

In the Presence of the Beloved:
Bahá'u'lláh's *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'*

A Revised Provisional Translation and Notes

Nima Rafiei

One of the central tenets of previous religions is the promise of attainment unto the presence of the Lord on the Day of Judgment for the faithful believers. Within the Islamic dispensation in the Arabic text of the Qur'án, the term *liqá'* and its various derivatives indicates the promise of attainment unto the presence and meeting with the Lord. There is indication in some of the sacred scriptures of the past that attainment unto the presence and meeting the chosen prophets and messengers of God is considered the same as that of God. How significant, therefore, that during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh so many of His devoted and ardent followers tarried and journeyed long distances to see only a glimpse of Him from afar. Bahá'u'lláh has fundamentally transformed the concept of attainment unto the divine presence in His Revelation. He has written a fascinating and lucid epistle, referred to in this paper as the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'*, in which He unequivocally states that reading it is equivalent to being in His presence. In this paper, we will briefly introduce the Islamic

background of *liqá'*, compare Shí'ih and Bábí-Bahá'í interpretations of attaining the *liqá'*, and we will demonstrate that the writings of Bahá'u'lláh infuse and transform the concept of attaining the divine presence to manifold events including being in the presence of God's prophets, messengers and manifestations, reading the divinely revealed scriptures, and undertaking service to mankind with detachment and pure, spiritual motivation.

The title *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'* or "Tablet of the Divine Presence" has been supplied by the renowned Bahá'í author and scholar, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávarí (1902-1972) in his extensive compilation on the writings of the Central Figures, *Má'idíy-i Ásmání* (vol. 8).¹ For the purposes of this study, the same title will continue to be used. Additionally, the opening of the same tablet is quoted and reproduced by Fáḍíl Mázandarání (1882-1957) in the fifth volume of his book, *Asráru'l-Áthár*.² The text of the tablet has been published in the first volume of the *Áthár-i-Qalam-i A'lá* series, also known as the *Kitáb-i-Mubín*,³ and is based on a copy in the handwriting of the renowned scribe and devoted follower of Bahá'u'lláh, Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín.⁴ Although there is a minor typographical error in the latter version, the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre has provided the authentic text of this tablet for the purposes of this translation and study.⁵ Additionally, the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre has reported that neither the biographical information on the date and location of the revelation of the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'* or the identity of its intended recipients is not known at this time.⁶ Before exploring the text of the tablet in question, we will discuss the Islamic background of the term and phenomenon of *liqá'*.

***Liqá'* in Islamic sources**

While this is not intended to be a thoroughly comprehensive survey, it will serve the purpose of this study well to provide some brief context on the *liqá'* from Islamic sources. The word

liqá' occurs in more than twenty passages in the text of the Qur'án. In most of these instances, it is translated as "meeting" in English to indicate the anticipated meeting with the Lord on the day of Resurrection. In a comprehensive encyclopedia on the Qur'án written by Bahá'u'd-Dín Khurramsháhi, he has provided a thorough and detailed list of the various verb forms and definitions of the word *liqá'*; most occurrences of the word *liqá'* and its various derivations indicate a physical meeting between two persons. He identifies several instances where *liqá'* is used, such as "*Lost are they who deny the meeting with God until 'the Hour' cometh suddenly upon them! ...*" [Qur'án 6:31], and "*But as for those who shall not have believed, but treated our signs and the meeting of the next life as lies, they shall be given over to the torment*" [Qur'án 30:16], and also in this passage "*Taste then the recompense of your having forgotten the meeting with this your day. We, too, we have forgotten you: taste then an eternal punishment for that which ye have wrought...*" [Qur'án 32:14].⁷ Dr. Khurramsháhi has also mentioned that various interpretations of the *liqá'* may occur in a figurative sense in referring to inspiration experienced by individuals.⁸ Ishráq Khávarí has also quoted from and supplied various passages of the Qur'án and Shí'ih ḥadíth sources regarding the *liqá'* in his *Qámús-i-Íqán*.⁹ He demonstrates that throughout history, the various commentators on the Qur'án have had various interpretations of the meaning of *liqá'*, with some quoting verses such as 7:143, in which God tells Moses that He will never see Him to mean that the *liqá'* is likely figurative and not literal, whereas verses from the Súrih of Qíyámah have been quoted to suggest that it is a literal event: "*On that day shall faces beam with light, Out looking towards their Lord...*" [Qur'án 75: 22-23].¹⁰

