Shoghi Effendi thus sent the following cablegram to the Bahá'ís of the world:

On occasion of Naw-Rúz of Holy Year convey twin joyful tidings to National Assemblies of the Bahá'í world. Building operations of the final unit of the Báb's Sepulcher commenced. Recall at this hour successive landmarks, each coinciding with a Naw-Rúz Festival in the history of the sixty year old enterprise founded by the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation. First, Naw-Rúz, 1909, witnessed the entombment within the Holy of Holies of the Shrine constructed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá of the dust of the Martyr-Prophet of the Faith. Second, Naw-Rúz, 1949, coincided with the laying of the first threshold stones of the arcade. Third, Naw-Rúz, 1951, synchronized with the termination of the excavation within the Shrine foundations for the eight piers designed to support the weight of the three-storey superstructure. Fourth, Naw-Rúz, 1952, is associated with the completion of the octagon setting second crown of the holy Edifice.

The celebrations of Naw-Rúz in this Holy Year are heightened by the placing of the first stones encircling the base of the dome. Anticipating, as the climax of the world-wide rejoicings of the Holy Year draw near, the placing of the gilded tiles, the fourth and last unit of the majestic Edifice. Fervently hoping that the greatest enterprise undertaken at the World Center of the Faith will be consummated ere the conclusion of the festivities of the Holy Year.¹⁰⁷

It is not only in the process of the erection of this shrine, however, that we can discern a link between this sacred building and the organization of Bahá'í year. The structure and design of this edifice also reflects the concept of Kull-i-Shay' that constitutes the organizing principle of the Badí' calendar. The Báb's Shrine has eighteen windows – symbolizing the eighteen Letters of the Living – that surround the vault containing His Remains. The terrace on which this

¹⁰⁷ Cablegram dated 21 March 1953. Cited in Shoghi Effendi, *Messages* 47 f.

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shrine is located is, moreover, surrounded by eighteen other terraces; nine lying below and nine above it. While the day of Naw-Rúz is thus the calendrical equivalent of the Primal Point Whose remains are held within this edifice, the shrine itself, with its eighteen windows, ostensibly corresponds to the month of Bahá‘, the days of which are dedicated to the Letters of the Living. The eighteen remaining terraces, finally, could be regarded as the equivalent of the following eighteen months of the Bábí and Bahá‘í year.

VI. THE DIVINE NAMES USED IN THE BAHÁ'Í WEEK

1. Tetrads, Heptads and Enneadecads

As already mentioned, the numbers four, seven and nineteen all play significant roles in Bábí and Bahá'í cosmology and ontology. In order to understand the following explanations of the significance of these numbers within the Badí' calendar, it will be necessary to take a brief look at how the various tetrads, heptads and enneadecads (groups of nineteen) described in the Bahá'í Writings are related to and derived from each other.

We have already seen that, for the Báb, the number nineteen constitutes a universal law or principle through which all things are created and God's plan unfolds in the world. It has also been established that this number is primarily derived from the nineteen letters of the Qur'anic opening verse "*Bismi'lláhi'r-Rahmání'r-Rahím*" (In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful) which, for the Báb, constitutes something like a divine world formula containing in its essence the entire contingent world. According to the Báb, this formula was made manifest for the first time in a corporal way in the form of the primary Váhid of the Islamic Dispensation. Since then it has been re-revealed as "*Bismi'lláhi'l-Amna'i'l-Aqdas*" (In the Name of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Holy), the opening verse of the Báb's Arabic and Persian Bayán, and returned to the plane of physical existence in the form of the primary Váhid of the Bábí Dispensation. This universal principle of nineteen is, as already mentioned, also the organizing element of many of the Báb's writings and of the Badí' calendar itself.

While the nineteen letters of the Basmalah are thus the source and origin of the various Bábí and Bahá'í enneadecads (or Váhids), the

four words that make up this verse give rise to a large number of different tetrads mentioned in the Báb's writings. Due to the fact that the first word (or word group) of the Qur'anic as well as of the Bábí Basmalah (bism) consists of three letters, the second (Alláh) of four and the last two (al-Raḥmán and al-Raḥím or al-Amna' and al-Aqdas) of six letters each, many of these tetrads or quaternaries are, in turn, composed of one group of three, one group of four and two groups of six entities each. In the last chapter (báb) of the Persian Bayán, the Báb thus states, for example, that human hearts (af'ida¹⁰⁸) can only be purified through belief in the first three letters of His Basmalah, while the spirits (arwáh¹⁰⁹) of man are cleansed by belief in the next four letters, souls or selves (anfus¹¹⁰) through belief in the following six and bodies (ajsám¹¹¹) by belief in the last six letters.

Another tetrad of this nature appears in váhid eight, báb five of the same book, where the Báb's followers are asked to offer three diamonds, four topazes, six emeralds and six rubies to Him Whom God shall make manifest. In the same chapter, this tetrad of precious stones is associated with a number of other quaternaries including one of white, yellow, green and red lights, another consisting of the four elements of fire, air, water and earth and a third one containing the abovementioned human faculties of heart, spirit, soul or self and body.¹¹² All of these quaternaries are said to be in the shadow of "*Bismi'lláhi'l-Amna' i'l-Aqdas*", which ostensibly signifies that they are derived from the four words of the Báb's new Basmalah.

As can be gleaned from these examples, the Báb's tetrads generally show a certain internal hierarchy, i.e. they usually start with the lightest, warmest, brightest and most spiritual component and end with the heaviest, coldest, darkest and most physical member. This tendency is also exemplified by another one of these quaternaries which is mentioned repeatedly in the Bahá'í Writings, namely that of the four realms of Heavenly Court (Lahút), Dominion (Jabarút),

¹⁰⁸ Sing. fu'ád.

¹⁰⁹ Sing. rúh.

¹¹⁰ Sing. nafs.

¹¹¹ Sing. jism.

¹¹² For an explanation of these tetrads see chapter VII.1 below.

Kingdom (Malakút) and Mortal Realm (Násút).¹¹³ This tetrad describes the different levels of the contingent word, while a fifth realm called Háhút, which is sometimes added to these four, denotes the station of the Divine Essence.

It appears that the different members of many of the Báb's tetrads describe certain qualities and attributes of each of these four realms of the contingent world. The world of Násút which denotes the physical word is thus, for example, associated with the coldest, heaviest and most solid element earth, the human body and the darkest colour red. This colour, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, signifies the act of martyrdom which takes place in the material world.¹¹⁴

A variant of this tetrad of realms appears to be the abovementioned notion of the seven stages of coming into being. In this Shí'ah concept, that was first described by Imám Ja'far-i-Šádiq,¹¹⁵ the first level Will (Mašhíyyat) thus appears to be located in the realm of Lahút, while the second level Purpose (Irádih) is ostensibly contained within the dominion of Jabarút and the third stage Predestination (Qadar) in the kingdom of Malakút. The last four stages of Fate (Qadá'), Permission (Idhn), Fixed-Time (Ajal) and Book (Kitáb), on the other hand, all occur within the material world called Násút, which has thus been divided into four parts to form yet another tetrad. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the attributes and functions ascribed to each of these seven stages as well as their associated colours largely correspond to their alleged counterparts in the tetrad of realms. The realm of Lahút, as well as the stage of Will, are thus linked to the colour white, while Jabarút and Purpose are both associated with the colour yellow. The realm of Malakút and the stage of Predestination are linked to the colour green and the realm of Nasút as well as the stage of Fate, when mentioned as part of the first four levels, to the colour red.¹¹⁶ When mentioned as the first member of the

¹¹³ The realms of Malakút and Násút are both sometimes also referred to as Mulk. For a more in-depth study of these realms see Milani and Fananapazir, "Pen Motif" and Lepain, *Archéologie*.

¹¹⁴ See Milani and Fananapazir, "Pen Motif".

¹¹⁵ Brown, *Creation*.

¹¹⁶ Milani and Fananapazir, "Pen Motif".

last four of the seven stages of coming into being, however, the level of Fate is linked to the colour white, while Permission is associated with yellow, Fixed-time with green and the Book with red.¹¹⁷

These patterns of association can be summarized as follows:

¹¹⁷ Brown, *Selections*.

Stage (Colour)	Realm	Element (Colour)	Human faculty	Bábí Váhid	Bábí Basm.	Islamic Váhid	Islam. Basm.
Will (white)	Láhút	Fire (white)	Heart (fu'ád)	The Báb	ب	Point of the Qur'án	ب
				Mullá Husayn	س	Muhammad	س
				'Alí-i-Bastámí	م	'Alí	م
Purpose (yellow)	Jabarút	Air (yellow)	Spirit (rúh)	Táhirih	ا	Fáṭimih	ا
				4 th Letter of the Living	ل	Ḥasan	ل
				5 th Letter of the Living	ل	Ḥusayn	ل
				6 th Letter of the Living	ه	4 th Imám	ه
Predestination (green)	Malakút	Water (green)	Self (nafs)	7 th Letter of the Living	ا	5 th Imám	ا
				8 th Letter of the Living	ل	6 th Imám	ل
				9 th Letter of the Living	ا	7 th Imám	ر
				10 th Letter of the Living	م	8 th Imám	ح
				11 th Letter of the Living	ن	9 th Imám	م
				12 th Letter of the Living	ع	10 th Imám	ن
Fate (red/white)	Násút	Earth (red)	Body (jism)	13 th Letter of the Living	ا	11 th Imám	ا
Permission (yellow)				ل	12 th Imám (Mihdí)	ل	
Fixed-Time (green)				ا	1 st Báb	ر	
Book (red)				ل	2 nd Báb	ح	
				د	3 rd Báb	ي	
				س	4 th Báb	ن	

In a similar way in which many of the Báb's tetrads appear to describe the different qualities and attributes of the four realms of Lahút, Jabarút, Malakút and Násút, the members of a number of His other heptads

also seem to be closely related to the different stages of coming into being.

2. The Seven Stages of Coming into Being

In the foregoing pages it has already been suggested that the seven stages of coming into being may be related to the seven days of the Bahá'í week. In order to further explore the possibility of such a relationship we will now examine these seven stages in a slightly more detailed manner.

Following in the tradition of Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í, the Bahá'í Writings distinguish between three major ontological levels or worlds: The World of God ('Alám-i-Haqq), the World of Command ('Alám-i-Amr), and the World of Creation ('Alám-i-Khalq).¹¹⁸ In this schema the World of God refers to the unknowable and unattainable Divine Essence or Ipseity – a station, which even the Manifestations of God can never attain or fully comprehend. The World of Command is, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, “*the station of the Primal Will, which is a universal reality (ḥaqíqat-i-kullíyyih) that is resolved into infinite forms*”¹¹⁹, while the World of Creation denotes the realm of physical existence.

While the World of God, according to the Bahá'í Writings, is not part of the seven stages of coming into being, the first three of these stages Will, Purpose and Predestination belong to the World of Command which is an immaterial and atemporal dimension. The last four levels of Fate, Permission, Fixed-Time and the Book, on the other hand, are of a temporal nature as they occur within the World of Creation.¹²⁰

The first of these seven stages, Will (Mashíyyat), is also referred to as the Word (Kalimát) or Command (Amr) of God, the First Intellect ('Aqlu'l-Awwal) or the Self or Soul of God (Nafsu'l-Iláh).¹²¹ It is the

¹¹⁸ These are the three levels inscribed on the Bahá'í ringstone symbol.

¹¹⁹ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from Makátib 2:141 Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

¹²⁰ Brown, *Creation*.

