



some passages translated by Bahá'u'lláh.

3. Content. The Súratu'l-Haykal begins with an invocation and a prayer in which Bahá'u'lláh praises God as the author of revelation and thanks him for the affliction he has undergone for his sake. He describes how in his greatest affliction, the Maiden (húríyah) appeared to him calling joyfully, "This is the Beloved of the worlds, but you do not know him." She then addresses the Bábís who had not accepted Bahá'u'lláh, warning them that God would raise up another people in their place if they did not aid Bahá'u'lláh. The Bábís, she says, are the blindest of people, since they deny the like of that by which they prove the truth of their own religion--presumably a reference to Bahá'u'lláh's divinely inspired writings. She calls on "this temple" to arise since all contingent beings are resurrected by him. She addresses the eye, the ear, and the tongue of Bahá'u'lláh, calling on his eye, for example, to look only at the beauty of God, not at the heavens or the earth.

Bahá'u'lláh replies to the maiden, telling her how Azal, the brother whom he had raised, had tried to kill him and tells her that when this became known, Azal had written to the Bábís saying that Bahá'u'lláh had tried to kill him. (The context suggests that Bahá'u'lláh's discovery of this was the occasion of writing this tablet, but it is not certain.)

Bahá'u'lláh now moves to the central theme of the tablet, the exposition of the metaphysical significance of the haykal. The four Arabic letters of the word are each associated with an attribute of God whose Arabic name contains that letter and with an aspect of God's relation with the universe:

háV: huwíyah (essence): God's will

yá: qadír (power, which is spelled QDYR in Arabic): God's sovereignty

káf: karam (generosity): God's bounteousness

lám: fadl (grace): God's grace

Elsewhere in the tablet he meditates on the spiritual significance of various parts of the body of the manifestation: the hem of his robe, which purifies by its touch; the foot, created from the steel of might to be steadfast in the path of God; his breast, which reflects the lights of God upon all things; and the heart, the repository of all knowledge and from which new and wondrous sciences will come forth. Bahá'u'lláh is told that his temple has been made the fountainhead of each of God's names and attributes. He has thus been given the power to recreate all things, bringing forth suns from motes of dust. He is called the "Self of God," for the saying "there is not God but I" applies to Bahá'u'lláh.

The tablet returns often to the theme of the disbelief of the Bábís, criticizing Bábí leaders for priding themselves on such titles as "mirror"

and

"letter," though it is Bahá'u'lláh who is the creator of the letters and mirrors. God's acceptance of their pious deeds is, he warns, dependent on their belief. He warns that their unbelief will lead the mass of believers astray. He criticizes those who accepted the new faith but came to him with questions about the Shî'ite imáms and bábs, in the end losing their faith. These, he warns, are like the Jewish leaders with Jesus. Finally, he insists that it was he who was prophesied by the Báb in his writings. He calls himself the Primal Point, a title of the Báb, thus identifying himself with the Báb.

The Súratu'l-Haykal defies easy summary, for it is a dense tapestry of mystical imagery drawn from esoteric Shî'ism, the Qur'án, the writings of the Báb, and even the Bible.

4. Relation to other texts. At Bahá'u'lláh's orders, the Súratu'l-Haykal was written as one point of a five-pointed star, with the tablets to the kings forming the other points. To judge by the first publication of this tablet, these other tables were those addressed to the Pope, Napoleon III, the Czar of Russia, Queen Victoria, and the Sháh of Iran. Of this combined tablet he says, "Thus have We built the Temple with the hands of power and might, could ye but know it. This is the Temple promised unto you in the Book. . . ." (PDC 47), evidently an allusion to Rev. 21:22P23, which in earlier Arabic translations of the Bible evidently said, "the glory of God [Bahá'u'lláhh] is its light," a passage quotes by Bahá'u'lláh elsewhere. In addition to the Bible there is the famous tradition of Kumayl, a well-known mystical tradition of Shî'ism, which identifies one of the five stages of reality as "a light that shines from the morn of eternity and illumines the temples of unity (hayákilu't-tawhíd). Shî'ite commentators identify the "temples of unity" as the prophets and imáms. Elsewhere the Imám Hyusayn is called "the temple of revelation" (haykalu'l-wahy wa't-tanzíl; `Abbás Qummí, Muntahá'l-Amal, Tehran, 1371/1951, p. 286).

5. Editions and translations. The text has been published at least three times: AQA 1:2P49; Kitáb-i-Mubín, Tehran, 120 B.E./1963, pp. 2P 38; and AQA 4:268P300. There was an early English translation, too. Short quotations are translated by Shoghi Effendi in PDC (1961), pp. 47-48, WOB (1955), pp. 109P10, 138P39, 169.

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