

Tablet of the Báb to His Uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad Khál-i-Akbar)¹, Revealed in Muscat² — Part I

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Introduction and background:

The following Tablet, revealed by the Báb during His sojourn in the port city of Muscat—sometime between mid-March and early May 1845⁴—stands as a radiant testament to the loftiness of His divine consciousness, the constancy of His resolve, and the tenderness of His affection toward His kindred.

Addressed to His maternal uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad Shírází—an eminent merchant then residing in Búshihr—this Tablet emerges from a period marked by both profound proclamation and rising opposition.

While in Mecca, the Báb had openly declared His Mission in the precincts of the Ka‘bah, before a gathering of pilgrims and religious scholars—a moment of singular spiritual potency and far-reaching consequence. Yet among those who witnessed this solemn act were some who, unable to grasp its majesty, returned to Búshihr bearing slanderous reports, thereby inciting anxiety and public unrest. From the tone and content of this Tablet, it becomes clear that the Báb was fully aware of these developments and of the apprehension they had stirred in His uncle’s heart.

In this Tablet, the Báb offers words of solace, unveils the divinely ordained origin of His utterance, affirms His unwavering trust in God, and reasserts the supreme authority of the Remnant of God. Composed in a mode of elevated Arabic, replete with the cadence

¹ Khál-i-Akbar, meaning “the Greater Uncle,” was the maternal uncle of the Báb—a merchant residing in and conducting his business from Búshihr.

² Muscat is the capital city of present-day Oman, located on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula; in the 19th century, it was a significant port and commercial hub with strong regional and maritime trade connections.

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⁴ According to the Báb’s own testimony (Khutbih-i-Jeddah, “Sermon of Jeddah”), He arrived in Jeddah on 24 February 1845. After staying three days in Jeddah, He left for Muscat on 27 February. Assuming a sea voyage of approximately 14 days, He would have reached Muscat around 14 March. A separate letter addressed to His younger uncle, Siyyid Ḥasan ‘Alí, confirms His presence in Muscat on 1 May. The Báb’s arrival in Búshihr is recorded as 14 May 1845 (see Denis MacEoin, *Sources for the Early Bábí Doctrine and History*, p. 48). Estimating a 10-day sea journey from Muscat to Búshihr suggests that His departure from Muscat occurred around 4 May. Thus, this Epistle was likely revealed during His stay in Muscat between 14 March and 4 May 1845. Afán (Āhd-i-A ‘lá, p. 80) states that, based on other epistles of the Báb recounting events of His pilgrimage to Mecca and His return to Shíráz, the Báb arrived in Muscat from Mecca in the early days of the month of Rabí‘ al-Awwal 1261 A.H., corresponding to mid-March 1845 C.E. This account corroborates the above estimation.

and imagery of the Qur'án, the Tablet reflects the Báb's self-understanding as the divinely commissioned Bearer of a new Dispensation. It offers a rare and intimate glimpse into the early tribulations that foreshadowed the tempestuous course of His ministry and the dawning of a new era in religious history.

The Báb's Sojourn in Muscat: A Mission of Proclamation and Compassion:

While the Báb was journeying through the sacred land of Ḥijáz, grievous tidings reached Him of the arrest and imprisonment, in the city of Baghdad, of Mullá 'Alí Bastámí—He who had been designated by the Báb as the second Letter of the Living and the first to be martyred in 'Iráq during the Báb the ministry.

Moved by divine wisdom, and desiring to avert the shedding of innocent blood and to safeguard the nascent community of His devoted followers, the Báb chose not to proceed to 'Iráq. Instead, He instructed those who had been anticipating His arrival in that region to journey to Isfahán, there to await His coming.

Following His return from Mecca, and after a brief sojourn in Jeddah, the Báb set His course toward the port city of Muscat. He departed Jeddah on the 27th of February 1845 and arrived in Muscat around the 14th of March of that same year. The purpose of this voyage was twofold: first, to proclaim His divinely ordained Mission to Shaykh Sulaymán, the Muftí of Muscat and a figure of renown among the Sunni clergies; and second, to make every possible effort toward securing the release of His loyal and steadfast follower, Mullá 'Alí Bastámí, then languishing in the prison of Najíb Páshá in Baghdad.

