

On the possible Hebrew, Judaic roots of the Ishrāqī-Shaykhī term (Ar.) هورقليا hūrqaḷyā (= Per. havarqaḷyā) [sic.] and a survey of its Islamic and Shī`ī-Shaykhī uses.

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This paper is now being revised and completed from notes dating to the early 1980s

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1970s and early 1980s I had the pleasure of studying Biblical Hebrew at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (England UK). [\[1\]](#) Reading and contemplating the Hebrew text of the Genesis story of creation, certain words of Hebrew vocabulary stuck in my mind and rung something of a cosmological bell when I was pondering the possibly Hebrew, Judaic roots and derivation of the Arabic transliterated loanword هورقليا , a word best known for its Islamic occurrence in the Ḥikmat al-ishrāq (The Wisdom of the Throne) of Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. [executed] Aleppo 587/1191) and in certain Shī`ī Islamic writings of the late 18th early 19th century polymathic philosopher-theologian Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā`ī (d. 1241/1826). هورقليا had been variously transliterated and understood by thinkers and philosophers of past centuries and by Iranists and Islamicists of modern times. In recent times it has most often been speculatively (pointed and) transliterated as the Arabic loanword hūrqaḷyā or with a loose and wholly speculative Persianate transliteration havarqaḷyā [sic.]. Neither of these

transliterations are at all accurate or assured. The linguistic origin, etymology and vowelling of هورقليا has long been and remains a matter of scholarly uncertainty and dispute. To date no completely satisfying suggestions have been made as to the linguistic and conceptual background of هورقليا. It is hoped here to argue for its very simple resolution in proposing that هورقليا derives from a somewhat corrupted Arabic transliteration of the Hebrew הַרְקִי־לַ (with the definite article -prefixed letter "H" = the firmament" cf. the Syriac cognate ܪܩܝܠܐ = R-Q-Y-` = "firmament"). Though the linguistic equivalence of هورقليا and הַרְקִי־לַ is imperfect it is the case (as will be demonstrated below) that this proposition has much to commend it conceptually at least as far as its biblical roots and Rabbinic interpretations are concerned. It accords with the senses given to هورقليا by Suhrawardi and his followers as a kind of luminous cosmic "interworld" reminiscent of the biblical "firmament" in Judaism and related religious cosmologies.

[1] In the early 1980s I communicated a brief, rather loose summary of my position regarding the possible Hebraic origins of the Arabic loanword هورقليا to Moojan Momen who registered it in a footnote to his now well known volume *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1985)(see p. 542. fn. 3) , "I am grateful to Stephen Lambden of the University of Newcastle for the suggestion that in view of the intermediary position of Hūrḡalyā, it may [originally have been] be a corruption of the Hebrew Ha-Raqī`a (or an equivalent word in another language) which is the word used in Genesis 1:6 for the firmament standing between heaven and earth".

A survey of 20th century theories as to the derivation of هورقليا

Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Aramaic, Mandaic as well as Arabic-Persian etymologies have all been proposed for هورقليا . A succinct survey of

these possibilities will first be registered here.

In his learned 25 or so page 1955 Persian article هَوْرَقْلِيَا [Havaqalya] published in Majalla-i Daneshkhada-i Adabiyyat, VI (1333 Sh.) (pp. 78-105), Muhammad Mo'in surveys many of the attempts to provide etymologies and explanations of the Arabic loanword هورقليا in a variety of Semitic, Islamic and other languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and Persian.

ADD SUMMARY

The Lughat-Nāmih of `Alī Akbar Dekhodā ,

In his massive Persian (Shī`ī) encyclopedic dictionary known as the Lughat-Nāmih, `Alī Akbar Dekhodā Qazvīnī, (1297/1879-d. Tehran, 1334 [Sh] / 1956) includes some useful entries covering Shaykhī related subjects, including an entry هورقليا . x (1st ed. vol. X:xxx). ADD

Hebrew

The Biblical roots and Jewish origins of هورقليا : the רָקִיעַ ("firmament", "dome" "sky", "expanse"...) in the book of Genesis.

As noted above, several unsuccessful attempts have been made to find a Hebrew, Jewish precedent for هورقليا . In repeating such an attempt it will be pertinent to begin with a survey the the context and possible senses and meaning of the biblical Hebrew רָקִיעַ (loosely, "firmament", "vault", "dome" "sky", "expanse", etc.) towards the beginning and in various subsequent chapters of the book of Genesis. It will be argued that this biblical Hebrew noun (with the definite article) provides an impressive linguistic and conceptual background for هورقليا as it has been understood, utilized and commented upon by Suhrawardi (d. 587/1191) and his commentators, including Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī, Mīr Dāmād (d.1041/1641), and such later Shī`ī sages as Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'ī (d.1243/1826) the foundational figure in the 19th century philosophical-mystical school of twelver

Shi`ism known as al-Shaykhiyya (Shaykhism). Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī has sometimes been erroneously reckoned the inventor of the term **هورقليا** through the influence of the Baṣran Sabaeans (= Mandaeans, see further below) This error is made, for example, by Sa`id Najafian in the course of his anti-Baha'i review of the massive anti-Baha'i tome of Muhammad Baqir Najafi entitled, Baha'iyyan in al-Tawhid vol.6 No.4 (1409/1989), 161.

The opening cosmogonic, cosmological verses of the book of Genesis of the Hebrew Bible are very well-known. They have been highly influential in various streams of (so-called) Abrahamic thought and tradition (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc). Note the Christological rewrite of Gen. 1:1 at the beginning of John 1:1. These religious literatures often set forth the biblical account of the six days of creation which is usually ascribed to the "P" (= the Priestly "source" or stream of pentateuchal tradition). After the words "[When] In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1) there follows the note on the primordial state of things and what transpired on the first Day of creation:

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And **God said**, **יְהי אור וַיְהי אור** Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis and the cosmogonic centrality of Light

The divine utterance **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אור וַיְהי אור** (= And God said, "Let there be Light"; and there was light" (Gen 1:3) is of central cosmogonic importance. Mention of a primordial "light" even precedes the mention of "days" and "nights" and the "sun" as ancient biblical scholars and theologians have noted. God created "light" (Heb., אור awr) on the very first of the six days of creation (Gen 1:3) though he did not create the

“sun” until the “fourth day” (Gen 1:14-19). What manner of primordial “light” this was has long been a subject of cosmological and theological controversy. How can there have been "light" on the first day when the physical “sun” was not something initially called into being. This "light" phenomenon may not be unrelated to the multifarious senses of the Hebrew masculine noun רָקִיעַ (raqī`a) as the foundation of the celestial luminaries defined as the "heaven". Fn

Fn. The Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish mystical text named the Sepher ha-Zohar (“The Book of Splendour”) attributed to Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai (fl. 1st-2nd cent CE ., but actually written by the Spanish kabbalist Moses de Leon, c. 1240-1305), makes a major shift in its deep qabbalistic exegesis of Gen 1:1ff when the implications of the divine words “And God said, `Let there be Light”” (Gen 1:3 cf.1:14) are reached (see Zohar, Bereshit I.16bf., I.31b-32a; Sperling, trans. 1:68f; Tishby, Zohar III:585f). From this point it is reckoned “we can begin to discover hidden things relating to the creation of the world in detail” (ibid). The jussive Hebrew phrase of command, יְהִי “Let there be [Light]” is expressed by 3 Hebrew letters; namely, [1] י yod [2] ה he and [3] ם yod. When voweled these three letters are pronounced yehi which means “Let there be!” (Gen 1:3a). In the Zohar the thrust and position these three letters of yehi (= Y-H-Y) indicates the “union of the Father” (= the first yod ם= the sephirot ḥokmah = “Wisdom”) and the “Mother” (= the he ה= the sephirot binah = “Understanding”).

The Hebrew רָקִיעַ (raqī`a) and the second day of creation

"Light" (awr) and "darkness" (ḥoshek) were differentiated on day two of creation. So too the positioning of the רָקִיעַ (Heb.) raqī`a, the light-bearing (loosely) “firmament”, “expanse”, “vault” or “sky”, etc (see App. 1). This phenomenon separated the ("subterranean") terrestrial "waters" from the ADD (celestial) "waters" . As Gen. 1:6 puts it,

"And God said, "Let there be a רָקִיעַ (raqī`a = [loosely] an "expanse", "firmament") in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and

divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8)

It is thus on the equally seminal second "Day" of creation (Gen. 1:6-8) that the positioning and naming of the **רָקִיעַ** *raqī`a* (AV [1611], loosely "firmament") as "heaven" is said to have happened. The nature of the **רָקִיעַ** (the *raqī`a*) in Gen. 1:6 is not at all obvious. Such is clearly illustrated from a survey of the numerous ancient and modern Bible translations and biblical commentaries on Gen 1:6-7. As is indicated above, the 1611 AV (King James') translation renders **רָקִיעַ** with the Latin [English] word "firmament". This translation is repeated from the Latin Vulgate, where **רָקִיעַ** is translated *firmamentum* (Latin *firmus* = "firm"). This is that the **רָקִיעַ** was considered something fixed, a solid expanse; hence the Latin translation *firmamentum*. The "heaven" or "sky" was thought in ancient cosmologies to something of a solid expanse overarching the earth. In Genesis 1:8 it is specifically stated, "And God called the **רָקִיעַ** "heaven" (Heb. **רָקִיעַ**) as the 1612 AV (King James') version translated ADD. One could thus speak of the "solid" vault of heaven capable of supporting and differentiating the celestial "waters" above from the terrestrial "waters" below.

At this point it might be appropriate to sum up by citing the observations of a few biblical scholars. In the early 20th century *International Critical Commentary* on Genesis by Skinner we read on Genesis 1:6-8:

Second work: The firmament. — The second fiat calls into existence a firmament, whose function is to divide the primaeval waters into an upper and lower ocean, leaving a space between as the theatre of further creative developments. The "firmament" is the dome of heaven, which to the ancients was no optical illusion, but a material

structure, sometimes compared to an "upper chamber" (Ps. 104:13, Am. 9:8) supported by "pillars" (Jb.26:11), and resembling in its surface a "molten mirror" (Jb. 37:18). Above this are the heavenly waters, from which the rain descends through "windows" or "doors" (Gn. 7:11 8:2, 2 Ki. 7:2,19) opened and shut by God at His pleasure (Ps. 78:23). The general idea of a forcible separation of heaven and earth is widely diffused; is perhaps embodied in our word 'heaven' (from heave?) and O.E. 'lift.' A graphic illustration of it is found Egyptian pictures, where the god Shu is seen holding aloft, with outstretched arms, the dark star-spangled figure the heaven-goddess, while the earth-god lies prostrate beath (see Je. ATLO², 7).* But the special form in which it appears here is perhaps not fully intelligible apart from the Bab[ylonian] creation-myth, and the climatic phenomena which it is based (see below p.46), (Skinner, ICC Genesis, 21-22).

In the first 1962[3] edition of the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* T. H. Gaster opened his article FIRMAMENT with the following definition,

"The traditional English rendering, following the LXX **στερέωμα** and the [Latin] Vulg[ate]. firmamentum, of the term **רָקִיעַ**, used in Gen. 1:6-7 and elsewhere to denote the expanse stretched across the sky in order to separate the upper and lower waters."

In support of this definition Gaster continues,

"The Hebrew term means properly a "strip of beaten metal" (cf. Exod. 39:3; Num. 17:3; Jer. 10:9; She?. 9b; Phoen. CIS I, 90) and harks back to the conception of the sky as a mirror like surface--a conception which recurs in Job 37:18, and which finds a classical counterpart in the common Homeric expression "brazen heaven" (Iliad V.504; XVII.425; Odyssey 111.2;

Pindar Pythian Odes X.22, Nemean Odes VI.3). The picture is elaborated in Job 26:13, where the movement of winds across the sky is represented as God's breathing on its surface in order to polish it" (IDB 2:270).

Gaster furthermore, has an interesting paraphrastic translation of Gen 1:6-8 in his 1969 volume *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament, A Comparative study with chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament*,

"God stretched a reef or septum across the primordial waters to divide them into an upper and lower resister. This septum, the canopy of the earth, is what we call the firmament."

