

A Philosophic Understanding of the Baha'i Writings And What Is It Good For?

by Ian Kluge August, 2016

1: Introduction

Among the various ways of studying the Baha'i Writings – for example, theological, historical, textual and thematic – we may also study the Texts from a philosophic perspective. The frequent and pervasive presence of philosophic passages encourages this approach which helps us understand Baha'u'llah's and 'Abdu'l-Baha's use of philosophic concepts, terminology, and argumentation when explaining such issues as the immortality of the soul, logical proofs for the existence of God and the nature of human knowledge. Because these philosophic elements are so pervasive at least some familiarity with them is beneficial to deepening our comprehension of the Texts. Furthermore, such knowledge is necessary for scholars of comparative religious philosophies.

To contextualize our discussion, let us first examine what the Writings themselves say about philosophy. 'Abdu'l-Baha says,

All mankind must be given a knowledge of science and philosophy; that is, as much as may be deemed necessary. All cannot be scientists or philosophers but each should be educated according to his needs and deserts.[1]

In effect, 'Abdu'l-Baha anticipates Mortimer Adler's dictum that "Philosophy is everybody's business!"[2] 'Abdu'l-Baha's use of the imperative words "must" and "needs" makes it clear that there is some degree of obligation for everyone to receive a measure of philosophical training, i.e. everyone should have a mind trained in careful, systematic thinking, analysis, basic logic and inferential reasoning, and forming coherent arguments. It is neither wise nor practical to contend that such mental skills are unnecessary, especially in light of 'Abdu'l-Baha's assertion, "in this age, the peoples of the world need the arguments of reason." [3] Without these basic skills, people will more readily fall prey to logically flawed arguments, irrational appeals and other misuses of reason. Consequently, at least some philosophic training is necessary as indicated by 'Abdu'l-Baha. Moreover, a philosophical approach also requires the habit of questioning so that each individual can take part in the independent investigation of truth to the best of his/her ability. The existence of a Feast of Questions re-enforces the importance of the habit of questioning is in Baha'u'llah's dispensation.

If – as some believe – philosophy begins and ends in words, i.e. is of no real value,[4] ‘Abdu’l-Baha would not make it an educational requirement nor make use of it in the Writings if this were true. Shoghi Effendi directly opposes the disparaging view of philosophy:

Philosophy, as you will study it and later teach it, is certainly not one of the sciences that begins and ends in words. Fruitless excursions into metaphysical hair- splittings is meant, not a sound branch of learning like philosophy.[5]

Clearly, what Shoghi Effendi rejects is a certain way or school of philosophizing that is jargon heavy and is often based on minute and subtle distinctions and arguments. We may find such among some late medieval philosophers or in contemporary postmodernism.[6] Elsewhere, Shoghi Effendi adds,

It is hoped that all the Bahá’í students will follow the noble example you have set before them and will, henceforth, be led to investigate and analyse the principles of the Faith and to correlate them with the modern aspects of philosophy and science. [7]

Obviously, the Guardian wishes us to keep in touch with new developments in mankind’s intellectual progress. The reason why is obvious: if Baha’is remain out of touch with developments in philosophy and the sciences, they will not be able to make the Baha’i teachings part of the public discourse on these subjects – and, in effect, hide Baha’u’llah’s revelation from the world. We must always remember that what happens in academic philosophy (and science) is inevitably carried to the ‘street level’ by students following various careers. The wide-spread influence of Nietzsche, Sartre and postmodern ideas and attitudes are a case in point.

Elsewhere, the Guardian re-emphasizes the need to engage with contemporary thought:

The Cause needs more Bahá’í scholars, people who not only are devoted to it and believe in it and are anxious to tell others about it, but also who have a deep grasp of the Teachings and their significance, and who can correlate its beliefs with the current thoughts and problems of the people of the world. [8]

Finally, he states,

If the Baha'is want to be really effective in teaching the Cause they need to be much better informed and able to discuss intelligently, intellectually, the present condition of the world and its problems. We need Bahá'í scholars, not only people far, far more deeply aware of what our teachings really are, but also well-read and well-educated people, capable of correlating our teachings to the current thoughts of the leaders of society.