While in Muscat, the Báb entrusted Mullá Ghawhar—who had regarded himself as the rightful successor of Siyyid Kázim—with the delivery of a weighty Tablet, addressed by His own hand to Sulṭán 'Abdu'l-Majíd, through Najíb Páshá, the Governor of Baghdad. He further appealed to him for assistance in securing the deliverance of Mullá 'Alí. Yet, far from responding with sympathy or support, Mullá Ghawhar not only rejected the Báb but demanded instead the execution of that innocent and steadfast Mullá 'Alí. At length, the Báb departed Muscat around the 4th of May 1845.

During His sojourn in Muscat, the Báb revealed, among other Tablets, two addressed to His uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad, and one to Shaykh Salmán Āl-'Aṣṣūr, the Imám Jum'ih (Friday Prayer Leader) of Búshihr.

These three Tablets are closely interrelated and ought to be read together to fully appreciate their content, context, and purpose. The second Tablet to His uncle and the one revealed in honour of Shaykh Salmán Āl-'Aṣṣūr will be presented separately in due course, under the respective titles: *Tablet of the Báb to His Uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid*

Muḥammad (Khál-i-Akbar), Revealed in Muscat — Part II, and Tablet of the Báb Revealed in Muscat in Honour of Shaykh Salmán Āl-‘Aṣfūr.

What follows is a provisional rendering of this deeply spiritual and soul-stirring Tablet.

The Báb writes:

*“O Preserver! Exalted be His station, the Almighty.
To the noble and honoured presence of the eminent merchant, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid
Muḥammad Shírází, at the residence of Shaykh Ṣāḥib in the port of Búshihr:
May thy glances illumine this.*

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Recite the Book⁵ of the Remembrance of the Name of thy Lord, which is now being sent down unto thee as a clear and manifest Book. Render thanks, then, unto God, thy Lord, and prostrate thyself before His decree—for this, verily, is the grace of God bestowed upon thee Verily, there is no God but He, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

Follow thou the decree revealed unto thee from the presence of the Manifest Imam (Leader)⁶, for verily it is the very Truth in the heavens and on the earth. He calleth mankind unto a just and well-balanced standard.

Indeed, the Servant of the Remnant of God⁷ hath come unto men, bearing witness to that which the Prophets and Messengers of God brought aforetime—that ye worship none save Him. This, verily, is the straight religion.

Rejoice, then, O uncle, in the Day of Remembrance⁸, and fear thou not any soul in the path of God, for all shall return unto God, thy Lord.

⁵ In classical Arabic, *kitáb* may signify a book, letter or epistle, divine scripture, or ordained decree, depending on context. The Qur’án itself employs *kitáb* in all these senses. Throughout this provisional translation, the term Kitáb has been rendered as “Book,” in keeping with the Báb’s usage and the recognition that all His writings are regarded as divinely revealed scripture. It should be noted, however, that in certain contexts, “Book” does not necessarily refer to a complete volume in the conventional sense, but may denote a letter, epistle, or any portion of revealed text. The term thus conveys a spiritual and revelatory station rather than a reference to physical extent or literary form.

⁶ This refers to the Báb Himself, asserting His role as a divinely appointed guide.

⁷ Remnant of God" (Baqiyatu’lláh) is a title associated with the awaited Mahdi in Shi’a Islam. By referring to Himself as the servant of this figure, the Báb subtly identifies with the prophesied redeemer.

⁸ Day of the Remembrance" signifies the era of the Báb's revelation. "Remembrance" (Dhikr) is another title the Báb uses for Himself, indicating His role in reminding humanity of God's presence.

We have indeed tested all creation from the Day the Cause was made manifest. Whoso hath believed and followed the signs of God—they, verily, are the rightly guided. But as for him who denieth the Book of thy Lord and followeth his own vain imagining, none of his deeds shall be accepted; and such as these are, in truth, the losers.