He comments,

"The Hebrew word rendered "firmament" [fn. 1=] means properly "a strip of hammered metal" [fn. 2=], and this too is a vestige of older folklore. In the book of Job the sky is similarly portrayed as a molten surface (even a mirror) polished by God's breath, i.e. by the winds which drive away the clouds that bestain it [fn. = 3]. In Homer, heaven is made of brass, [fn.4] and the same idea is attested also by the poet Pindar. [fn.5 =-] Alternatively, it is made of iron -- a notion mentioned not only in the Odyssey [fn. 6 =] but also in Egyptian sources; [fn.7 =] while in the Finnish Kalevara it is made by the divine smith Ilmarinen out of the finest steel. [fn.8 =](Gaster 1969:5-6). ADD fn.s

In the more recent 1989 [2000] Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary on Genesis (The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary) Nahum Sarna comments on the *rakia`* ("firmament" or `expanse') and the division of the waters in Genesis 1:6 in the following manner:

6. **an expanse** The Hebrew noun *rakia'* is unparalleled in cognate languages. The verbal form is often used for hammering out metal or flattening out earth, 15 which suggests a basic meaning of "extending." It is unclear whether the vault of heaven was here viewed as a gigantic sheet of metal or as a solid layer of congealed ice. The latter interpretation might be inferred from Ezekiel 1:22, which is how Josephus understood it as well.

water from water The purpose of the expanse is to create a void that separates what was taken to be the source of rain above from the water on earth.

On select English and other Early translations of רַקִּיעַ raqia`

Appendix 1 below will chart various English translations of רַקִּיעַ including "firmament" (KJV/AV), ADD "dome" (NIB-1994) the next few paragraphs will register a few ancient renderings.

The Greek Septuaginta (LXX) (1996, c1979, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, Logos X software).

6 Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς Γενηθήτω στερέωμα ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ ἔστω διαχωρίζον ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος καὶ ὕδατος. καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως. 7 καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ στερέωμα, καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ὕδατος, ὃ ἦν ὑποκάτω τοῦ στερεώματος, καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ὕδατος τοῦ ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος.

The Peshitta (Aramaic) Syriac of Gen 1:6-7 (ܠܩܝܥܐ = R-Q`-A, = "firmament")

And God said: `Let there be a ܠܩܝܥܐ ("firmament")

in the midst of the waters....

ADD TEXT

Aphrahat the Persian Sage (fl. mid. 4th cent. CE)

ADD TEXT

Gen 1:6-7 as cited by Aphrahat the Persian Sage (fl. mid. 4th cent. CE) in his *Demonstrations* (comprising Bks. 1-23 written between c. 336-345 CE). See above and note that Ms. "A" = Brit. Mus Add. Ms 14619 (Estrangela, 6th cent.). Ms. "B" = Brit. Mus. Add. Ms 17182 (= actually 2 Mss. see Owens Jr. 1983: 10-11).

The Book of the Cave of Treasures (Syriac) and its versions.

Here the description of the second day of creation has some interesting things to say about the Reki`a ("Firmament") and its cosmological role, including its position as a designation of the "lower Heaven" which has "the dense nature of water" :

And on the Second Day God made the Lower Heaven, and called it REKI'A' [that is to say, " what is sold and fixed," or " firmament "]. This He did that He might make known that the Lower Heaven doth not possess the nature of the heaven which is above it, and that it is different in appearance from that heaven which is above it, for the heaven above it is of fire. And that second heaven is NÛHRÂ (i.e. Light), and this lower heaven is *Darpition* [Fol. 4a, col. 1]8 and because it hath the dense nature of water it hath been called "*Reki`a*." And on the Second Day God made a separation between the waters and the waters, that is to say, between the waters which were above [*Reki`a*] and the waters which were below. And the ascent of these waters which were above heaven took place on the Second Day, and they were like unto a dense black cloud of thick darkness. Thus were

they raised up there, and they mounted up, and behold, they stand above the *Rekî'a* in the air; and they do not spread, and they make no motion to any side.

The Arabic Kitab al-Magal (Book of the Rolls)

This work ascribed to Clement of Rome (1st cent. CE) is essentially an Arabic recension of the Book of the Cave of Treasures. It may date to the

The Book of the Bee

Mandaean writings and Mandaic (dialect of Aramaic) ADD

ADD TEXT HERE

The biblical Hebrew word רָקִיעַ ("firmament", "sky", "expanse"...) occurs in the Semitic language subgroup of Aramaic known Mandaic. There is a close connection between items of biblical Hebrew vocabulary, items of Jewish thought, the Mandaic language and various doctrines of the Mandaeans (see Drower, Ethel. S & Macuch, 1963 cf. Macuch, 1962 and below). Gotz opens his recent entry רָקִיעַ in the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (=TDOT) by writing,

"Outside the OT, the noun *rāqîa`* has been found only in the later Semitic dialects such as Babylonian Targumic Aramaic, Syriac, Mandaic, and Aramaic" (vol. XIII:646).

See below

Select Arabic Translations of Genesis 1:6ff.

(1) Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/879)

One of the earliest Arabic translations of Genesis 1:6-8 is found in the opening section (headed *mubtadā'* al-khalq, the "Genesis of Creation") of the survey of world history entitled *Kitāb al-ma`ārif* ("The Book of Universal Cultures") of Abū Muhammad 'Abd-Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawarī (d. 276 / 889) where we find the

following translation of these verses:

"God, exalted be He, said, `Let there be a **سقف** saqf ("roof", "ceiling", etc) [in the] midst of the water (**وسط الماء** waṣṭ al-mā') to the end that there be a resolution [division] between the water and the water (al-mā' wa al-mā' = **فليحل بين الماء والماء**). So its *saqf* ("roof", "ceiling") came about. And He divided between the water (al-mā') which was inferior [lower] (asfal) and the water (al-mā') which was uppermost (a`lā). And God named the **السقف** saqf ("roof") **السماء** heaven (al-samā'). And there was evening and there was morning, the second day."

After this interesting and fairly accurate translation of Gen. 1:6-8, Ibn Qutayba cites a saying relayed through Mālik ibn Sa`īd, through **Isma`īl ibn Abī Khālid** from a certain Abī Ṣāliḥ expository of the qur'anic phrase **والبحر المسجور** ("And the Ocean Outstretched", wa'l-baḥr al-masjūr = Q. 52:6) who reckoned that `Alī [ibn Abī Ṭālib, d. 40/661?] said: `This is an ocean beneath the [Divine] Throne (al-`arsh). And this [qur'anic data] corresponds to what is mentioned in the Tawrāt (Torah-Bible) where it states that **السماء بين ماءين** "heaven is between two waters" (K-Ma`arif, 7 ; cf. Gen. cited above).

After this statement there follows Arabic citations of Genesis texts from 1:9-13 then Genesis 1:14f is cited as follows:

ADD ARABIC TEXT

(2) Sa`adia (Ar. Sa`īd] Ga'on al-Fayyūmī (882-942 CE)

The Egyptian born Jewish scholar and one time head (ga'on) of the Babylonian academy Sa`adia (Ar. Sa`īd] Ga'on [al-Fayyūmī] (882-942 CE) translated the Hebrew Bible into Arabic. This important work had exegetical implications and was entitled Tafsīr ("Commentary"). Genesis 1: 6-8 is translated as follows: :

فقال الله ليكن بساط في وسط الماء وليكن فاصلا ماء من ماء *

فصنع الله **البساط** و فصل بين الماء الذي من تحة البساط والماء
الذي من فوق البساط فكان كذلك * وسمى الله **البساط** سماء و كان مساء وكان
صباح يوما ثانيا *

(Arabic reproduced without pointing from Kahle
1904: 14).

"And God said, 'Let there be an expanse (= **بساط** bisāt =
"expanse" = "firmament") in the midst of the
Water. And let it be a separator (= **فاصلا**) of water
and water. So God fashioned the **بساط** ("expanse")
and it separated between the water which was
beneath **البساط** the "expanse" and the water
which was above **البساط** the "expanse". And God
named the expanse Heaven (سماء = al-samā') And
there was morning and there was evening, the
second day."

As indicated Sa`adia here translates **רְקִיעַ** ("firmament")
with **بِسَاط** (**bisāt**) which is perhaps accurately
translated "expanse".

The 17th century European Polyglot Bibles

Apparently following the Arabic of the Paris Polyglott of 1546
Bishop Brian Walton (d. 1661) in his *Biblica Sacra Polyglotta* (1653-
7) or *London Polyglott* Vol. VI (1657), page 3, has the following
rendering of Gen 1:6-8a:

سَاء الله ان يكون **جَلَد** في وسط الماء ويكون فاصلا بين مآين

فصنع الله الجلد وفصل بين الماء الذي من دونه الجلد والماء الذي فوقه **الجلد** 7

. فكان كذلك. و سمي الله **الجلد** سماء...

jalad "firmament") in (=) **جَلَد** And God XXX, "Let there be a"
the midst of the water, and let it be a separation between the
firmament")") **جَلَد** two waters. 7 So God fashioned the

and divided the water which was under it [the firmament] from the water which were above it [the firmament]: and it was so. ⁸ And God named (firmament") heaven..." (Gen. 1:6-8a) **الجد** the

"jalad) which translates (=) جد Here it is the Arabic firmament'). This word *jalad* comes from the root J-L-D. Pointed *jalada* this trilateral root has various verbal senses and forms including, 'to whip or flog or lash someone; as *jalida* 'to be frozen, freeze' or as *jaluda* 'to be tough, hardy, steadfast,' etc. Aside from numerous other verbal senses and meanings associated, for example, *jalad* can have جد with "[she-]camels" and "skin", the the verbal noun connotations of "hardiness, strength, sturdiness, etc" (see Lane, Lexicon I/ii 442-3). This perhaps led the (Christian) translator[s] to associate it with (the implications of) the LXX στερέωμα (stereoma =) and/or the Latin firmamentum (Latin *firmus* = "firm") as something of substance, a "solid" or "firm" covering reality (cf. J-L-D form II meaning to bind a book [with "skin"] and *mujallad* = "a [bound] Book"). In some modern Arabic dictionaries the sense "firmament" is actually given to *jalad* (Lexicon Hans Wehr 4th ed. p.154). This Polyglott rendering was followed around 200 years later by the more grammatically correct or polished Arabic translation of the Protestant missionaries Eli Smith (d.1857) and Cornelius Van Dyck (d. 1895 . First published in the mid. 1860s it reads

وقال الله ليكن جد في وسط المياه. وليكن فاصلا بين مياه ومياه

7 فعمل الله الجلد وفصل بين المياه التي تحت الجلد والمياه التي فوق الجلد وكان كذلك.

و دعا الله الجلد سماء...

firmament")") **جد** And God said, "Let there be a" in the midst of the waters, and let it be a separator between waters and waters. ⁷ And God made the "firmament", and divided the **الجد** (" **الجد** waters which were under the firmament") from the waters which were

the "firmament" : and it was **الجلد** above
") **الجلد** so. 8 And God called the
(firmament") heaven... (Gen. 1:6-8a

It may be appropriate at this point to register the translation of Gen 1:6f according to the Arabic translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritan Pentateuch ADD

According to a modern edition of this Arabic translation made by Abu'l-Hassan Ishāq al-Sūrī and edited by Aḥmad Hijjāzī al-Saqqā' , this : (version reads as follows (al-Tawrāt al-sāmiriyya, 25

وقال الله يكون **فلك** في وسط الماء. ليكون مميزاً بين ماء وماء
وصنع الله **الفلك** وفصل بين الماء الذي من تحت **الفلك** وبين الماء الذي فوق
الفلك

. وكان كذلك.