¹²¹ These designations apply to both the totality of the first three stages of coming into being that subsist in the World of Command and the first one of these stages in

first emanation from God and the vehicle through which everything else is created. This Primal Will has not been created by God's essence but through itself, because the Divine Essence is exalted above any attributes or activities.¹²² Imám Ja'far-i-Şádiq is thus reported to have stated: "*God created the Will through itself, then He created all things through the Will.*"¹²³

According to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and in the tradition of the ancient Greek philosophers, nothing can be created except through the interaction of an active force with a recipient. This principle of polarity or *coincidentia oppositorum* is also described as a dyad of existence and essence, matter and form¹²⁴ or masculine and feminine. When these two opposites unite a connection is realized from which a new creation comes into being. The Báb thus states that

with the exception of God, nothing can subsist through itself. All things are composite. Once this duality is established, connection is also established, for a thing cannot be a thing except through its existence, which is the aspect of manifestation (*tajallí*) in it, through its essence, which is the aspect of receiving (*qubúl*), and through connection (*rabt*), which is realized after the union [of the first two].¹²⁵

In the divine act of creation these three realities of existence, essence and connection correspond to the first three stages of coming into being. The Primal Will (*Mashíyyat*) is the active force or existence, the recipient agent or essence is represented by Purpose (*Irádih*) and the resulting entity of connection is the stage of Predestination (*Qadar*).¹²⁶ For this reason, the stage of Will is also associated with the element of fire, which is the most active one of the Aristotelian elements. Likewise, Purpose is linked to air, an element that is less active than fire but more active than water, with which the stage of

particular. The second and third stage (*Irádih* and *Qadar*) can thus also be regarded as different forms or levels of the Will (*Mashíyyat*).

¹²² Brown, *Creation*.

¹²³ Quoted in Idris Hamid, *Metaphysics* 174n.

¹²⁴ Brown, *Creation*.

¹²⁵ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from INBA 14:268. Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

¹²⁶ Brown, *Creation*.

Predestination is associated. The first two of these three stages are also linked by the Báb to the divine imperative “BE” (kun) through which God called all creation into being.¹²⁷ Referring to the two letters “B” and “E” (Káf and Nún) that form this command, the Báb thus asserts: “*The "B" is the stage of the Will and the "E" is the stage of Purpose. The Will is the father of all things, and Purpose is their mother. [...] Through the "B" God created the matter (mádda) of all things...and through the "E" God created the form (şúra) of all things.*”¹²⁸ Once these two letters have been joined together the stage of Predestination is manifested.¹²⁹

Another symbol used in the Bahá’í Writings to explain this process is that of the pen (qalam). Bahá’u’lláh frequently refers to the Will of God, and to Himself as its Manifestation, as the Most Sublime or Most Exalted Pen (Qalamu’l-A‘lá) and equates the act of writing with the process of divine creation.¹³⁰ In order for the pen, as an active force, to be able to write it needs a recipient, which is usually signified by the tablet (lawḥ). However, some Islamic traditions also point to the ink as the recipient force, as the pen has to unite with it before it can be used to write. One of these traditions is cited by Ibn-Kathír and reads: “*Verily the first thing that God created is the Pen, then He created the nún, which is the ink-pot (dawát).*”¹³¹ The Arabic letter “Nún”, that is the second letter of the divine command “BE” (kun) which is linked by the Báb to the station of Purpose (Irádih), is shaped like an ink-pot and, possibly for this reason, can also literally signify an ink-pot when spelled out as Nún-Waw-Nún. The actual script inscribed by this pen, then, signifies the stage of Predestination, as can be gleaned from another Islamic tradition which reads: “*The first thing which God*

¹²⁷ See, for example, the following passage in the long obligatory prayer: “I testify [...] that He Who hath been manifested is the Hidden Mystery, the Treasured Symbol, through Whom the letters B and E (Be) have been joined and knit together.”

Bahá’u’lláh, *Aqdas* 95.

¹²⁸ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from the Báb’s Tafsír-i-Basmalah in INBA 60:48-49, also INBA 64:74. Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

¹²⁹ Brown, *Creation*.

¹³⁰ For more details see Milani and Fananapazir, “Pen Motif”.

¹³¹ Quoted in *ibid*.

created is the Pen. Then He said (to the Pen), 'Write!' The Pen said, 'what shall I write?' He said, 'inscribe Predestination (Qadar)!'"¹³²

This principle of the necessary interaction of an active force with a recipient in the process of creation may also shed some light on the symbolic significance of the biblical story of Adam and Eve as the founders of the human race. Viewed in the light of this concept, Adam may be regarded as symbolizing the active force of the Will, while Eve could be seen as signifying the recipient entity of Purpose. Such an interpretation is, indeed, confirmed by the Báb Who states that "*the stage of Purpose, [...] is the Eve of the Primal Adam and the Throne whereon the Will is seated in the station of the All-Merciful.*"¹³³

The stage of Predestination, that is the third stage of coming into being, is described by Bahá'u'lláh as "*the stage of scheme and dimension, that is to say, the appearance of means in proper quantity*".¹³⁴ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, furthermore explains that this stage consists of "*the necessary and indispensable relationships which exist between the realities of things*".¹³⁵ What this means is that, through the interaction of Will and Purpose, the divine archetypes ('ayn) for all created things come into being at this level. These archetypes are more or less identical to the Platonic forms and signify the divine design plans after which all created things are fashioned.¹³⁶ The course of biological evolution, for example, is, therefore, the process by which matter is gradually shaped and fashioned until a being (e.g. a species) is formed whose form and shape reflects its archetype contained in the realm of Predestination.¹³⁷ For this reason, the Báb also calls this stage the "*womb of the contingent world*" and explains

¹³² Quoted in *ibid.*

¹³³ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from INBA 14:268 ff; 67:38 ff; 86:137 ff. Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

¹³⁴ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from *Má'idíy-i Ásmání*, vol. 8, p. 192.

Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

¹³⁵ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections* 198.

¹³⁶ Brown, *Creation*.

¹³⁷ For more details see Brown and von Kitzing, *Evolution*.

that its purpose is “*the design (handasa) of substances, matters, existences, natures, essences, accidents, and forms*”.¹³⁸

According to the Báb, this stage of Predestination “*which is made manifest after the conjunction of the two Commands [i.e. Will and Purpose]*” is also the realm where “*the condition of choosing good or evil ariseth*”.¹³⁹ This ability of choice between good and evil is what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes as the free will granted to human beings.¹⁴⁰ Imám Ja’far-i-Šádiq explains in this regard:

Each believer has a likeness upon the Throne [i.e. in the realm of Predestination], such that when he performs an obligatory prayer his likeness does the same, whereupon the angels bless him and ask for his forgiveness. And when a servant is disobedient, God causes a curtain of night to descend around his likeness, of which the angels are aware.¹⁴¹

In a similar way in which the term Will (Mashíyyat) is applied to the total of the first three stages of coming into being (Will, Purpose and Predestination) as well as to the first one of these three levels in particular, the four stages following the manifestation of Predestination are sometimes collectively referred to as Fate (Qadá’), which is also the name of the first of those four levels. These last four stages, together, signify the manifestation of the divine Will in the world of physical existence and are thus subject to the temporal and material limitations of this realm. For this reason, change to the divine Will (badá’) is not possible anymore once the stage of Fate has been reached.¹⁴² These last four stages of coming into being are also referred to by the Báb as the four pillars of the Throne of Purpose (Irádiḥ) whereon the Primal Will (Mashíyyat) is seated.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from Lawḥ-i-Váliy-i-Šhúshṭar. Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* 248 f.

¹⁴¹ Cited by Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá’i in *Sharḥu’l-Mashá’ir*, p 17 and translated by Keven Brown. Quoted in Brown, *Selections*.

¹⁴² Brown, *Creation*.

¹⁴³ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from INBA 14:268 ff; 67:38 ff; 86:137 ff. Cited in Brown, *Selections*.

Shaykh Ahmad-i-Aḥsá'í describes the first of these last four levels, which is the fourth stage of coming into being, using the example of the construction of a bed: While the stage of Predestination (Qadar) is “*measuring the materials of a bed for length, breadth, and shape*”, the level of Fate or Decree (Qadá’), he explains, “*corresponds to [actually] composing them into a bed.*”¹⁴⁴

The stage of Fate is associated with the most passive or recipient element earth and the corresponding colour red when mentioned as the last member of the first tetrad of stages.¹⁴⁵ This is because the stage of Fate serves as a recipient to the three higher levels. When mentioned as part of the last four levels, however, this stage is linked to the most active element fire and the corresponding colour white, because it serves as an active force in relation to the three stages that it precedes.

The fifth stage of coming into being is variably termed Permission (Idhn) or Execution (Imdā’). This level is associated with the element air as well as the colour yellow and signifies the divine authorization for the existence of any particular thing or creature. The sixth stage, Fixed-Time (Ajal), denotes the predetermined duration of existence of every such thing and is linked to the colour green and the element water. The seventh and last level, which is the stage of the Book (Kitáb) signifies “*the unveiling of the perfection of things*”¹⁴⁶ and thus the final and complete manifestation in the physical world of the divine archetypes contained within the World of Command. It is associated with the recipient element earth and its corresponding colour red.

These seven stages of coming into being, therefore, describe the process by which the Divine Will manifests itself in the material world. Bahá'u'lláh thus explains in His Lawḥ-i-Hikmat that “*nature is God’s Will and its expression in and through the contingent world.*”¹⁴⁷ It is also of interest to note in this context that the Arabic terms for “will” (mashīyyat) and “thing” (shay’) are both derived from the same

¹⁴⁴ Adapted from a passage cited in Idris Hamid, *Metaphysics* 435.

¹⁴⁵ See Brown, *Selections*.

¹⁴⁶ Browne, *Creation*.

¹⁴⁷ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets* 142.

root, which is “he willed” (*shá’a*), thus implying that every created thing is in its essence an expression of the Divine Will.

3. The Concept of Divine Names

Before we can try to establish a connection between the act of divine creation as described above and the names of the days of the Bahá’í week it may be of benefit to take a brief look at the concept of names and attributes of God as it is depicted in the Bahá’í Writings and in Islamic literature. According to Bahá’í Scripture, God is “*in His Essence sanctified above all names and exalted beyond even the loftiest attributes.*”¹⁴⁸ If the Divine Manifestations describe Him by certain names or attributes they are thus not trying to say that He actually possesses any of these attributes but are only asserting that He cannot possibly lack them:

For instance, as we consider created things we observe infinite perfections, and the created things being in the utmost regularity and perfection we infer that the Ancient Power on whom dependeth the existence of these beings, cannot be ignorant; thus we say He is All-Knowing. It is certain that it is not impotent, it must be then All-Powerful; it is not poor, it must be All-Possessing; it is not non-existent, it must be Ever-Living. The purpose is to show that these attributes and perfections that we recount for that Universal Reality are only in order to deny imperfections, rather than to assert the perfections that the human mind can conceive. Thus we say His attributes are unknowable.¹⁴⁹

Such a description via negation makes it possible to circumvent the philosophical dilemma that God, if He actually possessed any of the attributes human beings ascribe to Him, would be dependent upon the existence of His creation. If God was knowing in the sense that human beings use this attribute, for example, He would be dependent upon the existence of things He can have knowledge of. As such a notion is not possible from a Bahá’í perspective, the essential attributes of God must, therefore, be of a fundamentally different nature than the attributes known to man:

¹⁴⁸ Bahá’u’lláh, *Gems* 33.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablet to Forel* 17 f.

The Prophets say the knowledge of God has no need of the existence of beings, but the knowledge of the creature requires the existence of objects of knowledge; if the knowledge of God had need of any other thing, then it would be the knowledge of the creature, and not the knowledge of God, for the preexistent is different from the created, and the created is opposed to the preexistent....Therefore, the preexistence of the specifications and individualizations of beings, which are the things known of God, does not exist. These divine and perfect attributes [belonging to God's Essence] cannot be encompassed by rational perception in order to judge whether the knowledge of God needs objects of knowledge or not.¹⁵⁰

The essential attributes of God, which exist in the world of Háhút, are thus beyond human understanding and not describable by human terminology and language. In this realm of the Ipseity no difference exists between God's essence and His attributes. Such a distinction only arises in the first realm of the contingent world, i.e. the Primal Will (Mashíyyat) or the corresponding realm of Láhút.¹⁵¹ Any names and attributes we use to describe God do, therefore, not actually apply to the Divine Essence but to His Prophets and Messengers, Who are the manifestations of God's Will rather than His Essence:

All the descriptions, the qualities, the names and the attributes which we mention return to the Divine Manifestations; but as no one has attained to the reality of the Essence of Divinity, so no one is able to describe, explain, praise or glorify it. Therefore, all that the human reality knows, discovers and understands of the names, the attributes and the perfections of God refer to these Holy Manifestations."¹⁵²

Even though only the Divine Manifestations possess all the attributes ascribed to God to their fullest degree, human beings are also potentially able to reflect every single one of them. This potential sets humanity apart from the rest of creation, as all other created things are only able to reflect one of the divine names or attributes:

¹⁵⁰ 'Abdu'l-Bahá , *Some Answered Questions* 293 ff.

