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chapter 4 - baha'i and sufi symbolic cosmology**Chapter 4 -The Baha'i & Sufi Symbolic Cosmology of the Pentad of Being**

By Michael McCarron

The Baha'i Cosmos is one delineated by Five realms or worlds ('alam) of God. These five are known as Hahut, Lahut, Jabarut, Malakut, and Nasut. The realm of Hahut, is the realm of the One, The realm of Lahut of the Kuni-Qdr or otherwise using Plotinus' terms the Intellectual Principle and the All-Soul as higher and lower aspects of the same realm, the realm of Jabarut is the realm of Power, the realm of Malakut the realm of angels, and the realm of Nasut is the realm of physical reality:

Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, writes:

"Ponder the differences among the worlds ('awalim). Although the divine worlds ('alam ilahi) be never ending, yet some refer to them as four: the world of time (zaman), which is the one that hath both a beginning (awwal) and an end (ukhra); the world of duration (dahr), which hath a beginning, but whose end is not revealed; the world of perpetuity (sarmand), whose beginning is not to be seen but which is known to have an end; and the world of eternity (azal), neither a beginning nor an end of which is visible. Although there are many differing statements as to these points, to recount them in detail would result in weariness. Thus, some have said that the world of perpetuity hath neither a beginning nor end, and have named the world of eternity as the invisible, impregnable Empyrean. Other have called these the worlds of the Heavenly Court (Lahut), of the Empyrean Heaven (Jabarut), of the Kingdom of the Angels (Malakut), and of the mortal world (Nasut)." (Baha' Allah [Ghail tr.], SV pg. 25, HV pg. 29)

"Now as regards the fourth letter [of sura 103] which is the letter 'ayn. It signifieth the sublimity of the Divine Unicity (uluw al-ahadi) in the realms of Lahut (maqamat Godut); the sublimity of the Divine Uniqueness ('uluw al-wahidi) in the grades of jabarut (shu'unat al-Jabarut); the sublimity of the Divine Mercy ('uluw al-rahmani) in the realms of the dominion (al-mulk) and Malakut; the sublimity of the Divine Perpetuity ('uluw al-samadani) in that God revealed [manifest] Himself unto all in the realities of the selves (fi haqa'iq al-anfus) and the horizons (al-afaq); seen in the land of Nasut." (Shirazi [Lambden tr.], KT, pg. N/a)

In this commentary on the cosmological relationship of both Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, and Sayyid 'Ali-Muhammad, al-Bab, we have a mystical placement of the realms of God. The setting of course is addressed more on the individual level rather than on the doctrinal level of Orthodoxy. 'Ali-Muhammad makes an allusion to Qur'an 41:53: "In time We shall make them fully understand Our messages [through what they perceive] in the utmost horizons (al-afaq) [of the universe] and within themselves, so that it will become clear unto them that this [revelation] is indeed the truth. [Still,] is it not enough [for them to know] that thy Sustainer is witness unto everything?" 'Ali-Muhammad places the physical plane, the earthly plane as the level of gaining understanding within the self of God's divine plan. Thus, the realm of where the logos is manifest.

It is apparent that the use of cosmological motifs by both Mirza Husayn-'Ali Baha' Allah and Sayyid 'Ali-Muhammad Shirazi is to explain deeper matters of religion through allusion and analogy. Mirza Husayn-'Ali Baha' Allah additionally writes:

"[explaining the meaning of ta'am in Qur'anic Arabic] It signifieth the realm of the Throne of Hahut, the Paradise of the Divine Oneness....It signifieth the realm of the Paradise of Endless Duration, the Throne of Lahut, the Snow-White Light.....It signifieth the Paradise of the Divine Unicity, the Golden Land, the Depths of Jabarut." (Baha' Allah [Lambden tr.], KT, pg. N/a)

And further elaborates:

"The meaning of the Kingdom (malakut) in its primary sense and degree is the scene of His transcendent glory. In another sense it is the world of similitudes ('alam-i-mithal) which existeth between the Dominion on high (jabarut) and this mortal realm (nasut [i.e. in Malakut]; whatever is in the heavens or on the earth hath its counterpart in that world. Whilst a thing remaineth hidden and concealed within the power of utterance it is said to be of the Dominion (jabarut) and this is the first stage of its substantiation (taqyid). Whenever it becometh manifest it is said to be of the Kingdom (malakut). The power and potency it deriveth from the first stage, it bestoweth upon whatever lieth below." (Baha' Allah [Momen tr.], REL, pg. N/a)