و سمي الله **الفلك** سماء...

this Arabic version of the Samaritan Pentateuch **רָקִיעַ** For the Hebrew or falak. This Arabic word **فلك** rendering has the cosmological term can again be translated into English in various ways including, for example, 'celestial sphere/ body', 'star' or 'circuit'. In the pointed *falak* can indicate 'the orbit of a celestial **فلك** Qur'an .'body

Judaeo-Persian and Persian Translations

Constantinople 1546

The רָקִיעַ ("firmament", "sky", "expanse", "dome"...) in other biblical books and in post-biblical literatures

occurs 17 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is **רָקִיעַ** The Hebrew raq'ia invariably translated "firmament" in the AV (King James) English translation. There are nine occurrences of raq'ia in the opening book of Genesis (1:6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20) two in the book of Psalms (19:2 [1]; 150:1), five in the book of the prophet Ezekiel

..(1:22, 23, 25, 26; 10:1) and one in the book of Daniel (12:3

.Elsewhere in Genesis and the book of Psalms

.and the Merkabah **הַקִּיָּע** Ezekiel, the

הַקִּיָּע Daniel and the

in the Book of Daniel, Rabbinic Judaism and the Zohar **הַקִּיָּע**

ADD

has a close association **הַקִּיָּע** In various Rabbinic texts and Jewish mystical traditions with the bright light and with the sun.¹ The "firmament" is understood to signify a dazzlingly radiant light beaming cosmic phenomenon, a kind of luminous "interworld" betwixt earth and heaven. The *Sepher ha-Zohar* of Moses de Leon (c.1240-1305 CE), *rāqīa'* as a reality of stunning brightness, **הַקִּיָּע** (several times identifies (Heb./ Aram (Zohar 1:15aff). This important Jewish mystical text appropriately cites Dan 12:3 in *mashkilīm*, the "wise") "shall shine (*yāzhiru*) like the) **מִשְׁפָּלִים** asserting that the *zohar hā- rāqīa'*)" (*Berachoth*, 1.16aff). In view of its) **הַקִּיָּע** brightness of the would not have been inappropriately adopted in **הַקִּיָּע** cosmological and other senses *hawaqalya/ hūrqalyā* became important in, **هورقلييا**, an *Ishrāqī* cosmology of light Shaykhī hermeneutics as the future sphere of the eschatological resurrection "body" though it does not appear to have been directly adopted in the Bābī- Bahā'ī demythologization of latter day "resurrection" motifs. 2

Bab.Tal. *Hagiga* 12b; *Bershith* 17a, *Midrash Rabbah*, Gen. VI:6ff (cf. Samuelson, 1994[7]:118f.). The *Bab. Talmud* records that the following words were uttered by the Rabbis on parting from one of their learned associates, "may your eyes be enlightened by the light of the Torah and your face shine like the brightness of the firmament (B.Tal. *Berachoth* 17a) (**הַקִּיָּע**)

Suhrawarī's philosophy of illumination was also influential upon the Jewish convert 2 to Islam Ibn Kammūna (d.c.1285) who cites the Bible frequently in his *Tanqīh* (*al-abhāth li'l-milāl al-thalāth*. (Perlman, 1971

raqī`a in modern academic scholarship **הַקִּיָּע** (.The (Heb

..Heb.) **הַקִּיָּע** **ADD** *hā-raqī`a* of Gen. 1:2)

As implied above, in ancient cosmologies "heaven" was conceived as a solid dome-like "expanse" which arches across the earth. In the Anchor Bible Dictionary article ADD we read

In the Hebrew Bible "heaven" is sometimes used as a synonym for "firmament" (Heb. *rāqîa'*) to describe the dome-shaped covering over the earth that separated the heavenly waters above from the earthly waters beneath (Gen 1:6-8; Ps 148:4). Heaven, or the firmament, was thought to be supported by pillars (Job 26:11) and had foundations (2 Sam 22:8) and windows. When the windows of heaven were opened, the waters above the firmament fell upon the earth as rain (Gen 7:11; 8:2; Isa 24:18). Through these windows God also poured out blessings upon the earth (Mal 3:10). The birds fly across the firmament (Gen 1:20; Deut 4:17) and the sun, moon, and stars were set in the firmament ((Gen 1:14-18

Whereas the firmament referred specifically to the canopy covering the earth, heaven often had a broader meaning, referring to all that was above the earth, including the firmament. Rain, snow, hail, and thunder come from heaven (Exod 9:22-35; Isa 55:10; Josh 10:11; Rev 11:19). Heaven contained the storehouses of the winds, the snow, and the hail (Job 37:9; 38:22; Ps 135:7; Jer 10:13). (ABD CR Rom (version

ADD TDOT data

רקיע Later Jewish and Rabbinic interpretations of

Shihab al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and the هورقليا origins of Islamic aspects of

هورقليا It appears that the first Islamic writer to use the term was the late medieval founder of the Ishrāqī ("Illuminationist") school of philosophy Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191). For him it was something of a mystical-cosmological term

which indicated a brilliant, luminous, supernatural interworld. It seems likely that he appropriated this term directly or indirectly from a person or source influenced by Biblical-Judaic or Rabbinic concepts and terminology. His writings, as will be argued below, do indeed exhibit his (direct or indirect) utilization of .select biblical texts and concepts

Biblical and Isrā'īliyyat motifs and elements are indeed found within Suhrawardī's fifty or more Arabic and Persian works. *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* imagery and motifs associated with love and beauty are creatively expounded with reference to Adam, Joseph the acme of *jamāl* (Beauty), Zulaykha and others in Suhrawardī's Persian *Treatise on the Reality of Enraptured Love* (*fī ḥaqīqat al-`ishq*) (Suhrawardī, *Ishq*, [1999]: 58-76). There is also a Johannine Paraclete reference in the 7th section (*haykal*) of Suhrawardī's (Arabic) *Hayākil al-nūr* (Temples of Light). Having cited Q. 29:43 and alluded to Matt 13:13, Suhrawardī refers to the *tā'wil* (inner sense) and *bayān* (exposition) of these texts extending beyond the prophets (*al-anbiyā'*) unto that *maẓhar al-a`ẓam* (most supreme theophany) who is the *al-fāraqlītā*, the eschatological Paraclete and supreme expounder (Ar. Hayakil, 88). This paraclete reference was commented upon by Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (d. 907/1501)(Dawwānī, Shawakil, 215f). He saw the *maẓhar al-a`ẓam* as the "supreme Light theophany" closely related to the Spirit-Paraclete which was also identified with the twelfth Imam or the Mahdī-Qā'im) (see Corbin, 1970:39-50; 1971-2b:257; .[.Corbin /Suhrawardī,1970:41f/ 84-108 [Per

In his seminal and highly influential *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (Wisdom of Illumination) , Suhrawardī spelled the name of his cosmic "eighth This is neither an Arabic nor a Persian formation. It **هورقليا** clime", it is most likely represents a somewhat garbled, Arabized attempt to express the *hā-raqi`a*, Gen 1:6f). It seems to have been orally) **הַרְקִיעַ** biblical Hebrew communicated by a Hebrew speaking Jew or Jewish convert to Islam. As something probably communicated orally it was only loosely remembered or loosely **هورقليا** of **هو** (inadequately transliterated. The first letter (or two letters **or هورقليا** **hā'** . The latter part of **ه** ,("represent the Heb. definite article ("the being made up of the Arabic letters R-Q-L-Y-A and **رقليا** **the** represent a somewhat garbled form of the Hebrew word for made up of the four Hebrew letters R-Q-Y-`. The missing **הַרְקִיעַ** representative Hebrew letter "L" can be considered to have

been either glossed over or omitted at the post -Q quasi-L-Y-[A]. Neither the presence of the 5th **ل** (Arabic letter *ayn*) or the absence of a transliterated **هورقليا** (*lām*) in **ل** radically disturbs this suggested, **ل** representative of the Hebrew letter **ל** from the (originally) Hebrew **هورقليا** (direct or indirect) derivation of **הַרְקִיעַ**. Conceptually it has much in its favor.

as spelled out above) denotes what lies between **הַרְקִיעַ** In the Hebrew Bible the cosmic "waters" and is the locality where God "set" the "sun" moon and stars (Gen. 1:6-8). Conceptually it is something of a cosmological "inter world" dividing the terrestrial and cosmic "waters" as well being a source of stunningly bright light. This fits well with the mystical cosmology of a thinker who placed Light at the centre of his seen and unseen universes

Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination was most importantly expounded in his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (The Wisdom of Illumination). Therein the probably is associated with the "eighth clime" and with the **هورقليا** Jewish-rooted term is referred to **هورقليا**. cosmic, supernatural cites of Jābulqa[ā] and Jābarsa[ṣ]ā as something *dhāt al-ajā'ib* ("redolent of wonders", Hikmat,159-60). Commentators upon his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* have further elaborated the senses among them his devotee Shahrazūrī **هورقليا** and significance of

(Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288

In his commentary upon Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, Shams al-Dīn with **هورقليا** Muhammad Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288) again associates Jābulqā and Jābarsā. Commenting upon the "eighth clime" he writes that Hurqalyā") are "names of") **هورقليا** "Jābulqā", "Jābarṣā" [spellings vary] and cities in the world of the *ʿālam al-mithāl* ("world of similitudes") adding that is differentiated by being the *ʿālam al-aflāk al-muthul* (The world of **هورقليا** (the spheres of the [World of the] similitudes)" (Sh-Hikmat, xxxii; 574, 594-5

(Qutb al-Dīn Shirāzī (d. 1311

In his *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, Corbin notes that Qutb al-Din Shirazi, a famous commentator on Suhrawardi, has it relative to the "Imaginal World":

It is there that the various kinds of autonomous archetypal Images"

are infinitely realised, forming a hierarchy of degrees varying according to their relative subtlety or density....On each of these levels species exist analogous to those in our world, but they are infinite. Some are peopled by Angels and the human Elect. Others are peopled by Angels and genii, others by demons. God alone knows the number of these levels and what they contain. The pilgrim rising from one degree to another discovers on each higher level a subtler state, a more entrancing beauty, a more intense spirituality, a more overflowing delight. The highest of these degrees borders on the intelligible pure entities of Light and very closely resembles it" ((Corbin, SBCE:131

Corbin's translation of this *Risala* also has it that : ADD

.Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī (d.1041/1641), Mīr Dāmād

Mīr Dāmād styled himself "Ishrāq" after Suhrawardī and was known as the "Third Master" succeeding Aristotle and al-Farābī. A central, foundational figure of the philosophical-theological 'School of Isfahān', his often complex, frequently elevated 'irfānī oriented Persian and Arabic works, include materials of central interest. His Persian treatise al-Jadhawāt ("Particles of Fire"), for example, responds to an Indian scholars' enquiry as to why Moses was not .(consumed by the Sinaitic fire attendant upon the divine theophany (*tajallī*

In addition to the cosmological-theophanological implications of Moses' experience of the divine, this multi-faceted work also contains interpretations of the qur'ānic al-ḥurufāt al-muqatta'ah (isolated letters). Interesting reference is made in the sixth firebrand of al-Jadhawāt to hūrqulyā (loosely, "interworld"), a term which has biblial-هورقليا the sphere of .Jewish and Ishrāqī roots

An established group among the Islamic Pythagoreans and Platonists and a body of the Islamic Ishrāqīs, have it that there exists a world centrally situated (ʿālamī muttawasiṭ) betwixt the hidden world (ʿālam-i ghayb) which is the world of the Intellect (ʿālam-i ma`qūl) and the world of evident reality (ʿālam-i shāhadat) which is the perceptible world (ʿālam-i maḥsūs). And such a world hūrqulyā which is a perceptible world though a هورقليا they have named shadowy, spectral world; a realm disembodied which they have named the world of the isthmus (ʿālam al-barzakh) and the eighth clime (iqālī thāmin), the earth of reality (arḍ-i ḥaqīqa), [which is] something disembodied, disengaged .((khiyāl munfaṣil) (Jadhwat, 47

in Shaykhism and Shaykhi cosmological-هورقليا Hurqalyā eschatological gnosis

is important in connection with the Shaykhī هورقليا As a kind of interworld view of the sphere of the hidden Imam and the "earth" of the realm of supra-bodily, spiritual, resurrection

هورقليا Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'i and

Shaykh Aḥmad made considerable use of the obscure Ishrāqī-rooted term *hūrqalyā* for him loosely speaking, indicating an "interworld". Echoing هورقليا Mīr Dāmād, Shaykh Aḥmad has explained the significance and linguistic derivation of *hūrqalyā* in the following manner in his *Risāla* in reply to Mullā Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Anārī

hūrqalyā) and its meaning. It is another) هورقليا As for the expression dominion since what is indicated thereby is the world of the isthmus (ʿālam al-barzakh) and this mundane world ((alām al-dunyā). It is indicative of the world of bodies (ʿālam al-aḥsām), that is to say, the mundane world (ʿālam al-dunyā) and the world of souls (ʿālam al-nufūs); the world of the kingdom (ʿālam al-malakūt) and the world of the isthmus (ʿālam al-barzakh) which is the intermediary [sphere] between the mundane world (ʿālam al-dunyā) and the world of the kingdom (ʿālam al-malakūt) which is another dominion... it is in ..(the eighth clime (al-iqlīm al-thāmin

is derived from the Syriac هورقليا] As for what language this term is in. It language (al-luḡat al-suryāniyya) and is a Sabian term (luḡat al-ṣābi'a) and they [the Sabians = Mandaeans] are now living in Baṣra...