It would be beneficial and perhaps better serving the interest of the reader to briefly present a contemporary Shí'ih viewpoint and understanding of the *liqá'u'lláh* in order to compare and contrast with statements in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. In this space we can refer to one of the writings of

Áyat’ulláh Khumayní, the leader of the Islamic revolution of 1979. In one of his books, Áyat’ulláh Khumayní compiled and interpreted forty ḥadīths of the Imáms and the Prophet Muḥammad. The twenty-eighth quotation supplied by Khumayní is attributed to the sixth Imám, Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣádiq, whereupon when Imám Ja‘far was asked if God loves to meet those souls who are longing to meet Him, he replied that God too is longing to meet them. The tradition goes on to report that should one dislike the meeting with God, He in turn dislikes having to meet such a soul at the time of his or her death. Khumayní provides his discourse on various aspects of the tradition, not all of which are directly relevant here, but he does make some comments reflecting his attitude and understanding of the *liqá’* and meeting God. He carries out his interpretation as an indirect criticism of Ṣúfí and mystical thought.

Khumayní mentions in one instance “some” of the ‘ulamá have blocked the path of the *liqá’u’lláh* and deny the possibility to directly experience the “revelations of the Divine Names and Essence.”¹¹ He begins by saying that although it is not far-fetched to conceive such a viewpoint, it is hard to maintain and becomes implausible when it is compared with other Qur’anic verses and texts. He then later turns his attention to highlighting the position of “those who have kept open the path of *liqá’u’lláh*” (possibly a reference to mainstream ‘Uṣúlí Shí’ih ‘ulamá); that this path has been kept open by “...the impossibility of fathoming the Divine mystery through universal knowledge (*‘ilm al-kullí*) and by the means of rational thought and the impossibility of encompassing It in mystic experience (*Irfán al-shuhúdí*) and by the means of esoteric insight.”¹² From this point on, Khumayní directs his criticism at those who claim “the luminous veil of the Names and the Attributes” can also be removed, whereupon they attain and imagine themselves close to the Essence of God. Khumayní argues that since humanity, in its natural state, is “entrapped in the dark veils of corporeal nature and entangled in the chains of

petty hopes and expectations...and should we come across a man of vision and someone with a heart who attempts to lift the curtain from these veils, we consider it an error and affront..."¹³ it is therefore unimaginable for human beings to be capable of such spiritual transcendence from what he terms the realm of "*mulk*" or "earthly possession." He later clearly states, "Hence, the way to God-seeking is that one should at the outset devote his time to the remembrance of God and acquire the knowledge of God and the Names and Attributes of that Sacred Essence, the usual way from the adept (*masháyikh* [*shaykhs*]) of that science."¹⁴ *Khumayní* further writes that if one does not learn the "theoretical and practical exercises and austerities" or is "not familiar with learned jargon" then he cannot occupy himself with remembrance of the Beloved.¹⁵ It appears, therefore, that *Khumayní's* interpretation of attainment unto the divine presence is multi-fold and restrictive to specific criteria; namely, that individuals are only able, upon both seeking and acting upon the knowledge of God through well-learned clergy, and acquiring a working knowledge and understanding of theological practices and highly-specific terminology and concepts, to properly carry out the remembrance (*dhikr*) of God. With this in mind, we see that the Bahá'í writings and *Khumayní's* interpretations of attaining unto and understanding the divine presence are clearly different, as Bahá'u'lláh has ordained that the individual should engage in the search for spiritual truth, detached and un-influenced by old sciences and methods and standards of religious learning acquired from men.¹⁶