A philosophic approach to the Baha'i Writings is ideally suited to fulfilling Shoghi Effendi's directive to correlate the Texts with contemporary thought and, thereby, make the teachings part of contemporary discourse and spread their influence.

2: Clarifying Our Terms

To explain a philosophic approach to the Writings, it is best to begin by clarifying our terms. First, who is a philosopher? We believe Mortimer Adler is absolutely correct when he says "Philosophy is everybody's business!"[9] As we have seen above, 'Abdu'l-Baha agrees. In the broad sense, everyone is a philosopher to one degree or another. Everyone – and especially teenagers and young adults – asks basic philosophic questions about the value, meaning and purpose of life, about our ultimate personal and collective destiny, (im)mortality, about ethics and fairness, the existence or non-existence of God, the nature of good and evil, beauty,[10] sex and gender identity, and social duties. Not only does everyone faces these questions consciously or unconsciously but everyone answers them in one way or another though not always with the same depth and sophistication. The vital difference among people is whether they are conscious or unconscious of such reflections and the degree and consistency with which they pursue these matters.

In a specific sense, philosophers are those who do not take things at face value. A philosopher is anyone who looks at the world analytically, i.e. with a 'questioning eye' to look beneath appearances to discover, among other things, hidden connections, similarities, distinctions, errors in reasoning, consequences and patterns. The Writings refer to this as the independent investigation of truth and even celebrate it with a specific feast – the Feast of Questions. A conscious philosopher also examines his/her own answers self-critically and does not necessarily believe everything s/he thinks.

In addition to their analytic functions, some philosophers also exercise a synthetic or creative function in the development of world-views by which to interpret reality. Their world-view is the framework within which they develop concepts of good, truth, justice, beauty, spirit, human nature, non-human nature, reality and so on. These concepts are explained and justified in terms of the philosopher's world-view. Among the famous philosophers who have developed a world-view are Plato, Aristotle, Nagarjuna, Lao Tze, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer and Whitehead.

Finally, whatever their other differences, philosophers share two other convictions. First is the conviction that reason is essential to philosophy, and that philosophical explanations must in some way or another lead to rational explanations. Irrational and incoherent explanations are impossible to understand, i.e. they are not explanations at all. As we shall see below, the Baha'i Writings place an enormous emphasis on rationality, starting with the definition of the "human spirit" as the "rational soul." [11] Baha'u'llah says,

Consider the rational faculty with which God hath endowed the essence of man. Examine thine own self, and behold how thy motion and stillness, thy will and purpose, thy sight and hearing, thy sense of smell and power of speech, and whatever else is related to, or transcendeth, thy physical senses or spiritual perceptions, all proceed from, and owe their existence to, this same faculty [12]

The physical senses as well as whatever "transcend[s] thy physical senses or spiritual perceptions" depend on the "rational faculty." In other words, reason includes and goes beyond the physical senses and is applicable even to spiritual matters. Bahá'u'lláh's statement also shows that the spiritual aspects of our being are dependent on or informed by the "rational faculty" and, therefore, influenced by it. This leads to the conclusion that reason is an integral part of human nature and attempts to deny it violate this nature. Indeed, because reason is essential to human nature, even arguments to 'disprove' reason must be presented rationally to be understood. (In philosophy this is known as a self-refuting argument.) As we shall see below, reason and the heart work together. Without reason, philosophy becomes what I call 'free-style opinionating' which is a perfectly legitimate form of expression but is not to be confused with philosophy itself.

