The Kitáb-i-Íqán
The Book of Certitude
Revolutionizing the Concepts of:

- Religion,
- Eschatology and,
- Theology
In this presentation I will try to minimize the impact of personal interpretation of the Sacred Text, and if of necessity an statement or explanation that I make borders on interpretation, I requested that it be regarded solely as my individual interpretation, which lacks any authority.
Introduction
What is “The Kitáb-i-Íqán”?

The Íqán is the most important book written on the spiritual significance of the Cause.

(Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 37)
Bahá’u’lláh called it the lord of the books, and in His last major Writing, the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, states:

Briefly, there hath been revealed in the Kitáb-i-Íqán (Book of Certitude) concerning the Presence and Revelation of God that which will suffice the fair-minded.
In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, He states:

All the Scriptures and the mysteries thereof are condensed into this brief account. So much so that were a person to ponder it a while in his heart, he would discover from all that hath been said the mysteries of the Words of God, and would apprehend the meaning of whatever hath been manifested by that ideal King.
In the introduction to the first English translation of the Kitáb-i-Íqán in 1904, ‘Abdú’l-Bahá wrote: O’ Thou who are athirst for the water of life this manifest book is the fountainhead of the water of eternal life. Drink so much as thou art able from the fountain of the living water. O’ thou who art seeking after the knowledge of God! Immerse thyself in the ocean of the explanation of the Beauty of the Merciful, so that thou mayest gather from its depths the pearls of the wisdom of God.
Scriptural Significance of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

Shoghi Effendi in describing the place, the significance, the style and a summary of the themes of The Kitáb-i-Íqán in “God Passes By” States:
Foremost among the priceless treasures cast forth from the billowing ocean of Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation ranks the Kitáb-i-Íqán (Book of Certitude), revealed in the space of two days and two nights . . . it was written in fulfillment of the prophecy of the Báb, Who had specifically stated that the Promised One would complete the text of the unfinished Persian Bayán.
The place of The Kitáb-i-Íqán in the Bahá’í Literature

[T]his Book, setting forth the Grand Redemptive scheme of God, occupies a position unequaled by any work in the entire range of Bahá’í literature, except the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá’u’lláh’s Most Holy Book. Revealed on the eve of the declaration of His Mission, it proffered to mankind the ‘Choice Sealed Wine whose seal is of musk,’ and broke the ‘seals’ of the ‘Book’ referred to by Daniel.
The place of The Kitáb-i-Íqán in the Bahá’í Literature

Well may it be claimed that of all the books revealed by the Author of the Bahá’í Revelation, this Book alone, by sweeping away the age-long barriers that have so insurmountably separated the great religions of the world, has laid down a broad and unassailable foundation for the complete and permanent reconciliation of their followers.
The Style of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

Bahá’u’lláh’s writings are characterized by different forms and styles, each suitable for the content and purpose of its revelation. If a Tablet or treatise was addressed to a particular person or a special cultural group, cultural particularities and language of that person or group were taken in consideration.
The Style of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

In this respect Bahá’u’lláh’ states:
At one time We spoke in the language of the lawgiver; at another in that of the truth-seeker and the mystic, and yet Our supreme purpose and highest wish hath always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of this station.

(Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, 15)
We know that:
• The Kitáb-i-Aqdas is Revealed in the language of the lawgiver,
• The Kitáb-i-Íqán is Revealed in the language of the truth-seeker,
• The Seven Valleys is Revealed in the language of the mystic.
Regarding the style of The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Shoghi Effendi States:

A model of Persian prose, of a style at once original, chaste and vigorous, and remarkably lucid, both cogent in argument and matchless in irresistible eloquence.
Historical Background of its Revelation

- The Kitáb-i-Íqán was revealed in Baghdád, the capital of Iraq, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1862, approximately one year before Bahá’u’lláh’s public declaration in the Garden of Riḍván.