***Liqá'* in the writings of The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh**

The Báb gives an interpretation and discourse on attaining the divine presence within the text of His weightiest book, the Persian Bayán. In the seventh chapter of the third unit of the Persian Bayán, The Báb makes some fundamental statements: first with the opening Arabic verse of the chapter in which He states that the intended meaning of *liqá'u'lláh* is the attainment

of the presence of Him Whom God shall make manifest (*Man Yuẓhirihu'lláh*) as none can ever see God in His essence, secondly that the whole of creation hath naught been brought into being save for the attainment unto the presence or meeting with God, and lastly that all who have sought and attained the presence of Him Whom God shall make manifest, have attained unto the divine presence of the Lord.¹⁷ With this interpretive framework in mind, it is important to note that the Kitáb-i-Íqán written by Bahá'u'lláh is considered by Bahá'ís as the completion of The Báb's Persian Bayán. Within the text of the Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh also interprets and defines the meaning of *liqá'*. He brings forward some of the main verses of the Qur'án which mention *liqá'* and gives commentary on their true meaning in Persian within a few pages. The passages include: "*They who bear in mind that they shall attain unto the Presence of their Lord, and that unto Him they shall return,*"¹⁸ and "*Let him then who hopeth to attain the presence of his Lord work a righteous work.*"¹⁹ He writes in summary:

The knowledge of Him, Who is the Origin of all things, and attainment unto Him, are impossible save through knowledge of, and attainment unto, these luminous Beings who proceed from the Sun of Truth. By attaining, therefore, to the presence of these holy Luminaries, the 'Presence of God' Himself is attained. From their knowledge, the knowledge of God is revealed, and from the light of their countenance, the splendour of the Face of God is made manifest. [KI 131]

In the following passage, He also states:

Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the 'Presence of God' Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. Attainment unto such presence is possible

only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation. [KI 131-132]

Elsewhere, Bahá'u'lláh affirms this same definition in His *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*:

In all the Divine Books the promise of the Divine Presence hath been explicitly recorded. By this Presence is meant the Presence of Him Who is the Dayspring of the signs, and the Dawning-Place of the clear tokens, and the Manifestation of the Excellent Names, and the Source of the attributes, of the true God, exalted be His glory. God in His Essence and in His own Self hath ever been unseen, inaccessible, and unknowable. By Presence, therefore, is meant the Presence of the One Who is His Vicegerent amongst men... [ESW 118]

The same passage has been quoted by Fádíl Mázandarání in the second volume of his compilation, *Amr va Khalq*, although it is attributed to the Íqán.²⁰ In another instance, the Tablet of Visitation recited at the Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and The Báb refer to the divine presence: “*I bear witness that he who hath known Thee hath known God, and he who hath attained unto Thy presence hath attained unto the presence of God*” [BP 231]. Here we see clearly that Bahá'u'lláh confirms and expands upon what The Báb has written in the Bayán.

It is important to note that beyond the Kitáb-i-Íqán, however, Bahá'u'lláh has created additional definitions or realizations of the *liqá'* in some of His other writings. They indicate the necessity to be a sincere seeker of truth and highlight the relationship between the individual believer and the divinely revealed text. Please note that the following selections of Bahá'u'lláh's other writings do not have matching authoritative or authorized translations at this time and are purely provisional in nature. Bahá'u'lláh has written in a tablet revealed in both Arabic and Persian: “*...This is an epistle from*

Us unto whomsoever among mankind offereth up worship, that it may enchant and draw him nigh unto the sanctified Seat of reunion and Our presence..."²¹ It is important to note the similarity and closeness between the opening verse of this tablet and the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'*. Both here and in the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'*, Bahá'u'lláh has made it possible for the reader to attain unto the divine presence by reading and interacting with the sacred verses with faith and sincerity. Thus, the recitation and reading of the words of Bahá'u'lláh becomes a means by which we attain the presence of God. Beyond reading of the text, Bahá'u'lláh has provided another means for humanity to attain the *liqá'*.

