



Some Thoughts
On Bahá'u'lláh's
Tablet to the Christians

by *Don Dainty*



**Meditations on Bahá'u'lláh's
'Most Holy Tablet' –
a Tablet to the Christians**

by *Don Dainty*

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From East To West – The Lamp And Orient To Occident – The Light

The Lamp And The Light

The thirteenth paragraph [13] of Bahá'u'lláh's 'Tablet to the Christians' begins with the thought that the Light has shone 'from the East even unto the West'. This theme is repeated in the form of 'from Orient to Occident' in paragraph seventeen [17], thus emphasizing an important point.

These expressions of Bahá'u'lláh, it is important to note that this NAME means 'The Glory of God', touch on yet another related Biblical theme, this time from the Prophet Ezekiel:

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory...And the glory of the lord came into the house by way of the gate whose prospect is toward the East. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold the glory of the lord filled the house."

(Ezekiel 43: 1-5)

Thus, the rise of this Glory of God in the East, is to shine first upon the Holy Land (the 'house' and the 'inner court'), and then ultimately upon the West ('the earth shined with His glory'). The first culmination is the fulfillment of Judaic expectations by the movement of the 'Lamp' itself (Bahá'u'lláh) to the Holy Land from 'Assyria' (Iraq – Micah 7:11 – see below). This is a matter of considerable importance, particularly to Israel.

The other culmination relates to the 'light' of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh enlightening the 'West'. This is a matter of great

importance too – imagine – for North America. It's no accident that the Bahá'í Faith arose in the East, was persecuted, and has flourished in the West, in parallel, it should be noted, to Christianity.

Commenting elsewhere on this East to West transfer of grace, Bahá'u'lláh says:

“From the beginning of time until the present day, the light of Divine Revelation hath risen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West. The illumination thus shed hath, however, acquired in the West an extraordinary brilliancy. Consider the Faith proclaimed by Jesus. Though it first appeared in the East, yet not until its light had been shed upon the West did the full measure of its potentialities become manifest.”

(Bahá'u'lláh, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 75 – see also p. 79)

“Ponder this in your hearts” is Bahá'u'lláh's suggestion in paragraph thirteen [13] of the Tablet to the Christians.

The Co-heirs In The West

This gift of grace to the West is further indicated by the fact that the ‘co-heirs’ of Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Plan for the world were designated to be Canada and the United States of America – bastions of the West, and evidently free enough from the shackles of previous history to make an effective contribution to implementing the Divine Plan.

These two vigorous Bahá'í communities have contributed substantially to the dissemination of the Bahá'í teachings around the world for over 70 years; and particularly since the inception of that important part of the Divine Plan, the Ten-Year World Crusade, which began in 1953. Then, earlier generations of ‘friends’ (see John 15:14), moved from their comfortable homes to virtually every corner of the earth to encounter they knew not what. They have become the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh!

The outcome is that now, in that short space of time, the Bahá'í Faith is the most widespread religion in the world next to Christianity, according to the 1988 Year Book of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

East-West Movement Of The Lamp

Isaiah asks the question:

“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?”

(Isaiah 66:1)

The general answer to this question is the Holy Land. But there are more specific Biblical answers available to searching Christians and deepening Bahá'ís.

Archeology locates the flood of Noah in the Tigris-Euphrates river basin (ancient Assyria now Iraq and part of Iran). Also, remember that Christ said, twice for emphasis, that: ‘as it was in the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be’ (Matt 24:37-39). Accordingly, there is reason to seriously consider this area of the world, Iraq and Iran, in connection with the places associated with the Return.

Further, as required by Ezekiel, Iraq and Iran are to the East of the final destination - the Holy Land.

These fabled lands have figured prominently in Biblical history. The people from this area caused the Jewish Dispersal; they were in some measure responsible for the temporary return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem; the wise men that followed the signs to the infant Christ were Persian Magi; and to this day, the history of these lands is intertwined with that of the Holy Land.

The ‘amazing’ Micah adds considerable definition to the origins of the Beloved and to this East to West movement of the ‘Lamp’, when he traces the Lord’s travels in ‘that day’, by saying:

“In the day that thy walls are to be built, he (the Lord) shall come even to thee (assumed to be the Holy Land) from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.”