- It is assumed that the Kitáb-i-Íqán fulfilled the dual purpose of proving the truth of the Báb's claim and also of preparing the ground for Bahá’u’lláh's own public declaration.
His Holiness the Báb had three maternal uncles.  

- Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad 
- Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí 
- Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Ḥasan-‘Alí 

His second uncle, Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, also known as Khál-i-Aʿẓam (the Greatest Uncle), who was the uncle who raised Him after the passing of His father, was the only one of His uncles to have embraced His Cause at the time of His Martyrdom.
Historical Background of its Revelation

Aware of the special qualities that the Báb possessed since earliest childhood, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí was the first to embrace the Cause of the Báb in Shíráz after the Letters of the Living and was himself martyred shortly after the Báb as one of the Seven Martyrs of Ţihrán.
Historical Background of its Revelation

The Báb’s eldest uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad, had great respect for his Nephew’s integrity and spirituality. Yet, despite His admiration for the Báb, he did not recognize the station of the Báb for many years. He was heartbroken when his brother was martyred and did not understand the reason why he did not accept the intercession of the influential merchants who were trying so hard to save his life.
Historical Background of its Revelation

For several years he did not want to discuss the Báb and His Cause with anyone. However, once when engaged in a series of discussions with Áqá Mírzá Núru’d-Dín, a close relative of the Báb, he was forced to reconsider his position. During the discussion, he intimated that he could simply not believe that His own Nephew was the promised one of Islam.
Historical Background of its Revelation

Áqá Mírzá Núru’d-Dín compared him to Abú'-La'hab, the uncle of Muḥammad. Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad was understandably shaken by this comparison and asked Áqá Mírzá Núru’d-Dín what he should do to convince himself of the validity of the Báb’s claim.
Historical Background of its Revelation

Áqá Mírzá Núru’d-Dín suggested that he go on pilgrimage to Iraq and while there, visit his sister, the mother of the Báb, who had been living there since the martyrdom of her Son, and then go to Baghdád in order to attain the presence of Bahá’u’lláh and ask his questions of Him.
Historical Background of its Revelation

While in Bahá’u’lláh’s presence, the Báb’s eldest uncle was overwhelmed by His utterances and in the end beseeched Bahá’u’lláh to help him to see the truth of the Báb’s Message, bearing in mind that certain Islamic traditions were not, in his view, fulfilled by his Nephew. Bahá’u’lláh readily consented to help him and bade him to return with a list of the questions which puzzled him.
The Báb’s uncle then returned with four categories of questions all dealing with the coming of the Qá’ím (one of the stations claimed by the Báb, the word means “He who ariseth” or “the one that is standing.” It is the title of the promised one of Islam whose advent coincides with the Day of Resurrection). The questions have been preserved in the papers of the Afnán family. The questions he asked were the following:
Historical Background of its Revelation

- *The Day of Resurrection:* Is there to be a corporeal resurrection? The world is utterly filled with injustice. How are the just to be requited and the unjust punished?

- *The Twelfth Imám was born at a certain time and lives on.* There are traditions all supporting this belief. How can this be explained?
Historical Background of its Revelation

- *Certain events, according to the traditions that have come down from the Imáms, must occur before the advent of the Qá’im.* Some of these are mentioned. But none of these has happened. How can this be explained?"

- *Interpretation of the Holy Texts.* This Cause does not seem to conform to the beliefs held throughout the years (Qá’im must come with power and authority and rule the world), One cannot ignore the literal meaning of the Holy Texts and Scriptures. How can this be explained?
Historical Background of its Revelation

In answer to these questions, Bahá’u’lláh, within the span of two days and two nights, revealed what is known today as the Kitáb-i-Íqán (The Book of Certitude), but was in the early days referred to as Risálíy-i-Khál (Epistle to the Uncle). The original copy/manuscript of the Book was written in the hand of ‘Abdú’l-Bahá, who was eighteen years of age at that time.
Historical Background of its Revelation