In a Persian tablet, Bahá'u'lláh affirms almost verbatim what The Báb has written in the Persian Bayán regarding the *liqá'u'lláh*: that humanity and the larger creation have not been brought into existence save for the purpose of attaining the presence of the Lord. What is significant about this particular Tablet is that near its conclusion Bahá'u'lláh states that whosoever abides by and clings unto the laws and ordinances of God and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas will be reckoned as those who have attained His presence.²² One may conclude, in conjunction with this and other writings, that Bahá'u'lláh has defined the *liqá'u'lláh* in the light of faithful adherence to both the sacred text and the ordinances contained therein. Furthermore, Fáḍil Mázandarání has quoted a brief excerpt in Persian from the fourth volume of his *Amr va Khalq* where Bahá'u'lláh states that one who is engaged in devoted service to the Faith in the days of God will be considered as one who has attained His presence.²³ In addition to these previous passages, there is a tablet addressed to Samandar²⁴ where Bahá'u'lláh also speaks of the death of the physical body and the passing away from this earthly existence as the "gate" before attaining the presence of God and the means by which re-union with Him is achieved.²⁵

Additional Passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

The selections previously quoted from the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* and the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* indicates the spiritual authority and sovereignty inherent in each of the divine manifestations of God. With this same spiritual, immaterial sovereignty, the Manifestations of God may also determine and judge if an individual human being has fulfilled and attained the *liqá'*. In other tablets and writings to individual believers, Bahá'u'lláh exercises the authority to confirm the recipients as having fulfilled and attained unto the divine presence. For example, in a tablet addressed to an individual named Zayn, Bahá'u'lláh addresses him as such: “*O Zayn! The friends seek the divine presence and so doth God, magnified be His glory!... We beseech God that He aid His chosen ones with the bounty of forbearance, or perchance He may vouchsafe for them the recompense of attaining His presence, He verily is the All-Powerful, the Almighty!*”²⁶ Note the first part of this quote, that both the believers and God desire that they should meet Him and attain His presence; this reads very closely to the ḥadīth attributed to the sixth Imám, Ja'far aṣ-Ṣádiq, quoted earlier in this paper, that if one desires and longs for the meeting with God, God also desires for that individual to attain His presence.

In a tablet addressed to Aba'l-Ḥasan, Bahá'u'lláh lauds and praises him for having heard and read the divine verses and further counsels him not to be saddened by his separation from His presence, as the Pen of the Most-Ancient has recorded Aba'l-Ḥasan as having been granted the recompense of attaining His presence.²⁷ Likewise, in a tablet addressed to an individual named Raḥím, Bahá'u'lláh offers praise and blessings to Raḥím for his desire to attain the presence of “*the Almighty, the Best-Beloved,*” and further counsels him to not be saddened by his remoteness from Bahá'u'lláh, as power rests and has rested with and will always remain in the hand of God, and that

should God will or desire; He will bestow the recompense of the *liqá'*.²⁸ Further to the above mentioned tablets to Zayn and Aba'l-Ḥasan, there are two additional fascinating passages, both very similar to each other, in which Bahá'u'lláh creates a meaningful imagery of the divinely revealed verses of God as the means by which the individual may see God, thus implying one's attainment to God's presence and beholding His appearance. In referring to the revelation of divine verses, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

*Say: 'O people of the earth! Equate ye not the creation of the verses of God with the creation of any given thing, nor its appearance with the appearance of other things, if ye understand. Verily it is, in its essence, the mirror of God among all of the worlds, and verily it recounteth God and His excellent names, and by it ye are verily guided unto the Straight Path. Through it, God hath created all that hath been and all that is to be.'*²⁹

Passages from the writings and talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The following statements from 'Abdu'l-Bahá may be understood as further elucidation on the *liqá'*, and in some instances, confirmation or clarification of what Bahá'u'lláh has written. The following three passages are currently published and available in Persian, these translations are also purely provisional.