¹⁵¹ Brown, *Creation*.

¹⁵² 'Abdu'l-Bahá , *Some Answered Questions* 148.

Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it a recipient of the glory of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He hath focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath been singled out for so great a favor, so enduring a bounty.¹⁵³

God's attributes are thus manifested in the physical world, i.e. the realm of Násút, in two different ways: The manifestation of individual attributes through every created thing which is referred to as universal revelation (tajallí-i-‘ám)¹⁵⁴ and the manifestation of the totality of His attributes through the Divine Manifestations that is called specific or secondary revelation (tajallí-i-khás/tajallí-i-thání).¹⁵⁵

The names and attributes of God contained in the World of Command are more than mere terms used to describe the Logos or the Divine Manifestations, they are the highest creative principle and the cause of existence of all created things. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, therefore, describes these names as *“the first principle of giving existence in the world of creation and the source of the different grades of realities in the degrees of existence”*.¹⁵⁶ He, furthermore, asserts that they *“are actually and forever existing and not potential. Because they convey life, they are called Life-giving; because they provide, they are called Bountiful, the Provider; because they create, they are called Creator; because they educate and govern, the name Lord God is applied”*.¹⁵⁷ Bahá’u’lláh thus explains:

When God purposed to make His action manifest in His realm, reveal it upon His earth, establish it in His land, and make it a perpetual word and a clear sign, He clothed it in the garment of names. [...] Nothing in the heavens or on the earth can exist unless it is under the shadow of certain names among His names. For example, if thou seest the knowledge of a learned person, be assured that this knowledge hath appeared as a result of the effulgence of the name of God the Knowing. If thou observest the

¹⁵³ Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings* 65.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, Bahá’u’lláh, *Íqán* 139.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid* 141.

¹⁵⁶ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from *Makátib*, vol. 1, p.13. Cited in Brown, *Creation*.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation* 219.

power of a powerful individual, know that this power oweth its existence to its reflection of the name the Powerful. In like manner, the loftiness of the sky is a consequence of His name the Exalted, the radiance of the sun is a consequence of His name the Luminous, the stability of the earth is a consequence of His name the Imperturbable, the flowing of water is a consequence of His name the Fluid, and the blowing of wind is a consequence of His name the Sender.¹⁵⁸

Unlike God's essence and essential attributes which are contained in the realm of Háhút and independent of the contingent word, the names and attributes of God - or more precisely of His Manifestations - contained in the World of Command "*require the existence of objects or creatures upon which they have been bestowed and in which they have become manifest*".¹⁵⁹

4. God's Names and the Seven Stages of Coming into Being

Keeping in mind the essential distinction between God's unknowable essence and the attributes ascribed to Him, we can now go on to examine the individual names and attributes of God used in the Badi' calendar in a slightly more detailed manner. For this purpose we will first direct our attention to the names given to each day of the Bahá'í week.

In late Islamic thought, these divine names and attributes which, as we have seen, actually belong to the Manifestations of God, are grouped into the two complementary categories of names of Glory or Majesty (Jalál) and names of Beauty (Jamál).¹⁶⁰ The attributes of Jalál are names that indicate God's power, might or wrath, while the names of Jamál denote His mercy and forgiveness.¹⁶¹ In accordance with the ubiquitous principle of polarity described above, the divine names of Jalál thus represent a masculine or active force, while the attributes of

¹⁵⁸ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from the Tafsír-i-Hu, International Bahá'í Archives, unpublished manuscript, no. BC003/070/00084 C. Cited in Brown, *Creation*.

¹⁵⁹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation* 219.

¹⁶⁰ Walbridge, *Sacred* 196.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid* 196 f.

Jamál are of a feminine and, therefore, recipient nature.¹⁶² Some Islamic and especially Súfí schools of thought, however, have added a third category to this schema which is that of the divine names of perfection (Kamál).¹⁶³

The Súfí mystic Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927) thus describes the act of breathing, not only of humans but also of God, as consisting of three different types of breath: a stronger breath called Jalál, a weaker breath termed Jamál and the breath of Kamál, which unites and thereby annihilates the other two. For Khan, breath is the great power that stands behind the word and is thus the underlying cause of its existence.¹⁶⁴ In regard to the process of the utterance of the Word of God this would, therefore, mean that these three types of breath have to appear before any word can be pronounced and, thereby, made manifest.

This notion bears some resemblance to the depiction of the act of divine creation given by Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Aḥsá'í in his *Sharḥu'l-Favá'id* and confirmed in the Báb's *Tafsír-i-Há'*, wherein the first four levels of the seven stages of coming into being are described as consisting of two stages of inhaling (*istansháq*) and two stages of exhaling (*istantaq*).¹⁶⁵ In the first of these four stages the air is inhaled into the divine mouth, after which it is warmed by the heat of divine Reality in the second stage, pushed to the fore in the third stage and finally exhaled as a complete word in the fourth.¹⁶⁶ The first three of these stages, therefore, take place in the mouth of God which seems to symbolize the World of Command wherein the levels of Will, Purpose and Predestination are contained, while the fourth stage arises outside the mouth thus ostensibly pointing to the fact that the level of Decree is manifested in the physical world.

From a blend of these two accounts it would, therefore, follow that the divine name Jalál (Glory or Majesty) might signify the active force

¹⁶² See, for example, Murata, *Sourcebook*.

¹⁶³ See, for example, Nicholson, *Mysticism* 207

¹⁶⁴ Khan, "Sufi Teachings", part 1, chapter XVII.4.

¹⁶⁵ Saiedi, *Logos* 56 f.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

present in the process of divine creation and could thus be indicative of the level of Will (*Mashīyyat*) in the seven stages of coming into being. The name of *Jamál* (Beauty) would, then, signify the recipient agent of Purpose (*Irádih*), while *Kamál* (Perfection) might denote the level of Predestination (*Qadar*), which is where the active force and its recipient unite. When the Báb gave the names of *Jalál*, *Jamál* and *Kamál* to the first three days of the Bábí/Bahá'í week, He may thus have intended to allude, thereby, to the first three stages of coming into being. Such an interpretation is also supported by the fact that these three names are the only ones that appear in both the seven-day week and the nineteen-day month of the Badí' calendar. Furthermore, the order of these three names is the same in both cases with the only difference lying in the fact that the name of *Kamál* does not follow that of *Jamál* immediately in the nineteen days of the month.¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, this order does not reflect the structure of the *Du'á sahar* – the *Shí'ah* dawn prayer from which the Báb originally took the names for the nineteen days of the Bábí/Bahá'í month – as in this prayer the name of *Jamál* is mentioned before that of *Jalál* although most other names are invoked in the same order in which they appear in the Badí' calendar.¹⁶⁸

It appears that this ostensible pattern of association between the seven stages of coming into being and the names of the days of the Bahá'í week can also be extended to the remaining four stages and their respective counterparts in the seven-day week:

As mentioned above, the fourth stage of coming into being is termed Decree or Fate (*Qadá'*), while the corresponding weekday is named *Fidál* (Grace). Although these two terms do not seem to be closely related at first sight, the Bahá'í Writings are full of indications of the fact that whatever God decrees for His creatures (i.e. what He determines to be their fate) is, in reality, nothing but a sign of His grace and mercy. As already indicated, the level of Fate or Decree is the first stage of the manifestation of the Divine Will in the physical world. Whatever manifests itself as the Divine Decree in this world,

¹⁶⁷ For a possible explanation of this difference refer to chapters VII.3-5 below.

¹⁶⁸ The only other change of order introduced by the Báb in the Badí' calendar is the reversal of the names of 'Ilm and *Qudrat*

however, is in reality a sign of God's grace and mercy without which, as Bahá'u'lláh explains, any form of existence would be impossible:

I can have no doubt that should the holy breaths of Thy loving-kindness and the breeze of Thy bountiful favor (ifḏál)¹⁶⁹ cease, for less than the twinkling of an eye, to breathe over all created things, the entire creation would perish, and all that are in heaven and on earth would be reduced to utter nothingness.¹⁷⁰

Bahá'u'lláh furthermore asserts that the "Word of God", which, as already explained is the same as His Will and thus the origin of the divine decree (Qaḏá'), "*is God's all-pervasive grace (fayḏ), from which all grace (fuyúdat) doth emanate.*"¹⁷¹

The following quotation is another indication of the essential equivalence of Qaḏá' and Fiḏál, both of which are mentioned here together in slightly different grammatical forms:

Know thou that We have annulled the rule of the sword, as an aid to Our Cause, and substituted for it the power born of the utterance of men. Thus have We irrevocably decreed, by virtue of Our grace ('an jahati'l faḏlin maqḏíyyá).¹⁷²

The term Fate (Qaḏá'), therefore, describes from a human perspective what is, from the divine point of view, an outpouring of Divine Mercy (Fiḏál). Put in other words: the divine name of Mercy manifests itself as Fate in the world of humanity.

The fifth stage of coming into being is the level of Permission (Idhn), and the corresponding weekday bears the name of 'Idál (Justice). Justice, in Islamic thought, is the opposite of grace, as justice is giving exactly what is due, while grace means to give more than is deserved.¹⁷³ The term Idhn, as used in the Bahá'í Writings, denotes the

¹⁶⁹ The word ifḏál is a grammatical variant of Fiḏál.

¹⁷⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers* 90. In light of the above references to the divine breath, it is also of interest to note that, in this quotation, it is God's holy breaths (nafaháti) which breathe His bountiful favours over all created things.

¹⁷¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets* 141.

¹⁷² Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings* 303.

¹⁷³ Walbridge, *Sacred* 195.

permission or approval of an authority for a certain act to be carried out. This word, therefore, has certain legal connotations, which is why it is also translated by Shoghi Effendi as “judgment”.¹⁷⁴ In its negated form (lá adhinta, i.e. not permitted) it signifies actions that are legally prohibited. Permitting certain things and prohibiting others is an act of legislation and thus of justice.

God’s Justice (‘Idál), therefore, ostensibly manifests itself in the world as His Permission (Idhn) for the existence of every created thing. It should not, therefore, appear unreasonable to relate the divine name of Justice to the level of Permission, the fifth stage of coming into being.

The sixth stage of coming into being is termed Ajal (Fixed-Time) while the name of the corresponding weekday is Istijlál (Majesty). The term ajal is used in both the Qur’án and the Bahá’í Writings to describe the appointed time of resurrection¹⁷⁵ which, according to Bahá’í Scripture, denotes the Revelation of a new Divine Manifestation. At Qur’án 29:5, a verse quoted by Bahá’u’lláh in His Epistle to the Son of the Wolf,¹⁷⁶ for example, “*the set time of God (ajalu’l-lláh)*” refers to the time when mankind will attain God’s presence. It is at this appointed time of resurrection that the Majesty and Glory of God is revealed to mankind. Bahá’u’lláh thus exclaims: “*Verily, the Crier hath cried out, when the promised time (miqát) came, and they that have recognized the splendors of Sinai have swooned away in the wilderness of hesitation, before the awful majesty (saṭwat) of thy Lord, the Lord of creation.*”¹⁷⁷ Similarly, He asserts that “*when the set time (miqát) of concealment was fulfilled, We sent forth, whilst still wrapt within a myriad veils, an infinitesimal glimmer of the effulgent Glory (An-núr-i-núrá) enveloping the Face of the Youth...*”¹⁷⁸ Moreover, Bahá’u’lláh explains that in pursuance “*of the principle that for every thing a time (waqt) hath been fixed, and for every fruit a season hath been ordained, the latent energies of such a bounty can best be released, and the vernal glory (rabí‘a) of such a*

¹⁷⁴ For example in the phrase “tokens of Thy decree and judgment” found on page 210 of Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers*.