And indeed, We did send forth a Book from Mokhá aforetime, and thereafter from Muscat, containing clear signs from Us for a people who hearken⁹.

And We do indeed know that thou art in fear on account of My Self, and that the sovereign hath not believed in the decree. Yet God had already inscribed Our decree in the Qur'án beforehand.

And God is He Who heareth all, knoweth all. God hath indeed decreed: 'I shall assuredly triumph, I and My Messengers.' Verily, there is no God but He, the Almighty, the All-Subduing.

Know thou the decree of thy Lord in this moment: that I have not been engaged in any matter, nor have I revealed a single letter in the Book, save by the permission of the Remnant of God, the Proof of thy Lord, the True Imam¹⁰, the All-Hearing.

Know, then, that should the Name be made manifest among the people, it shall not be permitted for any soul to enter My presence except with My leave. And God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

Say: The Remnant of God hath indeed forbidden the countenance of the Remembrance of the Name of thy Lord to be turned toward the heedless, and the touch of My hand by the hands of the idolaters¹¹. And God is Almighty, All-Praised.

And if thou art the Just One, thou art well-aware of My return. I have, indeed, chosen a dwelling-place for Myself, and God is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Fear not, for this is the decree of God. Verily, if We so willed, We could reveal, in every single letter, the like of the Qur'án—and none shall have power to withstand the proof of thy Lord. There is none other God but He, the Almighty, the All-Compelling.

Know, then, that the Remnant of God hath enjoined Me that, on the Day of the Covenant, none shall be addressed save in a clear and eloquent Arabic tongue. For God hath ordained that My tongue, in every matter, be as the decree of the Qur'án; and whosoever

⁹ The Báb's mention of sending Books (Tablets, and Letters) from these locations underscores the widespread dissemination of His message.

¹⁰ This statement emphasizes the Báb's complete submission to divine will, asserting that His writings are not of personal origin but divinely inspired.

¹¹ Here, the Báb indicates a withdrawal from those who reject His message, a common motif in religious texts where divine guidance is withheld from the obstinate.

heareth it, it is incumbent upon him to inscribe the like thereof — for this is, verily, a proof from God unto all mankind.

And by virtue of that matter¹², it was not allowed to abide in the common abode¹³. Behold, then, what thou perceivest in the judgement now revealed. And God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Unto every soul is a fixed term inscribed, ordained in a manifest Book. And should I be slain in the path of thy Lord, or should death overtake Me, then unto God—thy Lord—shall I be gathered.

The Spirit of Truth¹⁴ hath encompassed My heart by the command of thy Lord, and all sovereignty lieth before Me as a letter traced upon a page.

Whether all believe in the remembrance of thy Lord or disbelieve therein, it addeth nothing to God. Verily, the Spirit sustaineth Me at every moment by the leave of God. God is, in truth, All-Powerful, All-Laudable.

And now hath the Ark, made subservient by the Will of God, come to rest upon the billowing waters of the sea. This is indeed what God hath willed. There is no power nor strength save in God. In Him have I placed My trust, and unto Him shall be the return.

By the bounty of God, I perceive not in My soul so much as a mustard seed of fear¹⁵, nor do I seek the aid of any soul— to the extent of an atom even less than that. And I abide, in accordance with the decree of the Book: I seek the forgiveness of God—He Who hath not taken unto Himself a son¹⁶, nor hath He any partner in His dominion, nor doth He require a helper out of abasement.

¹² The phrase “*that matter*” refers to the preceding paragraph in which the Báb declares that the choice of His dwelling place is subject to His own decree. By this, He asserts that the selection of where He will reside is not incidental or subject to ordinary considerations, but rather an expression of divine will.

