

# **Mythoi: Stories of the Origin, Fall and Redemption of Humanity: A Study in the Topology of the Holy Books**

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That which hath been in existence had existed before, but not in the form thou seest today.<sup>1</sup>

In *Some Answered Questions* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá discusses the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and interprets some of its primary symbols.<sup>2</sup> He adds that the story ‘contains divine mysteries and universal meanings, and it is capable of marvellous explanations’.<sup>3</sup> In this paper I want to explore some of these mysteries, meanings and marvels.

Taken together the events in the Genesis account are the story—and the word ‘myth’ means story—of our creation, fall and redemption. A myth is not a fanciful tale, which is the popular usage of the word. A myth is a root construct of the imagination which (in the manner of fairy tales, legends and fables, but in a far more important sense) takes the historical ‘did really’ as an expression of the imaginative and psychologically prior ‘let this be’.<sup>4</sup> This way of viewing things holds that historical events are shot through with archetypes or mythical exemplars; that is things imaginatively true for all time because they are essential to our processes of thought.<sup>5</sup>

The most important religious myth, in my view, is the story of the creation, fall and redemption of humanity.

Epistemologically, creation, fall and redemption is the royal metaphor of the advance of human consciousness. This advance of consciousness is the stuff of which history is made. It is what gives shape to the term universal history. Accordingly, humanity's origin, fall and redemption do not occur in history. They are mental states or spiritual movements which the mind is supposed to embrace imaginatively and illuminate. Thus searching the earth for some original Garden of Eden is a silly archaeological exercise but not a silly imaginative one.

Psychologically, the process of redemption passes through four stages or states of consciousness. It begins in Eden; that is, symbolically, any unconscious state of psychic unity—where unconscious means people are not aware of the psychological forces holding them together. There occurs what is traditionally termed a fall, or breaking of the unity into its component parts and their successive temporal appearance. This is a birth of consciousness, for consciousness always implies a separation or awareness of difference. From this perspective, the fall is not a loss of anything except innocence and ignorance. Spiritually, the fall stems from an increase of knowledge, a breakthrough towards a new unity causing a breakdown of established unity. It is the start of an advance.

When this separating tendency reaches its full extent, a reversal suddenly occurs and the third stage, that of apocalypse, happens. An apocalypse is the revealing of the hidden and complete form of Reality by the burning away of the partial and imperfect perceptions of reality that the 'fall' gives us. We must undergo this fiery unifying ordeal if our true state and nature are to be manifest. Finally, redemption occurs, which is the regaining of Eden but with consciousness. Re-entering Eden transformed means our vision of Eden is transformed. That is, the mind perceives the real Eden burning within and shining through every form of a cooled surface of wilderness, a perception symbolized in its specialized form in the biblical burning bush an

in its generalized form in Buddha's Fire Sermon.

Regained Eden is a new, more psychologically complete unity of consciousness, one in which the human perceptual powers are restored in new form, where humanity recognizes its true self.

## **Creation**

The first two chapters of Genesis describe two creations, the second reversing the sequence of events in the first at several important points. The first chapter tells of the physical creation being progressively 'called into being' through a series of 'And God said'. In this creation, begun in darkness and water, the human being is the last and highest creature.

This is traditionally styled the general creation, or creation from the bottom up, the ascendant push of life out of which humans evolve as the final species and yet remain essentially within nature's borders. 'Considered from this point of view man is the branch; nature is the root.'<sup>6</sup> In nature the human is born, grows and dies, being reborn only in replenishing the species with his offspring. But this rebirth is spiritually static, because it only keeps the non-progressive cycles of nature turning. It keeps human intelligence water-bound, that is locked in a cosmic womb or cave. Visions on this level are like Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and Yeats's *A Vision*; that is, visions of humanity revolving within the larger cycles of nature.

The second chapter of Genesis, which scholars like Joseph Campbell claim is the earlier account,<sup>7</sup> introduces us to 'man' the 'living soul' endowed with 'the breath of God'. And this breath means a spiritual potency as yet unawakened. This creation, begun in light and on land, is traditionally termed the special creation of God, or creation from the top down, so to speak. In this creation, the human being, the rational soul, is first created and highest; that is, it 'stands first in the order of creation and first in rank'<sup>8</sup>.

This special creation is imaginatively of a higher type than the first, because, according to its postulates, nature really emerges out of the human or human nature not the other way around.

The special creation of God is also imaginatively higher because, here, rebirth is not merely putting offspring into the treadmill of birth and death, as in nature. Spiritually, rebirth is a lifting movement raising us clear of nature, a resurrection from out of the lower world (into which we have plunged) into our true original condition; that is, not from hell or a lower world back into this one called earth, but from this world perceived as hell resurrected into heaven, which is this world perceived in its real form. Christianity calls this movement salvation or redemption, the buying back of one's spiritual self at the price of one's natural life.

Hence the two creations are mirror images and they move, metaphorically, in parallel opposition. These contrasting movements meet in humankind since, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, 'Not in any other of the species in the world of existence is there such a difference, contrast, contradiction and opposition as in the species of man.'<sup>9</sup> They give him spiritual and material senses, creating thereby within his powers of perception an epistemological opposition that reflects the ontological one.<sup>10</sup>

The two creations of Genesis correspond to the 'Universal' and 'Secondary' Revelations spoken of by Bahá'u'lláh.<sup>11</sup> His vision is an imaginative advance over the biblical split because it embodies the more complete idea that creation is one thing in two aspects and is in all respects a revelation of God. From Bahá'u'lláh's perspective, the 'Universal Revelation' is the first cause of physical creation, the unifying power holding the creation together. 'So pervasive and general is this revelation', He declares, 'that nothing whatsoever in the whole universe can be discovered that doth not reflect His splendour. Under such conditions every consideration of proximity and remoteness is obliterated.'<sup>12</sup>

The 'Secondary Revelation', and every prophetic Revelation is a secondary revelation, embodies what Bahá'u'lláh calls the 'principle of separation and distinction which animateth the Divine Purpose'.<sup>13</sup> For humanity this principle impels the power of consciousness towards consciousness of itself.