It is interesting to compare the use of realms by Baha' Allah and al-Bab with that of the Sufis and Isma'ilis. It is noteworthy that as the earlier passage regarding the Isma'ili conception of the realms and the type of interpretation that corresponds to a different conception of a term in each realm, in the case of Isma'ili the Spirit. Baha' Allah uses the same relative interpretation to the specific aspect of each realm for a subject in his case the interpretation of the meaning of 'ta'am' (food). This 'hiero-tafsir' is likened to as-Simnani's teachings:

"According to this scheme the Qur'an has four levels of meaning corresponding to the four realms of existence [for as-Simnani: Lahut, Jabarut, Malakut and Nasut]. The exoteric dimension the Qur'an relates to the Human Realm, the esoteric level to the secrets of the Realm of Sovereignty, the limit of the Qur'an to the Realm of Omnipotence, and the point of ascent to the Realm of Divinity." (Elias, TC, pg. 108)

In the *Umm al-Kitab* it is recorded that there are Ten realms similiar in name and function to that of Baha' Allah and al-Bab:

"...in tutte le sedi di (in all, the levels are) Ilahit, Malakutit, Gabarutit, Rabubit, Azalit, Lahutit, Nuranit, Ruhanit, Nasutit, Basarit ed Imamit" (Ranconi tr., UK, pg.108)

Interestingly in Abbas Effendi `Abdul-Baha's thought we see the use of Isma'ili terms for hierarchical thinking instead of Hahut:

"And similarly, some of the those who dwell among the sanctified signs consider that the Love of the Divinity (uluhiyyat) and the continuance of the attributes of the Heavenly Realm (lahutiyyat) in the temples and places of manifestation of the physical world (nasutiyyat)." (Effendi [Momen tr.], KM, pg. 24)

In sufism we see a two fold hierarchy similiar to two processes of Qur'anic creation:

Maratib-i Ilahi (Divine Ranks)

- a. Ahadiyat-- Oneness
- b. Wahdat-- Unity
- c. Wahidiyyat-- Unity in Plurality

Maratib-i Kawni (Worldly Ranks)

- a. Ruh-- Spirit
- b. Mithal-- Similitudinal
- c. Jism-- Body or corporeality

We can see similiarities in all these cosmological hierarchies. Ahadiyat is similiar to Huhat is similiar to Ilahiyat. Isma'ili Ruhaniyat is similiar to the Ruh of Sufism. In All these we can see that there is a similiar structure and function alll maintain the absolute seperateness of God

from the other realms which are created. As well this is expressed by 'Abdu'l-Baha of the Baha'i school in regards to Ahadiyyat and Wahidiyyat when he writes:

"...for the worlds of Divinity are infinite and, in each world, the Names and Attributes have a specific effect (hukm). In the World of Primal Oneness (ahadiyya), they [objects of knowledge] are identical to the Essence. In the World of Manifested Oneness (wahidiyyat), they are distinguished. These stations of Primal Oneness and pillar of Manifested Oneness and Divinity have always remained and will continue to endure." (Effendi [Momen tr.], KM, pg. 24)

The background and development to Sufi cosmology has its roots in the Qur'an where it is recorded that there are number of heavens and dominions. In Sufi tradition the greatest of authors on these realms was Ibn 'Arabi. His students Qunawi and Qaysari have relayed an reliable picture of how Ibn 'Arabi viewed the universe. Al-Kashani summates the Sufi Penta-Reality (hazair al-ilahi) as:

"In the views of the sufis there are five worlds, each of which is a Presence within which Divinity becomes manifest: 1. The Presence of the Essence (Huwiyyat); 2. The Presence of the Attributes and names, i.e., the Presence of Divinity (Lahut); 3. The presence of the Acts, i.e., the Presence of Lordship (Jabarut); 4. The Presence of Image-Exemplars and Imagination (malakut or mulk or 'alam al-mithal); and 5. The Presence of Sense-Perception and the Visible. (In each case), the lower is an image and locus of manifestation of the higher. The highest is (the Essence or) the World of the Nondelimited Unseen, also called the 'Unseen of the Unseens.' The lowest is the World of the Visible, which is the last of the Presences (Nasut)." (Qashani, FN III)

These Presences are known as worlds in many Sufi languages.