Second, unless they wish their own arguments to be logically self-refuting, philosophers are motivated by the search for truth, i.e. an understanding of 'how things really are in the world.' Even skeptical philosophies – such as postmodernism and deconstructionism – which ostensibly

deny the quest for truth or even the existence of truth do so in the belief that what they describe is 'how the world really is.' [13] For example, 'slippage' is accepted as a genuine, i.e. true feature of language and 'destabilization' can reveal actually existing levels of meaning that are otherwise hidden. Other postmodernists such as Foucault see 'power' as the hidden feature in virtually all human activities and endeavor to bring these hidden power-relations to light. Despite Foucault's denials, he obviously believes that he and his followers have revealed some true feature of the world and human interaction.

Third, according to the Writings, reason is necessary for faith and belief, even for the beliefs held by the heart. 'Abdu'l-Bah asserts,

If religious belief and doctrine is at variance with reason, it proceeds from the limited mind of man and not from God; therefore, it is unworthy of belief and not deserving of attention; the heart finds no rest in it, and real faith is impossible. How can man believe that which he knows to be opposed to reason? Is this possible? Can the heart accept that which reason denies? Reason is the first faculty of man and the religion of God is in harmony with it. [14]

In a similar vein, he states, "among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion must be in conformity with science and reason, so that it may influence the hearts of men." [15] The need for reason leads 'Abdu'l-Bahá to dismiss the traditional Christian account of the Trinity as "unreasonable and evidently wrong" [16] because of its self-contradictory nature. If it were true,

[t]he foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination. [17]

We agree with Baha'i theologian and philosopher Wolfgang Klebel that whatever is experienced in the heart must be interpreted and understood by the brain and, therefore, appears to us in rational form.

3: What is a Baha'i Philosopher?

The preceding discussion leads us to the question, ‘What do we mean by the term ‘Baha’i philosopher’? Can there even be such a thing?

In our view, a Baha’i philosopher is one who explicitly studies the Writings in regards to the various branches of philosophy: metaphysics and ontology; philosophy of man; epistemology; personal and social ethics; aesthetics; philosophy of science; political and social philosophy; philosophy of history and numerous other subdivisions. There are, of course, many ways of approaching these traditional branches of philosophy, among them

textual studies;
applications of the teachings to modern social, legal, psychological, political and scientific problems;
comparison and contrast studies with other religions and philosophies;
readings of texts in light of other religions or philosophies;
exegesis;
critical/analytical;
theme studies;
apologetics;

However, to ‘be Baha’i,’ each of these explorations must use the Baha’i Writings as the basis of understanding and the standard for truth, at least for the author. The Baha’i philosopher seeks to understand what God has revealed and why He has revealed it. Similarly, scientists seeks to understand what a certain phenomenon is, why it is, i.e. what causes it. Both cases involve developing hypotheses, gathering evidence, and evaluating by experiment or specific applications and drawing conclusions.

The complaint that requiring the Baha’i Writings as the basis of philosophical inquiry leads to a new form of scholasticism is true – but trivial. This allegation says little if anything because no field of study can be independent of certain unquestioned and unquestionable foundational principles. In today’s academic world, arguments must be rigorously secular, empirical, materialistic and compatible with the modern Anglo-American ‘analytic’ outlook to be acceptable. The problem is that the truth of materialism, empiricism, secularity and the analytic outlook are themselves unprovable by logic or scientific experimentation. There is simply no way to prove that the empirical, material, secular path is the only method of acquiring truth or valid understanding even of the natural world. The unprovable premise that all valid knowledge about nature must be physical is simply accepted as a working hypothesis. Consequently, it is clear that using the Baha’i Writings as a basis for understanding as a working hypothesis is no

less or more ‘than the procedures employed in science or academia.

All philosophical approaches to the Baha’i Writings must not necessarily be Aristotelian. It is quite possible to develop an existential approach to the Writings[18] or a Buddhist approach.[19] The only requirement is that these other approaches are able to interpret the Aristotelian concepts in a way consistent with the Writings. After all, the Aristotelian concepts cannot be ignored. The effectiveness of other approaches depends on the insight and ingenuity of the interpreter. Furthermore, some other approaches may only work partially and some not at all. It would, for example, be very difficult to take a positivist approach to the Writings.