Recall that Bahá'u'lláh defines both earnest service and sincere investigation and belief in the sacred texts as instances wherein human beings may attain the presence of God. The following passages clearly re-iterate and affirm what Bahá'u'lláh has written. *Ishráq-Khávarí* has published a small excerpt in Persian from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, wherein He states, "*O thou who art certain of God! By liqá' is meant belief in the signs of God...as bodily nearness is of no import, drawing*

near [unto God's presence] is in faith and certitude..."³⁰ 'Abdu'l-Bahá has also written in a similar passage, "...by nearness (qurbíyyat) [to the divine presence] is meant that of the spirit, not the body...in light of this it is hoped that you may draw nigh [unto God's presence] in every way."³¹ Furthermore, 'Abdu'l-Bahá also affirms Bahá'u'lláh's statements about service to the Cause of God as having fulfilled attainment unto His presence, "...the reality of 'drawing near' [unto God] is steadfastness in the religion of God, service to His Cause, and offering worship to the divine court of oneness..."³²

Elsewhere, we read in *Foundations of World Unity*:

Praise be to God! you have heard the call of the Kingdom. Your eyes are opened; you have turned to God. Your purpose is the good-pleasure of God, the understanding of the mysteries of the heart and investigation of the realities. Day and night you must strive that you may attain to the significances of the heavenly kingdom, perceive the signs of divinity, acquire certainty of knowledge and realize that this world has a creator, a vivifier, a provider, an architect...In this way may you behold the presence of God and attain to the knowledge of the holy, divine Manifestations. [FWU 65]

In one of His talks delivered in New York in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to the members of Mr. Kinney's Bible class as those who desire to approach the presence of God and subsequently counsels them in words similar to those found in Bahá'u'lláh's writings: "*It is my hope that you may put forth your most earnest endeavor to accomplish this end, that you may investigate and study the Holy Scriptures word by word so that you may attain knowledge of the mysteries hidden therein. Be not satisfied with words, but seek to understand the spiritual meanings hidden in the heart of the words...*" [PUP 459]. It is evident from the above passages that 'Abdu'l-Bahá clearly

confirms and in some instances offers some clarification on the meaning behind the *liqá'*.

Kawthar and Liqá'

A similar interpretative mechanism has been applied to other concepts and constructs in the Bahá'í writings. We will provide one example of an Islamic metaphysical construct employed in the writings of The Báb. In one of the major works of The Báb, the Commentary on the Súrih of Kawthar (*Tafsír Súriyih Kawthar*), written for Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí (later designated as the Letter of the Living, Vaḥíd), He identifies the revelation of divine verses from His pen, just as Bahá'u'lláh identifies the divine verses of His pen as a means to attain the presence of God, as the flowing waters from the fountain of *kawthar* in paradise. In one of the passages of this work provisionally translated and quoted by Dr. Nader Saiedi we read:

*The waters of that river [from the Kawthar fountain in paradise] flow forth from my tongue and pen with that which God willeth, imperishable and everlasting...*³³

The Báb, as the Manifestation of God invested with divine authority and sovereignty (in this case, to reveal divine verses), has defined this concept of *Kawthar*, rather than being an abstract physical location attainable only in the realms of Paradise, instead being found and attained in reading the divinely revealed word of God.

Notes on the content of the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'*

Although, as previously mentioned, the recipients of the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'* are not known at this time, Bahá'u'lláh uses specific language to qualify and describe them. They are called “*the birds of the most exalted paradise*” (*aṭyáru'l Firdaws*). “Firdaws” is a term found in the Qur'án, the highest attainable realm of paradise where the Prophet Muḥammad and other