Know also that the world of the isthmus (alām al-barzakh) is intermediary between this mundane world and the world of the hereafter (al-dunyā wa'l-ākhirā). It is the imaginal world [of similitudes] (ʿālam al-mithāl) [existing] between the world of the kingdom (ʿālam al-malakūt) and this mundane world (al-dunyā) .. (al-Aḥsā'i, *Jawāmi` al-kalim* I/3 pp.153-4 = *Majmū`a*, 30:308-9 = trans. Lambden ; cf. trans. Corbin, *SBCE* [1977]: 191-2; (1990:103

هورقليا in al-Aḥsā'i's al-Risālah al-Rastiyya

Written in 1226/1811 Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'i makes some very important in his *Risālah al-Rastiyya*, an epistle written in reply هورقليا statements about

to questions from Mullā `Alī ibn Mīrzā Jān Rashtī (ADD/ADD) (see Arabic
.text in Jawāmi' al-kilam, I/2, pp. ADD

I reply that Hūrqulyā is in the eighth clime and the meaning of the term is" another realm, in which there are two cities, one in the West -- Jābarsā -- and one in the East -- Jābulqā. About (each of) them is a wall of iron and within each wall one thousand thousand doors. They speak seventy thousand thousand languages, each people possessing a language different to that of any other ... [next few words incomprehensible]. Every day there go forth from each city seventy thousand who shall not return until the day of resurrection and there enter into each seventy thousand who shall not go out until the day of resurrection. Those who go forth and those who enter meet one another between heaven and earth and those who have come forth from Jābulqā go westwards, while those who have come forth from Jābarsā go eastwards. Anyone who rises up about midnight shall not hear (even) a faint noise, but shall hear from them a murmuring like the murmuring of a bee. The Proof, on him be peace, is in his occultation beneath Hūrqulyā in that world in a village called Kar`a ADD HERE in the Wādī Shamruk, and it is related that it (? the Wādī) is in Thebes ADD HERE And there are with him thirty *abdāl*. And each of these villages is in that world and he, on him be peace, is manifest to their inhabitants. But when he desires to enter these seven (other) climes, he puts on a form from among the forms of the people of these climes, and none shall recognize him and no eye shall behold him with recognition until all eyes behold him..." (JK 1/2: 10? ; trans. MacEoin, BSB 1: ADD under revision by .(SL

firmament", "expanse") and the ") רְקִיעַ Shaykh Ahmad the هورقليا possible Mandaic origins of the word

a) הורقليا could be , lām) and Hebrew") ل Despite the absent Arabic
h) רְקִיעַ viewed as a slightly garbled transliteration of the biblical Hebrew
ā- rāqīya' , with the definite article), traditionally translated "the
firmament" (AV) or "sky", "heaven" (see above). The biblical Hebrew word
firmament", "sky", "expanse"...) רְקִיעַ occurs in the Semitic")
language subgroup of Aramaic known Mandaic. There is a close
connection between items of biblical Hebrew vocabulary, items of Jewish
thought, the Mandaic language and various doctrines of the
Mandaeans ADD (see Drower, Ethel. S & Macuch, 1963 cf.
in the רְקִיעַ Macuch, 1962 and below). Gotz opens his recent entry

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (=TDOT) by writing, "Outside the OT, the noun *rāqîa`* has been found only in the later Semitic dialects such as Babylonian Targumic Aramaic, Syriac, (Mandaic, and Aramaic" (vol. XIII:646

Recently Macuch, the editor of the Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic (1962), has suggested that *Hūr qalyā* may be a garbled form of the Mandaic **anhūr qalyā* (= "the burning light", 1982:19f) though this is based upon a purely theoretical reconstruction of non-existent Mandaic words (see Macuch, MmD [1962] : 437) . This is not very convincing compared to the originating from a slightly garbled transliteration of the **هورقليا** hypothesis of There may also be Mandaic associations if Suhrawardi. **הַרְקִיעַ** biblical Hebrew was in communication with a Mandaean initiate though this complication .seems unnecessary

raqî'a) in Mandaic, in its (=) **רְקִיעַ** The biblical Hebrew loanword developed biblical, cosmological context indicates something of a "barrier" or separator between terrestrial-and cosmic realities (the "waters" in Gen. 1:6). It became a locus of primordial luminosity and light. All of this, as will be seen, provides a befitting conceptual background to the quasi acquired in *Ishrāqī* and later *Shi`i* **هورقليا** cosmological senses gnosis. This will be briefly discussed below in connection with a suggestion suggested by the **هورقليا** as to the Syriac- Mandaic etymology or basis of fountainhead of al-Shaykhiyya ("Shaykhism") Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsā`ī (d. .(Mecca/Medina, 1826

The basically Semitic language Mandaic is a branch or dialect of Aramaic and includes a considerable number of Hebrew and Aramaic loanwords. ADD The **raqî'a** is found in present Mandaic ADD Interestingly, a pre-Islamic, **هورقليا** word Mandaic occurrence of **rq`h'** ("firmament") is found in certain British Library .(located Magic Bowls 076M:3 and 083K:8 (Segal, Catalogue: ADD + 227

Comment here on al-Ahsa'i suggested derivation through and Basran Sabians or from Mandaic

It will be pertinent to note here that Sa`id Najafian's which he) **هورقليا** assertions about Shaykh Ahmad and transliterates *harqūliyah*) (in his anti-Baha'i review of

massive anti-Baha'i tome of Muhammad Baqir Najafi ,entitled, Baha'iiyyan) erroneously writes

Shaykh Aḥmad al-]Aḥsā'ī also seems to have]" assimilated some ideas of the Sabeans during his .residence at Baṣrah and its vicinity. His term [sic if not the conception of harqūliyah -- a term [هورقليا] hitherto unfamiliar in Islamic philosophy and mysticism -- for a quasi-immaterial sphere, came from the Sabeans" (cited from al-Tawhid vol.6 No.4 [1409/1989], (page. 161

ADD COMMENT

'Later Shaykhi writers on Hurqalya

The Shaykhi leader Ḥajji Mirza Muhammad Karim Khan Kirmani quite frequently. In his Persian هورقليا (d. 1871) used the term Irshad al-awamm ("Guidance for the Common folk") which was written in 18XX and several times published in Qajar Persia in the 19th century, Karim Khan Kirmani (d. 1871) made quite frequent use of the term hurqalyā'... ADD DETAILSIn his Persian ,Irshad al-awamm (Guidance for the Masses) for example

ADD HERE

in Gen. 1:6-7 רָקִיעַ Appendix 1. Select English translations of

The following select survey of various English translations of Genesis 1:6-8 must suffice to illustrate the somewhat ambiguous : רָקִיעַ nature of the cosmological Hebrew term

AV KING JAMES 1611 (1)

raqī'a] **firmament** in the midst of , רָקִיעַ | **And God said, "Let there be a" the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8) (AV**

.(1611

(British Revised Version (1881-1885 (2)

raqī`a] ADD in the midst of the , רָקִיעַ] **And God said, "Let there be a" waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8) (RV., (1881-5**

(American Revised Version (1901 (3)

raqī`a] ADD in the midst of the , רָקִיעַ] **And God said, "Let there be a" waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the (evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8**

(Revised Standard Version (HB [OT]1952 (4)

raqī`a] ADD in the midst of the , רָקִיעַ] **And God said, "Let there be a" waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the (evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8**

(New Revised Standard Version (NRSV.,1989

raqī`a] dome in the midst of , רָקִיעַ] **And God said, "Let there be a 6 the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸ God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there .was morning, the second day**

(New International Version (HB [OT] 1978

raqī`a] an expanse between , רָקִיעַ] **GEN 1:6 And God said, "Let there be the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky." And .there was evening, and there was morning--the second day**

The New Interpreter's Bible (1994) CHECK THIS

raqī'a] an expanse between , רקיע] GEN 1:6 And God said, "Let there be the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day. (NIB 1:338)

רקיע The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB) of 1994 translates with "dome" and has the following comment on Genesis 1:6b

On the second day of creation, sky and sea are formed. The -1:6 dome according to ancient Israel's cosmology, is an impermeable barrier that holds back a great reservoir of water in the sky, separating it from the great reservoir under the earth. When the "windows of the sky" are opened in the Priestly flood story ...(7:11), the water in this reservoir falls as rain

In the NIB opening Genesis commentary section by T.E. Fretheim, the following note on Gen 1:6f is found

On the second day of creation, sky and sea are formed. The -1:6" firmament," KJV, RSV] according to ancient Israel's" = רקיע = dome cosmology, is an impermeable barrier that holds back a great reservoir of water in the sky, separating it from the great reservoir under the earth. When the "windows of the sky" are opened in the Priestly flood story (7:11), the water in this ".reservoir falls as rain

TO BE COMPLETED

هورقليا Appendix 2 : Bābī-Bahā'ī primary scriptural sources and

As far as I am aware Bābī and Bahā'ī primary sources do not make use the They do, however, mention multi-worlds and take eschatological . هورقليا term events, like individual bodily resurrection, non-literally relative to a spiritualistic cosmology rooted in Shaykhī- Bābī writings. Bahā'ī texts express belief in subtle bodies and a spiritual understanding of individual and collective resurrection as well as of the *mi`raj* (Night Journey) of Muhammad. Baha'-Allah affirmed the reality of the concept of the *`ālam al-mithāl* explaining like Shaykh Aḥmad that the (Per.) *`ālam-i mithāl* exists between the exalted world .(of *jabarūt* (the "empyrean") and this mortal realm of *nāsūt* (Ma'idih 1:18-19

The Bāb, Baha'-Allah and his son Abd al-Baha' all in various ways commented upon the significance of the qur'ānic cosmological term *barzakh* (isthmus, Q. 23:100; 25:53; 55:20; Of interest in this respect is the Tablet of `Abd al-Baha' to Mīrzā Qabil of Abadih printed in the Baha'i magazine Star of the West 5/7, p.7ff which reads as follows (trans S. Lambden, cited and slightly ,revised from BSB 6:2-3, Feb. 1992

Translation of tablet of `Abd al-Bahā `Abbas to Mīrzā Qabil (of Abadih (Iran

He is God

!O servant of the sanctified threshold

Your letter was received at a time when the most great ocean of tasks, tribulations and literary communications is well-nigh overwhelming. The answer to the question which you requested cannot possibly be entered into in any great detail. A brief answer, therefore, is being written

The human spirit (rūḥ-i insānī), in other words the rational soul (nafs-i nāṭiqih), in the world of existence is the intermediary between things incorporeal ("disengaged", mujarradat) and delimited worldly things (mutahayyizāt); that is to say, between realities spiritual and things corporeal. From one vantage point it possesses spiritual refinement while from the other it exhibits the crassness of carnality, animalistic traits and worldly characteristics. It is neither an absolute abstraction nor is it completely of the world but is the confluence of two seas (majma` al-bahrayn) and a barzakh ("isthmus") between two realities (amrayn). If the spiritual aspect dominates it becomes lofty, luminous, merciful, tranquil (mutmainna), contented (raḍiyya) and approved (marḍiyya). And if it is contaminated with contingent, worldly concerns, it becometh immersed in the ocean of darkness, reproachful (lawwama), commanding to evil (ammara) and residing in the nethermost regions of the world of existence

It is thus the case that the human spirit has two aspects. If

the luminous aspect of the human intellect overcomes the world of nature, it will acquire the power of discovery which is the basis for wondrous insights, and become informed about the realities and characteristics of things. From this .brief explanation perceive detailed significances

The enraptured maidservant of God, enkindled with the fire of the love of God, daughter of the One Who attained the Meeting with his Lord; convey on my behalf to his eminence Dhabih, the resplendent, the utmost kindness and compassion. The hope is that, on account of the Divine Grace, the assembly of the maidservants of the Merciful may attain perfect organization, and, through their efforts in achieving complete continuity, realize their much-appreciated services. Convey the glad-tidings of the Divine Grace to those maidservants of the Merciful. And upon you .be the glory of the All-Glorious

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**On the possible Hebrew, Judaic roots of the
Ishrāqī-Shaykhī term (Ar.) هورقليا hūrqalyā (= Per.
havarqalyā) [sic.] and a survey of its Islamic and
Shī`ī-Shaykhī uses.**