The secondary revelations are different and progressive forms of the same universal thing.<sup>14</sup> Each is the power recreating all things, beginning with the highest, the believers, and working down to the transformation of physical earth itself. The secondary Revelations transform (i.e. develop by recreation) the forms of life deposited *in potentia* within the universe of the general revelation, more fully manifesting the original unity of all things by reuniting them in more complex patterns. Thus Bahá'u'lláh asserts:

In every age and cycle He hath, through the splendorous light shed by the Manifestations of His wondrous Essence, recreated all things, so that whatsoever reflecteth in the heavens and on the earth the signs of His glory may not be deprived of the outpourings of His mercy, nor despair of the showers of His favours.<sup>15</sup>

The final implication of considering the single creation as a double revelation is that at the end of time, when humanity regains itself, these secondary Revelations will be perceived as linked, emanating from the same Source and together forming a universal cycle of human development.<sup>16</sup> All Revelation, the universal and the secondary, pre-existed in eternity, in what Eliade calls '*in illo tempore*' or sacred time as opposed to historical time.<sup>17</sup> But at the end of time, or history as a developmental process, a secondary Revelation which is universal will appear that will unite the spiritual ground of Being with the apex of creation, connecting Genesis' two creations manifestly into one and thus redeeming all things. When this occurs, the eternal B and E, beginning and ending, matter and spirit, are

‘joined and knit together’<sup>18</sup> is to form a new creation.<sup>19</sup>

We said that the secondary Revelations are the cause of the development of humanity and nature. Since their transformational effect proceeds from the highest downward, humankind gets transformed first. The second chapter of Genesis follows this pattern, since it is here that civilization, the human form of nature, in the explicit shape of a garden, is introduced. But civilization, as the root of the word indicates, is really a city, and this is to be understood in the verse: ‘And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed’ (Gen. 2:8). Thus Eden is more than this garden. It is a garden on the outskirts of a city, the garden and the symbolically greater city together being Eden. The garden is civilization in nature, what human art makes out of the raw material of the physical world. The city is the inner spiritual form of the garden, what the art of revelation makes out of human nature. Eden as city implies that salvation is not just for the gardening individual but for all citizens. To redeem itself humankind must regain Eden, but the Eden symbolized as a city or civilization out of which comes a river of divine knowledge, or Revelation, ‘to water the garden’ (Gen. 2:10).

## **Revelation: The Kingdom of Names**

The writers of Genesis were aware that the special creations progressively recreate the general or physical creation, causing new forms to come out of it; the second chapter goes on to tell us that out of the ground of the garden, this magic circle of spiritual potential sown by God, the Lord made living things to come again, but in cultivated form: first the trees and plants, then the beasts and birds, humanity’s first ‘helpmeets’. These were brought to the first real individual in the Bible, Adam. He is the first individual because He is named. That means His name or spiritual potential is already activated. This Adam is one who knows

Himself to be a name or Manifestation of God. The 'living soul' mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis was endowed with the 'breath of God', but this endowment was not conscious of itself. Hence previously the phrase referring to the highest form of life was 'the man'. The word 'Adam' means man, but Adam 'the man' means red clay or Adamah, the *prima materia* called earth which is endowed with metaphysical potential.

The Bible then says that living things were brought 'unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof' (Gen. 2:19).

That word 'was' is wonderful. It means that the name Adam called each living thing became the name of that thing from that time. Adam's revelation of the Kingdom of Names revealed a specific intellectual form of nature.<sup>20</sup> That is, He re-called creation into new being and called the human mind into intellectual awareness of it, making all created things part of humanity's intellectual knowledge, lifting humanity from out of a purely material existence known adequately enough through his senses alone. This awakening of the human mind is possible only for the all-compelling power of the Word of God employing His holy speech. Once named by Him, things live forever. This naming of nature gives nature eternal life. Naming is an apocalypse. It is nature's salvation.

Yet 'that was the name' implies that Adam did not so much think up names for everything as read the names already written upon them. 'That was the name' means, from this perspective, that had been the name, though that name was unspoken. The naming in Eden was a new and different kind of creation. This great rupture of existence is the creation of the conscious human mind, conscious of itself. The names Adam called things can only be His own names, for the human being is the possessor of all the Names of God. If humanity itself is the sign of both worlds, its names are therefore its signature. It is Adam, the first

receptor of God's revelation of names, who then utters them. This more subtle aspect of the situation is discussed in the Qur'án's Súra of the Cow, (2:28–30).

When thy Lord said to the angels, 'Verily, I am about to place one in my stead on earth,' they said, 'Wilt thou place there one who will do ill therein and shed blood, when we celebrate thy praise and extol thy holiness?' God said, 'Verily, I know what ye know not.'

And he taught Adam the names of all things, and then set them before the angels, and said, 'Tell me the names of these, if ye are endued with wisdom.'

They said, 'Praise be to Thee! We have no knowledge but what Thou has given us to know. Thou! Thou art the Knowing, the Wise.'

He said, 'O Adam, inform them of their names.'

The Manifestation of God whom we know as Adam presided over the primordial historical stage of the spiritual conception of humankind—the birth of consciousness which always implies a separation—and He is the bearer to men of the civilizing arts of, first, Neolithic agriculture and second, articulate speech. Agriculture and speech are both cultivations, one of the physical earth, the other of intellectual earth. Hence garden imagery is so prevalent. The Qur'án tells us that human speech is the result of two prior events.