¹³ The original Arabic term used here by the Báb is "الخان", which is most precisely rendered as caravanserai—a type of public lodging house traditionally found along trade routes across Persia and the broader Islamic world. While caravanserai is the exact historical term, its usage in English today may sound foreign or incongruous in spiritual contexts. Accordingly, a more nuanced rendering has been adopted in this translation to better reflect the implied contrast in the Báb's words.

Notably, just prior to this passage, the Báb explicitly states that the choice of His dwelling is a divine ordinance and subject to His own decree. The use of the word khān in this context may subtly convey a deliberate distancing from common or unsanctified places of rest. It implies that, considering His sacred mission and exalted station, such public or worldly accommodations were deemed unsuitable. The alternative rendering thus avoids the literal term while striving to preserve both the historical sense and the spiritual dignity of the original.

¹⁴ "Spirit of Truth" may refer to divine inspiration or the Holy Spirit, indicating the Báb's reception of spiritual guidance.

¹⁵ This expression denotes complete trust in God, a sentiment echoed in various religious texts to illustrate unwavering faith.

¹⁶ This is a direct reference to Qur'an 17:111, affirming God's uniqueness and rejecting anthropomorphic attributes.

There is no God but He. Exalted is He above all that they associate with Him. Glorified be God, thy Lord, the Lord of the Throne, above all their vain descriptions. Peace be upon the Messengers, and praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.”

يا حفيظ تعالى شأنه العزيز در بندر بوشهر سراى شيخ عالى جناب صاحبى حاجى
ميرزا سيد محمد تاجر شيرازى منور فرمايند.