The Kitáb-i-Íqán dispelled every doubt that Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad had harbored. He became a devout believer, and at the end of his life he acknowledged his belief in the twin Manifestations of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh in his will and testament. His brother Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Ḥasan-ʻAlí, eventually embraced the Faith.
Historical Background of its Revelation

The original manuscript of the Kitáb-i-Íqán remained with the Afnán family, it was presented to Shoghi Effendi in 1948 by Fátimih-Khánnum-i-Afnán, the great-granddaughter of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad. It was placed in the International Archives Building at Bahá’í World Center on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel.
The Kitáb-i-Íqán was revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in Persian (Fársí). It was first published in Persian in Bombay, India in the early 1880s. It was first translated into English by ‘Alí-Kuli Kháñ, Nabilu’d-Dawlih, assisted by Howard MacNutt, and published under the title “The Book of Assurance” in New York, in 1904.
Publication and Translation of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

It was later retranslated into English by Shoghi Effendi as “The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude” and first published in 1931 by The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States of America.

In the post-script of a letter written by Shoghi Effendi to the US National Spiritual Assembly through his secretary, He states:
Publication and Translation of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

Unable to find a good typist, I have had to do the work myself, and I trust that the proofreaders will find it easy to go over and will not mind the type errors which I have tried to correct. . . The correct title is, I feel, 'The Kitáb-i-'Íqán,' the sub-title 'The Book of Certitude.' May it help the friends to approach a step further, and obtain a clearer idea of the fundamental teachings set forth by Bahá'u'lláh. (Signed) SHOGHI.
The Major Themes of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

Regarding the Major themes of the Book, Shoghi Effendi Stated:

• Proclaims unequivocally the existence of a personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and almighty;
• Asserts the relativity of religious truth and the continuity of Divine Revelation;
The Major Themes of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

• Affirms the unity of the Prophets, the universality of their Message, the identity of their fundamental teachings, the sanctity of their scriptures, and the twofold character of their stations;

• Denounces the blindness and the perversity of the divines and the doctors of religions in every age;
The Major Themes of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

- Cites and elucidates the allegorical passages of the New-Testament, the abstruse verses of the Qur’án, and the cryptic Muḥammadan traditions which have bred those age-long misunderstandings, doubts and animosities that have sundered and kept apart the followers of the world's leading religious systems;
- Enumerates the essential prerequisites for the attainment by every true seeker of the object of his quest;
The Major Themes of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

- Demonstrates the validity, sublimity and significance of the Báb's Revelation;
- Acclaims the heroism and detachment of His disciples;
- Foreshadows, and prophesies the world-wide triumph of the Revelation promised to the people of the Bayán,
Many of the concepts presented in The Kitáb-i-Íqán are unprecedented in the sacred scriptures of past religions. Some of the concepts that have been mentioned in the religious literature, have been given new definitions and meanings by Bahá'u'lláh.
The Unprecedented Concepts In The Kitáb-i-Íqán

Bahá'u'lláh States:
Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 92)
Some of the Unprecedented Concepts In The Kitáb-i-Íqán

- Revelation of the Universal Religion
- Presentation of the Universal Manifestation of God
- Redefining the Eschatology and the Eschaton.
- Foundation of the Bahá’í Theology
- Redefining the Concept of Divine Unity
- Revealing and expounding the mysteries of all Scriptures
- Attainment unto the Divine Presence
- The Essential Infallibility of the Manifestations of God
- Confirming the ability of the Manifestations of God to perform miracles and allowing people to ask for one.
Some statements in the past scriptures are indicative of the limited mission of the past Manifestations and the limited scope of their religion:

Some of the statements in the Old Testament indicate that the main mission of Moses was to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and lead them to the land of milk and honey and establishing the laws was incidental to this process.

- [God said to Moses] Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

   (King James Bible, Exodus, 3: 9-10)
Revolutionizing the Concept of Religion

Some of the Jesus’ statements in the Gospels indicate that He considered Himself as the promised Messiah of Israel and the inclusion of the Gentiles in His Faith was a post Jesus development.