The God of mercy hath taught the Qur'án, hath created man, hath taught him articulate speech (55:1–3).

How could Adam read the names of things if He didn't already know their names and how to read them? They are the same names as God taught Him before humankind was created. They are God's self-knowledge. Through Adam God taught humanity 'articulate speech'. This speech is the eternal Qur'án or 'recitation' of names.



## **The Fall Into Human Knowledge**

We all know that within the garden of Eden were two important trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; the latter tree ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says ‘signifies the human world’.<sup>21</sup> Adam and Eve are forbidden to eat of this second tree and sin or fall by disobeying this divine interdict.

Now in terms of spiritual geography, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stands symbolically opposite the Tree of Life that stands, in the words of Genesis, ‘in the midst of the garden’ (Gen. 2:9). The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, therefore, marks the outermost border of Eden. Beyond it lies eternal chaos or wilderness. Our original parents were forbidden to eat the fruit of this tree, not to protect a jittery God from His creatures rising to His height, but to prevent them from falling as low as nature in itself. Standing opposite the Tree of Life,<sup>22</sup> the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the tree of spiritual death. It sits in the lowest station of heavenly knowledge, as the furthestmost boundary of the Garden of intelligence, while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asserts ‘the tree of life is the highest degree of the world of existence: the position of the Word of God, and the supreme Manifestation ... the expression for the centre of absolutely pure sanctity—that is to say, of the divine supreme Manifestation’.<sup>23</sup>

Being a form of nature, though an intellectual form of it, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the lower human nature and its fruit is knowledge of nature, which is the objective form of humanity’s own lower aspect. Eating of the fruit of this tree produces both good and evil effects, but these get so tangled up in our minds that after a while we can’t decide which is which. This falling off of intellectual power and perception left humankind with only human knowledge, namely, art and science, which is a parody of revelation, that is, something with a like structure but which leads to the opposite conclusion, and which is wholly de-

pendent upon divine knowledge for its own existence, as the image in the mirror is dependent for its existence upon the object. Compared with Revelation, human knowledge cannot give truth, only, like the image in the mirror, the semblance of it.<sup>24</sup>

Hence the fall into human knowledge must be seen epistemologically as humanity's self-imprisonment within a smaller mental state, one characterized by the light/dark cycle of nature which is the metaphor of all opposition. In this subterranean spirituality, no reality higher than ego desires are perceived.

This same proud, vain and idiotic spiritual crime has been committed after every Revelation with the same sorry result. The mind loses the power to understand the reality of nature and humanity's own nature, which are the same as the revelation of names given things by every Manifestation, and people start again to believe themselves to be creatures of nature. From this point philosophies like the noble savage emerge which quickly degenerate into a pernicious social Darwinism. Humanity is banished to the wilderness.

Such expulsions do not occur because God desires to punish us in a spiteful fit of fury at our stupidity, nor from fear that His fire will be stolen, though this is what the satanic ego would like to think. Satan, or the serpent of the Eden story, believes God acts spitefully because he, himself, does, or would if he were in God's place. God expels us from Paradise in order to safeguard us from further stupidity, or at least the opportunity of acting upon it. We are expelled since, as the account goes on, 'the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' (Gen. 3:22). That is, live forever in his degraded condition of attachment to himself and human knowledge, with no hope of redemption.

The Manifestations know good and evil for they are the Alpha and Omega of human existence. But they use this

knowledge to develop the moral sense of the soul. Unenlightened humanity divides people into good and evil for such tyrannical purposes as holy wars and revenge, or for underpinning some oppressive penal code of class control. All these are aspects of our attachment to sin, warring divisions, illusion and hate, the ego-will to power through the knowledge of repressive domination. “These are the sins of the world, the fruits of the tree from which Adam did eat.”<sup>25</sup>

But humanity leaving Eden is really the spiritual departure of the Manifestation from out of the hearts of men, because they blind themselves to His reality and fall out from under His guidance. The Book of Job gets it right when it states that Satan ‘went forth from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:12). The Manifestation doesn’t leave. We do. He, then, cloaks Himself so that not everyone will recognize Him. In Bahá’u’lláh’s time ‘He chose to hide His own Self behind a thousand veils, lest profane and mortal eyes discover His glory’.<sup>26</sup> This is our real banishment, whether in Adam’s time or our own.

Yet even Satan serves divine purposes.<sup>27</sup> The Book of Revelation tells us that the law of God goes out into the wilderness to a place prepared of God after bringing forth a holy child from the womb of Eve.<sup>28</sup> Spiritually, the fall or separation from God is necessary for reunion to be possible. Disobedience is needed if God is to show His forgiveness.<sup>29</sup> Satan, which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá defines as the ego,<sup>30</sup> causes disobedience, hence he leads us into the wilderness and thereby extends the domain of the law of God, for the law follows him. To redeem humanity the voice of God becomes a ‘voice crying in the wilderness’. Wilderness—which is metaphorically any place in need of divine law, whether childhood, the actual jungle, or our morally deteriorating cities where the law of the jungle rules—is the origin of the return to Eden.<sup>31</sup> It is the first form of Eden that the mind in exile encounters. What does this mean?