It should be noted that because the Writings validate various Aristotelian concepts, terms and arguments does not mean that Baha’i philosophy is necessarily ‘stuck’ in 300 BCE during Aristotle’s time. Aristotle’s method of analyzing reality has undergone enormous varied developments since that time. A list of neo-Aristotelians includes Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd in the Muslim world; Maimonides in Judaism; Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus in Christianity; Mortimer Adler[20], Tuomas Tahko[21], Daniel Novotny[22], Jacques Maritain[23], John Wild[24] and W. Norris Clarke, SJ [25] in the contemporary world. To this we may add major ethicists like Alasdair MacIntyre,[26] Philippa Foot[27] and Rosalind Hursthouse.[28] In other words, using the Baha’i Writings as a foundation of our philosophizing does not prevent us from engaging with the intellectual currents of the modern world.

4: The Benefits:

There are at least five advantages to adopting a philosophic approach to the Writings.

First, the philosophic approach helps us understand the pervasive philosophic passages in the Writings such as the arguments to prove the existence of God and human immortality; the nature of causality; the essence-attribute-potential analysis of reality, i.e. ontology; and the limits of human knowledge. These and other arguments use Aristotle’s concepts for analyzing reality and, therefore, understanding these concepts and terms and how they are used is necessary to comprehend many significant passages in the Texts.[29]

Second, the philosophic approach also helps in explicating the Writings to others in a clear and rational manner that has been carefully thought through and is at ease with questions or even

challenges. Such preparation also helps our teaching work by strengthening our own faith and providing confidence in our teaching work. ‘Abdu’l-Baha asserts that,

[i]f religious belief and doctrine is at variance with reason, it proceeds from the limited mind of man and not from God; therefore, it is unworthy of belief and not deserving of attention; the heart finds no rest in it, and real faith is impossible. How can man believe that which he knows to be opposed to reason? Is this possible? Can the heart accept that which reason denies? Reason is the first faculty of man and the religion of God is in harmony with it.[30]

Elsewhere he adds, “among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion must be in conformity with science and reason, so that it may influence the hearts of men.”[31] A philosophic understanding of the Writings helps build our personal faith and love for Baha’u’llah on a rational foundation. It works in harmony with our heart and feelings.

Third, a philosophic understanding of the Baha’i Writings provides new opportunities for dialogue with other religions, especially those which have a well-developed philosophical tradition those such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism and Hinduism. Like the Writings, these religions have deep philosophical resources that are best engaged by a philosophic understanding of the Baha’i Texts because only then can dialogue progress from the surface features to the underlying principles.

Fourth, a philosophic understanding of the Writings also helps open dialogue with contemporary schools of thought as recommended by Shoghi Effendi. (See below) Among these influential schools of thought are postmodernism, Marxism, existentialism, objectivism and empiricism-materialism. In addition, a philosophical understanding of the Writings also facilitates Baha’i contributions to contemporary debate such as human nature, governance, social decline, ethics and globalism.

Fifth, a philosophic understanding of the Writings is of special importance to Baha’is insofar as apologetics or defending the teachings are concerned. Such an understanding is useful for two reasons. First, it allows us to show the underlying rationality of the teachings and the governance of the Faith. Second, philosophy provides a mental training that enables us to analyze and critique opposing arguments and renders them moot. If nothing else, this will enhance respect for the Faith even if agreement is not forthcoming.

5: How Do We Start?

The best place to begin a philosophic study of the Writings is in the Writings themselves. When we search the Writings, we find that they consistently use the concepts, terminology and argumentation found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Physics*.^[32] In other words, the Writings analyze and interpret reality in the same terms as Aristotle. This means, in our view, that by analyzing and explaining reality in these terms, Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha endorsed these concepts, terms and arguments as 'truth-bearing.' Not only are Baha'is obligated to understand them – they used pervasively throughout the Writings – but they also provide a foundation from which further

developments in philosophy may be pursued.