- These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
  
  (King James Bible, Matthew, 10:5)

- He [Jesus] answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
  
  (King James Bible, Matthew, 15: 24)
Revolutionizing the Concept of Religion

Although there are many verses in the Qur’án that address all humanity, There was an argument in the early Islamic era that Islam had come primarily for Arabs and for Mecca and its surroundings, which was based on verses such as this, God said to Muḥammad:

- It is thus moreover that we have revealed to thee an Arabic Koran, that thou mayest warn the mother city [Mecca] and all around it, and that thou mayest warn them of that day of the Gathering, of which there is no doubt - when part shall be in Paradise and part in the flame. (The Qur'an (Rodwell tr), Sura Counsel, 42:5)
Revolutionizing the Concept of Religion

Revelation of the Universal Religion:

In The Kitáb-i-Íqán Bahá’u’lláh presented the concept of Universal Religion. Revelation of God is for all humanity. There is only one religion, the universal religion of God, eternal in the past and eternal in the future. It integrates and harmonizes all the contending religions of the past as the successive stages of a progressive Revelation.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Religion

The purpose of the Universal Religion is:

- To establish unity,
- To Spiritualize,
- To educate and
- Transform the individual and society
Revolutionizing the Concept of Religion

In these cities [the Revelation and the holy Books of religions] spiritual sustenance is bountifully provided, and incorruptible delights have been ordained. The food they bestow is the bread of heaven, and the Spirit they impart is God's imperishable blessing. Upon detached souls they bestow the gift of Unity, enrich the destitute, and offer the cup of knowledge unto them who wander in the wilderness of ignorance.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Religion

Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Eschatology

- Redefining the Eschaton and the Eschatology.

- Eschaton is historically defined as:
  - The End of the Time or Age

- Eschatology is historically defined as:
  - Doctrines or set of beliefs related to the end of the time, end of the world, Resurrection, Life and death and judgment.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Eschatology

The concept of Eschaton (the end of the time, the age or the world) is presented in all the past religions. However, in the Judeo-Christo-Islamic Eschatological traditions the Eschaton is also connected to the appearance of their promised ones. The signs and prophecies related to the return or coming of the promised one in symbolic and allegorical language were considered as literal events that should precede or accompany his appearance.
The Old Testament contains the signs and prophecies related to the manifestation of their promised Messiah,

- Descent of Elijah in his corporal body from heaven prior to the appearance of Messiah.
- The signs and prophecies in the Books of Joel and Malachi, such as:
Revolutionizing the Concept of Eschatology

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. (Joel 2:28–32)

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven. (Malachi 4:1)
Christian Eschatology is more complicated. In addition to all signs and occurrences mentioned in Jewish Eschatology, there are uncertainties regarding the chronological aspects of the second advent and the commencement of the millennium. The eschatological statements in the Gospels predicated four types of Eschatology (Realized, near, far and indefinite) and two types of millennialism (pre and post).
Revolutionizing the Concept of Eschatology

In the Islamic eschatology, although similar to the Judeo-Christian eschatology, the imagery is more expanded and the sequence of events are related with more detail. According to Islamic traditions, at the time of the end, the heavens will be cleft asunder, the sun shall be folded up, the stars shall fall, and the mountains shall be set in motion.
After the appearance of Mahdi (promised one of Islam) and Jesus, Isráfil, one of the four exalted archangels, sounds the trumpet on the Day of Judgment. In so doing he resurrects the dead to be judged. All will pass a bridge called Ṣerāṭ that spans the expanse of Hell and connects the plane of judgment to the Heavens (Paradise). The virtuous will pass over the bridge and enter the Paradise, while the sinners fall into the Hell.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Eschatology

In The Kitáb-i-Íqán Bahá’u’lláh explains the mysteries of the Eschatological statements of the sacred scriptures of the past religions:

● When is the Eschaton, the end of the time.
● What is the heaven that is cleft asunder.
● What are the Sun and the Moon that will not give light.
● What are the stars that will fall from heaven.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Eschatology

In The Kitáb-i-Íqán Bahá’u’lláh explains:

• What is the resurrection and the sound of trumpet.
• Who are the dead that will come to life.
• What is the Rapture
• What is the Judgment and the Ṣeráṭ.
• What is the Heaven and what is the Hell.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Theology

- Foundation of the Universal (Bahá’í) Theology
- Presented the concept of the Universal Manifestation of God
- Redefined the Concepts of Divine Unity and
- Attainment unto the Divine Presence
Revolutionizing the Concept of Theology

- Presented the absolute transcendence of God, inaccessible to and exalted above the comprehension of all created things, even the Manifestations of God.
- Demonstrated that Recognition of the Manifestation of God is the ultimate goal of knowledge and spiritual quest, and that,
- The Manifestation of God is the Godhead in the human world and the world of creation.
Revolutionizing the Concept of Theology

- The Manifestation of God must be recognized by His own self.
- The unity of the essence of all Manifestations of God, which are the appearances of the Primal Will in the world at different times and under different names.
- The relativity of the stations of firstness and lastness of all Manifestations of God.
Some of the Unprecedented Concepts In The Kitáb-i-Íqán

- The continuity and progressive process of Divine revelation and the relativity of the religious truth.
- Revealing and expounding the mysteries of all Scriptures.
- Essential Infallibility of the Manifestations of God
- The ability of the Manifestations of God to perform miracles and allowing only one.
- The proper method and attitude of a seeker in the spiritual quest for truth.
- Bahá’u’lláh’s allusions to His own divine station.
It seems that the essential objective of The Kitáb-i-Íqán is to provide guidance and initiate the process of cleansing, purifying, and preparing the soul of man to be able to receive and recognize the Word of God and enter to the presence of the Universal Manifestation of God in the City of His Revelation (The Universal Religion of God), thus achieving the object of the Baháí Revelation, i.e. to effect a fundamental transformation in the individual and social character of mankind.
Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán was recommended by Bahá'u'lláh, He said, blessed is the one who had reviewed it and witnessed to its testimony and had studied and pondered its contents, and by ‘Abdú’l-Bahá, who stated “O’ thou who art seeking after the knowledge of God! Immerse thyself in the ocean of the explanation of the Beauty of the Merciful, so that thou mayest gather from its depths the pearls of the wisdom of God.”
Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

The study of the Kitáb-i-Íqán can take place on several levels. On one level a person can read the Book and benefit greatly without referring to any other books or materials. However, regarding the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá’u’lláh in the same Book states:
Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

All the Scriptures and the mysteries thereof are condensed into this brief account. So much so that were a person to ponder it a while in his heart, he would discover from all that hath been said the mysteries of the Words of God, and would apprehend the meaning of whatever hath been manifested by that ideal King.
Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

This servant will now share with thee a dewdrop out of the fathomless ocean of the truths treasured in these holy words, that haply discerning hearts may comprehend all the allusions and the implications of the utterances of the Manifestations of Holiness, so that the overpowering majesty of the Word of God may not prevent them from attaining unto the ocean of His names and attributes, nor deprive them of recognizing the Lamp of God which is the seat of the revelation of His glorified Essence. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 28)
Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

Considering the fact that in the course of exposition and interpretation of the theological and religious concepts, Bahá’u’lláh employs many theological, philosophical, and religious terms, and makes reference to other sacred scriptures as well as historical events, and in light of Shoghi Effendi’s statement regarding the importance of The Kitáb-i-Íqán,
Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán

“The Íqán is the most important book written on the spiritual significance of the Cause. *I do not believe any person can consider himself well versed in the teachings unless he has studied it thoroughly.*” and,

“The book is so important that the most minute detail is worthy of consideration,“

Study of The Kitáb-i-Íqán at deeper levels becomes imperative, and can be greatly aided by the study or review of the additional source materials.