Stephen Lambden

IN PROGRESS AND REVISION 2006-7

**This paper is now being revised and completed from notes
dating to the early 1980s**

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1970s and early 1980s I had the pleasure of studying Biblical Hebrew at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (England UK). [\[1\]](#) Reading and contemplating the Hebrew text of the Genesis story of creation, certain words of Hebrew vocabulary stuck in my mind and rung something of a cosmological bell when I was pondering the possibly Hebrew, Judaic roots and derivation of the Arabic transliterated loanword **هورقليا**, a word best known for its Islamic occurrence in the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (The Wisdom of the Throne) of Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. [executed] Aleppo 587/1191) and in certain Shī'ī Islamic writings of the late 18th early 19th century polymathic philosopher-theologian Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'ī (d. 1241/1826). **هورقليا** had been variously transliterated and understood by thinkers and philosophers of past centuries and by Iranists and Islamicists of modern times. In recent times it has most often been speculatively (pointed and) transliterated as the Arabic loanword *hūrqaalyā* or with a loose and wholly speculative Persianate transliteration *havarqaalyā* [sic.]. Neither of these transliterations are at all accurate or assured. The linguistic origin, etymology and vowelings of **هورقليا** has long been and remains a matter of scholarly uncertainty and dispute. To date no completely satisfying suggestions have been made as to the linguistic and conceptual background of **هورقليا**. It is hoped here to argue for its very simple resolution in proposing that **هورقليا** derives from a somewhat corrupted Arabic transliteration of the Hebrew **הַרְקִיָּלָה** (with the definite article -prefixed letter "H" = the firmament" cf. the Syriac cognate **ܪܩܝܠܐ** = R-Q-Y-` = "firmament"). Though the linguistic equivalence of **هورقليا** and **הַרְקִיָּלָה** is imperfect it is the case (as will be demonstrated below) that this proposition has much to commend it conceptually at least as

far as its biblical roots and Rabbinic interpretations are concerned. It accords with the senses given to هورقليا by Suhrawardi and his followers as a kind of luminous cosmic "interworld" reminiscent of the biblical "firmament" in Judaism and related religious cosmologies.

[1] In the early 1980s I communicated a brief, rather loose summary of my position regarding the possible Hebraic origins of the Arabic loanword هورقليا to Moojan Momen who registered it in a footnote to his now well known volume *An Introduction to Shi`i Islam* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1985)(see p. 542. fn. 3) , "I am grateful to Stephen Lambden of the University of Newcastle for the suggestion that in view of the intermediary position of Hūrḡalyā, it may [originally have been] be a corruption of the Hebrew Ha-Raqī`a (or an equivalent word in another language) which is the word used in Genesis 1:6 for the firmament standing between heaven and earth".

A survey of 20th century theories as to the derivation of هورقليا

Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Aramaic, Mandaic as well as Arabic-Persian etymologies have all been proposed for هورقليا . A succinct survey of these possibilities will first be registered here.

In his learned 25 or so page 1955 Persian article هورقليا [Havaqalya] published in Majalla-i Daneshkhada-i Adabiyyat, VI (1333 Sh.) (pp. 78-105), Muhammad Mo`in surveys many of the attempts to provide etymologies and explanations of the Arabic loanword هورقليا in a variety of Semitic, Islamic and other languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and Persian.

ADD SUMMARY

The Lughat-Nāmih of `Alī Akbar Dehkhodā ,

In his massive Persian (Shī`ī) encyclopedic dictionary known as the Lughat-Nāmih, `Alī Akbar Dehkhodā Qazvīnī, (1297/1879-d. Tehran, 1334 [Sh] / 1956) includes some useful entries covering Shaykhī related subjects, including

an entry **هورقليا** . x (1st ed. vol. X:xxx). ADD

Hebrew

The Biblical roots and Jewish origins of **هورقليا : the **רָקִיעַ** ("firmament", "dome" "sky", "expanse"...) in the book of Genesis.**

As noted above, several unsuccessful attempts have been made to find a Hebrew, Jewish precedent for **هورقليا**. In repeating such an attempt it will be pertinent to begin with a survey the the context and possible senses and meaning of the biblical Hebrew **רָקִיעַ** (loosely, "firmament", "vault", "dome" "sky", "expanse", etc.) towards the beginning and in various subsequent chapters of the book of Genesis. It will be argued that this biblical Hebrew noun (with the definite article) provides an impressive linguistic and conceptual background for **هورقليا** as it has been understood, utilized and commented upon by Suhrawardi (d. 587/1191) and his commentators, including Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī, Mīr Dāmād (d.1041/1641), and such later Shī`ī sages as Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā`ī (d.1243/1826) the foundational figure in the 19th century philosophical-mystical school of twelver Shi`ism known as al-Shaykhiyya (Shaykhism). Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā`ī has sometimes been erroneously reckoned the inventor of the term **هورقليا** through the influence of the Baṣran Sabaeans (= Mandaeans, see further below) This error is made, for example, by Sa`id Najafian in the course of his anti-Baha'i review of the massive anti-Baha'i tome of Muhammad Baqir Najafi entitled, Baha'iiyyan in al-Tawhid vol.6 No.4 (1409/1989), 161.

The opening cosmogonic, cosmological verses of the book of Genesis of the Hebrew Bible are very well-known. They have been highly influential in various streams of (so-called) Abrahamic thought and tradition (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc). Note the Christological rewrite of Gen. 1:1 at the beginning of John 1:1. These religious literatures often set forth the biblical account of the six days of creation which is

usually ascribed to the "P" (= the Priestly "source" or stream of pentateuchal tradition). After the words "[When] In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1) there follows the note on the primordial state of things and what transpired on the first Day of creation:

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And **God said, יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי אֹר** Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis and the cosmogonic centrality of Light

The divine utterance **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי אֹר** (= And God said, "Let there be Light"; and there was light" (Gen 1:3) is of central cosmogonic importance. Mention of a primordial "light" even precedes the mention of "days" and "nights" and the "sun" as ancient biblical scholars and theologians have noted. God created "light" (Heb., אור awr) on the very first of the six days of creation (Gen 1:3) though he did not create the "sun" until the "fourth day" (Gen 1:14-19). What manner of primordial "light" this was has long been a subject of cosmological and theological controversy. How can there have been "light" on the first day when the physical "sun" was not something initially called into being. This "light" phenomenon may not be unrelated to the multifarious senses of the Hebrew masculine noun רַקִּיעַ (raqī`a) as the foundation of the celestial luminaries defined as the "heaven". Fn

Fn. The Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish mystical text named the Sepher ha-Zohar ("The Book of Splendour") attributed to Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai (fl. 1st-2nd cent CE ., but actually written by the Spanish kabbalist Moses de Leon, c. 1240-1305), makes a major shift in its deep qabbalistic exegesis of Gen 1:1ff when the implications of the divine words "And God said, `Let there be Light'" (Gen 1:3 cf.1:14) are reached (see Zohar, Bereshit I.16bf., I.31b-32a; Sperling, trans.

1:68f; Tishby, Zohar III:585f). From this point it is reckoned “we can begin to discover hidden things relating to the creation of the world in detail” (ibid). The jussive Hebrew phrase of command, **יְהִי** “Let there be [Light]” is expressed by 3 Hebrew letters; namely, [1] י yod [2] ה he and [3] י yod. When voweled these three letters are pronounced yehi which means “Let there be!” (Gen 1:3a). In the Zohar the thrust and position these three letters of yehi (= Y-H-Y) indicates the “union of the Father” (= the first yod י= the sephirot ḥokmah = “Wisdom”) and the “Mother” (= the he ה= the sephirot binah = “Understanding”).

The Hebrew **רָקִיעַ (raqī`a) and the second day of creation**

"Light" (awr) and "darkness" (ḥoshek) were differentiated on day two of creation. So too the positioning of the **רָקִיעַ** (Heb.) raqī`a, the light-bearing (loosely) “firmament”, “expanse”, “vault” or “sky”, etc (see App. 1). This phenomenon separated the ("subterranean") terrestrial "waters" from the ADD (celestial) "waters" . As Gen. 1:6 puts it,

"And God said, "Let there be a **רָקִיעַ** (raqī`a = [loosely] an "expanse", "firmament") in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8)

It is thus on the equally seminal second "Day" of creation (Gen. 1:6-8) that the positioning and naming of the **רָקִיעַ** raqī`a (AV [1611], loosely "firmament") as "heaven" is said to have happened. The nature of the **רָקִיעַ** (the raqī`a) in Gen. 1:6 is not at all obvious. Such is clearly illustrated from a survey of the numerous ancient and modern Bible translations and biblical commentaries on Gen 1:6-7. As is indicated above, the 1611 AV (King James') translation renders **רָקִיעַ** with the Latin [English] word "firmament". This translation is repeated from the Latin Vulgate, where **רָקִיעַ** is translated firmāmentum

(Latin *firmus* = "firm"). This in that the רָקִיעַ was considered something fixed, a solid expanse; hence the Latin translation firmamentum. The "heaven" or "sky" was thought in ancient cosmologies to something of a solid n expanse overarching the earth. In Genesis 1:8 it is specifically stated, "And God called the רָקִיעַ "heaven" (Heb. ADD) as the 1612 AV (King James') version translated ADD. One could thus speak of the "solid" vault of heaven capable of supporting and differentiating the celestial "waters" above from the terrestrial "waters" below.

At this point it might be appropriate to sum up by citing the observations of a few biblical scholars. In the early 20th century *International Critical Commentary* on Genesis by Skinner we read on Genesis 1:6-8:

Second work: The firmament. — The second fiat calls into existence a firmament, whose function is to divide the primaeval waters into an upper and lower ocean, leaving a space between as the theatre of further creative developments. The "firmament" is the dome of heaven, which to the ancients was no optical illusion, but a material structure, sometimes compared to an "upper chamber" (Ps. 104:13, Am. 9:8) supported by "pillars" (Jb.26:11), and resembling in its surface a "molten mirror" (Jb. 37:18). Above this are the heavenly waters, from which the rain descends through "windows" or "doors" (Gn. 7:11 8:2, 2 Ki. 7:2,19) opened and shut by God at His pleasure (Ps. 78:23). The general idea of a forcible separation of heaven and earth is widely diffused; is perhaps embodied in our word 'heaven' (from heave?) and O.E. 'lift.' A graphic illustration of it is found Egyptian pictures, where the god Shu is seen holding aloft, with outstretched arms, the dark star-spangled figure the heaven-goddess, while the earth-god lies prostrate beath (see Je. ATLO², 7).* But the special form in which it appears here

is perhaps not fully intelligible apart from the Bab[ylonian] creation-myth, and the climatic phenomena which it is based (see below p.46), (Skinner, ICC Genesis, 21-22).

In the first 1962[3] edition of the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* T. H. Gaster opened his article FIRMAMENT with the following definition,

"The traditional English rendering, following the LXX **στερέωμα** and the [Latin] Vulg[ate]. firmamentum, of the term רָקִיעַ, used in Gen. 1:6-7 and elsewhere to denote the expanse stretched across the sky in order to separate the upper and lower waters."

In support of this definition Gaster continues,

"The Hebrew term means properly a "strip of beaten metal" (cf. Exod. 39:3; Num. 17:3; Jer. 10:9; She?. 9b; Phoen. CIS I, 90) and harks back to the conception of the sky as a mirror like surface--a conception which recurs in Job 37:18, and which finds a classical counterpart in the common Homeric expression "brazen heaven" (Iliad V.504; XVII.425; Odyssey 111.2; Pindar Pythian Odes X.22, Nemean Odes VI.3). The picture is elaborated in Job 26:13, where the movement of winds across the sky is represented as God's breathing on its surface in order to polish it" (IDB 2:270).

Gaster furthermore, has an interesting paraphrastic translation of Gen 1:6-8 in his 1969 volume *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament, A Comparative study with chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament*,

"God stretched a reef or septum across the primordial waters to divide them into an upper and lower resister. This septum, the canopy of the earth, is what we call the firmament."