By eating of the fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil, the

mind inverts the true order of creation. It now believes the spiritual shadow is light, and the light or Tree of Life it call darkness. Because of this spiritual inversion the mind believes material nature and empirical knowledge is Eden or reality, and spiritual Eden is a wilderness of superstition. Wilderness is what the natural understanding calls the holy books. Perhaps this idea is behind Bahá'u'lláh's statement to the Christian ecclesiastics in the Lawh-i-Aqdas:

Say, did ye not hearken to the Voice of the Crier, calling aloud in the wilderness of the Bayán, bearing unto you the glad-tidings of the coming of your Lord, the All-Merciful?<sup>32</sup>

Epistemologically, living in wilderness, or the outermost form of reality or Eden, means that humanity has ploughed under the Garden of divine knowledge of causes and effects and accepts only human criteria of knowing. The mind now wanders in what Bahá'u'lláh calls the 'wilderness of material causes'.<sup>33</sup> This is the spiritual origin of the growth of materialism as a philosophy of life, a philosophy which, as Shoghi Effendi said, was 'born originally in Europe'.<sup>34</sup> Men foolishly called this philosophy Enlightenment. Bahá'u'lláh wrote about them:

Those who have rejected God and firmly cling to Nature as it is in itself are, verily, bereft of knowledge and wisdom. They are truly of them that are far astray.<sup>35</sup>

Having forgotten Revelation, and having dismissed eternity and its laws, if we now wish to understand the knowledge of God, our minds must be purged of all acquired human learning.<sup>36</sup> But wilderness is also how the fallen mind sees the geographical Holy Land, the way the Holy Land appears to the eye, not to vision. This Holy Land has always been the garden surrounding the city, but now it is to be

physically restored as the promised land towards which all people will flow. 'This Holy Land', writes Bahá'u'lláh:

hath been mentioned and extolled in all the sacred Scriptures. In it have appeared the Prophets of God and His chosen Ones. This is the wilderness in which all the Messengers of God have wandered, from which their cry, 'Here am I, here am I, O my God' was raised. This is the promised Land in which He Who is the Revelation of God was destined to be made manifest.<sup>37</sup>

Israel as a land, a people and a state of soul fell into a degraded condition. The law of God followed the people of Israel so that they would re-learn how to transform the wilderness of earth into the new garden of civilization arising within it.

To return to Eden we must put the Tree of Life back into the centre of our lives or gardens of intelligence. We must uproot the tree of good and evil which has been there since Genesis 3:3 and transplant it back on the periphery. This ends the tyranny that time and space, the containing categories of nature and human knowledge, as Kant knew, wield over our mind and which give us only material knowledge through our natural mind.<sup>38</sup>

Let us take a look now at the events which occurred in Babel that parallel those that took place in Eden.

### **Babel: The Disintegration of the Word**

The opening of the eleventh chapter of Genesis informs us that originally 'the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech' (Gen. 11:1). This language was the speech of Adam.

But then the verses ominously inform us that 'It came to pass' that a division occurred in a land called Babel. Humankind decided to build a city of man, the infernal form of the ever-lasting city or word of God, the City of

Certitude, lying at the centre and highest point of Eden. But the city of man, being the reverse of the City of Certitude, is the city of doubt, the premise for obtaining knowledge from which Descartes started. Being the reverse of the eternal city in the heart of Eden, it can only be built in the wilderness of temporality lying outside Eden. Symbolically, it is itself that wilderness of uncertainty.

A close study of the events which followed this decision indicate that this 'fall' in Babel is a re-enactment of the 'fall' which occurred in Eden. In both accounts humanity's insatiable appetite for its own glorification under the seductive appeal of the inner Satan/serpent, its 'attachment to the human world',<sup>39</sup> goad humanity into believing that it 'shall be as gods' (Gen. 3:5) and 'reach unto heaven' (Gen. 11:4).

In Babel we meet the infernal tree again in the form of the tower. And, we also meet the serpent in Babel in the words: let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth' (Gen. 11:4).

Giving to humanity a name is the prerogative only of God, the Lord or Revealer of the Kingdom of Names. Names are how things are called into being, their numen and essence. So human beings giving themselves a name is their satanic attempt to call themselves into being, to create themselves, or make themselves a partner with God. The naming at Babel was to unite humankind but as it was already united in one language and one speech, the effect of this self-naming reverses the intent, destroys the unifying power of words and causes the very scattering people feared would occur.

So the story tells us that God confounded their language, making understanding impossible, and 'scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city' (Gen. 11:8).

This scattering occurs whenever human beings uncritically accept their own vain imaginings. Such acceptance shuts the powers of vision into themselves; that is, into

vanities or unrealizable fantasies. As Adam and Eve were forcibly evicted from Eden to prevent them from identifying themselves completely with nature in itself, so likewise the expulsion from Babel occurs to protect humankind from fully accepting the vain-glorious image that the human being is God and is thus bound by no moral rules or laws. Thus the biblical verses say:

Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do (Gen. 11:6).

Like remaining in the Garden after wilful disobedience, to have finished the infernal city, would have kept us proud, boastful and material, and eventually we would have destroyed creation in an orgy of frightful violence.

The tower was being built to ‘reach unto heaven’ (Gen. 11:4). But since heaven is within, such movement can only be up and outward towards physical existence.<sup>40</sup> But idle fancies are without. Without what? Without form and void of meaning. The ‘depths of idle fancies’ so often described in the Baha’i scriptures are then related metaphorically to the freezing wastes of stellar space, and the magnified search for the origin of the universe out there yields not knowledge of God but an abstract, mechanical, mathematical natural law.

Hence the tower was being built in the wrong direction. It was going further out into the wilderness, spiritually imitating the mineral to human cycle of nature, the one starting from earth not the heaven within. But since this cycle ends with humankind, to go higher is to enter nothingness, or pure imagination. To reach heaven one should not construct towers outward towards vain nothings but inward towards the centre or highest point of spirit. Thus ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that ‘any movement animated by love moveth from the periphery to the centre, from space to the

Day-Star of the universe'.<sup>41</sup>

The larger spiritual principle at work in Babel is that perverting the Word of God is the act of substituting the name humanity gives itself or attaches to itself for the name of God, and our names for things for the names that Adam, the eternal, recurring Manifestation of God, gives them. This is a denial of the Kingdom of Names, or Revelation, and a denial, therefore, of the possibility of resurrection. But subtler still, and the cause of all denials, is the holding of the former name of God against His new name. Thus Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

And since they fixed their eyes on names, therefore when He replaced His Name 'the Most Exalted' by 'the Most Glorious' their eyes were dimmed. They have failed to recognize Him in these days and are reckoned with those that perish.<sup>42</sup>

The essential point to understand is that when the name of God changes and transforms then all other names and their ranks change and transform. This is the new revelation of the Kingdom of Names, the recreated creation that appears with every Revelation, each release recreating the world in its image.