(Micah 7:11-12)

It was an Assyrian king, Essar-Haddon, who, sweeping down from the Tigris-Euphrates basin, began the Dispersal of the Jews by taking the people of Israel hostage and removing them to Assyria. His homeland is now modern Iraq. It is adjacent to Western Iran, known in Biblical times as Elam, the location, mentioned in the visions of Daniel and Revelation, where the 'two witnesses' (the Báb is the first) would arise in the 'last day' after 1260 years.

So the Returned Christ must not only pass through, or come from Assyria, the place associated with both the Dispersal and the Return, but He must also visit or pass through more than one fortified city; make more than one sea journey; sojourn by at least one river; and pass through much mountainous terrain. Bahá'u'lláh's enforced journeys incorporate all these detailed and extensive elements of Micah's vision.

All this effort would evidently be required for the Beloved to attain His 'footstool' in the Holy Land, in a movement to the West from His more Easterly origins.

Having thus attained the Holy Land, are the Biblical references even more specific about the place where He might find His 'place of rest'? Consider the following:

"Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith destroy it not, for a blessing is in it...and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold for the flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me."

(Isaiah 65:8-10)

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her ('her' must be the 'the people'), and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

(Hosea 2:14-15)

These suggest that in the sublime future, the Plain of Sharon and the Valley of Achor (the ancient name of the city called Acre during the Crusades, but now called Akká) will provide the promised blessings, safety and hope by virtue of their being host to the Glory of God Whose Ministry lasted for a period of forty years equivalent to the time of the Hebrew journey in the wilderness from Egypt to the Promised Land, as mentioned by Hosea.

Carmel – The Mount Of The Lord

This geography is further described in other Biblical references, such as:

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.”

(Isaiah 35:1-2)

“Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood in the midst of Carmel.”

(Micah 7:14)

“As I live, saith the king, whose name is the Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come.”

(Jeremiah 46:18)

Carmel is a beautiful mountain, by the sea, not far from the northern border with Lebanon. The name Carmel, itself, literally means ‘mount of God’ – hence suggesting one meaning for the many mountain references that the Prophets reveal in connection with the coming of, and the Ministry of, the Lord.

On the southwest side of Carmel is the Plain of Sharon along the coast; Mount Tabor is to the east; Megiddo (of Armageddon fame!)

is to its southeast, and on its northern slopes lay the City of Haifa. The Hebrew rootwords of Haifa mean ‘beautiful coastline’ – as it was in ancient times, so now does it remain.

Around the shore of the Bay of Akká to the North from Haifa, one can easily see nearby the famed, very ancient, town of Akká (Accho, Achor), fortified by the Crusaders and once shelled by the armies of Napoleon. This is where Bahá’u’lláh was confined in the ‘Most Great Prison’. The entire region around Carmel extending inland, was also styled ‘Akká’ during the Palestinian era.

One cannot fail to notice how the place names – Sharon, Tabor, Achor, and Lebanon – neatly define the periphery of the ‘footstool of the Lord’ itself, that is:

Mount Carmel The Seat Of The Unfolding Institutions Of The Kingdom Of God On Earth!

Bahá’u’lláh, addresses Bethlehem (a metaphor for His final place of ‘rest’), saying:

“... This light has risen in the orient, and travelled towards the occident, until it reached thee in the evening of its life.”

(vs 17, Tablet to the Christians)

NOTES:

***Names, Glory and
the The Spirit of Truth:
Some Thoughts
On The Use Of These Terms in
Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the Christians***

by *Don Dainty*

‘Names’, ‘Glory’ and the ‘Spirit of Truth’

In His Tablet to the Christians, Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to the word ‘NAMES’ 7 times, to ‘GLORY’ 11 times, and ‘SPIRIT’ with a capital ‘S’ 6 times. The repetition of these terms suggests an emphasis which is worthy of some exploration.

Four times this word Spirit is used in reference to It's manifestation in Christ, once in His Own Person, and once as the Spirit of Truth, that Spirit spoken of by Christ, manifested by Bahá'u'lláh, saying: “Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come...” (John 16:13) First, some thoughts on ‘names’.