¹⁷⁵ See, for example, Qur’án 6:2.

¹⁷⁶ Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 116.

¹⁷⁷ Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 132f.

¹⁷⁸ Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings* 75.

gift can only be manifested, in the Days of God."¹⁷⁹ Using a different grammatical form of the word Istijlál, Bahá'u'lláh, furthermore, repeatedly asserts that God lies hidden behind veils of glory (subuhát-i-jalál) which only His Manifestations can rent asunder through Their Revelation.¹⁸⁰

When applied to the process of Divine Revelation, the term fixed-time (ajal) thus apparently denotes the appointed time when the Glory and Majesty (Istijlál) of God is revealed to mankind through the Revelation of a Divine Manifestation. It is also of interest to note in this context that the word ajal is usually orthographically indistinguishable from the term ajall (the most exalted), which is a different grammatical form of Istijlál.

The seventh and last stage of coming into being is termed Kitáb (Book), while its corresponding weekday is named Istiqlál (Independence). The root from which the word Istiqlál is derived (qalla) is a verb meaning to diminish, wane, decrease, etc. In a similar way in which Justice ('Idál) and Mercy (Fiḍál) can be regarded as two complementary opposites, Istijlál and Istiqlál thus also lie on two ends of the same spectrum, as the root word of Istijlál (jalla) refers to making something exalted, great and majestic while the term, qalla, signifies an act of diminishing or making small.

A possible link between the attribute of Independence and the stage of the Book can be seen in the numerous statements contained in both the Bahá'í Writings and the Qur'án, which point to the fact that the revelation of a Holy Book (Kitáb) or divinely inspired verses (áyát) is the greatest and most compelling proof of the independence of God's Prophets and Messengers. 'Abdu'l-Bahá thus explains: "*The independent Prophets (anbiyá'-i-mustaqillah*¹⁸¹) *are the lawgivers and the founders of a new cycle. Through Their appearance the world puts on a new garment, the foundations of religion are established, and a new book (kitáb) is revealed.*"¹⁸² The Book as the last stage and the

¹⁷⁹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings* 262f.

¹⁸⁰ See, for example, Bahá'u'lláh, *Íqán* 199.

¹⁸¹ A different grammatical form of Istiqlál.

¹⁸² "Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* 164.

end product of the process of divine creation and revelation is thus also the ultimate sign of the independence of its Revealer.

In His *Lawḥ-i-Hikmat Bahá'u'lláh*, moreover, refers to the entire world as a divine book and states that the study of this book will render the reader independent of any other teacher:

Look at the world and ponder a while upon it. It unveileth the book (kitáb) of its own self before thine eyes and revealeth that which the Pen of thy Lord, the Fashioner, the All-Informed, hath inscribed therein. It will acquaint thee with that which is within it and upon it and will give thee such clear explanations as to make thee independent of every eloquent expounder.¹⁸³

A book can, therefore, not only serve as a proof of the independence of its Revealer, but can also render its reader independent of other sources of knowledge.

The names chosen by the Báb for the seven days of the Bábí/Bahá'í week do, therefore, appear to be more than an arbitrary selection of different attributes of God. In a similar way in which many aspects of the Badí' calendar ostensibly are a reflection of certain cosmological and ontological Bábí and Bahá'í concepts, the various meanings and connotations as well as the order of these names may be seen as signifying the process by which, according to the Bahá'í Writings, every created thing comes into being.

The pattern of association between the divine names used in the Bahá'í week and the seven stages of coming into being tentatively put forward here is thus one where each of these seven attributes of God manifests itself as one of the stages of coming into being. The divine name of Glory (*Jalál*) thus ostensibly manifests itself as God's Will (*Mashíyyat*) while the name of Beauty (*Jamál*) gives rise to the level of Purpose (*Irádih*) and the name of Perfection (*Kamál*) to the stage of Predestination (*Qadar*). In the same way God's Mercy (*Fidál*) reveals itself through the Fate (*Qaḏá'*) He decrees for His creatures, and His Justice (*'Idál*) is manifest in the Permission (*Idhn*) He gives for their existence. Likewise, God's Majesty (*Istijlál*) is revealed at the

¹⁸³ Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets* 141f.

appointed or Fixed-Time (Ajal) of the appearance of His Manifestations, Whose Independence (Istiqlál) is, finally, proven and established through the revelation of a divinely revealed Book (Kitáb).

VII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAMES OF THE MONTHS

1. The Báb's Tetrad of Months

Following a schema already described above in the discussion of Bábí tetrads, the Báb divided the nineteen months of the year into four groups. In accordance with the number of letters of each of the four words of the Basmalah,¹⁸⁴ the first member of this tetrad consists of the first three months, while the following four months form the second group. The next six as well as the last six months of the year, likewise, form one member of this tetrad each.

This scheme was introduced in a passage from váḥid 5, báb 3 of the Persian Bayán, which is summarized by E.G. Browne as follows:

... the three first months are chiefly set apart for Glorification (*taṣbiḥ*) since in them is created the Fire (*nár*) in the Hearts (*af'ida*) of All Things; and in the four following months, which are the months of Praise (*taḥmíd*), are created the Spirits (*arwáh*) of all Contingent things, for in them is Sustenance (*rizq*) given; and in the six subsequent months, which are the months of Unification (*tawḥíd*), God causeth existing things to die, not by a bodily death, but by a Death (*mawt*) from denial and a Life (*ḥayat*) in affirmation; and in the subsequent six months, which are the months of Magnification (*takbír*), God gives life to the people who have died from love of all that is beside Him, and have remained firmly established in His Love.

And in the first three months is the Fire of God (*nár-i-alláh*); and in the four subsequent months, the Air of Eternity (*ḥawá'-i-azal*) without Beginning; and in the six subsequent months the Water of Unification (*má'-i-tawḥid*), which runs over the Selves (*anfus*) of all things, from

¹⁸⁴ As mentioned above, the four words of the Bábí Basmalah are: *bism*, *Alláh*, *al-Amna'* and *al-Aqdas*.

the air of Eternity which is projected from the Fire of God; and the subsequent six months are connected with the Earth (turáb), for what appeared from the three elements has become fixed in those three elements.¹⁸⁵

The tetrads involved and their corresponding months are thus:

¹⁸⁵ Adopted from Momen, *Selections* 362.

Fire of God (nár-i-Alláh) Glorification (taṣbiḥ) Heart (fu'ád) Creation (khalq) ¹⁸⁶	Bahá' (Splendour)
	Jalál (Glory)
	Jamál (Beauty)
Air of Eternity (ḥawá'-i-azal) Praise (taḥmíd) Spirit (rúḥ) Sustenance (rizq)	'Azamat (Grandeur)
	Núr (Light)
	Raḥmat (Mercy)
	Kalimát (Words)
Water of Unification (má'-i-tawḥid) Unification (tawḥid) Self (nafs) Death (mawt) from denial and life (ḥayat) in affirmation	Kamál (Perfection)
	Asmá' (Names)
	'Izzat (Might)
	Mashīyyat (Will)
	'Ilm (Knowledge)
Earth (turáb) Magnification (takbír) Body (jism/jasad) ¹⁸⁷ Life (ḥayat) given to those that die from all else but the love of God	Qudrat (Power)
	Qawl (Speech)
	Masá'il (Questions)
	Sharaf (Honour)
	Sultán (Sovereignty)
Mulk (Dominion)	
'Alá' (Loftiness)	

In a similar way in which the days of the Bahá'í week appear to be associated with the seven stages of coming into being, it is possible to discern a link between this tetrad of months with their four associated quaternaries and the realms of Láhút, Jabarút, Malakút and Násút. In order to examine this ostensible pattern of association it will be beneficial to first take a brief look at the four tetrads mentioned in the

¹⁸⁶ The term *khalq* is used a few times in the above quotation in its verbal form (*khalāqa*) where it is translated as (he) created, but is not explicitly referred to as a member of any tetrad here. In other writings of the Báb, however, *khalq* is mentioned numerous times as the first member of the tetrad containing *rizq*, *mawt* and *ḥayat*.

¹⁸⁷ Although the human body is not explicitly mentioned in the above quotation, it is evident from other references in the writings of the Báb that it is indeed the fourth member of the tetrad containing heart, spirit and self. The Báb uses the terms *jism* and *jasad*, which can both be translated as body, interchangeably in these cases.

above passage from the Persian Bayán and their respective relationships to these divine realms.

The first tetrad mentioned in this passage contains the four Aristotelian elements of fire, air, water and earth. According to Bahá'u'lláh these four elements were the first things to be created by God: “*Know that the first tokens that emanated from the pre-existent Cause in the worlds of creation are the four elements: fire, air, water and earth*”.¹⁸⁸ This quaternary of elements could, therefore, be seen as a reference to the process of divine creation. Interestingly, this account is very much in conformity with modern scientific theories about the birth of our universe. These theories postulate that matter existed first in the physical state of plasma (fire), which later condensed to take on the gaseous state (air) and, after further cooling and compression by gravitational forces, was turned into liquids (water) and finally solids (earth).¹⁸⁹ This role of the four elements in the process of creation may be one of the reasons for their abovementioned association with the four realms of Láhút, Jabarút, Malakút and Násút and the corresponding stages of coming into being.

The second tetrad contains the four most important forms of *Dhikr* (remembrance of God), which are called Glorification (*tašbih*), Praise (*taḥmíd*), Unification (*tawḥíd*) and Magnification (*takbír*). According to an Islamic hadith, these forms of remembrance were dearer to Muḥammad “*than anything over which the sun rises*”.¹⁹⁰ Glorification (*tašbih*) is praising God by exclaiming “*subḥána-Alláh (praised be God)*”. Praise (*taḥmíd*) is giving thanks to God by saying “*al-ḥamdu Lilláh*” (*thanks be to God*). Unification (*tawḥíd*) is the confession of the oneness of God and, in its shortest form, is performed by exclaiming “*lá iláha illa'Lláh*” (*no god is there but God*). The Islamic formula of Magnification (*takbír*) is “*Alláhu Akbar*” (*God is Great*) while the Bahá'í version adopted during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh is “*Alláhu Abhá*” (*God is All-Glorious*). Each of the four members of

¹⁸⁸ Provisional translation by Keven Brown from Bahá'u'lláh, *Má'idí-i-Ásmání* vol. 4, p. 82, Cited in Brown, *Origin* 35f.

¹⁸⁹ For more details, see Mihrshahi, *Ether*.

¹⁹⁰ Muslim, *Sahih*, no. 6512: related on the authority of Abu Huraira

the Báb's tetrad of months is thus dedicated to the remembrance of God by one of these four forms of Dhikr.

A possible link between these different forms of Dhikr and the four divine realms can be discerned in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's assertion that the soul in the realm of Malakút confirms the reality of the profession of God's unity.¹⁹¹ The third form of Dhikr (tawhíd) is, therefore, associated with the corresponding third realm of Malakút. Furthermore, and as already explained above, the level of Predestination (Qadar), which is the third stage of coming into being and apparently associated with the same realm, is the locus of the unification of Will (Mashíyyat) and Purpose (Irádih). Links between the other three forms of Dhikr and the remaining realms of Láhút, Jabarút and Násút appear to be of a more indirect nature, i.e. through their shared association with other quaternaries such as that of the four elements.

