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Bahá'u'lláh's Early Mystic Writings

Faculty: [Susan Maneck, Necati Alkan](#)

Course Description:

In Bahá'u'lláh's Early Mystic Writings we will explore a theme that dominates Bahá'u'lláh's early writings and continues throughout His revelation: the relationship of the individual to spiritual reality—to God, to spiritual truths, to principles of personal development, and to laws of conduct. We will explore Bahá'u'lláh's *Rashh-i-`Ama* and some of His early poetry, *The Four Valleys*, *The Seven Valleys*, *The Hidden Words*, and *the Tablet of the Holy Mariner*. We will also read some Sufi texts that provide historical and literary context for allusions Bahá'u'lláh makes in His writings. We will round out our study with extensive commentaries and study materials by Baha'is on Bahá'u'lláh's early mystic writings.

Learning Objectives:

1. To be able to explain:
 - the contents of the various early tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in the course;
 - background information about the circumstances of their revelation and their recipients;
 - the relationship between them and other works of Bahá'u'lláh revealed before and after;
 - information about the cultural and social context of the Middle East at the time of their revelation (1853-63)
2. To demonstrate your understanding through postings in the course, devotionals, special research or artistic projects, or presentations to your friends.

Course Expectations and Guidelines:

This course is divided into one week (or less) sessions beginning with an orientation (Unit 1) and ending with a review and summary (Unit 8). All units include readings, activities, and an online discussion among workshop participants. The course has been structured so that it requires an estimated 5 or 6 hours per week of reading and discussion.

During Unit 1, you will draft a personal learning plan (PLP) to define the goals you have set for yourself by participating in this course. If you are taking the course for credit, one of your goals would naturally be meeting the course expectations for discussions, activities, and a final project. If you are not taking the course for credit, you need to set goals that will help you develop your personal capabilities and will be achievable in and around your other daily tasks.

During Unit 8, you will refer again to your PLP and complete a self-assessment reviewing the extent to which you met the goals you set for yourself. In addition, learners seeking credit from their university will complete their final project (15-20 page research paper or equivalent) and submit it to the lead faculty.

Your instructor will periodically review your progress in the course and be available to discuss things with you. The following guidelines will help you gain maximum benefit from your participation in the course and will contribute toward a rich and rewarding experience through dialogue with others. We recommend that you consider them when drafting your PLP.

- Complete the readings and activities for each unit. Afterwards, your first posting in the discussion area should make reference to the readings and activities in such a way that your instructor can tell you read the material and engaged in the activities.

- Post at least 2 message replies in the discussion area for each unit/session. Each post should contain substantive comments (i.e., a comment like “oh, that’s interesting” is NOT substantive).
- Choose at least 2 different days each session when you will participate in the discussions. We suggest posting at least once within the first few days of the session, with your second post at least two days before the next session begins. By contributing more than one post on different days, you will help the group develop rich ongoing discussions.
- If you post on time (i.e., within the time period of each unit on the course schedule), others will be able to read and respond to your post.
- Keep a course journal to help you track your ideas as you work on your final project.

In order to be eligible to receive a **Certificate of Completion**, you must participate in a majority of the discussions, as well as complete a majority of available unit activities and the end-of-course self-assessment. Learners taking the course for credit must also complete a final project. Your first discussion posts within each unit should address the discussion topic and demonstrate understanding of the course/unit concepts. Additional postings should provide substantive comments to other participants that are thoughtful, relevant, and help to extend the discussion.

Course Schedule:

Unit 1	Introduction to the Course and to Moodle	April 1-4, 2015
In this unit, you will review the unit topics and dates, learn how to use Moodle (our course delivery system), set up your user profile, begin developing a personal learning plan, and learn how to post and reply in the discussion forums. Learners seeking university credit through their own university or an external agency will be required to design a personal learning plan to meet external standards, including active and ongoing participation in the course discussion forums, readings, assigned activities, and completion of a 15 to 20 page research paper or a project of equivalent complexity.		
Unit 2	Rashh-i-Ama and Kullu't-Ta'am	April 5-11
Reading from the text and essays about the Rashh-i-Ama (Sprinklings from the Cloud of Unknowing) and the Kullu't-Ta'am (All Food), two of Bahá'u'lláh's earliest revelations.		
Unit 3	The Four Valleys	April 12-18
Reading from the text and essays about the Four Valleys		
Unit 4	The Seven Valleys	April 19-25
Reading from the text and essays about the Seven Valleys		
Unit 5	The Hidden Words	April 26-May 2
Reading the text and essays about the Hidden Words		
Unit 6	Tablet of the Holy Mariner	May 3-9
Reading the text and essays about the Tablet of the Holy Mariner		
Unit 7	A Selection of Other Tablets	May 10-16
Reading a selection of tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Baghdad and Adrianople periods--Surat al-Kifaya, Tafsir al-hurufat, Lawh-i-haqq, Tablets on the Maiden of Heaven, and Lawh--i-Halih Halih Halih Ya Bisharat		
Unit 8	Integration and Application of Learning	May 17-19
In this unit, we discuss the course in general and the relationship of the various topics to each other and review the learning goals set during Unit 1. Those seeking credit will complete their final projects (15-20 page research paper or equivalent) and submit them to the lead faculty.		
Course Project		
Your Personal Learning Plan (PLP) helps you focus on what you want to learn in the course and on what course project you might be interested in creating. The final project is a course requirement only if you wish to receive credit from an external agency. You will have an opportunity to share your final project		

with course participants.

The following is a short list of possible ideas for final projects. Learners may propose other ideas as well:

- Submit a research/reflection paper (approximately 15-20 pages including references) on a topic related to the course.
- Create an artistic project related to the course with a written explanation about it.
- Alternative final project formats can be discussed with course instructor.

Certificate of Completion	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners not taking the course for credit will receive a certificate of completion from the Wilmette Institute after course expectations were met.• For learners taking the course for credit, the Wilmette Institute will send a transcript to the learner and the external accrediting institution within a month of completion of the course. | |
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