The Kingdom of Names

Bahá'u'lláh begins His Tablet with mentioning ‘names’, a term often coupled with ‘attributes’, which He employs in His Writings to a much greater extent than was the case in the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures. Elsewhere, He alludes to the ‘Kingdom of Names’. Evidently, this matter is worthy of more consideration than we usually devote to it.

However, the word as used in the first two paragraphs of the Tablet to the Christians, appears to deal specifically with the names by which He, Himself, is known — that is, either Mírzá Husayn-Alí (note the inclusion of two very eminent central figures of Islamic history), or, Bahá'u'lláh – the Glory of God – a title given Him by the Báb, and foreshadowed in the Bible.

His Name Will Not Be Jesus Christ!

Primarily, insistence on the view that Jesus will *personally return* to accomplish the miracle of salvation, resurrection, unity and peace in the latter day, stems from the widespread notion that He will be known by the same name — Jesus.

To consider that Christ will return and use the same name - Jesus - is to ignore the prescriptions found in the second and nineteenth Chapters of the Book of Revelation, as follows:

“He that hath an ear Let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone *a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*”

(Revelation 2:17, King James Version)

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True... His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and *he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.* And he was clothed in a vesture dipped with blood: and his name is called the Word of God... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

(Revelation 11-16)

The above two Biblical citations clearly refer to the returned Christ in the latter day. Note that, while a number of titles and attributes are listed (Faithful and True, Word of God, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords), His actual new name is not given, and is known of no-one save the returned Christ Himself. Evidently, the fact that His name will be new, precludes the possibility that the name of the returned Christ will be Jesus.

What Then Are The Possibilities?

There are many designations in the Old and New Testaments by which to identify the Christ Returned. Included among these are:

- the Rod from Jesse (Isaiah 11: 1)
- the Judge among the nations (Isaiah 2:4)
- the Lord of Hosts (Psalms 24:10)
- the Comforter (John 16:7)

- the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13)
- the Son of man (Matthew 25:31)
- Alpha and Omega (Revelation 22:13)
- third woe to come quickly (Revelation 11: 14)
- He who sits on the throne (Revelation 5:13)
- the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:52)
- the trump of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
- the Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- Counsellor (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:16-7)
- the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- the glory of the Lord (Isaiah 40.5)

Although the particular name is not known, these are numerous hints as to its quality. However, even if one doesn't already know the answer, and were challenged to Biblically identify one comprehensive attribute or title for the Christ returned, a leading candidate would be glory. There are numerous Biblical references to flesh out this possibility. Some examples of these are:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye Lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in... Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

(Psalms 24:7-10)

“And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together...”

(Isaiah 40:5)

“... And, behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East ... and the earth shined with his glory ... and the glory of the LORD came into the house ... and behold the glory of the LORD filled the house.”

(Ezekiel 43:1-5)

“... the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD...”

(Isaiah 35:2)

“Arise, shine; for thy Light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.”

(Isaiah 60:1)

“... Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne... “

(Revelation 5:13)

“And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power...”

(Revelation 15:8)

“... shewed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God...”

(Revelation 21:10/11)

“And Jesus said unto them: Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory...”

(Matthew 19:28-30)

“And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it...”

(Revelation 21:23)

And, Christians have for 2,000 years daily supplicated the advent of this glory, daily, in the Lord's Prayer:

“Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in earth as it is in heaven... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.”

(Matthew 6:9-13)

The equating of the Father with glory in this beloved and sublime prayer, and the frequent references to the Glory of God found throughout the Bible, further confirm that the Second Advent would be a return in the station of the Father invested with power and glory.

His Name Is Bahá'u'lláh

Regarding Revelation 2:17 quoted above on p. 12, Robert Riggs, on page 70 of his book entitled *The Apocalypse Unsealed* makes some interesting points when he says:

“in antiquity, it was a custom to present invited guests with small mosaics or stones engraved with names or other suitable inscriptions. These stones were called tesserae... The colour white symbolizes purity and perfection... wisdom and understanding... Tesserae were also used to perpetuate a friendship and to render a union more sacred. The privilege of friendship could be extended to others carrying the tessera... It was usually broken into equal parts, and each party wrote his name or other suitable inscription on his piece. Mutual pledges and an exchange were made, and, to prevent imposture, the pledge was kept secret and no one knew the name inscribed on his piece except the possessor. Tesserae were probably carried by the early Christians during their travels to introduce them to fellow Christians... The Báb (the Fore-runner of Bahá'u'lláh) presented His followers and Bahá'u'lláh with a scroll often called the ‘White Stone’ on which He inscribed a pentacle (five-pointed star) with 360 derivatives of the word ‘Bahá’. This scroll represented the name of the new Manifestation to follow Him...”