The third tetrad mentioned in the above quotation contains the four human faculties of Heart (fu'ád), Spirit (rúh), Self or Soul (nafs) and Body (jism or jasad). The term heart (fu'ád) describes the highest spiritual faculty of man. According to the Bahá'í Writings, the heart is the seat of intuition, the faculty with which the essence of the Sacred Writings can be understood without need for prior education and learning.¹⁹² It is the heart which, when detached from all earthly things and turned towards God, becomes a mirror reflecting the divine attributes.¹⁹³ According to Bahá'u'lláh, the human heart is the only thing in the entire world of creation that God has reserved for Himself and that He has made the "*throne of the revelation of His Glory*".¹⁹⁴

The human spirit (rúh), which is described as an essence (dhát) and a spiritual reality (haqíqat) in the Bahá'í Writings, is the eternal and immortal aspect of man and constitutes his true identity. Its function is to know its Creator and to receive His grace.¹⁹⁵ The intellectual power of

¹⁹¹ Momen, "Byzantines".

¹⁹² Lepain, *Archéologie* VII.3.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings* 296.

¹⁹⁵ Lepain, *Archéologie* VII.3.

reason (‘aql), which allows human beings to understand abstract realities is a faculty of the human spirit.¹⁹⁶ After the death of the human body, the spirit continues its eternal journey towards its Creator. As the human spirit does not appear to be able to gain access to the divine realms higher than that of Malakút,¹⁹⁷ however, it can never actually reach the presence of God, but only that of His Manifestations.¹⁹⁸ The Bahá’í concept of the eternal human spirit is thus quite similar to the Christian idea of the immortal soul of man, which is why the term *rúh* is also commonly translated as ‘soul’ in the Bahá’í Writings.

The term *nafs* (self or soul) describes the vital principle of man that makes up his psyche and contains his psychological traits and characteristics as well as his sense of self.¹⁹⁹ It is the organ that allows the spirit (*rúh*) to communicate with the body and the locus of academic knowledge and learning.²⁰⁰ As it contains the human ego with all its animal instincts and sensual desires, it is prone to develop attachments to self and the material world. When this happens the self or soul becomes consumed by idle fancies and vain imaginings and turns into a veil preventing man from understanding his true destiny and purpose in life.²⁰¹ Because the self dies together with the body, these idle fancies and vain imaginings are removed at the moment of death, thus enabling the human spirit to realize his true station and the value of his accomplishments in life.²⁰² Bahá’u’lláh thus explains: “*It is clear and evident that all men shall, after their physical death, estimate the worth of their deeds, and realize all that their hands have wrought.*”²⁰³

In the Bahá’í Writings as well as Islamic literature we can find many indications of links between these four human faculties and the four divine realms. The Báb states, for example, that the language of divine verses (*áyát*), which extends from the realm of *Láhút*, becomes manifested in His heart (*fu’ád*), while that of prayers (*munáyát*)

¹⁹⁶ See, for example, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions* 209.

¹⁹⁷ See Milani and Fananapazir, “Pen Motif”.

¹⁹⁸ See, for example, the Báb, *Selections* 77.

¹⁹⁹ Lepain, *Archéologie* VII.3.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings* 170.

originates in the realm of Jabarút and is conceived in the mirror of reason (‘aql) which, as described above, is a faculty of the human spirit (rúh). In continuation of this theme, He asserts that the language of sermons (khuṭub) that extends from the realm of Malakút is reflected in the mirror of the self (nafs) while that of visitation prayers (ziyárát) and commentaries (tafasír) extends from the world of Násút and is connected to the body.²⁰⁴

Another indication of this pattern of association can be found in the description of Jabarút as the realm in which the Divine Manifestations acquire Their true individuality,²⁰⁵ which, as we have seen, is a quality of the spirit (rúh). Moreover, according to Islamic thought, this realm is the dwelling place of the archangel Isráfil whose responsibility it is to give immortal spirits (arwáh) to human beings.²⁰⁶

The realm of Malakút is often described as an intermediary between the higher spiritual realm of Jabarút and the physical world of Násút,²⁰⁷ in a similar way in which the human soul or self (nafs) serves as an intermediary between the spirit (rúh) and body (jism/jasad) of man. Furthermore, Malakút is also described as the ‘psychic realm’ in Islamic mysticism,²⁰⁸ which, again, links it to the corresponding faculty of self that is believed to contain the human psyche. In some of His Writings Bahá’u’lláh also makes mention of the “*Kingdom of His [God’s] Self (Malakútun Nafsihi)*”,²⁰⁹ which constitutes yet another link between the faculty of self and the divine realm of Malakút. The human body, finally, evidently belongs to the physical world of Násút.

As human beings apparently have no access to the worlds of Láhút and Jabarút,²¹⁰ it is primarily through the faculties of the Divine Manifestations, however, that the links to these higher realms are established. Ordinary human beings, on the other hand, can only enter the

²⁰⁴ From a Tablet of the Báb cited in Browne, *Nuqtatu’l-Kaf* 107.

²⁰⁵ Lepain, *Archéologie* I.6.

²⁰⁶ Milani and Fananapazir, “Pen Motif”.

²⁰⁷ Lepain, *Archéologie* I.7, Milani and Fananapazir, “Pen Motif”.

²⁰⁸ Milani and Fananapazir, “Pen Motif”.

²⁰⁹ Bahá’u’lláh, *Arabic Hidden Words* no. 70.

²¹⁰ Milani and Fananapazir, “Pen Motif”.

spiritual realm of Malakút, which is also referred to as the ‘Abhá Kingdom.²¹¹

The last tetrad of Creation (khalq), Sustenance (rizq), Death (mawt) and Life (ḥayat) can be read as a description of the life of a human being. The first component, Creation (khalq), would, following such an interpretation, be a reference to the moment of conception at which the new human being is created. The giving of sustenance (rizq), according to Islamic traditions, denotes the process of ensoulment, i.e. the donation of an immortal spirit (rúḥ) to the unborn child. The death (mawt) from denial and life (ḥayat) in affirmation mentioned by the Báb is, according to the Bahá’í Writings, the purpose of human existence on earth.²¹² Those souls that have reached this station and, during their lifetime, have died from the love of anything but God, will, finally, at the moment of their death, be given eternal life by God.

These four stages in the life of an individual are, again, closely linked to the four divine realms. The process of creation is associated with the realm of Láhút which contains the Primal Will (Mashíyyat) of God that is the ultimate origin of all created things. This ostensibly also holds true in the case of the creation of a human being, as the human ability to create and give life is ultimately nothing but a reflection of the creative power of the Primal Will. The giving of sustenance (rizq) is, as we have already seen, the donation of an immortal spirit by the archangel Isráfil who can be found in the realm of Jabarút. The death from denial and life in affirmation that man is asked to accomplish during his earthly life entails the detachment of his self (nafs) from the material world, his ego and animal instincts. When this is accomplished, the human spirit is freed from idle fancies and vain imaginings and can enter the spiritual realm of Malakút. Finally, the moment of physical death is evidently an event that occurs in the material world of Násút.

This association of the four tetrads mentioned in the above quotation from the Persian Bayán with the four heavenly realms and the corresponding stages of coming into being can be summarized as follows:

²¹¹ Lepain, *Archéologie* I.7.

²¹² See, for example, the opening words of the short obligatory prayer: “*I bear witness, o my God, that Thou hast created me to love Thee and to worship Thee*”.

Realm	Láhút	Jabarút	Malakút	Násút
Stage	Will (Mashíyyat)	Purpose (Irádih)	Predestination (Qadar)	Fate (Qađá') ²¹³
Element	Fire (nár)	Air (hawá')	Water (má')	Earth (turáb)
Form of Dhikr	Glorification (taşbiḥ)	Praise (taḥmíd)	Unification (tawḥid)	Magnification (takbír)
Human faculty	Heart (fu'ád)	Spirit (rúḥ)	Self (nafs)	Body (jism/jasad)
Moment in life	Creation (khalq)	Giving of Sustenance (rizq)	Death (mawt) from denial and life (ḥayat) in affirmation	Life (ḥayat) given to those who have died from the love of anything but God

2. The Nineteen Months and the Four Divine Realms

We have seen that the four tetrads which the Báb associates with His quaternary of months all seem to be linked to the four realms of Láhút, Jabarút, Malakút and Násút. This pattern of association makes it seem reasonable to expect that the names of the months within each of the four groups that make up this quaternary should also be related to these same divine realms. Such an expectation is, indeed, confirmed by a closer examination of the individual members of this quaternary:

3. The First Three Months and the Realm of Láhút

²¹³ As already explained, the term Fate (Qađá') does not only denote the fourth stage of coming into being but also the totality of the last four stages which all occur in the realm of Násút.

The divine names that are contained in the first member of the Báb's tetrad of months are Bahá' (Splendour), Jalál (Glory) and Jamál (Beauty). Following the schema described above, we would expect these three names to be related to the realm of Láhút and the associated stage of Will (Mashíyyat). According to Islamic thought, the realm of Láhút contains the most excellent names and the most exalted attributes of God.²¹⁴ This description evidently applies to the three names that make up the Báb's first group of months: Bahá', as explained above, is regarded as the Most Great Name (Ism-i A'zam) of God while the names of Jalál and Jamál represent the total of all active and passive or masculine and feminine attributes of God respectively. We have also seen that the Báb associated the name of Bahá' with the 'Point' (Nuqṭih) a term that denotes the Will of God. The name Jalál, as a representative of all active divine attributes can also be seen as signifying the Will of God, which is the active force that unites with the recipient entity of Purpose (Irádih) to bring about a new creation.

The third attribute Jamál is associated with Bahá'u'lláh and, therefore, the name Bahá'. This can be gleaned from the various references contained in the Bahá'í Writings where Bahá'u'lláh is described as the 'Abhá Beauty' (Jamál-i-Abhá), the 'Blessed' or 'Sacred Beauty' (Jamál-i-Mubárák) or the 'Blessed Perfection' or 'Ancient Beauty' (Jamál-i-Qidam). As a synonym for the name Bahá', the attribute of Jamál is therefore also indicative of the 'Point'.

4. The Fourth Through Seventh Month and the Realm of Jabarút

The second member of the Báb's tetrad of months contains the names of 'Azamat (Grandeur), Núr (Light), Raḥmat (Mercy) and Kalimát (Words). These attributes we would expect to be related to the realm of Jabarút and the associated stage of Purpose (Irádih). The term 'azamat is often used in the Bahá'í Writings to describe the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. This can be gleaned from phrases such as 'the greatness of this Cause' ('azamat-i-Amr), the 'greatness of this Revelation' ('azamat-i-Zuhúr) and the 'greatness of the Day' ('azamat-i-Yawm). Bahá'u'lláh, furthermore, refers to Himself as the

²¹⁴ Milani and Fananapazir, "Pen Motif".

‘Tongue of Grandeur’ (Lisán-i-‘Azamat) in various instances. Finally, ‘Azamat is also used in reference to Christ and God’s Manifestations in general. As seen above, Jabarút is, in turn, the realm in which the Divine Manifestations acquire individuality and from which their Revelations originate. Bahá’u’lláh, therefore, also describes Himself as the “*King of the heaven of knowledge (Sultánu-i-jabarút-i-‘irfán)*”²¹⁵ and frequently speaks of the “heaven of Revelation (Jabarút-i-Amr or Jabarútu’l-Amr)”. Moreover, He makes reference to the “heaven of [His] omnipotent glory (Jabarútu’l-‘azamat)” as the realm from which the tongue of His power has addressed His creation.²¹⁶

The superlative form²¹⁷ of ‘azamat is a‘zam. It is thus not surprising that, while the attribute a‘zam, due to its association with the name Bahá’ which is the Most Great Name (Ism-i A‘zam) of God, belongs to the highest contingent realm of Láhút, the name of ‘azamat belongs to the inferior realm of Jabarút. Núr is, likewise, an attribute that is frequently used in the Bahá’í Writings as well as the Qur’án in reference to the Divine Manifestations and Their Revelations, which are both described as lights of guidance, and can, therefore, also be associated with the realm of Jabarút from which these revelations originate. As it happens, Núr is also the name of the province where Bahá’u’lláh was born and which could thus be regarded as the recipient of the Manifestation of the Will of God in a similar way in which the stage of Purpose contained in the realm of Jabarút is the recipient of this Will.