Accordingly, with each new secondary Revelation all things are spiritually known anew, again and yet for the first time, the same yet different. The Báb writes:

All that is known owes its renown to the splendour of Thy Name the Most Manifest, and every object is deeply stirred by the vibrating influence emanating from Thine invincible Will.<sup>43</sup>

Renown means to re-name. All things are spiritually known by their names, thus re-known in fuller form when this name changes and transforms, for the old name does not disappear but is folded within the new name: meaning is



cumulative. A new name for a thing is a transformation of that thing, the thing in a new and more complete form.

If revelation is progressive, revealing more of God, then the world of objects, stirred by the vibrating influence of its progressive namings, is also progressive as an effect, revealing more of the creation. Humanity's progression, spiritual and intellectual, depends upon this progressive unfolding of revelation and creation, the twin places of appearance of God's changing names, towards the perfect human being and the perfect word. If the perceptual leap is not made the new revealed creation cannot be seen—'their eyes were dimmed'—and people fall into babbling about something which is no longer there.<sup>44</sup>

The entire Babel disintegration, like the expulsion from Eden, is true according to its own mytho-poetic canons of truth which I've rationalized as all interpretation does. But both stories are also a prophecy about the end of days and what will be re-enacted within the community of God, the garden of Eden, at that time.

## **Apocalypse: Reversal**

'Abdu'l-Bahá informs us that in all universal cycles the 'divine and creative purpose in them was the evolution of spiritual man ... The circle of existence is the same circle; it returns. The tree of life has ever borne the same heavenly fruit'.<sup>45</sup> He also states that in all spiritual cycles 'the origins and ends are the same'.<sup>46</sup> Bahá'u'lláh remarks: 'Know thou that the end is like unto the beginning. Even as thou dost consider the beginning, similarly shouldst thou consider the end, and be of them that truly perceive. Nay, rather consider the beginning as the end itself, and so conversely, that thou mayest acquire a clear perception.'<sup>47</sup>

The meaning of these quotations, as I see it is that spiritually what occurs in the beginning of a cycle of development reoccurs in complete and perfected form at the end when everything returns and is given restitution, for on the

Day of Resurrection Bahá'u'lláh says 'in truth there is a return and resurrection for every created thing'.<sup>48</sup> In this return the teleology of the universe becomes openly manifest.<sup>49</sup>

The holy books tell us that the end of time is marked by an apocalypse. The word apocalypse literally means revelation. For our purposes this revelation is the uncovering of the true form of reality, the time when everything returns in its own consummated form. But this return, restitution and resurrection of all created things can be perceived only by a metaphorical reversal of the image of Eden in the mirror of our minds. That is, the mind must cease to understand creation from a material epistemology and see it as the Prophets do, as a spiritual revelation.

The idea of reversal of forms at the end of a process of development is an old one. Christ spoke of the last being first and the first last. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle uses the idea of a thing transforming into its opposite form at the end of its development. Heraclitus spoke of opposites becoming each other. Jung returned to Heraclitus for his idea of psychological enantiodromia, a word meaning to flow backwards.<sup>50</sup> And in rhetoric there is the reversal of the order of words known as chiasmus, which word also has an anatomical meaning, being the place in the brain stem where the optic nerves cross.<sup>51</sup> The idea is renewed by Bahá'u'lláh when He states that at the end of time all things undergo the 'mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign'.<sup>52</sup> What is this reversal?

I'm not sure, but one meaning may be that events in the historical world are resurrected by being re-enacted in their true or real or spiritual form. Hence if Eden is to be restored in our minds, so, too, is Babel to be regained in the spirit.

Historically, Babel is a place wherein occurred the disintegration of the unifying power of the originating word of God which Adam, Noah and the other great ones had brought to a certain level of perfection. The word Babel has

been derived from *balal*, which means confusion and this meaning is related to the city of Babylon, the Bible's symbol for material civilization without any divine guiding principle. Bahá'u'lláh confirms this usage.<sup>53</sup> Symbolically, Babel is any place where the city of man is imaginatively attempted.

The Hebrew word Bab-el literally means the gate of God. This Bab-el is the inmost land of revealed spirit, which appears at the end of time. Bab-el is the spiritual land we enter through the gate of God, wherein was re-enacted the aspiring evil leading to the confusion of tongues for the last time; after the murder of the Báb there arose a myriad cacophonous claimants to be 'Him Whom God shall make manifest', thus confounding and scattering the community of God. The towering ego-vanity of Yahyá and his serpent-like seducer, though, finally consolidated evil into a single form or spot of dark earth opposing the luminous spot. For once the Spirit of Truth is manifested in the form of a single Man and His words (thus marking the end of developmental time), this results in the essence of evil, the unrestrained imagination of the ego, reaching up into its false idle/idol heaven to be as gods, becoming manifested in the form of a man and his words.<sup>54</sup>

Evil consolidated into a single form is the revelation of the real cause and nature of evil itself. This revelation is that the fall of humanity, which theologically begins evil, is not expansion outward, which is development, but our voluntary enslavement to whatever is outside ourselves. Spatially this means nature. Temporally it means our past; intellectually it means our own reflection. All these are idol of self. Humanity is not essentially a part of nature but apart from it, and is no longer a part of its own past but past it. Hence identifying oneself with what one is not or is no longer alienates us from ourselves. We are expelled from our inner unity.

