

BAHÁ'IS OF HIGHLAND NEWSLETTER

“When man allows the spirit, through his soul, to enlighten his understanding, then does he contain all Creation; because man, being the culmination of all that went before and thus superior to all previous evolutions, contains all the lower world within himself. Illumined by the spirit through the instrumentality of the soul, man’s radiant intelligence makes him the crowning-point of all Creation.”

Concerning Body, Soul and Spirit, - Paris Talks, Ábdu'l-Bahá, pg. 97

Dear Friends,

Happy Ridván! We are excited to bring to you the 12th issue of our newsletter! Continuing on the description of the worlds of God we discussed in our last two issues of our newsletter about the worlds of Habut and Labut, this month we would like to share an excerpt on the world of Jabarut from “The Tablet of All Food: The Hierarchy of the Spiritual Worlds and the Metaphoric Nature of Physical Reality” by Jean-Marc Lepain, translated by Peter Terry, *Bahá'í Studies Review* 16 (2010): 43–60. DOI: 10.1386/bsr.16.43/1.

Below the world of Labut comes the world of Jabarut, a world in which nothing exists but the divine will (Jabr). In this world one finds only God and His Manifestations. At this level of existence divine Manifestations leave the level of the fused union of essences, which is particular to Labut, and acquire individual existences. Baha'u'llah describes this level of existence of the divine Manifestations as ‘the station of distinction’ which pertains ‘to the world of creation and limitation thereof and which is characterized by ‘differentiation, temporal limitation, characteristics and standards’. In this world, the Manifestations become the channels of the divine will. They are the archangels of which the Mosaic tradition speaks. To them is applied the formula ‘Thou (the Manifestation) art He (God) and He (God) is thee (the Manifestation)’. Baha'u'llah refers to this world using various expressions such as ‘the Kingdom of unity’ (Wahidiyya), ‘the most exalted Paradise’, ‘the Paradise of Justice’, ‘the Tabernacle of Glory’ or ‘the world of divine decrees’, for in this world there exists only the decree (qada) of God, and it is by this decree that the divine Manifestation speaks and acts. Through the power of Jabarut the divine decree rules over the world, for the Word of God always prevails in the end. The divine decrees are the spiritual laws that will never be changed. They constitute the fundamental order hidden behind the reality of all things, the source of all knowledge, human or divine. Whoever has attained complete understanding of these laws has entered paradise and has grasped the ultimate reality

of unity, for true unity is the unity of will between the creature and the Creator.



Baha'u'llah also speaks of this world as the ‘World of Command’ (‘alam al-amr), for it is by this command (amr) that all the creatures (khalq) have come into existence. The ‘World of Command’ is distinguished from the ‘World of Creation’, or ‘Created World’ (‘alam al-khalq), by the fact that the World of Command is the world of divine justice, while the World of Creation is the world of mercy; for without the divine mercy, the creatures, because of their imperfection, could not subsist. Jabarut is also the world of the Mother Book (umm al-kitab) and of the Preserved Tablet (lawh al-mahfuz). Both expressions have Qur’anic origins but Baha'u'llah uses

them with completely new meanings. We must remember that, for most Muslims, the *Qur'an* is an uncreated book. They believe that from all eternity a celestial prototype of the divine *Qur'an* has existed engraved on a tablet made of an inalterable substance and it is that celestial prototype that is called the Mother Book. The angel Gabriel did nothing more than dictate the book to the Prophet Muhammad who transmitted it to human beings. The Preserved Tablet is an extension of the same concept. The expression is mentioned only once and it is the only place that the rather mysterious word 'tablet' (*lawh*) appears in the singular, apparently with a technical meaning associated with holy writings probably borrowed from Hebrew or Aramean. Baba'u'llah, having chosen this word to designate his short writings as opposed to the 'books' (*kitab*), indicates that they have the same inspirational and authoritative status and should be considered as part of the divine revelation. According to Muslim commentators, the Preserved Tablet represents the plaque upon which all divine decrees have been inscribed, making God's decision irrevocable. Whatever is inscribed on the Preserved Tablet cannot be changed and this is supposed to apply to the part of the *shari'a* (legal system) that is directly mentioned in the *Qur'an*. Baba'u'llah gives a different interpretation to these expressions. The Mother Book and the Preserved Tablet represent the quintessence of revelation (*wahy*), the spiritual laws that are eternal. The Mother Book represents the divine knowledge that the Manifestations share with God in the world of *Jabarut*. When in the *Tablet of Ahmad* Baba'u'llah says of the *Bayan* that 'It is the Mother Book', he does not mean that the *Bayan* is uncreated or contains laws that cannot be changed, rather he means to confirm the inspirational status of the book as part of the divine revelation. The *Bayan* is part of the same truth that is revealed again and again. In *Jabarut* the revelation exists independently of all human knowledge; it has no need of the garment of words and is not submitted to the contingency that characterizes the created world. When the divine Manifestation transmits the divine revelation to men, he gives it a contingent form that is the form of human language. In the *Baha'i Faith* the concept of revelation goes far beyond the revealed words of the holy books. The distinction made by Baba'u'llah between his revelation and his writings appears clearly in this passage: Say: The First and Foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self. Next to this testimony is His Revelation. For whoso faileth to recognize either the one or the other He has established the words He hath revealed as proof of his reality and truth.

The concept of revelation not only includes the words revealed by the prophets but his deeds and his lasting influence on the world. Revelation is a power at work in God's creation. It is the source of the progress of humankind and the cause of transformation of society. It can influence people even when they have never read Baba'u'llah's writings or heard of his message. Thus the Mother Book does not represent the prototype of any particular book, but the matrix from which all the revealed books have been issued forth, the knowledge that God shares with His Manifestations and which is common to all dispensations. The Preserved Tablet, which Baba'u'llah sometimes calls the *Tablet of Chrysolite*, has an even greater meaning.



It is upon this tablet that the divine decrees (*qada*) are inscribed and consequently it becomes the source of the knowledge of the past and of the future. It is the symbol of the omniscience of the divine Manifestations and of the omnipotence of God. Omniscience and omnipotence should be considered as two aspects of the same reality of the *Jabarut* and it is from that source that the Manifestations derive their knowledge and power. The 'divine Pen' (*qalam-i ilahi*) becomes then the expression of this omnipotence for this is the pen that registers the divine decrees; at the same time the pen is a symbol of omniscience for it is the channel of revelation. There is a clear association between the idea of 'pen' and the idea of 'tablet', which are both personifications of the *Jabarut*. Shoghi Effendi wrote: 'The Preserved Tablet is a spiritual expression and has no actual existence. It sometimes refers to the Manifestation Himself, Whose knowledge encompasses the knowledge of the former and the latter generations.'

Announcements

- *Release of Rubi Book 10-3*

Letters/Communications

- ***National Spiritual Assembly***

- *Feast of Jamál*
- *Feast of Jalál*
- *US NSA Election Results*
- *May 12 Congressional Call*
- *Arab American Conference*
- *CA EU132 Host RBC Appointment*
- *Ridván 2017 Elections*
- *Bahá'í World News Service Development*

- ***Universal House of Justice***

- *Ridván 2017 Message*

- ***Cluster***

- *Appointment of Area Teaching Committee*
- *UC Planning Guide*
- *EU 132*
- *Training Institutes Attaining a Higher Level of Functioning*

Talks/Presentations/Web

- *The Face of God Among Us – John Hatcher*
- *The Bahá'í Proofs for God - Ian Kluge*
- *Oneness and Equality Inspire Enthroned Chief*
- *Ridván Celebration*

Links

- *Bahá'is of Banning*
- *Bahá'is of Claremont*
- *Bahá'is of Fontana*
- *Bahá'is of Rancho Cucamonga*
- *Bahá'is of Redlands*
- *Bahá'is of Riverside*
- *Bahá'is of San Bernardino*
- *Bahá'is of San Bernardino southwest*
- *Bahá'is of Upland*
- *Bahá'is of Yucaipa*
- *Highland Children's Classes*

Bahá'is of Highland

<http://www.divinegemsvirtues.com/highland-lsa.html>

highlandlsa@gmail.com