Raḥmat is the most feminine and thus most passive or recipient attribute used in the Badí‘ calendar and could, therefore, be seen as representing the recipient nature of the stage of Purpose, which is contained within the realm of Jabarút. Kalimát, finally, is a reference to the Word of God, and, as we have already seen, it is the coming together of Will and Purpose, the first two stages of coming into being, that leads to the utterance of the divine imperative BE (kun) which, in turn, brings all of creation into being.

²¹⁵ See Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 119.

²¹⁶ Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings* 332.

²¹⁷ Or more strictly speaking an escalated form.

5. The Eighth Through Thirteenth Month and the Realm of Malakút

The third member of the Báb's calendrical quaternary contains the months of Kamál (Perfection), Asmá' (Names), 'Izzat (Might), Mashíyyat (Will), 'Ilm (Knowledge) and Qudrat (Power). These six names would be expected to be connected to the realm of Malakút and the corresponding stage of Predestination (Qadar). As already explained, Kamál is an attribute that brings together and unites the masculine and feminine names of God and can thus be seen as representing the stage of Predestination which is the result of the interaction of Will and Purpose.

Asmá', which means names or attributes, may be seen as a reference to the eternal archetypes ('ayn) that exist in the realm of Malakút, which is thus often also referred to as the "kingdom of names (malakútu'l-asmá')" in the Bahá'í Writings. As already explained, these archetypes are the design plans for all created things and therefore contain the qualities and attributes of everything within the world of creation. While every 'Ilm can, likewise, be seen as a reference to these divine blueprints, as it denotes, among other things, the knowledge that God has of His creation. The divine knowledge ('ilm) contained in the realm of Malakút and the stage of Predestination can thus be interpreted as knowledge of the qualities and attributes ('asma) of all created things.

Mashíyyat is the Will of God. Even though this Primal Will is contained within the realm of Láhút, it does not extend to the physical world of Násút directly but through the intermediary worlds of Jabarút and Malakút. From the perspective of a human being, the Will of God thus reaches and manifests itself in the world from the lowest non-material realm of Malakút. Moreover, the term Mashíyyat is, as already explained, also used in the Bahá'í Writings to denote the entire World of Command. The only realm within this world to which ordinary human beings have access is the realm of Malakút. For this

reason, the Will of God as it exists and manifests itself within this realm is the only form human beings can experience.

The term *Qudrat* (Might) can be readily linked to the realm of *Malakút* and the associated stage of *Qadar* (Predestination), as *qudrat* and *qadar* are both derived from the same Arabic root word. This root word (*qaddara*) can be translated as (he) predetermined, considered, measured, counted or valuated. The attribute *Qudrat* denotes God's ability to do whatsoever He wishes. God, therefore, has the ability or power (*qudrat*) to predetermine (*qaddara*) the fate or predestination (*qadar*) of all created things.

The attribute 'Izzat, which is also translated as power or omnipotence in the Bahá'í Writings, is practically synonymous with *Qudrat*. Both of these terms thus denote the divine ability to determine the fate (*qadar*) of everything contained within the realm of *Násút*. This divine decree reaches the physical world from the realm of *Malakút*, which ostensibly contains the stage of Predestination (*Qadar*).

6. The Last Six Months and the Realm of *Násút*

The last group within this tetrad contains the months of *Qawl* (Speech), *Masá'il* (Questions), *Sharaf* (Honour), *Sulṭán* (Sovereignty), *Mulk* (Dominion) and 'Alá (Loftiness). These six attributes would be expected to be related to the realm of *Násút* and the corresponding stage of Fate (*Qaḏá'*) and possibly also Permission (*Idhn*), Fixed-Time (*Ajal*) and Book (*Kitáb*).

In the Bahá'í Writings and the *Qur'án*, the word *qawl*, in many instances, denotes the speech or revelation of the divine Messengers or Manifestations. This speech or revelation, evidently, occurs within the realm of *Násút* and is, furthermore, closely associated with the revelation of a holy book (*kitáb*). This is also the reason for the commonly used designation of the *Qur'án* as the speech (*qawl*) of God. The term *Book*, in turn, is the name of the last stage of coming into being that is contained within the world of *Násút*.

The term Masá'il can be translated as questions, problems, concerns or affairs and denotes the matters that God deals with in the world or, in other words, His actions in the realm of Násút. In the Bahá'í Writings, this term is, therefore, often used in reference to the intricacies or problems of the application of the divine law and the social issues humanity is facing, which can both only be resolved by the Manifestations of God or their appointed successors.

The word Sharaf is only used twice in the Bahá'í Writings translated by Shoghi Effendi, both times in reference to events that occur in the material world. In the first reference, Bahá'u'lláh states that the excellence (sharaf) of all things, which, in this case, refers specifically to the actions of human beings, is dependant upon God's bidding and God's word,²¹⁸ and in the second, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that Palestine has become the glory (sharaf) of all nations, since it was visited by many of the Manifestations of God.²¹⁹ The term sharaf thus appears to denote an act carried out or an object contained in the world of Násút that has been honoured by God or His Manifestations. This interpretation is also supported by the frequent use of another form of this word (tasharrafa), which means to be honoured or sacralized. In the Súrih-i-Ghuṣn, Bahá'u'lláh thus states that Beirut has been honoured by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá²²⁰ and the ear by hearkening to His call.²²¹ The Land of Syria is also said to have been honoured by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh,²²² and the whole world has, likewise, been honoured by His presence.²²³ All of these references thus refer to the sacralisation of things contained in the world of Násút through the actions of God or His Manifestations.

The attribute Sulṭán does not only denote God's sovereignty over His creation but is also frequently used in the Qur'án in reference to the divine authority or warrant with which God's Messengers are sent to earth. Moreover, Sulṭán is also the designation of a king or ruler as

²¹⁸ See Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers* 68.

²¹⁹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Citadel* 27.

²²⁰ Shoghi Effendi, *World Order* 136.

²²¹ *Ibid* 137.

²²² Bahá'u'lláh *Epistle* 60.

²²³ See, for example, *ibid* 44, Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers* 179.

well as of a preponderate or hegemonic style of governance. This term, therefore, signifies God's absolute sovereignty over the world and the divine authority with which His Manifestations appear in the realm of Násút. A closely related term is the name of Mulk, which denotes a dominion or kingdom. The connection to the realm of Násút is quite obvious here, since Mulk is, as already mentioned, an alternative designation for this realm.

The term 'Alá' can, finally, be seen as a reference to the detachment from the realm of Násút which the believer demonstrates during the month of the fast that bears this name. This attribute has, furthermore, already been explained as a possible reference to the person of the Báb and the early years of the formative age of the Bahá'í Faith. These years were a time of absolute detachment from the material world that often resulted in martyrdom. As mentioned above, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that the colour red is associated with the realm of Násút because this material world is the plane of martyrdom.

CONCLUSION

The Badí‘ calendar, as devised by the Báb and completed by Bahá‘u’lláh, is more than simply a system designed to help calculate time, structure and organize human lives and commemorate events of religious significance. Being founded upon a number of Islamic and particularly Shaykhí ideas and theories that were adopted, expanded and elaborated upon by the Báb, it expresses, through its structure and organization a wealth of symbolic allusions to metaphysical, cosmological and theological concepts of the Bábí and Bahá‘í Religions.

Furthermore, it appears to reflect and re-enact, symbolically, some of the more significant events and phases in the early history of these twin religions and gives some indications of their intrinsic connectedness and interdependence as it was perceived by the Báb and Bahá‘u’lláh.

The study of this calendar can, therefore, offer fascinating insights into various Bábí and Bahá‘í doctrines and concepts, a preliminary exploration of some of which I have tried to offer in this monograph.

APPENDICES

I. DEFINITIONS AND ANALYSES OF THE NAMES OF THE BAHÁ'Í MONTHS

Bahá' (هَآءِ) : Splendour. Also translated in the Bahá'í Writings as glory, light or excellence. Additional definitions are handsomeness, shapeliness, loveliness, nicety, charm, beauty, pleasantness, prettiness, grace, comeliness, elegance, fineness, foppery, gracefulness, gorgeousness, glamor, goodness and pulchritude. Bahá' is not mentioned in the Qur'án. This attribute is also used in its superlative (abhá') and adjective form (bahí) in the Du'á sahar.²²⁴

Jalál (جَلَالٌ) : Glory. Also rendered as majesty in the Bahá'í Writings. Alternative translations are magnificence, gravity, sublimity, respect, reverence, solemnity, splendor, stateliness, luxuriousness, veneration, loftiness, greatness, augustness, portliness, dignity, grandeur, glorification, grandness and lug. In Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Íqán²²⁵ Muḥammad is designated as the “*King of glory (Sultán-i-Jalál)*”. In the same book and elsewhere, God is said to be hidden behind “*veils of glory (subuhát-i-jalál)*” which have been burnt or rent asunder through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Jalál is mentioned twice in the Qur'án as an attribute of God, both times in combination with honour (al-ikrám). Jalál is also used in its superlative (ajall) and adjective form (jalíl) in the Du'á sahar.

Jamál (جَمَالٌ) : Beauty. Also translated in the Bahá'í Writings as charm. Other definitions include comeliness, shapeliness, loveliness, nicety, pulchritude, glory, handsomeness, fineness, grace, goodness, gorgeousness, foppery, gracefulness, glamor and prettiness. Jamál is the most commonly used alternative designation for Bahá'u'lláh,

²²⁴ For an in-depth treatment of the meaning and significance of the name Bahá', see Lambden, “Bahá'” and Faizi, *Explanation*.

²²⁵ Bahá'u'lláh, *Íqán* 26.

Who is referred to as the “*Abhá Beauty (Jamál-i-Abhá)*” and the “*Ancient*”, “*Blessed*” or “*Sacred Beauty (Jamál-i-Mubáarak)*” in numerous instances. Another one of His designations is “*Jamál-i-Qidam*”, variously translated as the “*Blessed Perfection*” or “*Ancient Beauty*”. The prophet Salih, Imám Husayn, Muḥammad and the Báb are all identified as the “*eternal*”, “*everlasting*” or “*immortal Beauty (Jamál-i-Azali)*” in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, while the Báb is also referred to as the “*Primal Beauty (Jamálu'l-Awwali)*” in the Bahá’í Writings. The attribute jamál is, furthermore, used to describe Christ, Imám Ja’far-i-Šádiq, the Báb and the prophet Hud. Moreover, God’s Revelation is referred to as the “*Beauty of God (Jamálu’lláh)*”. Jamál is mentioned once in the Qur’án, but not as an attribute of God. Later Islamic traditions do, however, attribute beauty to God.²²⁶ The attribute Jamál is also used in its superlative (ajmal) and adjective form (jamíl) in the Du’á sahar.

‘**Aẓamat (عَظَمَة)** : **Grandeur**. Also rendered in the Bahá’í Writings as glory, majesty, dominion or greatness. Additional definitions include stateliness, gravity, respect, regard, reverence, solemnity, magnificence, loftiness, splendor, grandness, luxuriousness, glorification, exaltation, esteem, augustness, mightiness, lug and solemnity. Apart from its use as an attribute of God, ‘aẓamat is also applied in the Bahá’í Writings to describe Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation in phrases such as “*the greatness of this Cause (‘aẓamat-i-Amr)*”, the “*greatness of this Revelation (‘aẓamat-i-Zuhúr)*” and the “*greatness of the Day (‘aẓamat-i-Yawm)*”. Bahá’u’lláh, furthermore, refers to Himself as the “*Tongue of Grandeur (Lisán-i-‘Aẓamat)*” in various instances. Finally, ‘Aẓamat is also used in reference to Christ and God’s Manifestations in general. The superlative form a’ẓam (most great) is associated with Bahá’u’lláh, whose name is regarded as the “*Most Great Name (Ism-i A’ẓam)*” of God and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the “*Greatest Branch (Ghusn-i-A’ẓam)*”. ‘Aẓamat is not mentioned in the Qur’án in this but in some other forms. In the Du’á sahar, it is also mentioned in its superlative (a’ẓam) and adjective form (aẓim).

²²⁶ Walbrigde, *Sacred* 197.

Núr (نور) : Light. Also translated in the Bahá'í Writings as radiance, brightness, splendour, effulgence or illumination. Additional definitions include gleam, emergence and limelight. The word Núr is used in reference to Muḥammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh in the Bahá'í Writings. When a person accepts the Revelation of God his heart is said to be illumined with the knowledge of God. Mention is also made of the light (núr) of God's law. Moreover, many Bahá'í principles are described as various expression of light. Examples of this are "*the light of justice (núr-i-'adl)*", "*the light of unity (núr-i-tawhíd)*" and "*the light of chastity (núr-i-'ismat)*". Mention is also made of "*the light of divine guidance (núr-i-hidáyat)*", the "*light of certitude (núru'l-íqán)*" and "*the light of this Cause (núru'l-Amr)*". Núr is mentioned 43 times in the Qur'án, eight times as an attribute of God. The famous 'Light Verse'²²⁷ has been the subject of many interpretations by Islámic scholars and is also referred to and interpreted in the Bahá'í Writings. The Qur'án and Muḥammad are both designated as "*The Light (an-Núr)*". Furthermore, light (núr) and guidance (huda) is said to have been provided in the Torah as well as the Gospel. Those who accept Islám are stated to have, thereby, been guided from darkness to light, referring to the light of faith and the darkness of disbelief and polytheism respectively. In the Qur'ánic as well as the Biblical account of the act of creation, these two opposites of light and darkness are said to have been separated by God. Moreover, Núr is the title of Súrih 24 of the Qur'án. This name of God is also used in its superlative (anwár) and adjective form (nayı́r) in the Du'á sahar.

Raḥmat (رَحْمَة) : Mercy. Also rendered in the Bahá'í Writings as blessing, grace, favor, loving kindness, providence or compassion. Alternative definitions are tameness, tenderness, lenity, love, leniency, kindness, warm-heartedness, benignity, deep sympathy, affection, clemency, commiseration, fineness, feeling, graciousness, friendliness and care. In the Bahá'í Writings, God is "*the source of infinite grace (raḥmat)*", and His Revelation a "*river of mercy*". The verses (áyát) of Bahá'u'lláh are thus also a manifestation of the "*divine mercy (raḥmat-i-rabbání)*". Raḥmat is used 63 times in the Qur'án, 56 times

²²⁷ See Qur'án 24:35.

in reference to God. The Qur'án was sent down as a guidance (huda) and mercy (raḥmat) from God, and so was the Torah. Muḥammad was also sent to earth as a mercy to the servants of God. Other forms of this word (esp. Raḥmán and Raḥím, which are the two divine attributes mentioned in the Basmalah) are used hundreds of times in the Qur'án. In the Du'á sahar, God's mercy is described twice as all-embracing ('awsa).

Kalimát (كَلِمَات) : Words. Also translated in the Bahá'í Writings as sayings and writings, terms, utterance, the Word of God, entities or talk. Further renderings of the singular form (kalimat) are speech, address, letter, note, disquisition, dispatch, say, conception, concept, view, notion, announcement, statement and vocable. The "*Word of God (Kalimatu'l-lláh)*" is of central importance for Islamic and Bahá'í theology. It is the divine creative impulse and the Divine Elixir (Iksír) that can convert "*satanic strength into heavenly power*".²²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, furthermore, asserts that the knowledge of one word (kalimat) lies within the Treasury of His wisdom, which, if revealed to mankind, would cause everyone to recognize His station.²²⁹ Kalimat is mentioned 20 times in the Qur'án, 13 times in reference to the Word of God. By the Word from God 'Be' (kun) creation came into being. The term kalimat is also used in the Qur'án in reference to God's decree or judgment, e.g. God's "*Word of punishment (kalimatu'l-'adhábi)*"²³⁰. In the Du'á sahar, God's words are described as complete (támmat) and as most perfect (atamm).

Kamál (كَمَال) : Perfection. Also rendered in the Bahá'í Writings as excellence, fullness, consummation or maturity. Additional definitions include exemplariness, entirety, completeness, completion, conclusion, perfectibility, totality and wholeness. The Bahá'í Writings contain many references to God's perfection (kamál). In the Kitáb-i-Íqán,²³¹ Bahá'u'lláh, moreover, states that He is wholly (kamál) resigned to God's will, and the Báb states that the ultimate perfection (kamál) of His Bayán will only become apparent with the revelation of

²²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings* 200.

²²⁹ Shoghi Effendi, *World Order* 109.

²³⁰ See Qur'án 39:19 and 39:71.

²³¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Íqán* 252.

Him Whom God shall make manifest.²³² Kamál is used twice in the Qur’án, but not as an attribute of God. Later Islamic thought and traditions do, however, attribute kamál to God.²³³ The attribute kamál is also used in its superlative (akmal) and adjective form (kamíl) in the Du’á sahar.

Asmá’ (اَسْمَاء) : Names. Also translated in the Bahá’í Writings as titles, attributes or designations. Further renderings include nouns and substantives. God is designated in the Bahá’í Writings as the “*King*” or “*Lord of Names*” (*Maliku’l-Asmá’* or *Sultánu’l-Asmá’*), as He possesses and is the Origin and Creator of all attributes. Reference is also made in various instances to the “*kingdom of names (malakútu’l-asmá’)*”, the realm in which all of those attributes become manifest. While every created thing is said to mirror forth one of the names of God, the human soul is potentially capable of reflecting all of them. This potential is, however, only fully expressed in the Divine Manifestations Who are the perfect mirrors of all the names and attributes of God. Asmá’ is mentioned eight times in the Qur’án, four times as an attribute of God Who is said to have the “*most beautiful names (al-Asmá’u’l-husna)*”.²³⁴ At Qur’án 2:31, God teaches Adam “*all names*” or the “*natures of all things (al-asmá’a kullahá)*”. According to Islamic thought, the Qur’án contains 99 names of God, while the hundredth is His “*Most Great Name (Ismu’l-‘azam)*”. For Bahá’ís the name Bahá’, which is not mentioned in the Qur’án, is this Most Great Name of God. In the Du’á sahar, God’s names are described as great (kabír) and most great (akbar).

‘Izzat (إِزَّة) : Might. Also rendered in the Bahá’í Writings as glory, power, exaltation, honour, majesty, grandeur, pomp, strength, sovereignty or magnificence. Other possible translations are arrogance and pride, but it can also mean to be precious or dearly loved. In the Kitáb-i-Íqán,²³⁵ every Prophet is said to have “winged His flight unto the heights of glory (‘izzat). Bahá’u’lláh asserts that God has seized

²³² Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 30.

²³³ Walbrigde, *Sacred* 198.

²³⁴ See Qur’án 7:180, 17:110, 20:80 and 59:24.

²³⁵ Bahá’u’lláh, *Íqán* 15.

power (‘izzat) from kings and ecclesiastics²³⁶ and, in the Persian Hidden Words,²³⁷ states that man has chosen boundless shame for himself even though God had chosen for him imperishable glory (‘izzat). ‘Izzat is mentioned twelve times in Qur’án, four times as an attribute of God to whom belongs all honour.²³⁸ It is, moreover, used very frequently in other grammatical forms. The attribute ‘Izzat is also used in its superlative (a’azza) and adjective form (‘azíz) in the Du’á sahar.

Mashíyyat (مَشِيَّة) : Will. Also translated in the Bahá’í Writings as purpose, wish, the Primal Will, the Will of God, bidding, pleasure or desire. The Will of God (Mashíyyatu’l-lláh) in Islamic and Bahá’í thought is primarily a metaphysical realm, the first creation of God through which all other things come into being. Nevertheless, it can also refer to God’s plan for His creatures,²³⁹ which finds expression in the laws that govern the physical as well as spiritual worlds. Bahá’u’lláh repeatedly states that the verses He has revealed have been sent down from the “heaven of the Will of God”.²⁴⁰ The term mashíyyat is not used in the Qur’án, but the corresponding verb (yashá’) appears numerous times most commonly in reference to the Will of God. In the Du’á sahar, God’s will is described as conclusive (máḍiyat) and most conclusive (amḍá).

‘Ilm (عِلْم) : Knowledge. Also rendered in the Bahá’í Writings as wisdom, divine knowledge, science, attainments, learning, discerning, revelation or understanding. Other meanings include familiarity, know-how, lore, noticing, vigilance, carefulness, apprehension, acquaintance, recognition, consciousness, comprehension, conversance, cognizance, erudition, versedness, expert’s advice, and cognition. In the Bahá’í Writings, knowledge is of two kinds: Divine (Ilahí) and satanic (shayṭání).²⁴¹ The former is the knowledge of God that is revealed through His Manifestations. These Manifestations are

²³⁶ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 230.

²³⁷ Bahá’u’lláh, *Persian Hidden Words* no. 21.

²³⁸ See Qur’án 4:139, 10:65, and 35:10.

²³⁹ Walbridge, *Sacred* 199.

²⁴⁰ See, for example, Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 115.

²⁴¹ See, for example, Bahá’u’lláh, *Íqán* 67.

the repositories of divine knowledge, and from Them God has “caused to proceed the knowledge (*‘ilm*) of all that was and shall be”.²⁴² Bahá’u’lláh thus asserts that when He received His Revelation in the *Síyáh-Chál*” the “*breezes of the All-Glorious*” taught Him the “*knowledge of all that hath been*”.²⁴³ According to an Islamic tradition quoted in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*,²⁴⁴ this divine knowledge is said to consist of 27 letters, only two of which were revealed to mankind by the Manifestations of God that preceded the Báb. Satanic knowledge, on the other hand, signifies the idle fancies and vain imaginings that the divines erroneously believe to be true knowledge.²⁴⁵ This latter type of knowledge can, therefore, act as a veil (*subahát*) preventing man from recognizing the Divine Manifestations. Nevertheless, the acquisition of knowledge is incumbent upon everyone, as it has the potential to become like “*wings to man’s life*”.²⁴⁶ ‘*Ilm* is mentioned 104 times in the *Qur’án*, frequently in reference to God, Who is said to have full knowledge of all things.²⁴⁷ The term is also used in reference to the knowledge imparted to man through Muḥammad and the *Qur’án*. God’s knowledge is described as penetrating (*náfíd*) and most acute (*anfád*) in the *Du’á sahar*.

Qudrat (قُوَّة) : Power. Also translated in the Bahá’í Writings as might, potency, strength, authority, dominion, celestial might, omnipotence, transcendent power, influence, indomitable strength, all-pervading power, ascendancy or divine power. Additional meanings include force, faculty, ability, capacity, capability, thew and violence. In the Bahá’í Writings, one of the designations of God is the “*Ancient Power (Qudrat-i-Qadím)*”. The word *Qudrat* is most commonly used to describe God’s unlimited ability to act in the world. This divine power of action is often expressed through the metaphor of the Hand (Persian: *dast*, Arabic: *yad*) of Power or Omnipotence (*Qudrat*). It is thus, for example, the “*Hand of Divine power*” that can, alone, deliver mankind from the desolating affliction of religious fanaticism and

²⁴² Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel* 95.

²⁴³ Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 11.

²⁴⁴ Bahá’u’lláh, *Íqán* 243.

²⁴⁵ See, for example, Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 39.

²⁴⁶ Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle* 26.

²⁴⁷ See, for example, *Qur’án* 20:98.

hatred,²⁴⁸ and it is within the grasp of God's power that all things in heaven and earth lie.²⁴⁹ Qudrat is not mentioned in this form in the Qur'án, but other derivatives of the same root are used numerous times. The adjective qadír (all-powerful), for example, is applied in many instances to describe God's ability or power to do whatsoever he wishes. The term decree (qadr) is derived from the same root, a secondary meaning of which is to measure. God's power is described as all-subduing (mustatílát) in the Du'á sahar

Qawl (قَوْل) : Speech. Also rendered in the Bahá'í Writings as saying, words, pretension, request, testimony or discourse. Other possible meanings include notion, opinion, view, concept, say, utterance, talk, speaking, colloquy, conversation, yarn and statement. Qawl is used more or less synonymously with kalimát in the Bahá'í Writings. The Báb states that "*the Bayán and whosoever is therein revolve round the saying (qawl) of Him Whom God shall make manifest*" in the same way in which the Gospel "*revolved round the saying of Muḥammad*".²⁵⁰ Qawl is mentioned 92 times in the Qur'án, often in reference to the Word of God and His Revelation (through the speech of Muḥammad). The term is also used in reference to God's law and the Qur'án, which is the Word that separates truth from falsehood.²⁵¹ In the Du'á sahar God's speech is described as pleasing (radíy) and most delightful (ardá).