prophets and messengers of God, martyrs, saints, and the pious dwell. One may infer that Bahá'u'lláh's intent in using this phrase is to indicate that because the recipients have attained a stage in their spiritual growth and search for divine truth, they are symbolically dwelling in such a lofty station. This is further indicated in the same passage when Bahá'u'lláh acknowledges them for their acceptance of His Cause and that the "Concourse on high" has rejoiced because of their belief. It is therefore possible that they may have been recent or new believers to the faith of Bahá'u'lláh who desired to meet Him and be in His presence. Afterwards, Bahá'u'lláh mentions that simultaneously, the denizens of the cities of eternity have raised their cries of grief and lamentation owing to their "burning thirst" despite their nearness to the ocean of His presence. Although it is not explicitly stated, it is possible that Bahá'u'lláh is referring to a recent exile [perhaps to 'Akká] because these recipients did not get to see Him beforehand. He has therefore written this Tablet as a means of attaining His presence. When reading this passage, it seems that Bahá'u'lláh has eliminated this dichotomy between joy and anguish. After mentioning these two phenomena, Bahá'u'lláh writes that they have become one or entwined in the Day of God.

We read near the middle section of the Tablet that Bahá'u'lláh offers blessings and praise for these recipients for having entered "the city." The language itself is at once both simple to follow, yet, also ambiguous. The word for "city" in Arabic is "*madínah*," and this term has a diverse meaning in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. In one instance, it can refer to a literal town, city, or place where the Manifestation of God is dwelling, and in the other, it is highly figurative by referring to stages of spiritual progress of the individual. In this particular connection, it is interesting that Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to the "city of eternal and immortal life" in His discourse and interpretation of the *liqá'* in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, as well as in in this Tablet, where He writes that the recipients of the *Lawḥ-i-*

Liqá' are blessed for having entered "the city." Perhaps Bahá'u'lláh is invoking the same city He mentioned in the Íqán.

Conclusion

The *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'* and other passages from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh bring about a figurative and meaningful understanding of what it means for humanity to attain the divine presence. Whereas in previous religious dispensations this idea and others were and still are understood to be literal and physical events that have yet to occur, Bahá'u'lláh confirms that the presence of God will be attained and realized in multiple instances including being in the physical presence of His manifestations, reading the divinely revealed texts with sincerity, and carrying out acts of service with utmost detachment and purity of motive.

Bahá'u'lláh's "*Lawḥ-i-Liqá'*," or "The Tablet of the Divine Presence"

1. First translation, published in 1928

For the reference and use of the reader, the text of the first published translation of the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'* will be provided below. It is not known who carried out this translation; it is included in the *Bahá'í Scriptures* compilation published in 1928, within the chapter entitled, "The Degrees of Devotion." The text is as follows:

276. He is the Everlasting Being!

This is a message which We have appointed as Our meeting for those who advance toward God in this Day in which all countries are changed.

The one who reads that which is revealed in this Tablet from the direction of the Throne and doubts the reality

of meeting his Lord; verily, he is of those who deny God, who causeth the mornings to break forth!

O birds of Paradise! Hear the voice of the Beloved in these days wherein the feet of the people deviate.

On account of your advancement the Supreme Concourse hath rejoiced; but because of your not having attained the meeting, and being thirsty while near the ocean, the cry of mourning and weeping has been raised by the inhabitants of the cities of eternity.

This is indeed good; that this rejoicing and sorrow seem to unite and to embrace one another in the Day of God, the Omnipresent, the Dear, the Chosen!

The bellies of the polytheists are burned by that which We have uttered aforetime, and for this reason they dissemble day and night against My soul.

Blessed are you, since ye have entered the city and attained that which your Lord, the Dear, the Giver, desireth.

It is incumbent upon you that gladness and exultation shall be manifest in your faces; so that every soul may find you in submission and forbearance. Thus it is preordained from the Pen of El-Abha. Verily, your Lord the Merciful is the knower of that which is secret and manifest!

Ye are in the shadow of My providence and under the Dome of My mercy. Verily, the sight of God is directed toward you, O ye possessors of clear insight.

Blessed are ye; those who love you and those who advance toward you sincerely, for the sake of God, the Dear, the Almighty!

God beareth witness, and those who are encircling the Throne, that ye have victoriously attained His meeting, and have circulated around the Holy of Holies of His

Cause, and were present before His Face. Verily, He is the powerful over all that He wisheth! There is no God but He, the Dear, the Bestower!

