

Glad-Tidings: Wilmette Institute faculty notes

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This tablet is not particularly long — a bit over 8 pages — but it is a weighty work and a significant supplemental work to the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Five tablets reproduced in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* have a similar structure: the Bishárát, Tarazat, Kalimát-i-Firdawsiyyih, Tajalliyát, and Ishráqát. The structure consists of

an introduction, a series of numbered statements on aspects of the Faith, and a conclusion. The Bishárát has by far the shortest introduction of the five; just one paragraph (in the Ishráqát the opening material occupies more pages than the numbered statements). In each case the tablet is named for the name of the numbered statements; thus the Ishráqát has a series of ishraq or splendors (-at is a feminine plural ending in Arabic; ishraq is a feminine noun with its plural Ishráqát).

In the case of the Bishárát, the statements are listed as "glad tidings." I am not sure of this, so I will ask the Persian and Arabic experts: is "glad tidings" the way "gospel" is translated into Arabic? It means good news, just as "gospel" does.

The fifteen Glad-Tidings contain extremely important teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The first abolishes holy war; the second establishes interfaith dialogue. The third supplements the call in the Aqdas for a universal auxiliary language. The sixth calls for the establishment of the Lesser Peace (which can also be found in the ninth leaf of the exalted paradise, the Lawh-i-Dunyá, and the second ishraq).

I will add parenthetically that anyone who has the old Bahá'í World Faith might want to compare the translation of the sixth Glad-Tidings on page 193 with the new translation in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 23. The old translation says "The sixth glad tidings is the Most Great Peace"; the new translation says "The Sixth Glad-Tidings is the establishment of the Lesser Peace." Big difference! A side-by-side translation quickly shows you how much better the new translation — done under the auspices of the Universal House of Justice and approved by them — is compared to the old.

The ninth Glad-Tidings is one of my favorite ones: it includes a prayer for forgiveness of one's sins. This prayer is not in the prayerbook, as far as I know. [It is not. - B.Z.]

The thirteenth Glad-Tidings is all about the members of the House of Justice; again an example where Bahá'u'lláh supplements the Aqdas text. The fifteenth Glad-Tidings is also remarkable; in it Bahá'u'lláh recommends essentially the British form of government, with a monarch and a democratically elected legislature. He repeats this in the Lawh-i-Dunyá (page 93: "The system of government which the British people have adopted in

London appears to be good, for it is adorned with the light of both kingship and of the consultation of the people").

Each of the fifteen Glad-Tidings requires meditation and comparison with other tablets. Read it and enjoy.

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