So it was clearly the Báb that bestowed the title of Bahá'u'lláh on ‘Him Whom God would make manifest’. Thus Bahá'u'lláh becomes the King, Ruler and Father of us all in accord with the following promises:

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

(Matthew 16:27)

“When the son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations ... Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...”

(Matthew 25:31-34)

These are some background thoughts on Bahá'u'lláh's use of 'names' and 'glory'. What of the 'Spirit of Truth'?

The 'Spirit Of Truth'

The Christ Returned, as forecast in the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians, is destined to perform many sublime functions. The characterization of these functions is provided by the numerous titles that accompany them. Some forty of these titles are listed by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By* (pages 95-96). Seventeen of these are listed above on pages 2 & 3 of this document. And, among these many, is also included that of the 'Spirit of Truth', upon which Bahá'u'lláh lays some emphasis in His Tablet to the Christians.

The prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, called the *Tablet of Ahmad*, is a prayer 'invested with special potency and significance'. Some six generations of Bahá'ís throughout the world can now attest to the truth of that statement. It is noteworthy that this prayer makes a most important promise:

“Verily, this is that Most Great Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh), foretold in the Books of the Messengers, through Whom *truth shall be distinguished from error and the wisdom of every command shall be tested.*”

What an astonishing promise, considering that the systematic and experimental search for truth is fraught with such great dif-

faculty for us mortals of relative incapacity. Only the Manifestation of God, He Who is possessed of all-knowledge, regal authority and power, could possibly advance such a promise, and then demonstrate it's validity.

Further, Bahá'u'lláh in His Letters to the Kings, rulers and ecclesiastics, proclaimed:

“O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus, the Spirit of God, ‘I go away, and come again unto you’? Wherefore, then, did ye fail, when He did come again unto you in the clouds of heaven, to draw nigh unto Him, that ye might behold His face, and be of them that attained His Presence? In another passage He saith: ‘*When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth*’. And yet, behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies... Ye have, by reason of your failure, hindered the breath of God from being wafted over you, and have withheld from your souls the sweetness of its fragrance.”

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 246-247)

“Announce thou unto the priests: Lo! He Who is the Ruler is come. Step out from behind the veil in the name of thy Lord, He Who layeth low the necks of all men. Proclaim then unto all mankind the glad-tidings of this mighty, this glorious Revelation. *Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth*. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 12 “Tablet to the Christians”)

Thus it is clear that Bahá'u'lláh laid claim to be that ‘Spirit of Truth’, forecast by Christ in the Gospel of John, in these words:

(1) “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth,

which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

(John 15:26)

(2) “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

(John 16:13)

Regarding an ‘agency’ that prompts His Revelations, notice that the thought expressed by John is affirmed by Bahá’u’lláh in His Tablet to Christians as above in the second quotation of page 17.

(3) “... And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever and ever; Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you... But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever, I have said unto you... Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you...”

(John 14:15-28)

A Post-Script by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as appointed Interpreter of the Bahá’í Writings by Bahá’u’lláh, often discusses these issues also. Among the many examples is the following:

“The reverend minister read from the words of the Gospel, ‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth’. The century has dawned when the Spirit of Truth can reveal these verities to mankind, proclaim that very Word, establish the real foundations of Christianity

and deliver the nations and peoples from the bondage of forms and imitations. The cause of discord, prejudice and animosity will be removed, the basis of love and amity be established... You must listen to the admonition of this Spirit of Truth. You must follow the example and footprints of Jesus Christ. Read the Gospels.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 41-42)

Names, glory and truth indeed!!!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Books mentioned are available in most public libraries.

Local **Telephone** listings are often in your phone book under "*Bahá'í Faith*".

In Canada **Vision TV** broadcasts *Bahá'í Perspective* the first Wednesday and Thursday of each month (check local listings).

Please feel free to contact any one of the following:

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