A world (alam) "... (it) signifies that by which things are known, for Divinity is known through it in terms of Divine Names and Attributes." (Jorjani [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Ta'rifat, 188)

Rather than attempt an interpretive explanation I will rely on the technique of Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh, Pir of the Ni'matu'llahi Dhar-Riyasitayni Sufi school, and simply present the terms. The following are from his sufi "Lexicon":

The Worlds Defined:

'Alam al-'Amr: "According to the Sufis, the realm of the command may be ascribed to that realm which is without time or matter, such as the realms of intellect ('aql) and souls (nafus). In the same way, the realm of creation may be ascribed to that realm which is material, including the heavens, the elements, and the three kingdoms of nature." (Tahanawi [Nurbakhsh tr.], See Lexicon, Kashshaf Istilahat al-Funun, 1054)

'Alam al-Khalq: "The realm of the creation is made up of sky, earth, land, sea, air and space. It is finite and transitory and may be seen by created beings. The realm of the command, however, is infinite and everlasting." (Maibodi [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Kashf al-Asrar, V 165)

'Alam al-Ghaib: "the realm of the unseen is said to refer to the level of the Oneness. (Tahanawi [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Kashshaf al-Istilihat al-Funun 1054)

'Alam Lahut: "Sabzavari says the realm of Divinity, refers to the level particular to Divinity which is known as the realm of the everlasting, as well as the level of the Essence of the Unicity." (Dohkoda [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Farhang-i Dohkhoda)

'Alam al-Jabarut: "In the Kashf al-Loghat, it is stated that in the terminology of the Sufis, the realm of Divine Power, is said represent the level of Unity (wahdat), which is the Mohammadan reality linked to the level of the Attributes. The level of the Attributes is also termed the realm of Divine Power, where the level of the Names is called the angelic realm ('alam al-malakut)." (Tahanawi [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Kashshaf Istilihat al-Funun, 1200)

"According to Abu Talib Makki, the realm of Divine Power is the world of the Grandeur, by which he means the realm of the Divine Names and Attributes. Most masters maintain that it refers to the intermediate realm lying between the All-Encompassing and His commands." (Jorjani [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Ta'rifat, 101)

'Alam al-Malakut: As a Universal, "In Sufi terminology, the angelic realm represents the realm of spirits, the realm of the Unseen, and the realm of spiritual reality. The level of the Attributes is called the realm of Divine Power (Jabarut), the level of the Names is called the angelic realm." (Tahanawi [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Kashshaf Istilihat al-Funun, 1339)

As a particular, "The gnostics angelic realm is his heart, which contains the realm of Divinity and His wonders, such as the marvels of His mysteries, the subtleties of His lights, the manifestation of His Essence and Attributes, and the forms of His Acts. When his heart is characterised thus, it becomes a mirror of Divinity's angelic realm. Whatever lies within the angelic realm, he sees in his heart. Either objectively or through contemplative vision. According to the Koran, 'Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of the Heavens.' (6:75) The Prophet said, 'If demons did not surround people's hearts, they would look upon the angelic realm of the heavens.' The gnostic said, 'The station of the angelic realm is that of certitude.'" (Ruzbihan [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Mashrab al-Arwah, 210)

'Alam al-Mithal: "The imaginal realm, which is also known as the realm of souls, is higher than the realm of the visible ('alam al-shahadat) and lower than the realm of spirits. The realm of the visible is the shadow of the imaginal realm which, in turn, is the shadow of the realm of spirits. Everything that exists in this world exist also in the

imaginal realm, that which is seen in dreams being a form of the imaginal realm. In the Kashf al-Lughat it states that the absolute imaginal realm is the realm of spirits, while the relative imaginal realm is the realm of imagination (khayal)." (Tahanawi [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Kashshaf Istilahat al-Funun, 1342)

'Alam al-Mulk: "The realm of sovereignty refers to that which is other than Divinity, meaning those contingent beings that have perished, those that exist, and those that have yet to come" (Nurbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism Vol. III, pg. 106)

In Addition, to the ideas of the presences or worlds of God is that of Time which is associated with each realm. In Islam time plays an important part in it's prevalence as an awareness of the Final Judgement which is literally an end or running out of time. The following Sufi definitions are applied to the concepts of time used by Baha' Allah:

Zaman: "Time is related to the presence of nearness (hadhrat al-'indiyat), which in turn is the 'eternal duration'." (Shah Nimatullah [Nurbakhsh tr.], Risalah Shah Nimatullah, IV 37)