Here is a list of the most commonly used terms.

1 – Essence: what a thing actually is, or, its definition which distinguishes it from all other kinds of things; its unique identity as a certain kind of being. Each essence has a unique set of potentials and therefore, a unique form; and is also unique substance.* We cannot know the essence of anything directly; we can only know about essences by means of the attributes in the phenomenal world.^[33]

2 – Attribute: the qualities that an essence or a particular thing has. There are two kinds of attributes. Essential attributes are those that an essence or a particular thing must have to be what it is. Being a mammal is an essential attribute for a dog. Accidental attributes are those that can change without changing what a thing is. Being black and white is an accidental quality of a dog; if its color were different, it would still have the essence of a dog. Sometimes, an attribute is essential from one point of view but not from another. Being brindle colored is an essential attribute for my particular dog, Athena, but it is not an essential attribute i.e. accidental for being a dog in general.

3 – Form: another term for essence from the point of view of its structure or composition as seen in real things. Form identifies something as the particular kind of thing it is. Everything we know has form because without it we could not distinguish one thing from another. Even ideas have form, or, as Abdu'l-Baha calls them, "intelligible form,"^[34] i.e. a particular composition by which we can understand them. Form is more than just physical shape.

4 – Matter: is that from which something else is made. “Matter is a relative term, to each form there corresponds a special matter.”[35] For example, paper is matter relative to books and books are matter relative to libraries. Matter can be physical but can also be concepts that are formed into an argument or a plot idea formed into a novel. It is sometimes called ‘substance.’ The same idea/matter can often have more than one “intelligible form” just as certain mathematical ideas can be expressed in different formulas. There is no such thing as actual matter without form.

5 – Hylomorphism: the belief that all actual beings – except God – are composed of matter and form. The Writings support this view. It is evident in Abdu’l-Baha’s four-fold causality where formal causality is involved in everything that happens to matter. He also refers to hylomorphism directly:

For example, letters and words are composed of two things: The first is the substance which is ink and pencil-lead and is the "Fashioned" while the second is the forms and features of the letters and words which are the "Fashioner".[36]

The ink and pencil-lead are the “Fashioned” i.e. the substance and the script or form is the “Fashioner.” Without the form we could not distinguish one piece of writing from another. In “I was a Hidden Treasure” Abdu’l-Baha also writes:

For it is not possible for a thing to have an external existence and not to be formed into a shape because substance and primal matter in order to exist need shape and form; while shape and form in order to appear need substance.[37]

This passage validates Aristotle’s view that there is something called “prime matter” – which today would be called the infinite or ocean of quantum potential – that is made actual or instantiated by taking on a specific form. Every proton or electron is a specific actualization of a part of ocean of infinite quantum potential. Here, too, the necessity of substance and form is demonstrated.

Finally, we also read,

Then it is clear that original matter, which is in the embryonic state, and the mingled and composed elements which were its earliest forms, gradually grew and developed during many ages and cycles, passing from one shape and form to another, until they appeared in this perfection, this system, this organization and this establishment, through the supreme wisdom of God.[38]

“Original matter” is Abdu’l-Baha’s term for what Aristotle’s “prime matter” (see above) i.e. matter without form which is pure potential that has not yet been made actual. Abdu’l-Baha’s calls this “the embryonic state,” precisely because it is still pure potential and is impelled by God’s action guided by His wisdom through various forms. Hylomorphism is also the metaphysical basis of progressive revelation in which the (subject) matter – “the eternal verities” found in every revelation – appear in various forms over historical time. As Abdu’l-Baha says, “truth is one, although its manifestations may be very different.”[39] The actual manifestations are the in which truth can appear.