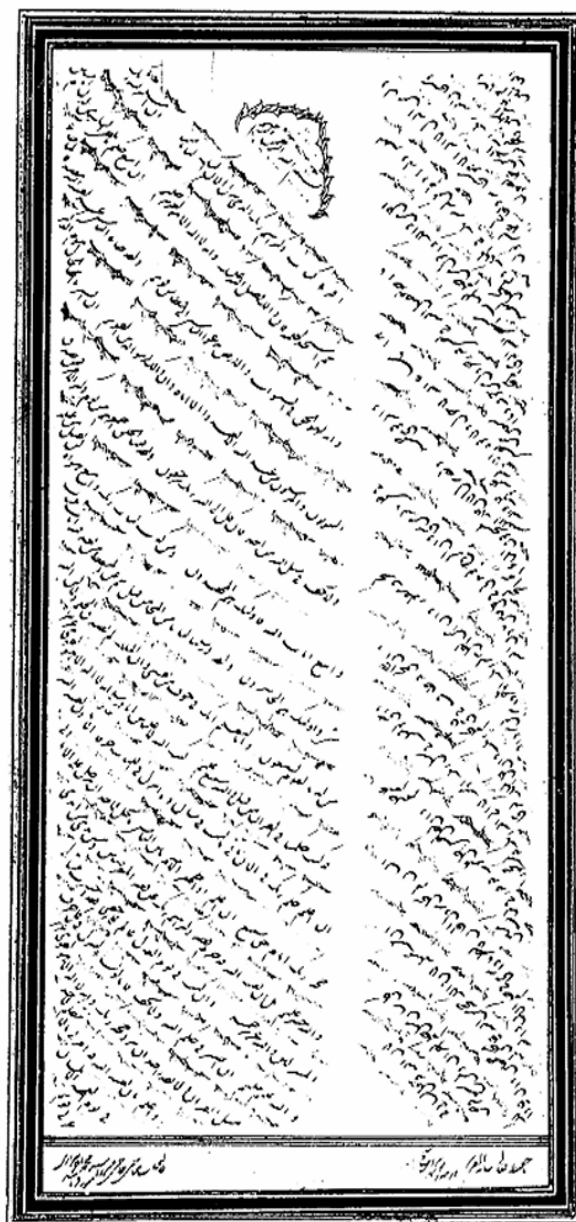
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اقرء كتاب ذكر اسم ربك الذى ينزل الآن اليك كتاباً مبيناً ان اشكر الله ربك ثم
اسجد لحكمه فانّ ذلك فضل الله عليك و انه لا اله الا هو لعزیز حكيم. ان اتبع
حكم ما تلقى اليك من لدن امام مبين و انه لهو الحق فى السموات و الارض يدعوا
الناس الى قسطاس قويم. و لقد جاء الناس عبد بقية الله مصداقاً لما جاء النبيون
(النبيون) و المرسلون من عند الله الاّ تعبدوا الاّ اياه و انّ ذلك لهو الدين القويم ان
ابشر يا ايها الخال بيوم الذكر و لا تخف فى سبيل الله من احد فانّ كلّ الى الله
ربك يرجعون و لقد فتنّا الخلق اجمعهم من يوم ذكر الامر فمن صدق و اتبع آيات
الله فاولئك هم المهتدون و من كذب كتاب ربك و اتبع هواه لن يقبل من عمله
شيئاً و اولئك هم الخاسرون. و لقد ارسلنا كتاباً من المخا من قبل ثم عن المسقط
من بعد فيه آيات بينات من لدنا لقوم يسمعون و انا لنعلم انك فى خوف من نفسى
و ان الملك لم يصدق الحكم ولكن الله قد كتب حكماً فى القرآن من قبل و الله
سميع عليم كتب الله لاغلبين انا و رسلى انه لا اله الاّ هو لقوى عزيز ان اعلم حكم
ربك فى الآن بانّى ما كنت فى شأن و ما انزل فى الكتاب حرفاً الاّ باذن بقية الله
حجة ربك امام حق سميع ان اعلم اذا ظهر الاسم بين الناس ما يحل لاحد ان يدخل
علىّ الاّ باذننى و الله خير عليم قل ان بقية الله قد حرم وجه ذكر اسم ربك عن وجه
المعرضين و مس يدى من ايدى المشركين و الله عزيز حميد و ان كنت فى يوم
العدل عالم على رجعى فقد اختيرت (اخترت) بيتاً لى و الله عليم حكيم ان اصبر فى
حكم الله و لاتخف فانا لو نشاء لننزل فى كل حرف مثل القرآن و لا يقدر احد ان
يرد حجة ربك و انه لا اله الاّ هو لقوى عزيز و اعلم بان بقية الله قد امرنى بالآ
تتكلم لاحد فى يوم العهد الاّ بلسان عربى قويم لان الله قد جعل لسانى فى كل شأن
مثل حكم القرآن و لمن سمع فرض ان يكتب بمثله لان ذلك حجة من الله على
الخلق اجمعين و ان على ذلك الشأن لم يحل نزول الخان فانظر ماذا ترى فى حكم
الآن و الله عليم حكيم. و ان لكل نفس اجل مكتوب قد قدر فى كتاب مبين و اننى
لو قتلت فى سبيل ربك او مت ائنى الى الله ربك قد كنت محشوراً و ان روح الحق
قد طاف فى قلبى بحكم ربك و ان كل الملك لدىّ كحرف مسطور و ان آمن الكل
بذكر ربك او يكفروا به لن يزداد فى علمى بالله من شيئى و ان الروح يؤيدنى فى
كل حين باذن الله و الله قوى حميد و لقد نزل الآن فلك المسخر فوق الماء يمّ البحر
هذا ما شاء الله لا حول و لا قوة الاّ بالله عليه توكلت و اليه المصير ما اجد بفضل

الله في نفسى قدر خردل من خوف و ما استعين من نفس اقل من ذلك و اقول من
حكم الكتاب استغفر الله الذى لم يتخذ لنفسه ولدا و لم يكن له شريك فى الملك و
لم يجعل لنفسه ولياً من الذل لا اله الا هو سبحانه و تعالى عما يشركون و سبحان
الله ربك رب العرش عما يصفون و سلام على المرسلين و الحمد لله رب العالمين.

(Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, Ādh-i-A'lá, pp. 94-95)

Tablet of the Báb to His Uncle, Siyyid Muḥammad, in His Own Hand



(Abú'l-Qásim Afnán, Ādh-i-A'lá, p. 93)