The historical advance of idolatry, our deepening fall, has proceeded from our worship of our body, and by

extension nature, to the worship of the extensions of that body, which recent scholars, such as Marx and McLuhan, have rightly interpreted as technology, in servitude to which we perceive the ultimate terrors of alienation.

To obtain release from this perceptual imprisonment is the struggle of consciousness. Some people attempt to regain consciousness by a process Plato called anamnesis or recollection of all prior stages of human thought. But this is still babbling because the real origin of all things is spirit.<sup>55</sup> Going back in time to find the origin is the nightmare of history from which Joyce tried unsuccessfully to awaken.<sup>56</sup> The real awakening is to reclaim oneself by resurrection to greater identity with the eternal here and now. That is, by reunion with the Kingdom of Names in its new form. Every divine renaming is an apocalypse. All things are re-named when a new name is exalted to the station of God, which becomes the 'First Word'. Through the Báb's pronouncement of God's new name in His own time, Bahá'u'lláh says:

the whole creation was revolutionized, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth were stirred to the depths. Through that Word the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing, in both the contingent world and the heavenly kingdom, entities of a new creation, and revealing, in the unseen realms, the signs and tokens of Thy unity and oneness.<sup>57</sup>

## **The End of Time: The Redemption of All Things**

The story of the events in the original Garden of God tell us of events that will recur throughout the Adamic cycle, and thus in mythic seed form hold the entire historical prophetic cycle. These Edenic events are the archetypes, or governing forms, of history and of human consciousness. They have animated the progress of humanity back to the

sacred vale of Eden, which the Manifestations of God have by set degrees prepared us to re-enter. The Manifestations themselves are the archetypes of humanity, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained:

The Holy, Divine Manifestations are unique and peerless. They are the arch-types (sic) of celestial and spiritual virtues in their own age and cycle. They stand on the summit of the Mount of Vision and they foreshadow the perfections of the evolving humanity.<sup>58</sup>

Bahá’u’lláh, whose words ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls the ‘essence of the words of the Prophets’, brings the universal secondary revelation; the final revelation of the Kingdom of Names that both unites all things and separates all things. ‘Verily’ says Bahá’u’lláh, ‘the day of ingathering is come, and all things have been separated from each other.’<sup>59</sup> With this fiery apocalypse of thought, humanity enters a new perceptual universe. Yet it has always been there in the thought of the Prophets.

Thus at the end of time, in the last days, the process of unfoldment, to which Satan contributed but which he did not initiate, will be manifestly perfect and complete. The Prophetic Cycle will terminate, will be rolled up within a new and larger order spread out in its stead. For the old order must be limited in order to preserve it. The long series of self-reverses suffered by humanity, the descent into the deepening gloom of division, disunity and ignorance of higher things will itself as an entire process, through the Great Reversal, apocalyptically reverse and the reality of the expanding spiritual unity of humanity become manifest. For, from the perspective of eternity, divisions are developments, all evolution is from the undifferentiated unity to the differentiated unity; that is towards a complete manifestation. And with complete manifestation, what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls ‘the primal oneness deposited at the heart of all created things’<sup>60</sup> is manifest.

The Lord of all mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise,' says 'Abdu'l-Bahá.<sup>61</sup> But this earthly paradise appears only with the spiritual resurrection of the city of Eden. This, in turn, occurs at the end of time when time itself is transformed because civilization is run according to the law of God.<sup>62</sup>

The Prophetic cycle ended when Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed: 'Ye are the fruits of one tree.'<sup>63</sup> With the appearance of this 'Tree of the world of existence',<sup>64</sup> the cosmological Tree or *axis mundi* of myth, Eden re-appears at the spiritually highest point on earth, the heart of the mountain of God in the desert wilderness of the Holy Land, for the 'Tree of Life, of which mention is made in the Bible, is Bahá'u'lláh'.<sup>65</sup>

'Abdu'l-Bahá writes:

There are not two trees: one a tree of divine mercy, the other the tree of Satan ... God is the Father of all; the e is not a single exception to that law. There are no people of Satan; all belong to the Merciful. There is no darkness; all is light.<sup>66</sup>

Thus the two trees are one tree. Henceforth the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, or human knowledge, becomes reunited with the Tree of Life, or divine knowledge. This is because, for the spirit, as far as knowledge is concerned, 'the earth and heaven are as one since it makes discoveries in both'.<sup>67</sup> The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil have always been one tree in two aspects which humanity's dividing mind has considered two trees.

Even Satan, or Lucifer, being one of the names, or sons, of God (Job 1:6) and living originally within the Garden, re-enters Eden when Bahá'u'lláh converts the ego's 'satanic strength' into 'heavenly power'.<sup>68</sup>

The wilderness will be transformed into a new garden around the eternal City of God. This City is named Jerusa-

lem. It, too, must also be renewed and restored as New Jerusalem, the centre of the organic and spiritual unity of humanity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls this organic unity ‘divine civilization’, built upon the law of Bahá’u’lláh, and He remarks that the divine form of civilization ‘is what is meant in the Bible by the descent of the New Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem is none other than the divine civilization, and it is now ready.’<sup>69</sup>

The real garden is the earthly paradise which is to appear everywhere, while the City behind or within it is the spiritual paradise, the City of Certitude or ‘city of Bahá’<sup>70</sup> illuminated by the fire burning within creation. We see it when ‘By the fire of the love of God the veil is burnt which separates us from the Heavenly Realities’.<sup>71</sup> The garden is also the Lesser Peace to the city’s Most Great Peace, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth as the outer picture of the Kingdom of God that Christ told His disciples was ‘within you’.

