From the Editor's Desk

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This issue of the journal begins with a sobering look at the state of the international order today. In "International Law in a Divided World: Back to the Future?" Payam Akhavan helps us to make sense of a moment of apparent reversal in what at the turn of the millennium may have seemed like a trajectory of increasing global integration, and a growing consensus on the meaning of justice. Drawing on the framework for understanding history given to us by the Bahá'í writings, Akhavan helps us see past a dichotomous view of advance and retreat, and to instead think about our own contribution to the long, arduous, but inevitable journey towards a global order and civilization worthy of humanity's maturity.

A Bahá'í vantage point on history, of course, takes into account those singular moments when a Manifestation appears in historical time, bearing a Revelation with the potentiality to make the world anew. In "The Delivery of the Lawḥ-i-Sulṭán and the Fate of Badí': Entries from the Diary of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, 1869," Omid Ghaemmaghami gives us a fascinating peek into one very specific moment when that potentiality was offered freely to a human being with the temporal authority to accept it. This short research note translates and contextualizes entries from the journal of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, the Qajar ruler of Iran from 1848 to 1896, at the time when he received the Lawḥ-i-Sulṭán, addressed to him by Bahá'u'lláh and carried by his specially designated messenger, Badí'. Though brief, the entries are poignant—not for any lofty sentiments expressed by their author, but quite the opposite. In the casual indifference with which the Sháh not only dismisses the message, but cruelly condemns the innocent messenger to torture and death, the reader sees the tragic refusal of a gift freely offered. Along with his fellow rulers who received tablets from Bahá'u'lláh. Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh rejected both the Greater and Lesser Peace, likely without even attempting to grasp the significance of what he let slip through his fingers.

Yet Bahá'u'lláh did not ultimately entrust the fate of humanity to the whims of monarchs. In the two book reviews featured in this issue, we see the depth of response that His message can elicit in a receptive heart. First is Ehsan Hemmat's review of *Reason, Revelation, and Reality*, a translated volume of talks by Dr. 'Alí-Murád Dávúdí, edited by Vargha Bolodo-Taefi and published by Association for Bahá'í Studies Publications. Hemmat highlights the volume's efficacy in conveying the depth of thought of this preeminent Bahá'í scholar whose intellectual contributions to both his faith and his country were fully matched by the personal sacrifice of his life and death. Jack McLean's review

of *Tools for Living: Winnifred Harvey and the Beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith in Ottawa*, Heather Harvey's biography of Winnifred Harvey, similarly highlights the immense value of accounts like this one of lives dedicated to bringing Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the oneness of humanity into reality.

We are also pleased to present a French translation of Paul Lample's seminal work, "Exploration d'un cadre pour l'élimination des préjugés raciaux aux États-Unis," previously published in English in volume 35, no. 1-2 of this journal and as a freestanding book, *In Pursuit of a More Superb Mission*. The journal continues to aspire to strengthen its capacity to serve the entire population of North America in all its linguistic diversity.

The poems featured in this issue—"Gourd" by Donna Denizé, "In the Kingdom of Obsolete Things" and "How Much to Cut" by Jin Cordaro—take prosaic objects and actions and turn them into powerful metaphors that easily map onto anyone's lived experience.

On the cover, we feature the work of Luis Brunet—one of ABS' long-time valued collaborators—who, to his talent as a translator, adds a passion for digital art.