Dahr: "eternal duration is an eternal time and is an extension of the presence of Divinity (hadhrat al-ilahiyat), being the inward aspect of time through which eternal time, pre-eternity (azal) and post-eternity (abad) are joined." [Jorjani [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Ta'rifat]

Azal: "Pre-eternity symbolizes the extension of the flow of grace from the Absolute spiritual Reality, and the manifestation of the essence of Oneness (ahadiyat) at the sites of the names of the Divine Acts (asma-i fa'li), in the sense that it is not dependent on space and time. This is the pre-eternal nature of the Essence, which lies beyond the imaginal realm ('alam al-mithal) and within the angelic realm ('alam al-malakut) and the realm of Divine Power ('alam al-jabarut). In the realms below the archetypal realms, namely those of sovereignty and vision, the Essence manifest in the names of the Divine Acts, those Acts being dependent on space and time, and forming the basis for the manifestation of bodies. Furthermore, time, as the measure of movement of the material universe, is ordained and actualized in those acts." (Bertels [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Tasawwuf wa Adabiyat-i Tasawwuf, 168)

Abad: Post-eternity (abad) and pre-eternality are both qualities of Divinity. The difference between pre-eternality and post-eternality is that the former has no beginning while the latter has no end. When Waseti was asked about post-eternity, he replied, 'It is an allusion to the abandonment of finite enumeration and the effacement of one's moments (waqt) in everlastingness.' He added, 'Sign and designation are two characteristics that flow in post-eternity, as they have done in pre-eternity. Pre-eternity, preexistence, and post-eternity do not attain the reality of the Oneness; they are merely definitions and allusions through which Divinity becomes known.' (Sarraj [Nurbakhsh tr.], Kitab al-Loma' fi't-Tasawwuf, 364)

Sarmadi: "In Sufi terminology, while the pre-eternal is that which has no primacy and the post-eternal that which has no finality, the everlasting is that which has neither primacy (beginning) nor finality (end). (Tahanawi [Nurbakhsh tr.], see Lexicon, Kashshaf Istilahat al-Fonum, 647)

It is worth noting that the great Sufi teacher Ruzbihan speaks of time in terms of spiritual enlightenment or for each category of time corresponds to a degree or station on the path of enlightenment.

Baha'i Symbolic Cosmos Overview:

In brief the symbolic cosmos of the Baha'i can be recounted as:

1. The highest level of all existence is Hahut, this represent God's essential oneness (ahadiyyat). It is represented by the color white in Babi/Baha'i color symbolism.
2. The level of Divinity's attributes being manifest within His Divinityhead (uluhiyyat) in the realm of Lahut. This is the level of singularity (wahidiyyat). This is the station of the Prophetic Oneness. It is represented by the color white in Babi/Baha'i color symbolism. It is a realm of the Command ('alam al-'Amr).
3. The level of Divinity's attributes being manifest in the locus of manifestation (mahall). This is the level of Divinity's Names and Attributes (asma wa'l-sifat) which is in the realm of Jabarut. This is the Station of the Prophetic Plurality, not to be confused with their actual Manifestation in the realm of nature or sense ('alam al-nasut, 'alam shuhud wa'l-huss). It is important to point out that in Shuhudi sufism this is the realm of witnessing (shahuda) of Divinity's beauty. Only a prophet can witness in the station (maqam) of Prophetic Oneness. It is represented by the color yellow in Babi/Baha'i color symbolism. It is a realm of Creation ('alam al-khalq).
4. The level of the symbolic representations ('alam al-mithal) in the realm of Malakut. This is the realm of spirits and angelic beings. In which there are the cities of Jabalqa and Jabalsa. Represented by the color green in Babi/Baha'i color symbolism. It is a realm of Creation.
5. The level of sense perception the natural world, which is divided into seven climbs and four kingdoms-animal, mineral, vegetative and human. This is the realm of Nasut. In this realm all contingencies and quiddities take on concrete existence. There is a direct correlation between what is in the realm of Malakut to that which is in the realm of Nasut. It is represented by the color red in Babi/Baha'i color symbolism. It is a realm of Creation.