And how is this transformation and resurrection to be accomplished? The Báb indicates that through the potency of the Words of Him Whom God shall make manifest, He ‘rolleth up the whole world of existence, sets it under His Own authority by relating it unto Himself, then as the Mouthpiece of God ... proclaimeth: “Verily, verily, I am God, no God is there but Me; in truth all others except Me are My creatures.”’<sup>72</sup>

It is ‘His Words’, the joyful tidings diffused from Thine all-glorious Station<sup>73</sup> in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s phrase, the universally potent special Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh which resurrects and redeems all things by relating creation ‘unto Himself’.

And our original speech, that of Adam, which was broken at Babel, is restored by the Báb and this will roll up all other languages into a universal tongue. Hence Zephaniah says of the last days:



For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent (Zephaniah 3:9).

And the Lord will walk upon His holy mountain, Carmel, the Garden of God that is Eden lying between heaven and earth, the highest point and mid-most heart of creation where the worlds of God and humanity intersect; and out from the midst of which will go forth His all-encompassing law, and New Jerusalem will flourish in the mid-most heart of this holy spot, as the City of Certitude will flourish in the heart of humanity,<sup>74</sup> and earth will mirror heaven, and the people of the earth will 'become the upholders of one Order and the inhabitants of one City',<sup>75</sup> and the name of the Lord will be Bahá'u'lláh, the first word which was in the beginning, who was with God, who is as God for us.

With the reconciliation of heaven and earth humanity re-enters sacred time. The centre has reappeared, and the whole of human history is resurrected and fashioned into a single image, for only by getting to the centre may the transformation of levels be accomplished. Everything has become universalized.

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## Notes

1. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, p. 140.
2. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 122–6.
3. *ibid.* p. 123.
4. The phrase is that of the Canadian critic Northrup Frye, to whom I owe a great deal in the structure of this paper. See especially his books *The Great Code*, *Words of Power* and *Fearful Symmetry*.
5. Ernst Cassirer in his book *The Problem of Knowledge*, vol. 4, says: 'Myth is not a fiction, for that is the work of individuals who abandon themselves to the free activities of fancy. In myth there is no such freedom or, better said, no such chance. On the contrary, everything in it is a necessity, imposed on us not from without, by the existence of "things", but from within, through the nature of consciousness. This consciousness is the real "active subject" of mythology' (p. 298). With myth it is 'not the question of objective truth but that of the psychological necessity of these myths' (p. 305). Specifically in relation to religion, he writes: 'Myth is no merely outward and incidental shell to be discarded at will but a basic form of religious representation' (p. 303). Myths 'arose from the unconscious imaginings and ideas of primitive peoples, and to this extent expressed in full truth and complete clarity the faith that lived within them' (p. 304).
6. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 4.

7. See, for example, *The Power of Myth*, p. 54.
8. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 1.
9. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 236.

10. 'For the Preexistent is different from the phenomenal, and the phenomenal is opposed to the Preexistent' ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 293). This essential opposition is not limited to God and creation, for 'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of the soul's 'essential preexistence' in relation to the body (ibid. p. 280). This opposition is also an eternal one. There is no transforming connection between the opposed pairs. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: 'The mortal substance does not become eternal and vice versa; the human kind does not become a Creator and vice versa. The transformation of the innate substance is impossible' ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, p. 61).
11. See Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 139–43.
12. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 93, p. 184.
13. ibid. no. 29, p. 71.
14. 'Wherefore the dispensations of the past are intimately connected with those that follow them: indeed they are one and the same, but as the world groweth, so cloth the light, so doth the downpour of heavenly grace, and then the Day-Star shineth out in noonday splendour' ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, p. 58).
15. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 26, p. 62.
16. 'Each of the Divine Manifestations has likewise a cycle, and during the cycle His laws and commandments prevail and are performed. When His cycle is completed by the appearance of a new Manifestation, a new cycle begins. In this way cycles begin, end and are renewed, until a universal cycle is completed in the world ... ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 160).
17. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*.
18. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 321.
19. See Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 177 and note 188.
20. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says 'ethereal matter ... is an intellectual reality. In the same way, nature, also, in its essence is an intellectual reality' ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 84). Spiritually, names are an articulate 'breath of God' a particularized essence or attribute of Him. Adam's revelation of names was of nature in its intellectual form, the foundation of

the medieval *scientia* based on the alchemical correspondences between two books, the *verbum scriptum* and *verbum factum*.

21. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 123.
22. Called in Bahá’í terminology Sadrat’ul-Muntahá (literally the tree beyond which there is no passing) or the divine Lote-Tree. Norse mythology calls this tree Yggdrasil. In many mythologies this tree is an *Axis Mundi* (axis of the world). Its peculiar character in some of these myths is that its roots are in heaven, its fruits on earth; that is, it is a emanation or descent and symbolizes revelation.
23. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 124.
24. Human knowledge gives only the semblance of truth because its subject, the world, is only the semblance of reality. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá writes: ‘This present life is even as a swelling wave, or a mirage, or drifting shadows ... Never can reality and the mere semblance of reality be one, and wide is the difference between fancy and fact, between truth and the phantom thereof’ (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections*, pp. 177–8). Bahá’u’lláh warns: ‘The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it’ (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 328).
25. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 177.
26. Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 75.
27. Bahá’u’lláh writes: ‘For the letters of negation, no matter how far they may be removed from the holy fragrances of Thy knowledge, and however forgetful they may become of the wondrous splendours of the dawning light of Thy beauty, which are shed from the heaven of Thy majesty, must needs exist in Thy realm, so that the words which affirm Thee may thereby be exalted’ (Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 325).
28. The story is found in Revelation 12:6. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá discusses the meanings of this story in *Selections*, p. 172.
29. ‘If none be found to stray from Thy path, how, then, can the ensign of Thy mercy be unfurled, or the banner of Thy bountiful favour be hoisted? And if iniquity be not committed, what is it that can proclaim Thee to be the Concealer of men’s sins, the



Ever-Forgiving, the Omniscient, the All-Wise?’ (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 142, p. 310).