6 – Change: the movement from potential to actual or actualization of potentials, or capacities, Change may be as simple as moving from one place to another or the actualization of human potentials. Change always requires something external to make potentials actualize because if potentials could realize themselves they would not be potentials. This is the metaphysical reason for needing Manifestations: as perfectly actualized mirrors of God they are able to activate and actualize the potentials in humankind. All change, including spiritual change, is the movement from potential to actual. If there were no potentials in man or anything else, there would be nothing to actualize.

7 – Substance: has several meanings. It can be plain, simple matter, but its most important meaning refers to anything that is not an attribute of something else, i.e. it is independent, not a part of something else the way an attribute is. AS we shall see, in the Writings, even God is said to be a substance. In fact, He is the only absolutely independent ‘thing’ and, therefore, is a substance in the fullest sense of the word.

8 – Four-fold Causality: Abdu’l-Baha accepts Aristotle’s analysis of causality[40] according to which everything has four causes:

the existence of everything depends upon four causes -- the efficient cause, the matter, the form and the final cause. For example, this chair has a maker [efficient cause] who is a carpenter, a substance which is wood [material cause], a form [formal cause] which is that of a chair, and a purpose [final cause] which is that it is to be used as a seat.[41]

In nature, all these aspects of causality work together at the same time and not in sequence but when a conscious maker is involved, the final cause, i.e. the purpose and the formal cause i.e. the plan precede the efficient and material cause. Before we actually build a desk, we make the decision to do so, i.e. conceive a purpose; then we think of a form or plan, and after that we gather the materials and get to work. We should note that Aristotle specifically denied that a natural process – like growing a corn stalk – requires a conscious ‘maker’ at every step. In natural processes, the final cause which guides the others takes the place of a conscious creator.

9 – Phenomenality: refers to all that is created and exist in time. All phenomenal things are preceded by a cause and require causes to continue existing.[42] That is why they are “essentially phenomenal,” i.e. it is part of their essence to require causes. The phenomenal is dependent on external causes which is why it is “contingent.” The human soul is phenomenal though it is eternal once it exists.[43] Phenomenal things can never understand the non-phenomenal, i.e. Preexistent. (See below) The phenomenal world is subject to the laws of nature. The essence of phenomenal things cannot be known directly, but only by their attributes.[44] The phenomenal world is also “the source of imperfections.”[45]

10 – Preexistence or the Preexistent: is God. The pre-existent has no cause and is absolutely independent of all other things. It includes or embraces everything (see discussion below). Its Essence is unknowable and can only be known by Its attributes as far as human powers allow.[46] It can never incarnate itself in a limited and imperfect carnal body because that would mean the Preexistent can be “qualified with phenomenal attributes.”[47] The Preexistent is perfect.

11- Emanation: describes the relationship between God and His creations. Here is Abdu'l-Baha's clear explanation:

Know that proceeding is of two kinds: the proceeding and appearance through emanation, and the proceeding and appearance through manifestation. The proceeding through emanation is like the coming forth of the action from the actor, of the writing from the writer. Now the writing emanates from the writer, and the discourse emanates from the speaker, and in the same way

the human spirit emanates from God. It is not that it manifests God -- that is to say, no part has been detached from the Divine Reality to enter the body of man. No, as the discourse emanates from the speaker, the spirit appears in the body of man.[48]

It is the opposite of “manifestation”[49] (not related to “Manifestation.'): the proceeding through manifestation is the manifestation of the reality of a thing in other forms, like the coming forth of this tree from the seed of the tree.”[50] Another way to think of emanation is a magnet and its magnetic field. The term ‘emanation’ does not appear in Aristotle but his follower Plotinus (300 CE) deduced it from his theory of God as thought thinking itself. When God thinks of an aspect of Himself, He generates/emanates an object of thought which is distinct from Himself but depends on Him and does not diminish Him.

[1] ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 108; emphasis added.