He comments,

"The Hebrew word rendered "firmament" [fn. 1=] means properly "a strip of hammered metal" [fn. 2=], and this too is a vestige of older folklore. In the book of Job the sky is similarly portrayed as a molten surface (even a mirror) polished by God's breath, i.e. by the winds which drive away the clouds that bestain it [fn. = 3]. In Homer, heaven is made of brass, [fn.4] and the same idea is attested also by the poet Pindar. [fn.5 =-] Alternatively, it is made of iron -- a notion mentioned not only in the Odyssey [fn. 6 =] but also in Egyptian sources; [fn.7 =] while in the Finnish Kalevara it is made by the divine smith Ilmarinen out of the finest steel. [fn.8 =](Gaster 1969:5-6). ADD fn.s

In the more recent 1989 [2000] Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary on Genesis (The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary) Nahum Sarna comments on the *rakia`* ("firmament" or `expanse') and the division of the waters in Genesis 1:6 in the following manner:

6. ***an expanse*** The Hebrew noun *rakia'* is unparalleled in cognate languages. The verbal form is often used for hammering out metal or flattening out earth, 15 which suggests a basic meaning of "extending." It is unclear whether the vault of heaven was here viewed as a gigantic sheet of metal or as a solid layer of congealed ice. The latter interpretation might be inferred from Ezekiel 1:22, which is how Josephus understood it as well.

water from water The purpose of the expanse is to create a void that separates what was taken to be the source of rain above from the water on earth.

On select English and other Early translations of

רָקִיעַ raqia`

Appendix 1 below will chart various English translations of רָקִיעַ including "firmament" (KJV/AV), ADD "dome" (NIB-1994) the next few paragraphs will register a few ancient renderings.

The Greek Septuaginta (LXX) (1996, c1979, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, Logos X software).

Ἔκαστος εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς Γενηθήτω στερέωμα ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ ἔστω διαχωρίζον ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος καὶ ὕδατος. καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως. καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ στερέωμα, καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ὕδατος, ὃ ἦν ὑποκάτω τοῦ στερεώματος, καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ὕδατος τοῦ ἐπάνω τοῦ στερεώματος.

The Peshitta (Aramaic) Syriac of Gen 1:6-7 (ܪܩܝܥܐ = R-Q`-A, = "firmament")

And God said: `Let there be a ܪܩܝܥܐ ("firmament") in the midst of the waters....

ADD TEXT

Aphrahat the Persian Sage (fl. mid. 4th cent. CE)

ADD TEXT

Gen 1:6-7 as cited by Aphrahat the Persian Sage (fl. mid. 4th cent. CE) in his *Demonstrations* (comprising Bks. 1-23 written between c. 336-345 CE). See above and note that Ms. "A" = Brit. Mus Add. Ms 14619 (Estrangela, 6th cent.). Ms. "B" = Brit. Mus. Add. Ms 17182 (= actually 2 Mss. see Owens Jr. 1983: 10-11).

The Book of the Cave of Treasures (Syriac) and its versions.

Here the description of the second day of creation has some interesting things to say about the Reki`a ("Firmament") and its cosmological role, including its position as a designation of the "lower Heaven" which has "the dense nature of water" :

And on the Second Day God made the Lower Heaven, and called it REKI'A' [that is to say, " what is sold and fixed," or " firmament "]. This He did that He might make known that the Lower Heaven doth not possess the nature of the heaven which is above it, and that it is different in appearance from that heaven which is above it, for the heaven above it is of fire. And that second heaven is NÛHRÂ (i.e. Light), and this lower heaven is *Darpition* [Fol. 4a, col. 1]8 and because it hath the dense nature of water it hath been called "*Rekî'a*." And on the Second Day God made a separation between the waters and the waters, that is to say, between the waters which were above [*Rekî'a*] and the waters which were below. And the ascent of these waters which were above heaven took place on the Second Day, and they were like unto a dense black cloud of thick darkness. Thus were they raised up there, and they mounted up, and behold, they stand above the *Rekî'a* in the air; and they do not spread, and they make no motion to any side.

The Arabic Kitab al-Magal (Book of the Rolls)

This work ascribed to Clement of Rome (1st cent. CE) is essentially an Arabic recension of the Book of the Cave of Treasures. It may date to the

The Book of the Bee

Mandaean writings and Mandaic (dialect of Aramaic) ADD

ADD TEXT HERE

The biblical Hebrew word **רָקִיעַ** ("firmament", "sky", "expanse"...)
occurs in the Semitic language subgroup of Aramaic
known Mandaic. There is a close connection between items of
biblical Hebrew vocabulary, items of Jewish thought, the Mandaic
language and various doctrines of the Mandaeans (see Drower, Ethel.
S & Macuch, 1963 cf. Macuch, 1962 and below). Gotz opens his
recent entry **רָקִיעַ** in the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
(=TDOT) by writing,

"Outside the OT, the noun *rāqîa`* has been found only in
the later Semitic dialects such as Babylonian
Targumic Aramaic, Syriac, Mandaic, and Aramaic"
(vol. XIII:646).

See below

Select Arabic Translations of Genesis 1:6ff.

(1) Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/879)

One of the earliest Arabic translations of Genesis 1:6-8 is found in the
opening section (headed *mubtadā'* *al-khalq*, the "Genesis of
Creation") of the survey of world history entitled *Kitāb al-ma`ārif*
("The Book of Universal Cultures") of Abū Muhammad 'Abd-Allāh
ibn Muslim Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawarī (d. 276 / 889) where we find the
following translation of these verses:

"God, exalted be He, said, `Let there be a **سقف** *saqf* ("roof",
"ceiling", etc) [in the] midst of the water (**وسط الماء** *wasṭ al-*
mā') to the end that there be a resolution [division] between the
water and the water (*al-mā' wa al-mā' = فليحل بين الماء*
والماء). So its *saqf* ("roof", "ceiling") came about. And He
divided between the water (*al-mā'*) which was inferior [lower]
(*asfal*) and the water (*al-mā'*) which was uppermost (*a`lā*). And
God named the **السقف** *saqf* ("roof") **السماء** *heav* (*al-*
samā'). And there was evening and there was morning, the
second day."

After this interesting and fairly accurate translation of
Gen. 1:6-8, Ibn Qutayba cites a saying relayed through

Mālik ibn Sa`īd, through **Isma`īl ibn Abī Khālid** from a certain Abī Ṣāliḥ expository of the qur'anic phrase **والبحر المسجور** ("And the Ocean Outstretched", wa'l-baḥr al-masjūr = Q. 52:6) who reckoned that `Alī [ibn Abī Ṭālib, d. 40/661?] said: `This is an ocean beneath the [Divine] Throne (al-`arsh). And this [qur'anic data] corresponds to what is mentioned in the Tawrāt (Torah-Bible) where it states that **السماء بين ماءين** "heaven is between two waters" (K-Ma`arif, 7 ; cf. Gen. cited above).

After this statement there follows Arabic citations of Genesis texts from 1:9-13 then Genesis 1:14f is cited as follows:

ADD ARABIC TEXT

(2) Sa`adia (Ar. Sa`īd] Ga'on al-Fayyūmī (882-942 CE)

The Egyptian born Jewish scholar and one time head (ga'on) of the Babylonian academy Sa`adia (Ar. Sa`īd] Ga'on [al-Fayyūmī] (882-942 CE) translated the Hebrew Bible into Arabic. This important work had exegetical implications and was entitled Tafsīr ("Commentary"). Genesis 1: 6-8 is translated as follows: :

فقال الله ليكن **بساط** في وسط الماء وليكن فاصلا ماء من ماء *
 فصنع الله **البساط** و فصل بين الماء الذي من تحة البساط والماء
 الذي من فوق البساط فكان كذلك * وسمى الله **البساط** سماء و كان مساء وكان
 صباح يوما ثانيا *

(Arabic reproduced without pointing from Kahle 1904: 14).

"And God said, `Let there be an expanse (= **بساط** bisāṭ = "expanse" = "firmament") in the midst of the Water. And let it be a separator (= **فاصلا**) of water and water. So God fashioned the **بساط** ("expanse") and it separated between the water which was beneath **البساط** the "expanse" and the water which was above **البساط** the "expanse". And God

named the expanse Heaven (سَمَاء = al-samā') And there was morning and there was evening, the second day."

As indicated Sa`adia here translates רָקִיעַ ("firmament') with بَسָاط (**bisāt**) which is perhaps accurately translated "expanse".

The 17th century European Polyglot Bibles

Apparently following the Arabic of the Paris Polyglott of 1546 Bishop Brian Walton (d. 1661) in his *Biblica Sacra Polyglotta* (1653-7) or *London Polyglott* Vol. VI (1657), page 3, has the following rendering of Gen 1:6-8a:

سَاءَ اللهُ ان يكون جَلَدٌ في وسط الماء ويكون فاصلا بين مآين

فصنع الله الجلد وفصل بين الماء الذي من دونه الجلد والماء الذي فوقه الجلد 7

. فكان كذلك. و سمي الله الجلد سماء...

jalad "firmament") in (=) جَلَدٌ And God XXX, "Let there be a" the midst of the water, and let it be a separation between the firmament")" جَلَدٌ two waters. 7 So God fashioned the and divided the water which was was under it [the firmament] from the water which were above it [the firmament]: and it was so. 8 And God named (firmament") heaven..." (Gen. 1:6-8a) the جَلَدٌ the

") (jalad) which translates (=) جَلَدٌ Here it is the Arabic firmament'). This word *jalad* comes from the root J-L-D. Pointed *jalada* this trilateral root has various verbal senses and forms including, 'to whip or flog or lash someone; as *jalida* 'to be frozen, freeze' or as *jaluda* 'to be tough, hardy, steadfast,' etc. Aside from numerous other verbal senses and meanings associated, for example, *jalad* can have جَلَدٌ with "[she-]camels" and "skin", the the verbal noun connotations of "hardiness, strength, sturdiness, etc" (see Lane, Lexicon I/ii 442-3). This perhaps led the (Christian) translator[s] to associate it with (the implications of) the LXX στερέωμα (stereoma =) and/or the Latin firmamentum (Latin *firmus* =

"firm") as something of substance, a "solid" or "firm" covering reality (cf. J-L-D form II meaning to bind a book [with "skin"] and *mujallad* = "a [bound] Book"). In some modern Arabic dictionaries the sense "firmament" is actually given to *jalad* (Lexicon Hans Wehr 4th ed. p.154). This Polyglott rendering was followed around 200 years later by the more grammatically correct or polished Arabic translation of the Protestant missionaries Eli Smith (d.1857) and Cornelius Van Dyck (d. 1895 . First published in the mid. 1860s it reads

وقال الله ليكن جَدًّا في وسط المياه. وليكن فاصلاً بين مياه ومياه

7 فعمل الله الجلد وفصل بين المياه التي تحت الجلد والمياه التي فوق الجلد وكان كذلك.

و دعا الله الجَدَّ سماء...

firmament")") **جلد** And God said, "Let there be a" in the midst of the waters, and let it be a separator between waters and waters. 7 And God made the "firmament", and divided the **الجلد** (" **الجلد** waters which were under the firmament") from the waters which were the "firmament" : and it was **الجلد** above (" **الجلد** so. 8 And God called the (firmament") heaven... (Gen. 1:6-8a

It may be appropriate at this point to register the translation of Gen 1:6f according to the Arabic translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritan Pentateuch ADD

According to a modern edition of this Arabic translation made by Abu'l-Hassan Ishāq al-Sūrī and edited by Aḥmad Hijjāzī al-Saqqā' , this :(version reads as follows (al-Tawrāt al-sāmiriyya, 25

وقال الله يكون **فلك** في وسط الماء. ليكن مميزاً بين ماء وماء

وصنع الله **الفلك** وفصل بين الماء الذي من تحت **الفلك** و بين الماء الذي فوق

الفلك

. وكان كذلك.