Cosmogenesis in Sufi and Baha'i Thought:

In the following a brief overview of cosmogenesis in the writings of the Sufis and Baha'is is given. To begin the works of the Sufis usually begin with an introduction or pre-ambles where Praise to God is made, a statement of Divinity's bringing the Cosmos to being is made and peace and blessings are extolled on the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, we can see this in both the pre-ambles of the Naqshbandi Sufi, al-Jami's, work: *al-Durrah al-Fikhirah* (*The Precious Pearl*) and in Baha'u'llah's work, *Haft Vadi* (*Seven Valleys*). Below I have provided them both in full, al-Jami's thesis provided with additional commentary by his student al-Lari.

Sufi, Pre-ambles al-Durrah al-Fikhirah:

"Praise be to Divinity, Who became manifest (tajalla) through His essence (bi-dhatihi) to His essence (li-dhatihi), so that the manifestations (majali) of His essence and of His attributes became individuated (ta'ayyana) in His inner knowledge, the effects (athar) of these manifestations being then reflected upon His outward aspect (zahir) from within (al-batin), such that unity (al-wahdah) became multiplicity (kathrah), as you see and behold. May Divinity's blessing and peace be upon him through whom this multiplicity reverted to its original unity, and upon his family and companions, who have inherited of this virtue a large portion." (Jami, DF, pg. 33)

"'Praise be to Divinity, Who became manifest through His essence to His essence': that is, Who knew His essence through His essence rather than through a knowledge superadded to His essence. This is knowledge in a universal and general manner ('ala wajh kulli jumli) and by it the author has alluded to the first individuation (al-ta'ayyun al-awwal)." (al-Lari, Sharh, DF, pg. 115)

"'Became individuated in His inner knowledge': that is, became individuated after that as fixed essences (ta'ayyana ta'ayyunan thubutiyan) in His inner knowledge. This is knowledge of particulars ('ilm tafsili) and by it the author has alluded to the second individuation." (al-Lari, Sharh, DF, pg. 115)

Bahai, Pre-ambles of the Haft Vadi:

Praise be to Divinity, Who hath made being to come forth (izhara) from nothingness ('adam)

graven upon the tablet of man (lawh al-insan) he secrets of pre-existence (asrar al-qadim)

taught him from the mysteries of divine utterance that which he knew not;

made him a Luminous Book unto those who believed (imana) and surrendered (istaslama) themselves,

caused him to witness the creation (khalq) of all things in this black and ruinous age,

and to speak forth from the apex of eternity (qutb al-baqa') with a wondrous voice in the Excellent Temple:

to the end that every man may testify, in himself, by himself, in the station of the Manifestation of his Lord (maqam tajalli), that verily there is no Divinity save Him (la illah illa huwa),

and that every man may thereby win his way to the summit of realities (haqa'iq),

until none shall contemplate anything whatsoever but that he shall see Divinity therein

And I praise and glorify the first sea (awwal bahr) which hath branched (tasha'ba) from the ocean of the Divine Essence

and the first morn (awwal sabah) which hath glowed from the horizon of oneness (al-ahadiyyat)

and the first sun (awwal shams) which hath risen (ishraqat) in the Heaven of Eternity (sama' al-azaliyyat)

and the first fire (awwal nar) which was lit from the lamp of Pre-existence in the lantern of singleness (al-wahidiyyat):

He who was Ahmad in the kingdom of exalted ones (malakut al-'alimin),

and Muhammad amongst the concourse of the near ones (mala' al-muqarrabin),

and Mahmud in the realm of the sincere ones (jabarut al-khalisin).

(Baha' Allah, HV pg. 1-2, SV para 1-2)