30. ‘... Satan, by which we mean the natural inclinations of the lower nature. This lower nature in man is symbolized as Satan—the evil ego within us, not an evil personality outside’ (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation*, p. 287).

31. Bahá'u'lláh informs us that: 'Moses entered the holy vale, situate in the wilderness of Sinai, and there beheld the vision of the King of glory from the "Tree that belongeth neither to the East nor to the West"' (Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 54). This same Tree is Bahá'u'lláh Himself, in Bahá'í theology. Describing the spiritual geography of Eden, He calls to souls 'from the Divine Lote-Tree which is raised on the borders of the vale of security and peace, situate in the luminous Spot beyond the glorious City' (Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, p. 246).
32. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, p. 12.
33. *ibid.* p. 144.
34. Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 125.
35. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, pp. 143–4.
36. '... empty thyself of all learning, that thou mayest partake of My knowledge ... empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me ... (Bahá'u'lláh, *Hidden Words*, Persian no. 11).
37. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 163, p. 344.
38. '... for when the motivating and guiding power is the divine force of magnetism it is possible, by its aid, to traverse time and space easily and swiftly' ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, p. 198).
39. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 123.
40. '... Reflect upon the perfection of man's creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him.  
 "Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form  
 When within thee the universe is folded"  
 (Bahá'u'lláh, *Seven Valleys*, p. 34).
41. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, pp. 197–8.
42. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, p. 185.
43. The Báb, *Selections*, p. 195.
44. 'What hath become of the creation and the manifestations thereof? What of the names and their kingdom? Whither are gone all created things, whether seen or unseen? What of the hidden secrets of the universe and its revelations? Lo, the entire creation hath passed away! Nothing remaineth except My Face,

the Ever-Abiding, the Resplendent, the All-Glorious'  
(Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 14, p. 29).

45. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation*, p. 220.
46. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in *Bahá’i World Faith*, p. 400.
47. Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets*, p. 183.
48. *ibid.* pp. 186–7.
49. ‘As to the Return ... by this is meant the return of all created things in the Day of Resurrection, and this is indeed the essence of the Return as thou hast witnessed in God’s own days ...’ (*ibid.* p. 183).
50. Jung says, ‘I use the term enantiodromia for the emergence of the unconscious opposite in the course of time’ (Jung, *Psychological Types*, p. 426).
51. McLuhan used chiasmus to describe the reversal that occurs at the end of any process of development. He noted: ‘It is a characteristic chiasmus that waits upon the utmost development of any process that the last phase shall show characteristics opposite to the early phases’ (McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, p. 328). The chapter ‘Reversal of the Overheated Medium’, from his book *Understanding Media* is devoted to an exploration of the ancient doctrine ‘that during the stages of their development all things appear under forms opposite to those that they finally present’ (McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 46).
52. Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 157: ‘Behold, the “mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign” hath now been made manifest.’ Note 171 in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, explains that this statement is a prophecy of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsá’í; that ‘at the appearance of the Promised One all things would be reversed, the last would be first, the first last’. Bahá’u’lláh, the note continues, also refer to this prophecy in other Tablets.
53. ‘Consider the differences that have arisen since the days of Adam. The divers and widely-known languages now spoken by the peoples of the earth were originally unknown, as were the varied rules and customs now prevailing amongst them. The people of those times spoke a language different from those now known. Diversities of language arose in a later age, in a land known as Babel. It was given the name Babel, because the term

signifieth “the place where the confusion of tongues arose”  
(Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 87, p. 173).

54. 'Supply us also with that which is best for us, and write us down with such of Thy servants as have repudiated the Idol (Mírzá Yahyá) ... (Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 132).
55. 'The essence of existence is a spiritual reality because invisible forces of the spirit are the origin of matter and the foundation thereof' (Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Brown, 'A Bahá'í Perspective', p. 29n).
56. Joyce stated that 'History is a nightmare from which I'm trying to awake'. *Finnegan's Wake* is his attempt to write a history of the world on purely human postulates. But the language and setting of the *Wake*, one man's night dream, indicates that Joyce did not get beyond the nature symbolism of sleep and darkness that is Plato's cave, namely the watery womb of creation. Thus it remains a gigantic exercise of memorizing the mnemonic devices stored in the archives of human learning. It is precisely human learning that must be discarded if the mind is to escape history and redemption is to occur.
57. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 295.
58. *Star of the West*, vol. 5, no. 5, p. 81.
59. Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *Promised Day is Come*, pp. 32-3.
60. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, p. 263.
61. *ibid.* p. 275.
62. 'Know then, how much ground hath been gained by the Law of God and His Teachings in this dispensation, how they have reached such heights that they far transcend the dispensations gone before' (*ibid.* p. 167).
63. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 112, p. 218.
64. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, p. 53.
65. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, p. 57.
66. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation*, p. 266.
67. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 241.
68. See *Gleanings*, no. 99, p. 200 for Bahá'u'lláh's discussion of this theme.
69. 'Abdul-Bahá, *Promulgation*, pp. 101-2.

70. Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets*, p. 120.
71. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 82.
72. The Báb, *Selections*, p. 98.
73. Abdul-Bahá, in *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 158.

74. The city, new Jerusalem, at the centre of Eden is the physical counterpart to the City of Certitude at the centre of the human being. This City in both of its aspects must be renewed and restored as the centre of humanity. New Jerusalem is divine civilization grounded upon divine Law. 'By "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" is meant the holy law of God, and this is set forth in many Tablets and still to be read in the Scriptures of the Prophets of the past' ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections*, p. 165).
75. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, no. 156, pp. 333-4.