و سمي الله الفلك سماء...

this Arabic version of the Samaritan Pentateuch רָקִיעַ For the Hebrew or falak. This Arabic word فلك rendering has the cosmological term can again be translated into English in various ways including, for example, `celestial sphere/ body', `star' or `circuit'. In the pointed *falak* can indicate `the orbit of a celestial فلك Qur'an .body

Judaeo-Persian and Persian Translations

Constantinople 1546

The רָקִיעַ ("firmament", "sky", "expanse", "dome"...) in other") biblical books and in post-biblical literatures

occurs 17 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is רָקִיעַ The Hebrew raq'ia invariably translated "firmament" in the AV (King James) English translation. There are nine occurrences of raq'ia in the opening book of Genesis (1:6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20) two in the book of Psalms (19:2 [1]; 150:1), five in the book of the prophet Ezekiel ((1:22, 23, 25, 26; 10:1) and one in the book of Daniel (12:3

.Elsewhere in Genesis and the book of Psalms

.and the Merkabah רָקִיעַ Ezekiel, the

רָקִיעַ Daniel and the

in the Book of Daniel, Rabbinic Judaism and the Zohar רָקִיעַ

ADD

has a close association רָקִיעַ In various Rabbinic texts and Jewish mystical traditions with the bright light and with the sun.¹ The "firmament" is understood to signify a dazzlingly radiant light beaming cosmic phenomenon, a kind of luminous "interworld" betwixt earth and heaven. The *Sepher ha-Zohar* of Moses de Leon (c.1240-1305 CE), *rāqîa'* as a reality of stunning brightness, רָקִיעַ, (several times identifies (Heb./ Aram (Zohar 1:15aff). This important Jewish mystical text appropriately cites Dan 12:3 in

mashkilīm, the "wise") "shall shine (*yāzhiru*) like the **משִׁפְּלִים** asserting that the *zohar hā- rāqīa'*" (*Berachoth*, 1.16aff). In view of its **הַרְקִיעַ** brightness of the would not have been inappropriately adopted in **הַרְקִיעַ** cosmological and other senses *hawaqalya/ hūrqualyā* became important in **هورقليا**, an *Ishrāqī* cosmology of light Shaykhī hermeneutics as the future sphere of the eschatological resurrection "body" though it does not appear to have been directly adopted in the Bābī- Bahā'ī demythologization of latter day "resurrection" motifs. 2

Bab.Tal. *Hagiga* 12b; *Bershith* 17a, *Midrash Rabbah*, Gen. VI:6ff (cf. Samuelson, 1994[7]:118f.). The *Bab.Talmud* records that the following words were uttered by the Rabbis on parting from one of their learned associates, "may your eyes be enlightened by the light of the Torah and your face shine like the brightness of the firmament (B.Tal. *Berachoth* 17a) (**הַרְקִיעַ**)

Suhrawarī's philosophy of illumination was also influential upon the Jewish convert 2 to Islam Ibn Kammūna (d.c.1285) who cites the Bible frequently in his *Tanqīh* *(al-abḥāth li'l- milāl al-thalāth*. (Perlman, 1971

raqī`a in modern academic scholarship **הַרְקִיעַ** (.The (Heb

..Heb.) **הַרְקִיעַ** **ADD** *hā-raqī`a* of Gen. 1:2)

As implied above, in ancient cosmologies "heaven" was conceived as a solid dome-like "expanse" which arches across the earth. In the Anchor Bible Dictionary article ADD we read

In the Hebrew Bible "heaven" is sometimes used as a synonym for "firmament" (Heb. *rāqīa'*) to describe the dome-shaped covering over the earth that separated the heavenly waters above from the earthly waters beneath (Gen 1:6-8; Ps 148:4). Heaven, or the firmament, was thought to be supported by pillars (Job 26:11) and had foundations (2 Sam 22:8) and windows. When the windows of heaven were opened, the waters above the firmament fell upon the earth as rain (Gen 7:11; 8:2; Isa 24:18). Through these windows God also poured out blessings upon the earth (Mal 3:10). The birds fly across the firmament (Gen 1:20; Deut 4:17)

and the sun, moon, and stars were set in the firmament
..((Gen 1:14-18

Whereas the firmament referred specifically to the canopy covering the earth, heaven often had a broader meaning, referring to all that was above the earth, including the firmament. Rain, snow, hail, and thunder come from heaven (Exod 9:22-35; Isa 55:10; Josh 10:11; Rev 11:19). Heaven contained the storehouses of the winds, the snow, and the hail (Job 37:9; 38:22; Ps 135:7; Jer 10:13). (ABD CR Rom (version

ADD TDOT data

הורקליה Later Jewish and Rabbinic interpretations of

Shihab al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and the هورقليها origins of Islamic aspects of

هورقليها It appears that the first Islamic writer to use the term was the late medieval founder of the Ishrāqī ("Illuminationist") school of philosophy Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191). For him it was something of a mystical-cosmological term which indicated a brilliant, luminous, supernatural interworld. It seems likely that he appropriated this term directly or indirectly from a person or source influenced by Biblical-Judaic or Rabbinic concepts and terminology. His writings, as will be argued below, do indeed exhibit his (direct or indirect) utilization of .select biblical texts and concepts

Biblical and Isrā'īliyyat motifs and elements are indeed found within Suhrawardī's fifty or more Arabic and Persian works. *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* imagery and motifs associated with love and beauty are creatively expounded with reference to Adam, Joseph the acme of *jamāl* (Beauty), Zulaikha and others in Suhrawardī's Persian *Treatise on the Reality of Enraptured Love (fī ḥaqīqat al-`ishq)* (Suhrawardī, Ishq, [1999]: 58-76). There is also a Johannine Paraclete reference in the 7th section (*haykal*) of Suhrawardī's (Arabic) *Hayākil al-nūr* (Temples of Light). Having cited Q. 29:43 and alluded to Matt 13:13, Suhrawardī refers to the *tā'wil* (inner sense) and *bayān* (exposition) of

these texts extending beyond the prophets (*al-anbiyā'*) unto that *maẓhar al-a`ẓam* (most supreme theophany) who is the *al-fāraqlītā*, the eschatological Paraclete and supreme expounder (Ar. Hayakil, 88). This paraclete reference was commented upon by Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (d. 907/1501)(Dawwānī, Shawakil, 215f). He saw the *maẓhar al-a`ẓam* as the "supreme Light theophany" closely related to the Spirit-Paraclete which was also identified with the twelfth Imam or the Mahdī-Qā'im) (see Corbin, 1970:39-50; 1971-2b:257; .[.Corbin /Suhrawardī,1970:41f/ 84-108 [Per

In his seminal and highly influential *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (Wisdom of Illumination) , Suhrawardi spelled the name of his cosmic "eighth This is neither an Arabic nor a Persian formation. It **هورقلييا** clime", it is most likely represents a somewhat garbled, Arabized attempt to express the *hā-raqi`a*, Gen 1:6f). It seems to have been orally) **הַרְקִיעַ** biblical Hebrew communicated by a Hebrew speaking Jew or Jewish convert to Islam. As something probably communicated orally it was only loosely remembered or loosely **هورقلييا** of **هو** (inadequately transliterated. The first letter (or two letters **or هورقلييا hā'** . The latter part of **ه** ,("represent the Heb. definite article ("the being made up of the Arabic letters R-Q-L-Y-A and **رقلييا** the represent a somewhat garbled form of the Hebrew word for made up of the four Hebrew letters R-Q-Y-` . The missing **הַרְקִיעַ** representative Hebrew letter "L" can be considered to have been either glossed over or omitted at the post -Q quasi-L-Y-[A]. Neither the presence of the 5th **ليا** guttural sounding of the or the absence of a transliterated **هورقلييا** *lām*) in **ل**) Arabic letter *ayn* radically disturbs this suggested, **ل** representative of the Hebrew letter from the (originally) Hebrew **هورقلييا** (direct or indirect) derivation of **הַרְקִיעַ** .Conceptually it has much in its favor .

as spelled out above) denotes what lies between) **הַרְקִיעַ** In the Hebrew Bible the cosmic "waters" and is the locality where God "set" the "sun" moon and stars (Gen. 1:6-8). Conceptually it is something of a cosmological "inter world" dividing the terrestrial and cosmic "waters" as well being a source of stunningly bright light. This fits well with the mystical cosmology of a thinker who placed .Light at the centre of his seen and unseen universes

Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination was most importantly expounded in

his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (The Wisdom of Illumination). Therein the probably is associated with the "eighth clime" and with the **هورقليا** Jewish-rooted term is referred to **هورقليا**. cosmic, supernatural cities of Jābulqa[ā] and Jābarsa[ṣ]ā as something *dhāt al-ajā`ib* ("redolent of wonders", *Hikmat*, 159-60). Commentators upon his *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* have further elaborated the senses among them his devotee Shahrazūrī **هورقليا** and significance of

(Shams al-Dīn Muhammad Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288

In his commentary upon Suhrawardī's *Hikmat al-ishrāq*, Shams al-Dīn with **هورقليا** Muhammad Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288) again associates Jābulqā and Jābarsā. Commenting upon the "eighth clime" he writes that Hurqalyā") are "names of") **هورقليا** "Jābulqā", "Jābarṣā" [spellings vary] and cities in the world of the *`ālam al-mithāl* ("world of similitudes") adding that is differentiated by being the *`ālam al-aflāk al-muthul* (The world of **هورقليا** .(the spheres of the [World of the] similitudes)" (Sh-*Hikmat*, xxxii; 574, 594-5

(Qutb al-Dīn Shirāzī (d. 1311

In his *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, Corbin notes that Qutb al-Din Shirazi, a famous commentator on Suhrawardi, has it relative to the "Imaginal :”World

It is there that the various kinds of autonomous archetypal Images" are infinitely realised, forming a hierarchy of degrees varying according to their relative subtlety or density....On each of these levels species exist analogous to those in our world, but they are infinite. Some are peopled by Angels and the human Elect. Others are peopled by Angels and genii, others by demons. God alone knows the number of these levels and what they contain. The pilgrim rising from one degree to another discovers on each higher level a subtler state, a more entrancing beauty, a more intense spirituality, a more overflowing delight. The highest of these degrees borders on the intelligible pure entities of Light and very closely resembles it" ((Corbin, SBCE:131

Corbin's translation of this *Risala* also has it that : ADD

.Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī (d.1041/1641), Mīr Dāmād

Mīr Dāmād styled himself "Ishrāq" after Suhrawardī and was known as the

"Third Master" succeeding Aristotle and al-Farābī. A central, foundational figure of the philosophical-theological 'School of Isfahān', his often complex, frequently elevated 'irfānī oriented Persian and Arabic works, include materials of central interest. His Persian treatise al-Jadhawāt ("Particles of Fire"), for example, responds to an Indian scholars' enquiry as to why Moses was not .(consumed by the Sinaitic fire attendant upon the divine theophany (*tajallī*

In addition to the cosmological-theophanological implications of Moses' experience of the divine, this multi-faceted work also contains interpretations of the qur'ānic al-ḥurufāt al-muqatta'ah (isolated letters). Interesting reference is made in the sixth firebrand of al-Jadhawāt to hūrqulyā (loosely, "interworld"), a term which has biblisal-هورقليا the sphere of .Jewish and Ishrāqī roots

An established group among the Islamic Pythagoreans and Platonists and a body of the Islamic Ishrāqīs, have it that there exists a world centrally situated ('ālamī muttawasiṭ) betwixt the hidden world ('ālam-i ghayb) which is the world of the Intellect ('ālam-i ma`qūl) and the world of evident reality ('ālam-i shāhadat) which is the perceptible world ('ālam-i maḥsūs). And such a world hūrqulyā which is a perceptible world though a هورقليا they have named shadowy, spectral world; a realm disembodied which they have named the world of the isthmus ('ālam al-barzakh) and the eighth clime (iqḷī thāmin), the earth of reality (arḍ-i ḥaqīqa), [which is] something disembodied, disengaged .((khiyāl munfaṣil) (Jadhwat, 47

in Shaykhism and Shaykhi cosmological-هورقليا Hurqulyā eschatological gnosis

is important in connection with the Shaykhī هورقليا As a kind of interworld view of the sphere of the hidden Imam and the "earth" of the realm of .supra-bodily, spiritual, resurrection

هورقليا Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Aḥsā'i and

Shaykh Aḥmad made considerable use of the obscure Ishrāqī-rooted term hūrqulyā for him loosely speaking, indicating an "interworld". Echoing هورقليا Mīr Dāmād, Shaykh Aḥmad has explained the significance and linguistic derivation of *hūrqulyā* in the following manner in his Risāla in reply to Mullā Muhammad Ḥusayn al-Anārī

hūrḡalyā) and its meaning. It is another) **هورقليا** As for the expression dominion since what is indicated thereby is the world of the isthmus (ʿālam al-barzakh) and this mundane world ((alām al-dunyā). It is indicative of the world of bodies (ʿālam al-aḡsam), that is to say, the mundane world (ʿālam al-dunyā) and the world of souls (ʿālam al-nufūs); the world of the kingdom (ʿālam al-malakūt) and the world of the isthmus (ʿālam al-barzakh) which is the intermediary [sphere] between the mundane world (ʿālam al-dunyā) and the world of the kingdom (ʿālam al-malakūt) which is another dominion... it is in ..(the eighth clime (al-iqlīm al-thāmin

is derived from the Syriac **هورقليا**] As for what language this term is in. It language (al-lughat al-suryāniyya) and is a Sabian term (lughat al-ṣābi'a) and they [the Sabians = Mandaeans] are now living in Baṣra... Know also that the world of the isthmus (alām al-barzakh) is intermediary between this mundane world and the world of the hereafter (al-dunyā wa'l-ākhirā). It is the imaginal world [of similitudes] (ʿālam al-mithāl) [existing] between the world of the kingdom (ʿālam al-malakūt) and this mundane world (al-dunyā) .. (al-Aḡsā'ī, Jawāmi' al-kalim I/3 pp.153-4 = Majmū'a, 30:308-9 = trans. Lambden ; cf. trans. Corbin, SBCE [1977]: 191-2; .(1990:103