By Myself! We have accepted from you that which ye desired, and We will be with you in all times. El-Bahá be upon you on the part of the Dear, the Helper! [BS 188-189]

2. New provisional translation

He is the Eternal!

Lo, We made this epistle to be the attainment of Our presence for such as have turned unto God in these days, wherein the nations have been made to tremble. Whosoever gazeth upon that which hath been sent down from the Throne of glory in this Tablet and findeth himself in doubt as to whether he hath attained the presence of his Lord, he is of them who have turned away from God, the One Who causeth the dawn to break. O ye birds of the most exalted paradise! Give ear unto the call of the Beloved in these days wherein the feet of men have slipped. The Concourse on high have rejoiced by reason of your acceptance of this Cause, and the voice of the denizens of the cities of eternity hath been raised aloud in grief and lamentation by virtue of your remoteness from Him and your burning thirst, notwithstanding your nearness to the Ocean of His presence!

O how glorious is this blissful joy, this bitter anguish! Methinks both have embraced in the Day of God, the Powerful, the Almighty, and the Omnipotent! The hearts of the infidels have been set ablaze by that which We have revealed aforetime, and still they plot against Me day and night!

Blessed are ye for having entered the city and attained unto that which hath been ordained by your Lord, the Mighty, and the Bestower. It behooveth you to show forth from your countenances utmost joy and bliss that all may discern in you the tokens of resignation and submission. Thus hath it been decreed by the pen of Glory; verily, your Lord is the Most Merciful, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. O men of insight! Ye are beneath the shadow of My loving kindness and the canopy of My mercy, thus is the gaze of God fixed upon you. Blessed are ye and whosoever loveth you and turneth unto you wholly for the sake of God, the Almighty, the All-Compelling. God and such as have circled round the Throne bear witness that ye have attained unto His presence, circumambulated the Kaaba³⁴ of His command, and beheld His countenance. Potent is He over whatsoever He willeth. No God is there but Him, the Mighty, the Munificent! By My life! We have granted that which ye have desired, and We are with you at all times. The glory of Him Who is the Almighty and the Helper rest upon you!

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- * The Rodwell English translation of the Qur'án was referred to in this paper.

NOTES

- ¹ 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Kḥavári, *Má'idíy-i Ásmání* (Tihrán: Mu'asassiy-i Millíy-i Maṭbú'át-i Amrí, 129 B.E.), vol. 8:167-68.
- ² Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fáḍil Mázandarání, *Asráru'l-Áthár* (Tihrán: Mu'asassiy-i Millíy-i Maṭbú'át-i Amrí, 128 B.E.), vol. 5: 68-69.
- ³ *Áthár-i-Qalam-i A'lá vol. 1* (Dundas, Ontario: Mu'asassiyih Ma'árif-i Bahá'í, 153 B.E.), 390.