Masá'il (مَسَائِل) : Questions. Also translated in the Bahá'í Writings as problems, principles, truths, matters, mysteries, subtleties, obscurities or intricacies. Additional definitions include affairs and concerns. In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh asserts that the divines falsely claim to know the subtleties (masá'il) of God's law and that the people should thus rather seek guidance concerning abstruse matters (masá'il) of Faith from the Divine Manifestations. According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Bahá'í teachings are the most perfect solutions to the world's "*social problems (masá'il-i-ijtimá'íyy)*",²⁵² and in His

²⁴⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle* 14.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 104.

²⁵⁰ Shoghi Effendi, *World Order* 100.

²⁵¹ See, for example, Qur'án 86:13.

²⁵² 'Abdu'l-Bahá, **Tablet to Forel** 26.

Will and Testament the Universal House of Justice is charged with the responsibility to resolve all “*difficult problems*”.²⁵³ As a divine attribute, *masá’il* thus signifies the matters or affairs that God decrees and deals with in the world as well as the intricate theological and legal subtleties that only the Divine Manifestations are able and authorized to explain. This name of God is not mentioned in the Qur’án. God’s questions are described as beloved (*habíb*) and most agreeable (*ahabb*) in the Du’á sahar.

Sharaf (شَرَف) : Honour. Also rendered in the Bahá’í Writings as excellence or glory. Other definitions include uprightness, virtuousness, righteousness, rectitude, integrity, honesty, goodness, correctness, kudos, high repute, eminence and nobility. Bahá’u’lláh states that the excellence (*sharaf*) of all things is dependant upon God’s bidding and God’s word.²⁵⁴ According to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Palestine has become the glory (*sharaf*) of all nations, since it was visited by many of the Manifestations of God.²⁵⁵ *Sharaf* is not mentioned in the Qur’án. The attribute *sharaf* is also used in its adjective form (*sharíf*) in the Du’á sahar.

Sultán (سُلْطَان) : Sovereignty. Also translated in the Bahá’í Writings as king, lord, shah, majesty, sovereign, monarch, authority, potency, the power of sovereignty, the All-Possessing, he who ruleth or the most potent of rulers. Other meanings include potentate, chief, ruler, governor, tyranny, grip, rule, totalitarianism, predominance, supreme power or authority, command, clout, control, imperiousness, influence, leverage, ascendancy, absolutism, abuse, preponderant governing, hegemony, warrant and permission. In the Bahá’í Writings, numerous designations of God include the term *Sultán*. Among them are the “*Ancient (or King) of Days (Sultán-i-Qidam)*”, the “*King of the seen and unseen*”, the “*King of Revelation (Sultánu’-z-Zuhúr)*”, the “*King of Names (Sultánu’l-Asmá’)*” and the “*King of Kings*”. The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh is, at times, designated as the “*King of Days (Sultánu’l-Ayyám)*”.²⁵⁶ *Sultán* is mentioned 37 times in the

²⁵³ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Will and Testament* 20.

²⁵⁴ Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers* 68.

²⁵⁵ Cited in Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel* 27

²⁵⁶ See, for example, Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers* 117.

Qur'án, where it is a great sin to lay claims to authority without any warrant, permission or authority (sultán) from God. Only God's messengers such as Moses, Aaron and Muḥammad have been sent by God with “*manifest*” or “*clear authority (sulṭánun mubín)*”. Satan only has power or authority (sultán) over those who obey and follow him. In the Qur'án, sultán thus primarily refers to the authority with which God's Messengers have been invested. God's sovereignty is described as enduring (dá'im) and most permanent (adwam) in the Du'á sahar.

Mulk (مُلْكُ) : Dominion. Also rendered in the Bahá'í Writings as sovereignty, empire, kingdom, realm, universe, this world or the land wherein one dwelleth. Further translations are dominance, command, clout, rule, power, reign, property, ownership and holding. In the Persian Hidden Words,²⁵⁷ we are warned not to abandon an everlasting dominion (mulk) for things which perish, and in the Kitáb-i-Íqán,²⁵⁸ the leaders of religion, in any age, are said to have deprived themselves of an everlasting sovereignty (mulk) by having rejected God's Prophets. In His Kitáb-i-Aqdas,²⁵⁹ Bahá'u'lláh, furthermore, states that anyone who has tasted of the sweetness of servitude to God will “*refuse to barter it for all dominion (mulk) of earth and heaven*”. In some instances Mulk is used synonymously with Násút in references to the material world. Mulk is mentioned 46 times in the Qur'án. According to this book, God's is the kingdoms of heaven and earth, and the sovereignty will be God's on the Day of Judgment.²⁶⁰ God is also stated to have given their kingdoms to Abraham, Saul, David and Solomon and has bestowed sovereignty (mulk) on Muḥammad.²⁶¹ Another form of this word is malik (king), which is also used as an attribute of God in both the Bahá'í Writings and the Qur'án. In the Du'á sahar, God's dominion is described as excellent or magnificent (fâkhir) and most magnificent (afkhar).

²⁵⁷ Bahá'u'lláh, *Persian Hidden Words* no. 37.

²⁵⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, *Íqán* 15.

²⁵⁹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Aqdas* 64.

²⁶⁰ See, Qur'án 22:26 and 25:26.

²⁶¹ See, Qur'án 12:101.

‘Alá’ (عَلَا): Loftiness. Also translated as glory in the Bahá’í Writings. Other meanings include exaltation, dignity, elevation, sublimity, transcendence and high or noble rank. ‘Alá’ is not mentioned frequently in the officially translated Bahá’í literature, but other derivatives of the same root word are. One example of this is the form a‘lá’ that is frequently used in the context of teaching the Faith, an activity which is described as the exaltation (a‘lá’) of God’s word or Cause. ‘Alá’ is mentioned twice in the Qur’án in reference to God although in a slightly different spelling (without the final hamzih). Moreover, it appears quite frequently in other forms, for example in the phrase “Exalted be He” (ta’álá) which is habitually added by pious Muslims when mentioning the name of God.²⁶² The superlative form a‘lá (most lofty or most exalted) of this word, furthermore, forms the name of Súrih 87 of the Qur’án. The attribute ‘alá’ is derived from the word `ulúww (loftiness, elevation) mentioned in the Du’á sahar where it is also used in its superlative (a‘lá) and adjective (‘ál) forms.

²⁶² Walbridge, *Sacred* 190.

II. THE DU'Á SAHAR (Ramadan Dawn Prayer)

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Bahá'** (**Splendor**) at its most Splendid (*abhá'*) for all Thy Splendor (*bahá'*) is truly resplendent (*bahí*). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the fullness of Thy Splendor (*bahá'*).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Jamál** (**Beauty**)²⁶³ at its most beautiful (*ajmal*) for all Thy Beauty (*jamál*) is truly beautiful (*jamíl*). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Beauty (*jamál*).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Jalál** (**Glory**) in its supreme Glory (*ajall*) for all Thy Glory (*jalál*) is truly Glorious (*jalíl*). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the totality of Thy Glory (*jalál*).

O my God! I beseech Thee by thy **'Azamat** (**Grandeur**) at its supreme Grandness (*a'zam*) for all Thy Grandeur (*'azamat*) is truly Grandiose (*'azim*). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the fullness of Thy Grandeur (*'azamat*).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Núr** (**Light**) through all of its Lights (*anwár*) for all Thy Light (*núr*) is truly Luminous (*nayyír*). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Light (*núr*).

O my God! I beseech Thee by thy **Rahmat** (**Mercy**) by virtue of its All-Encompassing nature (*awsa'*) for all of Thy Mercy (*rahmat*) is All-Embracing (*awsa'*). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Mercy (*rahmat*).

²⁶³ In the Badí' calendar, Jalál comes before Jamál.

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Kalimát (Words)** at their most Perfect (atamm) for all Thy Words (kalimát) are truly Complete (támmat). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the totality of Thy Words (kalimát).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Kamál (Perfection)** in its absolute Perfectness (akmal) for Thy Perfection (kamál) is truly Perfect (kámil). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the completeness of Thy Perfection (kamál).

O my God! I beseech thee by thy **Asmá' (Names)** by virtue of their supreme Greatness (akbar) for all Thy Names (asmá') are truly Great (kábir). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the totality of Thy Names (asmá').

O my God! I beseech thee by Thy **'Izzat (Might)** at its utmost Mightiness (a'azza) for all Thy Might ('izzat) is truly Mighty ('aziz). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the fullness of Thy Might ('izzat).

O my God! I beseech thee by Thy **Mashíyyat (Will)** at its most Conclusive (amdá) for all of thy Will (mashíyyat) is truly conclusive (máḍiyat). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the totality of Thy Will (mashíyyat).

O my God! I beseech thee by Thy **Qudrat (Power)** through the Power (qudrat) of which Thou overshadoweth all things for all of Thy Power (qudrat) is truly All-Subduing (mustatílat). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the fullness of Power (qudrat).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **'Ilm (Knowledge)**²⁶⁴ at its most Acute (anfád) for all of Thy Knowledge ('ilm) is truly Penetrating (náfid). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Knowledge ('ilm).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Qawl (Speech)** at its most Delightful (ardá) for all Thy Speech (qawl) is especially Pleasing

²⁶⁴ In the Badí' calendar, 'Ilm is placed before Qudrat.

(radíy). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Speech (qawl).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Masá'il (Questions)** which are most Agreeable (ahabb) of Thee for all of Thy Concerns (masá'il) are truly beloved (habíb). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thine affairs (masá'il).

O my God! I beseech thee by thy **Sharaf (Honour)** which is most Honourable (sharaf) for all of Thine Honour (sharaf) is truly Honoured (sharíf). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thine Honour (sharaf).

O my God! I beseech thee by thy **Şultán (Sovereignty)** at its most Permanent (adwam) for the whole of Thy Sovereignty (şultán) is truly Enduring (dá'im). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the absoluteness of Thy Sovereignty (şultán).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy **Mulk (Dominion)** at its most Magnificent (afkhar) for the whole of Thy Dominion (mulk) is truly Excellent (fákhir). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Dominion (mulk).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy 'Ulúww (Sublimity) at its most **Lofty (A'lá)**²⁶⁵ for the whole of Thy Sublimity ('ulúww) is truly Lofty ('ál[ín]). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the fullness of Thy Sublimity ('uluww).

O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy Mann (Benevolence) at its most Immemorial (aqdam) for the totality of Thy Benevolence (mann) is truly Pre-existent (qadím). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the whole of Thy Benevolence (mann).

O God, I beseech thee by thy áyát (Verses/Signs) at their most Distinguished (akram) for all Thy Verses (áyát) (verses) are truly Precious (karím). I, verily, O my God, beseech Thee by the totality of Thy Verses (áyát).

²⁶⁵ A slightly different spelling ('Alá) is used by the Báb for the Badí' calendar.

I, verily, beseech Thee, O my God! by that whereby Thou hast Standing (sha'n) and Omnipotence (jabarút) and I supplicate Thee by virtue of every single quality (shan) and dimension of Power (jabarút) that Thou do indeed answer me by virtue of the foregoing at the very moment I request of Thee! Wherefore do Thou answer me, O my God!

[Then ask thy requirement for this is surely a thing decreed].²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Adapted from a provisional translation by Stephen Lambden. Online at <http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/03-Biblical-islam-BBst/dawnP.htm> [accessed 25 April 2005]. Reproduced here with kind permission of the translator.

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