[2] Mortimer Adler, “Philosophy is Everybody’s Business,”
<http://www.thegreatideas.org/greatideas1.html>

[3] ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 7

[4] Baha’u’llah, *Tablets of Baha’u’llah*, p. 169: “Such academic pursuits as begin and end in words alone have never been and will never be of any worth. The majority of Persia’s learned doctors devote all their lives to the study of a philosophy the ultimate yield of which is nothing but words.”

[5] Shoghi Effendi, *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Baha’i Community*, p. 445.

[6] We might think of Duns Scotus or Suarez among the medievals or Derrida, Lacan or Deleuze among the postmodernists. See Ian Kluge, “Postmodernism and the Baha’i Writings” in *Lights of Irfan*, Vol. 9, 2008, or see <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/>

[7] Shoghi Effendi in a letter to an individual believer, 21 October, 1943 in *Compilation, Scholarship*, p. 17.

[8] Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, 21, October, 1943 in *Scholarship*, p. 4.

[9] Mortimer Adler, “Philosophy is Everybody’s Business,” in
<http://www.thegreatideas.org/greatideas1.html>

[10] People may claim they have no aesthetic opinions but the fact that they make selections of things to beautify their homes, or at least, do not intentionally ‘uglify’ them shows an unconscious aesthetic impulse at work.

[11] See Ian Kluge, "Reason and the Baha in Writings," in *Lights of Irfan*, Vol. 14, 2013, or at <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/>

[12] Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXXXIII, p. 163; emphasis added.

[13] Postmodernism and deconstructionism fall into this self-refuting category. From our perspective postmodernism and deconstruction are not so much genuine philosophies as free-style opinionating. See Ian Kluge, "Postmodernism and the Baha'i Writings" in *Lights of Irfan* or <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/>

[14] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 231.

[15] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 299.

[16] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 120.

[17] 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 115; emphasis added.

[18] Ian Kluge, *The Call into Being: Introduction to a Baha'i Existentialism* in *Lights of Irfan*, Vol. 4, 2003 or <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/published-articles.html>

[19] Ian Kluge, *Buddhism and the Baha'i Faith* in *Lights of Irfan*, Vol. 8, 2007 and *Emptiness and the Baha'i Writings*, both at <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/published-articles.html>

[20] Mortimer Adler, *Aristotle for Everybody; Six Great Ideas: Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Liberty; Equality; Justice; Ten Philosophical Mistakes*.

[21] Tuomas Tahko, editor, *Contemporary Aristotelian Metaphysics*.

[22] Daniel Novotony, Lukas Novak, *Neo-Aristotelian Perspectives in Metaphysics*.

[23] Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge; Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*.

[24] John Wild, *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy*.

[25] W. Norris Clarke, SJ, *The One and the Many*.

[26] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice, Whose Rationality?*

[27] Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices*.

[28] Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*.

[29] Ian Kluge, "The Aristotelian Substratum of the Baha'i Writings," in *Lights of Irfan*, IV, 2003 or at <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/>

- [30] ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 231.
- [31] ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 299.
- [32] Ian Kluge, “The Aristotelian Substratum of the Baha’i Writings,” in *Lights of Irfan*, IV, 2003 or at <https://www.bahaiphilosophy.com/>
- [33] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 220.
- [34] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 115.
- [35] Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. by R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye, Bk II 2, 194b
- [36] Abdu’l-Baha, “I was a Hidden Treasure”, (provisional translation by Moojan Momen) in *Ocean*.
- [37] Abdu’l-Baha, “I was a Hidden Treasure”, (provisional translation by Moojan Momen) in *Ocean*.
- [38] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 182; *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 29.
- [39] Abdu’l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p 128.
- [40] Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. by R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye Bk. II, 7, 198 a, b.; *Metaphysics*, trans. By W.D. Ross, Bk. V, 1, 1013 a, b.
- [41] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 280.
- [42] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p.
- [43] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 151.
- [44] Abdu’l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 421.
- [45] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 293.
- [46] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 221.
- [47] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 203.
- [48] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 205.
- [49] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 294.
- [50] Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 205.

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