

The Word of God and the Power of the Word: "Sacred tokens from the planes of glory"

Keiko Arai

The fundamental truth of human existence as expressed in "I think, therefore I am" could be stated as humans have language. Furthermore, John's Gospel starts with the line "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Indeed, God bestowed only upon man among all the creatures on earth the ability to use and understand language, enabling him to receive and understand the Word of God. What is it meant for man to have the ability to use language and what is the purpose of God in revealing His Word to man through the Manifestations of God? This presentation will try to answer to these questions, first by studying spirituality and intelligence, "the essence of man" who possesses language, and then discussing the significance of man having these faculties. In the process, I would like to address such questions as what brings happiness to man, who is fundamentally a spiritual being, what does it mean for him to read the Sacred Writings and to have faith and, finally, how should man live.

The Baha'i Faith and the Symbolism of the Rose: "In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love"

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The word "rose" is found on numerous occasions in the Baha'i Writings. The rose is used as a symbol of the Faith because of its beauty and its fragrance. The rose itself represents the manifestation of God. Its beauty symbolizes "the Beauty of God," and its fragrance "the fragrance of God." In this presentation, I will discuss the attributes of the beauty and fragrance of God as symbolized by the rose. Then, taking these features into consideration, I would like to try to understand what Baha'u'llah teaches us in His words "In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love." I suggest that the human heart is the soil where the rose of love should be planted. The reason why God created the human heart is for us to learn what qualities are expected for the heart and how we should live. The symbolism of the rose in the Baha'i Faith teaches us to fill our hearts and the world with the attributes of the Beauty of God and the Divine fragrance.