

Ornaments: Wilmette Institute faculty notes

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The Tablet of Tarazat is another of the series of tablets Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, which expands on themes in that work. Like the Bishárát (which I described in a previous posting) it divides into three sections:

An introduction. The first two paragraphs of the introduction set up the theme of the tablet: that God is great, but nevertheless the Cause has been plagued by opposition from the ignorant and rebellious. The next three paragraphs of the introduction may sound familiar to you: they are a prayer found in the Bahá'í prayer book (p. 171-73).

The last paragraph of the introduction may be seen as a transition to the actual Tarazat (plural; singular, Taraz) themselves. It is worth quoting a bit: "These sublime words were heard today from the rustling of the divine Lote-Tree. . ." Is this a fancy way of saying "I received the following revelation today. . .?"

The six tarazat themselves. Reading through them, it seems they have as a theme the perfection of character and its application in the world. The first Taraz gives supremely practical advice; that a person's first goal in life should be to "know himself" (advice as old as the Greeks) and understand that which leads to loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty. Acquiring such knowledge results in maturity; presumably a spiritual maturity. And what does a person need next? Wealth! Prosperity gives one the means to express the spiritual qualities one has developed. The second Taraz turns to interfaith dialogue (to put it in modern terms) and, beyond that, association with all the peoples of the world. The third and fourth tarazat return to the theme of personal development, focusing on development of a good character and acquisition of the quality of trustworthiness. The third Taraz also quotes a Hidden Words; presumably this is an example of "re-revelation," something Bahá'u'lláh does a lot in Epistle to the Son of the Wolf.

The fifth and sixth tarazat mix advice about personal character with exhortations about changes needed in society. The fifth focuses on protecting the station of God's servants, but devotes much space to the importance of craftsmanship. The sixth continues the theme by stressing the importance of acquiring knowledge and the value of the press (though it also notes the inaccuracy of press articles about Bahá'u'lláh).

The third section of the Tarazat is an open letter to Mírzá Hadi Dawlat-ABadí, a prominent follower of Mírzá Yahyá. The tablet was not revealed to him, but perhaps the recipient knew the man. There is a detailed discussion of him in the materials we sent you; most of it comes from Taherzadeh's Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. The only comment I will

offer here is that this is another example of how the Tarazat resembles Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, which was revealed some time later (I say some time because we do not know the year of revelation of the Tarazat).

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