



Materials for the Study of the Dawn-Breakers, Nabil's Narrative

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Updated Feb 12, 2019

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Reading: Introduction, Chapters 1-26 & Epilogue

Key Characters and Tablets

Progressive Map with Newly-Introduced Cities

Read and discuss the chapter

Post-Reading self-test: Key Episodes

Suggested Memorization

Suggested Additional Readings

Additional External Resources

Printable enlarged Dawn-Breakers (PDF)

bit.ly/db-printed

Ocean (Dawn-Breakers with Audio)

bit.ly/ocean2install

Poster-size Map of Iran

bit.ly/badasht-map-iran

Poster-size Timeline of key Characters (PDF)

bit.ly/badasht-timeline

Chronology of Major Events (PDF)

bit.ly/badasht-chronology

Various Dawn-Breakers Study Groups (on Facebook):

bit.ly/db-study-groups

History and Importance of the Dawn-Breakers

Role of Study and Teaching in the Bahá'í Life

Challenging features of the Dawn-Breakers

Some Suggested Approaches to Studying the Dawn-Breakers

- Intensive weekend introduction
- Intensive 10-day retreat
- Local study class
- Personal study

Pronunciation of Persian Names

Bahá'í literature commonly includes some Persian words. These words, such as “Bahá'í” itself, may contain accented vowels, dot-under characters (like ħ and ẓ) and underscored letter groups (such as dh, and th). These special characters help identify the original Persian letters and at the same time suggest a correct pronunciation.

Fortunately, the Persian transliteration system used in Bahá'í books is extremely simple and most letters are pronounced exactly as an English speaker would intuitively expect. There are, in fact, only **four exceptions** which a reader will need to learn (u, ħ, th & dh). The goal here is not to attain a fully native pronunciation but rather to achieve a basically correct pronunciation and with it, sufficient self-confidence for the reader.

Just Three Vowels *(and a couple mixed vowels)*

The most important element of Persian pronunciation are the vowel sounds. There are basically three to remember (a, i, and u) and each one is either short or long. The long versions are indicated with an accent (á, í, and ú). To quickly learn the vowels, just remember a word for each which rhymes with the correct sound:

a - like cat	i - like bed	u - ‘o’ like boat
á - like father	í - like tree	ú - like moon

These are all simple and intuitive. **The only exception is the short “u” which is pronounced as an “o”.** Although this seems a bit odd, it is entirely consistent so once you have memorized the one exception, you have mastered basic Persian vowels.

There are also a few vowel combinations the reader should know:

aw - ‘ow’ as in ‘row’ or ‘tow’. For example: Kawthar or Naw-Rúz
ih - ‘eyh’ — the feminine suffix. For example: Munir**ih** or Táhir**ih**
iy or **ay** - ‘ay’ as in ‘say’. For example: Siyyid or Ĥusayn

Underscores

Several Persian letters are represented by two English letters connected with an underscore. The easy ones are:

sh

ch

kh - as a ‘k’ from the back of the throat. For example: Khán or Khurásán

gh - as a ‘g’ from the back of the throat

Only two characters do not sound as they first look. They are:

dh - as a 'z' as in Ádhirbayján or Dhabíh

th - as an 's' as in Hadíth or Kawthar

Dot-Unders

The Persian alphabet has a few characters with nearly identical sounds (similar to how our 'c' in 'cat' and 'k' in 'kitten' are basically repeated sounds). In order to tell which letter is being used, the transliteration sometimes provides a dot under the second version. For example, Persian has two letters with the 'h' sound. The second is indicated as **ḥ** -- but it is still pronounced basically as 'h'. The dotted letters are:

ḥ

ṭ

ẓ

ṣ

ḍ - pronounced as 'z' as in Riḍván or Riḍá

These are fairly straightforward and **only the 'ḍ' is a surprise (pronounced as 'z')**.

One common mistake is to exaggerate dotted letters, for example, pronouncing "Aḥmad" as "A**kh**mad". In Persian and Arabic, consonants are not mixed together so each one is pronounced exactly as it is written. Therefore the 'ḥ' is simply an 'h' aspirated slightly without adding a vowel: "aḥmad".

Likewise, vowels are not modified by consonants as in English, so it is helpful, when learning, to first sound out the vowels and then repeat the word adding consonants. So "Aḥmad" become "a--a-", "aḥmad"

Just a Few Other Very Simple Rules

1. The letter 'r' is very lightly rolled:

example: Táhirih, Rúḥí, Riḍván

2. When consonants are doubled, just pause on the consonant a little:

examples: Sunn**í**, Mullá, Muḥ**am**mad

3. When a connecting vowel is used between two words, the two words are often written as one word with dashes. The connecting vowel is pronounced as part of the first word:

examples: **Alláh-u**-Abhá, **Kitáb-i**-Íqán

4. In English, consonants are often merged into a new sound like with **th**, **sh**, and **ng**. This is not so in Persian. Each consonant should be pronounced separately.

examples: far**an**gí, Sang**is**ar, Baṭ**th**á, Faṭ**h**

Examples for Practice

Short a: Yazd, Aḥmad, Aqdas

Long á: Bahá, Afnán, Bagḥdád, `Abá, `Abbás, Abhá, bázár, Qájár

Short i: Big, Bismi'lláh, Biṣḥárát, Qá'im, Sabzivár

Long í: `Alí, Rasḥtí, Aḥsá'í, Amín, Áqásí, `Azíz, Bábí, Bahá'í, Gílán, Raḥím, Nabíl, Vaḥíd, Báṣhí

Short u: Muftí, Sulṭán, Qum, `Uṭhmán, `Abdu'l-Bahá, Muḥammad, Gurgín, Gulistán, Alláh-u-Abhá, Ámul, Bahá'u'lláh

Long ú: Rúḥí, Balúḥistán, Ḥájí, Rúmí, Núr, Quddús, Şúfí, Túmán, Rúz, Bárfurúsh, Rúḥu'lláh, Mulúk

ay or iy: `Ayn, Ḥusayn, Nayríz, Siyyid

aw: Kawṭhar, Naw-Rúz

Double: Muḥammad, Mullá, Sunnί, ṭulláb, Quddús

Adjacent: Abhá, Bahjí, Ṭihrán, Aḥmad, Raḥmán, Raḥmat, Mujtahid, Qurbán, Yahyá, Baṭḥá, Fath-`Alí, farangí, Sangisar

Suffix ih: Ṭahirih, Madrisih, Fáṭimih, Ábádih, Afḥih, Bahíyyih, Baṣrih, Imám-Zádih

th, dh and ḡ: Riḍá, Riḍván, Faḍl, Ḥaḍrat, Qáḍí, Dhabíḥ, Adhán, Ádhirbáyján, Ḥadíth, `Uṭhmán, kawṭhar

Glossary Memorization Exercise

Geography Memorization Exercise

Backstories: Shí'ah Islam and the martyrdom of Husayn