I think it is worthwhile at this early juncture to draw an overview of the Wahdat al-Wujud cosmological perspective of al-Jami. For the Unitarian Sufis existence is a single thing, although that thing has qualitative differentiation, akin to the idea of atomic particles which exist at a lower level of energy but are unfolded out of a higher energy state where atoms do not exist, although their evolution is from that one string of existence.[actually atoms are alot like quiddities] This analogy withstanding, the supreme "thing" of their cosmological perspective is termed Ahadiyyat al-Dhati. It is that which is the Essence of all Essences, or the Essence of God (Divinity). Divinity is manifest through His Essence to His essence, this is the Unity (wahdah) of Divinity. His Essential Knowledge is His cognition, this is Universal Knowledge, the first individuation (ta'ayyun al-awwal), this first individuation is known mystically as al-Qalam al-A'la and is equated with the first faculty, that of speech and is the Word of Divinity (kalimat God) and existence is based on this general existence. There is also His inner Knowledge which are His individuation of His attributes, that is to say I think on my self qualities, thus giving me ideas of the qualities of my self. This inner knowledge is knowledge of Particulars ('ilm tafsili) and is the second individuation (ta'ayyun al-thani) which exist in the intermediary level (al-barzakh) in something that has the mystical moniker of the World of Ideas and Forms ('alam al-ma'ani wa-al-suwar). Now the important point to remember at this stage is that all this is a mental existence (wujud al-dihni or wujud al-'aql) and the Inner knowledge (particulars) is a mental entity (amr i'tabar). This helps to distinguish the Unity from the Multiplicity (kathrat). The Multiplicity is the manifestation of the Inner or Mental Existence or Mental Entity in the outer world, the very space/time continuum we live within, mystically known as variously: Nasut, 'alam al-hiss wa-al-shuhud (the world of sense and visibility), kathrat (multiplicity). The Reality of this Existence is a substratum of the mental entity (amr i'tabar). Usually the mirror analogy is employed to explain this phenomenon. However, I would like to employ a different analogy:

There is a ring on the hand of the Creator (necessary existent, wajib al-wujud). We understand this ring to be the Logos or Word (kalimat) it is known as the Most-Exalted Pen (al-Qalam al-A'la). This word is the existence of all existents. Say the necessary existent shines a pure light on the ring, the emerald set on the ring band reflects this ray of light. depending on the color of the emerald set in the ring will determine the quality of the light reflected once it finds expression on a physical plane intersecting the reflected light making their reflection of the pure light now visible on the physical plane. We can see the ring as the Word of Divinity or General Existence, the emerald the quiddities who depending on thier receptive qualities give the expression of the light in similitative existence (wujud al-mithali fiy 'alam al-mithal) until they find concrete existence in the expression of a physical plane, finally the red light on the plane is the world of sense and visibility ('alam al-hiss wa shahada).

Now understanding this let us turn our attention to the symbolic allegory of Baha'u'llah in the Haft Vadi which portrays a cosmological perspective similiar to this, depending on your interpretation.

The Haft Vadi establishes that their is a cosmological source and derivative and an act which derives these derivations. Hence we see in the Pre-amble four things derived:

1. "Sea" (bahr) from the Ocean of the Divine Essence (Huwit) by the act of branching (tusha'ba).

2. "Morn" (sabah) from the Horizon of Oneness (afaq al-Ahadiyyat) by the act of glowing or appearing (lah).

3. "Sun" (shams) from the Heaven of Eternity (sama' al-Azaliyyat) by the act of effulging or overflowing (ishraqat).

4. "Fire" from the Lamp of Pre-existence (Musabah al-Qadimiyyat) in the Lantern of Singleness (mishkuwat al-wahidiyyat) by the act of fueling (awqudat).

Thus I would argue that based on these relations that the "Sea" is Universal Knowledge, that is to say Essential. The "Morn" are the Names and Attributes which is to say the aspects (i'tabar) which exist in the level of Wahdah. The "Sun" is the first aspect which begets all other aspects which is to say the Command or Word of Divinity. And the "Fire" is another way of expressing the first aspect or Command at the level of wahidiyyat, instead of ahadiyyat (see section on Divinity's Oneness below).

Regarding the Mental Existence of the Divine Mind it is interesting to look at a passage from the Four Valleys (Chahar Vadi) in the Second Valley it is noted:

"If the wayfarers (salik) goal be the dwelling of the Praiseworthy One (Mahmud) this is the station (maqam) of primal reason (raja' bi-'aql) which is known as the Prophet and the Most Great Pillar (rukn a'zim). Here Reason signifieth the divine, universal mind ('aql kulli rabba fiy maqasud) whose soveriegnty enlighteneth all created things (rutbah tarubiyat imkan)" (Baha' Allah, SV pg. 52)

Abbas Effendi Abdu'l-Baha addresses this issue in his commentary:

"...these realities that are sometimes called quiddities, potentialities and archetypes have always had an intellectual existence and are incorporated within the mirror of the Essence of the Absolute in a state of absolute simplicity and unity and not in a state of plurality." [emphasis added] (Effendi [Momen tr.], KM, pg. 22)

Understanding that the Prophet represents the Universal Mind, that is to say the intellectual entity (amr i'tibari) we can understand the use of the terms of Ahmad, Muhammad and Mahmud in the Seven Valleys as three differing perspectives from angelic subjects, angels of the throne, gazing upon the effulgence of the undifferentiated ray of light the prophet exists in in his unmanifest state. This is the station of unicity. The plurality of prophets is an expression of this un-manifest state in the realm of sense and visibility.

