

A poster had pointed to the section in Christopher Buck's *Paradise and Pardigm* pp 165-6, which refers to the Tenth Glad-Tidings under the heading 'Abrogation of Book Burning.' The abrogation of the law appears welcome, but did the Bab in fact provide for the general burning of books?

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> No, don't have it, but it's quoted in a secondary work. Browne--  
> here's Buck's citation:  
>  
> <http://tinyurl.com/2kv4q2>

There is no "burning" of books involved, so far as I know.

The Aqdas says : God hath relieved you of the ordinance laid down in the Bayan concerning the destruction (mahuu = wipe out, erase, scratch off) of books. We have permitted you to read such sciences as are profitable unto you, not such as end in idle disputation; better is this for you, if ye be of them that comprehend.

The Arabic Bayan 6:6 says (approximately) : "erase (ta-mahuu-na) all that you have written and replace it with the Bayan and what you produce in its shadow."

Washing-off a page allows its paper to be re-used, and there is a common practice of writing prayers on paper, washing it off with a little water which is collected, and drinking it to prevent evil or to cure an illness. Book burning is a more a European practice, presumably because printed books were more common. But even in Europe, in the days of hand-copied books, paper was sometimes washed off and re-used. Modern imaging techniques allow us to see the 'erased' text, the palimpsest, still hidden within the paper.

The Persian Bayan expands considerably on what the Arabic Bayan says,

but does not explain what is clear in the Arabic Bayan, that the books concerned are those one has written oneself. The Persian Bayan does explain the reason for this law, which briefly is, that in each new dispensation all is made new, yet all previous dispensations are included in the new. The truth, in effect, has moved to a new place, and one must turn to the new place to receive it. But this is very much a thumbnail version of what is a rather long explanation.

Baha'u'llah has annulled this law: there is a difference in emphasis in the two religions. The first emphasises the newness of the new and thus the oldness of the old, the second allows more for the continuities within "the ancient faith of God." Similarly, the Q&A to the Aqdas includes churches and chapels in the definition of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar.