

# Editors' Introduction

Bahá'í Studies Review, Volume 21 © Intellect Ltd 2015

Editors' Introduction. English language. doi: 10.1386/bsr.21.3/7

This will be the last edition of *Bahá'í Studies Review*, at least in its present form. The sterling work of writers, researchers, editors and reviewers, over its many years of publication, is gratefully acknowledged. Their work has forged a well-deserved reputation for BSR in the field of Bahá'í studies.

It may be opportune at this juncture to reflect – if only briefly – on the future course of Bahá'í studies, to consider how we might build on the efforts of the past decades. Indeed, a vibrant discussion has already begun on both revitalizing and encouraging scholarship as it relates to the Bahá'í Faith. Introducing the latest edition of *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, John S. Hatcher explores the implications of a conceptual framework for Bahá'í scholarship and poses a number of challenging questions,

How does Bahá'í scholarly activity serve the advancement of spiritual and material civilization? What elements of a conceptual framework does it share with other aspects of Bahá'í endeavour, such as expansion and consolidation, social action, or involvement in the discourses of society, and what elements are distinct for its specific purposes? How does the cultivation of the intellectual life of the community serve all of these actions?

(28-3, 2018, 4)

Not surprisingly, no ready answers are proffered to these 'hard questions'. At this time when the framework governing Bahá'í efforts in general is evolving, an exciting vista presents itself to those engaged in deep study of various facets of the Bahá'í revelation. The work to articulate a contemporary conceptual schema for Bahá'í scholarship is in train.

In taking up the challenge of a re-energised engagement with this important endeavour, we can surely derive fresh inspiration from these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

There are certain pillars which have been established as the unshakable supports of the Faith of God. The mightiest of these is learning and the use of the mind, the expansion of consciousness, and insight into the realities of the universe and the hidden mysteries of Almighty God. To promote knowledge is thus an inescapable duty imposed on every one of the friends of God.

(*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, 126)

This issue of the *Bahá'í Studies Review* brings together a selection of articles on a wide range of topics. Not seeking to articulate a single thematic thread, this edition allows for a topical miscellany exemplifying some of the diverse interests absorbing those engaged in Bahá'í studies – language, textual analysis, art and artists, philosophical reflection, history, social principles and their application in society. The contributors exhibit a broad variety of approaches reflective of their interests and backgrounds.

We are grateful to all who contributed their time and work to this edition of the *Bahá'í Studies Review*.