Another interesting passage from the Pre-amble of the Haft Vadi is one in regards to the manifestation of existence in terms of it's source:

"By My life, O friend, wert thou to taste (dhawq) of these fruits (thahrat) , from the green garden of these blossoms which grow in the lands of knowledge, beside the orient lights of the Essence ('inda tajalli anwar al-dhat) in the mirrors (miraya) of names and attributes (al-asma' wa-al-sifat)-- yearning would seize the reins of patience (sabr) and reserve (istabar) from out thy hand, and make thy soul (ruah) to shake with the flashing [faithful] light (bi-waraqa al-anwar), and draw thee from the earthly homeland (watan) to the first, heavenly abode in the Center of Realities [Pole of Transcendent Immanence] (al-watan al-asaliy al-ilahi fiy qutb al-ma'i), and lift thee to a plane (maqam) wherein thou wouldst soar in the air even as thou walkest upon the earth, and move over the water as thou runnest on the land. Wherefore, may it rejoice Me, and thee, and whosoever mounteth into the heaven of knowledge (sama' al-'irfan), and whose heart (qalb) is refreshed by this, that the wind of certitude (saba al-yaqin) hath blown over the garden of his being (riyad sirrah), from the Sheba of the All-Merciful." (Baha' Allah, SV para #5, pg. 3-4)

Interestingly the use of the term "qutb al-ma'i" has a deeper meaning than translation allows. al-Jami speaking on the concept of "Ma'i" writes:

"They (Unitarian Sufis) also say that the Truth, because of His essential absoluteness (itlaqihi al-dhatihi) possesses essential coextension (al-ma'iyah al-dhatiyah) with every existent thing, and that his being present (hudur) with things is His knowledge of them, so that not an atom's weight escapes His knowledge on earth or in the heavens." (Jami, DF, pg. 52)

"Ma'i" is literally "witness". Understanding that the "qutb" is the pole or axis around which all things revolve we see that the center of realities is the Knowledge of Divinity or the first emanation (sadir al-awwal) which is the universal prophetic station or general existence as al-Jami would say.

Likewise we can see a similiar symbolic representation in other works of Mirza Husayn-'Ali Baha' Allah:

Lawh-i Kulli at-Ta'am:

"Praise be to Divinity Who hath caused Oceans of Light (bahr an-nur) to surge in the divine Fiery water; excited the Letters of Manifestation (ahruf al-zuhur) in the incomparable point of the realm of Unknowing (bi-al-nuqtat al-'ama'i al-firdani); made (ja'il) the Hidden Mount (tur al-ghaybi) revolve about the Firmament of Manifestation (falak al-zuhur), the concealed Self (nafs al-batun), the Focal Center of Eternality (wijhat al-azali); caused the lordly Point (nuqtat al-rububi) to circle round the Most-Splendid, All-Enduring Ornament (tarz al-abha'i al-sarmadi) to the end that all may testify 'He is the True One. No Divinity is there save Him. He, verily, is the

incomparable, the One, the Eternal Who neither begetteth nor is begotten. He cannot be likened to any single thing and He, Divinity, is the Majestic, the All-Compelling'[Qur'an Surah al-Ikhlās].'' (Baha' Allah [Lambden Tr.], KT, pg. 28)

Baha' Allah's comments on a poem al-Qasida al-Warqa'i:

"In other words, the sign of effulgence (tajalli) which was from the effulgence of the lights (tajalliyat anwar) of the morn of unknowing and the appearance of the dawn (tazaharat ishraq) of the sun of holiness and glory (shams qudsi), which arose and was manifested from the sun of existence (shams wujud) and the moon of the desired One (qamara maqsud) and the Worshipped Point (Nuqtah mu'ibad) conferred and bestowed (mutashraq) everlasting and eternal life through the drops of the water of divine existence (wujud `aliy) and sprinklings of the undying pure and limpid waters upon the realities of contingent beings (haqa`iq mumiknat wujud) and the essence of created things (dhat muwjudat) and all the atoms of existent entities and remembrances, and clothed and garbed them in eternal robes and exalted shirts and everlasting imperishable garments." (Baha' Allah [Mac Eoin tr.], QW, pg. 20-21)

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