An Epistle of the Báb to His Grandmother and Mother

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Introduction and background:

This sacred Epistle, revealed by the Báb, is addressed to His beloved grandmother and mother, and stands as a luminous testament to His tender care, spiritual insight, and intimate guidance for His family. It exemplifies the interplay between personal affection and divine instruction that characterizes the Báb's correspondence with His nearest loved ones.

In this Epistle, the Báb reassures His grandmother and mother of His continued life and health, affirming that His sole desire is the good-pleasure of God. He invokes the hope of reunion, entrusting the ultimate outcome to the Will of the Lord of the world. The Epistle unfolds a profound exposition on spiritual truths: the exalted nature of divine knowledge, the reception of deeds in the acceptance of God, and the proper locus for the manifestation of God's Proof. Through these reflections, the Báb elevates the hearts of His family above transient sorrow, reminding them that grief, when weighed against the bounty of God, is of no consequence.

The Epistle further addresses their anxieties regarding His return, emphasizing that God's grace and bounty continually encompass His servants and that prudence governs what is revealed to them.

Finally, the Epistle conveys arrangements for the transmission of supplications and other sacred pages, ensuring their careful delivery while safeguarding them from causing unintended sorrow. Throughout, the Báb's words blend filial affection, guidance, and spiritual reassurance, providing a template of devotion, trust in God, and serenity in the face of worldly anxieties.

In essence, this Epistle encapsulates the Báb's loving guardianship of His family, illuminating the path of steadfast faith, submission to divine will, and the abiding remembrance of God—a message as timeless as it is intimate.

The precise date and place of revelation of this short yet sacred Epistle are not known to the author of this paper. However, from the internal evidence of the text itself, it may be ascertained that it was revealed toward the end of the year 1841, during the Báb's stay in Karbalá and prior to His public declaration. This estimation is supported by the historical fact that the Báb remained in that city for nearly a year in 1841, and that His grandmother and mother were at the time deeply anxious for His return to Shíráz. It is known that, in their concern, they sent His maternal uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ʻAlí, to persuade Him to return to His native city.

What follows is a provisional English rendering of the original Persian Epistle, based on the manuscript preserved in the *Iran National Bahá'í Archives* (INBA), vol. 58, pp. 160–162.

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Thus, Doth the Báb Reveal:

"He is the Most Exalted

Let it be stated, in honoured presence of the grandmother and the mother, that—praise be to God—I am in life and health, and cherish no desire save the good-pleasure of God. May the Lord of the world—glorified and exalted be His Majesty—ordain the reunion.

Now that ye have attained unto the truth of this matter, no loftiness in the knowledge of God beyond that which He hath graciously vouchsafed is conceivable, though the fruit of all deeds returneth unto the acceptance of God, yet the acceptance of God is not made manifest save in the locus wherein His Proof standeth established.

In fine, all sorrows, when set beside the bounty of God, become as naught and are unworthy of mention.

Certain passages were written to the Siyyid.[2] Should he be honoured to attain this exalted presence, he shall perform the visitation on My behalf; and whatsoever is in accordance with your noble pleasure shall be duly mentioned (to him), for the grace of God toward the dwellers in the House hath been—and remaineth—unbounded.

And concerning My return, which ever caused you anxiety, were it not for the sake of prudence, it would have been mentioned. Whenever the Siyyid deemeth it expedient, he shall make mention thereof. In every case, the means of the grace and bounty of God have ever been—and shall remain. Be not sorrowful.

Some time ago, Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar[3] was on his way, and I sent with him a compilation of the supplications of the People of the House, and I wrote that five chahārqads[4] and ten handkerchiefs should be sent. After their arrival, act in accordance with your noble judgment.

And God hath ever remembered His servants; sufficient is He as Protector and Trustee, sufficient is He as All-Knowing and All-Reckoning, and sufficient is thy Lord as Guide and Helper.

He is the Most High.

Both pages shall be perused by the Siyyid. Whenever he resolveth to return to his homeland, he shall deliver this page to the grandmother and the mother, and give the page of verses, which they shall preserve.

Otherwise, he shall go to Mírzá Jawád, deliver the pages to him, and keep their mention concealed, so that perchance no sorrow befall anyone."

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[2] In the manuscript copy above, the word سید (*Siyyid*) is marked with the number ۱۱ (11). In the Abjad numerical system, the name *Ali* corresponds to 110 (shown in Persian numerals as ۱۱۰); however, the Báb customarily omits the zero, rendering it as ۱۱ (11). This practice makes it clear that the term *Siyyid* here refers to Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the Báb's maternal uncle, known as the "Greatest Uncle."

[3] Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar, the paternal cousin of the Báb, was killed by partisans of Subh-i-Azal in Baghdad (Aboulqasim Afnan, *Ahd-i Ala*, p. 219).

[4] *Chahārqad* (Persian: چارقد, /CArqad/), also known as *chāruq*, *rusari*, *lachak*, *maqsurah*, or *maqna'ah*, refers to an old-fashioned shawl or head covering traditionally worn by women to cover the hair. In modern Persian, it is generally equivalent to a *rusari* (scarf or headscarf).

هو الاکبر

حضور جدّه و والده ذکر میشود که الحمد لله حیات صحت را
دارم و تمنائی جز رضای الهی نیست خداوند عالم جلّ اجلاله عزّ
ملاقات مقدر فرماید هرگاه بر حقیقت امر موفق شده اید که
علّوی در علم خداوند فوق آنچه خداوند منّت گذارده متصوّر نیست
اگر چه ثمرهٔ کلّ اعمال راجع میگردد بقبول الهی و قبول الهی
ظاهر نمیگردد الاّ در محلیکه حجّت ثابت باشد الغرض حزن ها در
جنب موهبة الهی بلا ذکر میگردد فقراتی بسیّد نوشته شد هرگاه
مشرف باین عزّ شده از قبل من قبول زیارت فرموده و هر قسم که
رضای شریف است ذکر شود که فضل الهی در حقّ سکان بیت
بلا نهایه بوده و هست و آنکه همیشه متعجب بودید از رجعت هر گاه
بملاحظه حفظ نبود ذکر میشد هر گاه سید مقتضی دانند ذکر خواهند
نمود و در هر حال اسباب فضل و جود الهی بوده و هست محزون
نباشید مدتی قبل میرزا علی اکبر روانه بود صحیفهٔ دعاهای
اهل بیت را فرستادم و نوشتم پنج دانه چهارقد ده دانه دستمال
بفرستند بعد از وصول هر قسم رای شریف است فرموده
باشید و خداوند ذاکر عباد خود بوده و هست و کفی به ولّیا و وکیلا
و کفی به علیماً و حسیبا و کفی بربّک هادیاً و نصیراً
هو الاعلی هر دو صفحه بملاحظه سیّد خواهد رسید هرگاه
اراده وطن نمودند این صفحه را بجده و والده و صفحه آیات را
بدهند نگاهدارند الاّ نزد میرزا جواد برود که برساند و مستور دارد ذکر
آن را لعل حزنی بر کسی وارد نیاید