



Gate of the Heart:: Understanding the Writings of the Bab (Baha'i Studies)

Nader Saiedi

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In 1844 a charismatic young Persian merchant from Shiraz, known as the Báb, electrified the Shí'ih world by claiming to be the return of the Hidden Twelfth Imam of Islamic prophecy. But contrary to traditional expectations of apocalyptic holy war, the Báb maintained that the spiritual path was not one of force and coercion but love and compassion. The movement he founded was the precursor of the Bahá'í Faith, but until now the Báb's own voluminous writings have been seldom studied and often misunderstood. Gate of the Heart offers the first in-depth introduction to the writings of the Báb.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the author examines the Báb's major works in multifaceted context, explaining the unique theological system, mystical world view, and interpretive principles they embody as well as the rhetorical and symbolic uses of language through which the Báb radically transforms traditional concepts. Arguing that the Bábí movement went far beyond an attempt at an Islamic Reformation, the author explores controversial issues and offers conclusions that will compel a re-evaluation of some prevalent assumptions about the Báb's station, claims, and laws.

Nader Saiedi's meticulous and insightful analysis identifies the key themes, terms, and concepts that characterize each stage of the Báb's writings, unlocking the code of the Báb's mystical lexicon. Gate of the Heart is a subtle and profound textual study and an essential resource for anyone wishing to understand the theological foundations of the Bahá'í religion and the Báb's significance in religious history.

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