

From the Editor's Desk

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The cover of this issue of *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* features “The Weight of Light” by Sky Glabush. You may find its image of the sun, radiant in the sky, and reflected in the waves below, worth revisiting as you read each of the articles featured within.

“The Quantum State Function, Platonic Forms, and the Ethereal Substance: Reflections on the Potential of Philosophy to Contribute to the Harmony of Science and Religion” deals with a deceptively simple question: “What is the nature of reality?” Considering and correlating answers suggested by philosophy, religion, and science, Dr. Vahid Ranjbar highlights the ways in which each of these systems helps open our minds to the possibility that the reality that we experience day to day is, on some level, illusory. We walk in a world of shadows, reflections of a deeper existence that our physical senses are not attuned to. And yet, through the unique human capacity of mind, channeled into our philosophical strivings, scientific investigations, and religious study, we can begin to glimpse that more fundamental reality; to know at least that it is such, that it generates the mundane world to which we have sensible access, and that, viewed from the higher perspective unlocked by

these three systems of knowledge, this entire reality is one.

As part of its attempt to deploy the Bahá'í Writings in service to a pressing ecological and moral question—the treatment of animals and the natural world—“Discerning a Framework for the Treatment of Animals and the Natural World in the Bahá'í Writings: Ethics, Ontology, and Discourse” considers some of the ethical consequences of this same phenomenon of reflection. Given that “[w]hatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God,” our relationship to the natural world is necessarily a relationship with the sacred (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings* 90:1). Generated by the arc of creative emanations originating in God, and striving to return to that origin and goal through spiritual development, the human being's every interaction with the world of nature has a dual significance: in acting in a way that honors the divinity mirrored in each created thing, we simultaneously advance in our own spiritual journey.

Finally, “Learning from ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in a Society Characterized by Ageism” takes up the reflection motif from an intensely practical standpoint. Dr. Deborah van den Hoonaard challenges the Bahá'í community to pay attention to how well it reflects its own high ideals, and to consider how ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's example defies our societal preconceptions about the role of older adults. In doing so, she reminds us that the beauty of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's

life is always available to us as a standard to use in our efforts to understand, evaluate, and ultimately re-shape social phenomena.

We are also pleased to feature “Grammar Lesson” by Joel Dias-Porter and “Undertow” by Shawn R. Jones in this issue, two poems that bring home the urgency of creating a world that faithfully reflects the ideal of the oneness of humanity.