- ⁴ Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Mubín* (Tihrán: Mu'asassiy-i Milliy-i Maṭbú'át-i Amrí, 120 B.E.), 355.
- ⁵ On page 390 of *Áthár-i-Qalam-i A'lá vol., p. 390*, the text of the *Lawḥ-i-Liqá'* reads in the second to last sentence,
 "... انّه لهُو المقتدر على ما تشاء لا اله الا هو العزيز المنان."
 The boldened term "*tashá'*" (تشاء) should instead be read as "*yashá'*" (يشاء) as is reflected in the authentic type-script of this tablet.
- ⁶ I am very grateful for the efforts exerted by the friends serving in the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre for providing me with a type-script of the authentic text of this tablet and for also providing me with a copy of an early English translation that was published in 1928. This earlier English translation was helpful in ensuring a proper reading of the Arabic text. It will be included at the end of this paper for the reference of interested readers; it should be noted that the current provisional translation was completed before receiving a copy of the earlier translation.
- ⁷ Bahá'u'd-Dín *Khurramsháhi*, *Dánishnámíy-i Qur'án Va Qur'án Pazhúhí* (Tihrán?: Intishárát-i Dústán, 1998), vol. 2: 1937-38.
- ⁸ *Khurramsháhi*, *Dánishnámíy-i Qur'án Va Qur'án Pazhúhí*, vol. 2: 1938.
- ⁹ 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd *Ishráq-Khávarí*, *Qámús-i-Íqán* (Tihrán: Mu'asassiy-i Milliy-i Maṭbú'át-i Amrí, 128 B.E.), vol. 3: 1343-48.
- ¹⁰ *Ishráq-Khávarí*, *Qámús-i-Íqán*, vol. 3: 1344.
- ¹¹ Áyat'ulláh Rúḥ'u'lláh *Khumayní*, *An Exposition on Forty Aḥadíth Narrated through the Prophet and His Ahl al-Bayt, may peace be upon them.* (Qum: Ansariyan Publications?) e-book edition, p. 390.
- ¹² *Khumayní*, *Ibid*, p. 390.
- ¹³ *Khumayní*, *Ibid*, p.392.
- ¹⁴ *Khumayní*, *Ibid*, p.394.
- ¹⁵ *Khumayní*, *Ibid*, p. 394-95.
- ¹⁶ For instance, refer the first page of Bahá'u'lláh's *Kitáb-i-Íqán*.
- ¹⁷ Báb, 'Alí Muḥammad *Shírání*, *Bayán-i-Fársí* (Tihrán?: n.p.), 81-82.
- ¹⁸ Qur'án 2:46 Rodwell.
- ¹⁹ Qur'án 18:111 Rodwell.
- ²⁰ Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fáḍil Mázandarání, *Amr va Kḥalq* (Hofheim: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1986), vol. 2: 166-67.
- ²¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *La'áliyú'l-Hikmat* (Rio De Janeiro: Editora Bahá'í, 1996), vol.2: 108. (Provisional translation by author.)
- ²² Vaḥíd Ra'fatí, *Yádnámíy-i Miṣbáḥ-i Munír* (Hofheim: Bahá'í-Verlag, 2006), 390-91.

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- ²³ Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fáḍil Mázandarání, *Amr va Kḥalq* (Hofheim: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1985), vol. 4:160.
- ²⁴ It is likely that the recipient was the Apostle of Bahá'u'lláh, Shaykh Kázim Samandar.
- ²⁵ Ishráq-Khávarí, *Má'idiy-i Ásmání*, vol. 8:95.
- ²⁶ Bahá'u'lláh, *La'áliyū'l-Ḥikmat*, vol. 2: 206-7. (Provisional translation by author.)
- ²⁷ Bahá'u'lláh, *La'áliyū'l-Ḥikmat*, vol. 2: 174-75.
- ²⁸ Bahá'u'lláh, *La'áliyū'l-Ḥikmat* (Rio De Janeiro: Editora Bahá'í, 1991), vol. 3: 153-54.
- ²⁹ *Áthár-i-Qalam-i A'lá* vol. 1, p. 286. (Provisional translation by author.) The other passage is found in *La'áliyū'l-Ḥikmat*, vol. 2, p. 40. Due to the close similarity of the two passages, the first citation is sufficient to reproduce here.
- ³⁰ 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávarí, *Má'idiy-i Ásmání* (Tíhrán: Mu'asassiy-i Milliy-i Maṭbú'át-i Amrí, 122 B.E.), vol. 9: 13. (Provisional translation by author.)
- ³¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Makátíb-i 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (n.p.: Mu'asassiy-i Milliy-i Maṭbú'át-i Amrí), vol. 2: 270. (Provisional translation by author.)
- ³² 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Makátíb-i 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, vol. 2: 149. (Provisional translation by author.)
- ³³ Nader Saiedi, *Gate of the Heart: Understanding the Writings of the Báb* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 72.
- ³⁴ *Kaaba* (كعبة) is a reference to the point of adoration, where worship is directed. In Islám, the *Kaaba* is identified as the city of Mecca, the spot constructed by the prophet Abraham, which had later been used to house pagan idols.