هورقليا in al-Aḡsa'i's al-Risālah al-Rastiyya

Written in 1226/1811 Shaykh Aḡmad al-Aḡsā'ī makes some very important in his Risālah al-Rastiyya, an epistle written in reply **هورقليا** statements about to questions from Mullā `Alī ibn Mīrzā Jān Rashtī (ADD/ADD) (see Arabic .(text in Jawāmi' al-kilam, I/2, pp. ADD

I reply that Hūrḡalyā is in the eighth clime and the meaning of the term is" another realm, in which there are two cities, one in the West -- Jābarsā -- and one in the East -- Jābulqā. About (each of) them is a wall of iron and within each wall one thousand thousand doors. They speak seventy thousand thousand languages, each people possessing a language different to that of any other ... [next few words incomprehensible]. Every day there go forth from each city seventy thousand who shall not return until the day of resurrection and there enter into each seventy thousand who shall not go out until the day of resurrection. Those who go forth and those who enter meet one another between heaven and earth and those who have come forth from Jābulqā go westwards, while those who have come forth from Jābarsā go eastwards. Anyone who rises up about midnight shall not hear (even) a faint noise, but

shall hear from them a murmuring like the murmuring of a bee. The Proof, on him be peace, is in his occultation beneath Hūrqaḷyā in that world in a village called Kar`a ADD HERE in the Wādī Shamrukh, and it is related that it (? the Wādī) is in Thebes ADD HERE And there are with him thirty *abdāl*. And each of these villages is in that world and he, on him be peace, is manifest to their inhabitants. But when he desires to enter these seven (other) climes, he puts on a form from among the forms of the people of these climes, and none shall recognize him and no eye shall behold him with recognition until all eyes behold him..." (JK 1/2: 10? ; trans. MacEoin, BSB 1: ADD under revision by .(SL

firmament", "expanse") and the") רְקִיעַ Shaykh Ahmad the possible Mandaic origins of the word هورقلیا

a هورقلیا could be , lā m) and Hebrew") ل Despite the absent Arabic h) רְקִיעַ viewed as a slightly garbled transliteration of the biblical Hebrew ā- rāqíya' , with the definite article), traditionally translated "the firmament" (AV) or "sky", "heaven" (see above). The biblical Hebrew word firmament", "sky", "expanse"...) רְקִיעַ occurs in the Semitic") language subgroup of Aramaic known Mandaic. There is a close connection between items of biblical Hebrew vocabulary, items of Jewish thought, the Mandaic language and various doctrines of the Mandaeans ADD (see Drower, Ethel. S & Macuch, 1963 cf. in the רְקִיעַ Macuch, 1962 and below). Gotz opens his recent entry Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (=TDOT) by writing, "Outside the OT, the noun rāqîa` has been found only in the later Semitic dialects such as Babylonian Targumic Aramaic, Syriac, .(Mandaic, and Aramaic" (vol. XIII:646

Recently Macuch, the editor of the has Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic (1962), has suggested that Hūrqaḷyā may be a garbled form of the Mandaic **anhūr qalyā* (= "the burning light",1982:19f) though this is based upon a purely theoretical reconstruction of non-existent Mandaic words (see Macuch, MdD [1962] : 437) . This is not very convincing compared to the originating from a slightly garbled transliteration of the هورقلیا hypothesis of There may also be Mandaic associations if Suhrawardi. רְקִיעַ biblical Hebrew was in communication with a Mandaean initiate though this complication .seems unnecessary

raqi`a) in Mandaic, in its =) רָקִיעַ The biblical Hebrew loanword developed biblical, cosmological context indicates something of a "barrier" or separator between terrestrial-and cosmic realities (the "waters" in Gen. 1:6). It became a locus of primordial luminosity and light. All of this, as will be seen, provides a befitting conceptual background to the quasi acquired in Ishraqī and later Shi`i هورقليا cosmological senses gnosis. This will be briefly discussed below in connection with a suggestion suggested by the هورقليا as to the Syriac- Mandaic etymology or basis of fountainhead of al-Shaykhiyya ("Shaykhism") Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsā`ī (d. .(Mecca/Medina, 1826

The basically Semitic language Mandaic is a branch or dialect of Aramaic and includes a considerable number of Hebrew and Aramaic loanwords. ADD The **raqi`a is found in present Mandaic** ADD Interestingly, a pre-Islamic, هورقليا word Mandaic occurrence of **rq`h'** ("firmament") is found in certain British Library .(located Magic Bowls 076M:3 and 083K:8 (Segal, Catalogue: ADD + 227

Comment here on al-Aḥsa'i suggested derivation through and Basran Sabeans or from Mandaic

It will be pertinent to note here that Sa`id Najafian's which he) هورقليا assertions about Shaykh Ahmad and transliterates harqūliyah) (in his anti-Baha'i review of massive anti-Baha'i tome of Muhammad Baqir Najafi ,entitled, Baha'iiyyan) erroneously writes

Shaykh Aḥmad al-]Aḥsā`ī also seems to have]" assimilated some ideas of the Sabeans during his .residence at Baṣrah and its vicinity. His term [sic if not the conception of harqūliyah -- a term [هورقليا] hitherto unfamiliar in Islamic philosophy and mysticism -- for a quasi-immaterial sphere, came from the Sabeans" (cited from al-Tawhid vol.6 No.4 [1409/1989], (page. 161

ADD COMMENT

'Later Shaykhi writers on Hurqalya

The Shaykhi leader Ḥajji Mirza Muhammad Karim Khan Kirmani quite frequently. In his Persian هورقلیا (d. 1871) used the term Irshad al-awamm ("Guidance for the Common folk") which was written in 18XX and several times published in Qajar Persia in the 19th century, Karim Khan Kirmani (d. 1871) made quite frequent use of the term hurqalyā'... ADD DETAILSIn his Persian ,Irshad al-awamm (Guidance for the Masses) for example

ADD HERE

in Gen. 1:6-7 רָקִיעַ Appendix 1. Select English translations of

The following select survey of various English translations of Genesis 1:6-8 must suffice to illustrate the somewhat ambiguous : רָקִיעַ nature of the cosmological Hebrew term

AV KING JAMES 1611 (1)

raqī`a] firmament in the midst of , רָקִיעַ | **And God said, "Let there be a" the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8) (AV .(1611**

(British Revised Version (1881-1885 (2)

raqī`a] ADD in the midst of the , רָקִיעַ | **And God said, "Let there be a" waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8) (RV., .(1881-5**

(American Revised Version (1901 (3)

raqī`a] ADD in the midst of the , רָקִיעַ | **And God said, "Let there be a" waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and**

it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the (evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8

(Revised Standard Version (HB [OT]1952 (4)

raqī'a] ADD in the midst of the , רָקִיעַ] And God said, "Let there be a" waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the (evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8

(New Revised Standard Version (NRSV.,1989

raqī'a] dome in the midst of , רָקִיעַ] And God said, "Let there be a 6 the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸ God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there .was morning, the second day

(New International Version (HB [OT] 1978

raqī'a] an expanse between , רָקִיעַ] ^{GEN 1:6} And God said, "Let there be the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky." And .there was evening, and there was morning--the second day

The New Interpreter's Bible (1994) CHECK THIS

raqī'a] an expanse between , רָקִיעַ] ^{GEN 1:6} And God said, "Let there be the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day. (NIB .(1:338

רָקִיעַ The New Interpreter's Bible (NIB) of 1994 translates with "dome" and has the following comment on Genesis .1:6b

On the second day of creation, sky and sea are formed. The -1:6 dome according to ancient Israel's cosmology, is an impermeable barrier that holds back a great reservoir of water in the sky, separating it from the great reservoir under the earth. When the "windows of the sky" are opened in the Priestly flood story

...(7:11), the water in this reservoir falls as rain

In the NIB opening Genesis commentary section by T.E. Fretheim, the following note on Gen 1:6f is found

On the second day of creation, sky and sea are formed. The "firmament," KJV, RSV] according to ancient Israel's " =] dome cosmology, is an impermeable barrier that holds back a great reservoir of water in the sky, separating it from the great reservoir under the earth. When the "windows of the sky" are opened in the Priestly flood story (7:11), the water in this ".reservoir falls as rain

TO BE COMPLETED

هورقليا Appendix 2 : Bābī-Bahā'ī primary scriptural sources and

As far as I am aware Bābī and Bahā'ī primary sources do not make use of the term **هورقليا**. They do, however, mention multi-worlds and take eschatological events, like individual bodily resurrection, non-literally relative to a spiritualistic cosmology rooted in Shaykhī- Bābī writings. Bahā'ī texts express belief in subtle bodies and a spiritual understanding of individual and collective resurrection as well as of the *mi`raj* (Night Journey) of Muhammad. Baha'-Allah affirmed the reality of the concept of the *`ālam al-mithāl* explaining like Shaykh Aḥmad that the (Per.) *`ālam-i mithāl* exists between the exalted world (of *jabarūt* (the "empyrean") and this mortal realm of *nāsūt* (Ma'idih 1:18-19

The Bāb, Baha'-Allah and his son Abd al-Baha' all in various ways commented upon the significance of the qur'ānic cosmological term *barzakh* (isthmus, Q. 23:100; 25:53; 55:20; Of interest in this respect is the Tablet of `Abd al-Baha' to Mīrzā Qabil of Abadih printed in the Baha'i magazine *Star of the West* 5/7, p.7ff which reads as follows (trans S. Lambden, cited and slightly revised from BSB 6:2-3, Feb. 1992

Translation of tablet of `Abd al-Bahā `Abbas to Mīrzā Qabil (of Abadih (Iran

He is God

!O servant of the sanctified threshold

Your letter was received at a time when the most great

ocean of tasks, tribulations and literary communications is well-nigh overwhelming. The answer to the question which you requested cannot possibly be entered into in any great detail. A brief answer, therefore, is being written

The human spirit (rūḥ-i insānī), in other words the rational soul (nafs-i nāṭiqih), in the world of existence is the intermediary between things incorporeal ("disengaged", mujarradat) and delimited worldly things (mutahayyizāt); that is to say, between realities spiritual and things corporeal. From one vantage point it possesses spiritual refinement while from the other it exhibits the crassness of carnality, animalistic traits and worldly characteristics. It is neither an absolute abstraction nor is it completely of the world but is the confluence of two seas (majma` al-bahrayn) and a barzakh ("isthmus") between two realities (amrayn). If the spiritual aspect dominates it becomes lofty, luminous, merciful, tranquil (mutmainna), contented (raḍiyya) and approved (marḍiyya). And if it is contaminated with contingent, worldly concerns, it becometh immersed in the ocean of darkness, reproachful (lawwama), commanding to evil (ammara) and residing in the nethermost regions of the world of existence

It is thus the case that the human spirit has two aspects. If the luminous aspect of the human intellect overcomes the world of nature, it will acquire the power of discovery which is the basis for wondrous insights, and become informed about the realities and characteristics of things. From this brief explanation perceive detailed significances

The enraptured maidservant of God, enkindled with the fire of the love of God, daughter of the One Who attained the Meeting with his Lord; convey on my behalf to his eminence Dhabih, the resplendent, the utmost kindness and compassion. The hope is that, on account of the Divine Grace, the assembly of the maidservants of the Merciful may attain perfect organization, and, through their efforts in achieving complete continuity, realize their much-

appreciated services. Convey the glad-tidings of the Divine
Grace to those maidservants of the Merciful. And upon you
.be the glory of the All-Glorious

ADD

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