

## What is the Master Index?

### *The Master Index of the Worlds of God*

(informally known as “The Worlds of God Index”) is a four-tiered hierarchy for organizing the verities in the Bahá’í Writings, so that their description of “reality” can be made clear.

#### First Tier: Conditions of Existence

All existence or reality is made up of three conditions of existence<sup>1</sup> or three worlds: the Condition of Deity or World of God, the Condition of Prophethood or World of Command, and the Condition of Servitude or World of Creation. These three conditions or worlds are symbolized in the Greatest Name ringstone symbol.

#### Second Tier: Subjects

Each condition of existence has “Subjects” which comprise it. For instance, the World of God has only one Subject, which is Deity itself. The World of Command contains several Subjects, such as: Will of God, Cause of God, Holy Spirit, and Manifestations of God while not incarnate. The World of Creation is made up of many Subjects, such as: mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, time and numbers, and other-worldly kingdoms.

#### Third Tier: Subheadings

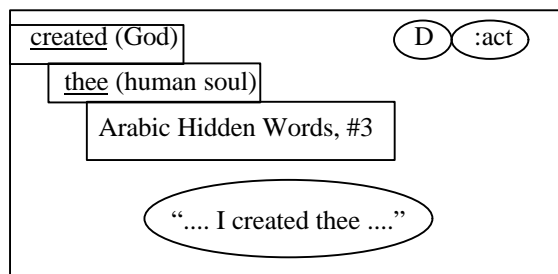
Each subject has characteristics (Subheadings), the total of which describe that subject’s entire reality. Examples of Subheadings of a given Subject: its names, its objectives or purposes, its faculties or powers (which can be used to achieve its purposes), its actions (verbs) and its attributes (adjectives, adverbs and nouns).

#### Fourth Tier: Key Phrase

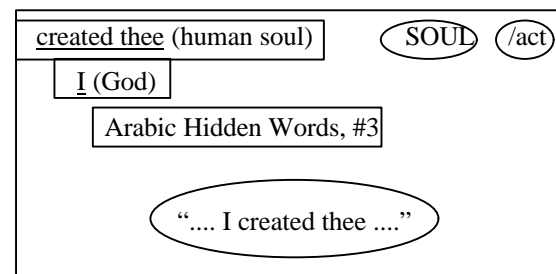
Examples: “The All-Knowing” is a specific example of the “Subject:Subheading” “Deity:name.” Another is “The All-Bounteous.” A key phrase of the Subject:Subheading “human soul:objective” is: “to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.”

## SAMPLE INDEX CARDS:

### Card # 1:



### Card # 2:



For illustrative purposes, above are the index cards created from indexing a small part of the 3rd Arabic Hidden Word. Two index cards were made from the quote “I created thee.” There are six fields on each card. The cards have been slightly simplified, and each field has been encircled, for ease of explanation.

#### 1) Upper right (2 fields): Subject Abbreviation followed by **Subheading**

**Card 1:** Subject Abbreviation “D”, which stands for the Subject “Deity” (God). Subheading is “:act”, which stands for “action taken by the Subject”. An action is a verb. God “created”. Created is the action performed by the Subject, Deity.

**Card 2:** Subject Abbreviation “SOUL”. Subheading is “/act”, which stands for “action in relation to the Subject”. The Soul was “created”. Created is the action in relation to the Subject, Soul.

About Subjects: The National Reference Library Committee, appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, used a total of 23 Subjects to index the Writings. The Subject “Deity” (tier 1) is in the World (Condition) of God (Deity) (tier 1). The Subject “Soul” (tier 2) is in the World of Creation (Condition of Servitude) (tier 1). By “Subject” is not necessarily meant the subject of the sentence. A Subject is a category of reality about which something (a Subheading) can be stated, and can be located in the grammatical predicate of a sentence or the grammatical subject of it.

About Subheadings: Subheadings (tier 3) describe the Subject. The “:” in front of “act” means that the action is undertaken by the Subject. If there is a “/” instead, then the Subject is the recipient of the action. Other examples of subheadings which describe a subject include: attributes (nouns which describe the subject, such as “beauty” (tier 4), as in the beauty of God’s Prophets), names, objectives (tier 4 example: “to know and worship God”), etc.

#### 2) Upper left, line 1: Key Word or Phrase representing the Subheading and Subject (part of Tier 4)

**Card 1:** the underlined portion (“created”) comes first, which is the key word or phrase representing the subheading. The rest which follows (“God”) provides clarification of the Key Phrase, and appears in parentheses because the word “God” does not literally appear in the quote, but is implied.

**Card 2:** “created thee” is the key phrase representing the Subheading and Subject, followed by “(human soul)”, in parentheses, clarifying that by “thee” is meant “human soul.”

#### 3) Upper left, line 2: Key Word or Phrase representing the Object of the Index Quote

(rest of Tier 4)

**Card 1:** “thee (human soul)” is what stands opposite to the Key Phrase Subject “Deity”.

**Card 2:** “I (God)” is what stands opposite to the Key Phrase Subject “Soul”.

**Note:** Not all index cards need this line 2. For example, in the prayer, “The Tablet of Ahmad”, in which the first sentence opens: “He is the King...”, the Subject is Deity, and His name is “the King.” Upper Left Line 1 simply reads: “The King”. Upper Right reads: “D:name”. Line 2 is empty.

#### 4) Line 3 on left of card: **The Citation**

**Cards 1&2:** In this case, the 3rd Arabic Hidden Word. If another book is cited, it is typically the book abbreviation, followed by page number and paragraph number.

#### 5) Center of card:

The entire quote (“I created thee”) being indexed.

### **How is the Master Index Different from Text Retrieval Programs?**

Existing computer software text search programs are for word and phrase searches, while the Master Index is for “concept” searches. Here are a few examples of things you can do with the Index that you cannot do with a text retrieval program.

You can locate all the citations for all the names of God in the Index. You can look up all the objectives of the human soul. You can look up all the attributes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

A text-retrieval software program cannot give you these results, because to use it you must type in the literal words or phrases you are looking for. You cannot type in the words “names” and “God” and expect to get a list of the names of God. What you will get are the citations of the literal occurrences of the words “names” and “God” in proximity to each other. The Index, however, has two file drawers full of index cards bearing God’s names and where to find them in the Writings, and over 190 more index card file drawers for all the subjects and subheadings represented in the Index.

Basically, the Index contains thousands of mini-compilations on all these subsets of reality. Every sentence of the Writings is indexable.

### **Some Benefits of The Index**

1. It provides a holistic overview of reality, which humankind needs to understand.
2. Indexing the Writings using the Index’s methodology is very intensive interaction with the Creative Word and a potent deepening / spiritual transformation tool, taking to heart Bahá’u’lláh’s exhortation:  
*“Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.”*  
Kitáb-i-Aqdas, para. 182
3. Courses, compilations, and games have been created from the Index to teach its concepts.

### **Completing the Index**

With encouragement from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, FIR members are computerizing it. More volunteers are needed to computerize existing cards and to index the remainder of the Bahá’í Writings. To inquire about this project, contact:

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#### Footnotes:

- 1 - See pamphlet “The Three Conditions of Existence: A Brief Description”
- 2 - See pamphlet “The Foundation for the Investigation of Reality”

# THE MASTER INDEX OF THE WORLDS OF GOD:

## AN INTRODUCTION