

The Báb's Tablet to the Nineteenth Temple

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Introduction and background:

In the nascent Bábí Dispensation, the first eighteen individuals to recognize the Báb's divine mission were conferred the title "Letters of the Living" (*Hurúf-i-Hayy*) (Báb, *Persian Bayán* II:7). In Bábí theology, the "letter" serves as a metaphor for a messenger—an intermediary proceeding from the "Point," which symbolizes the Manifestation of God (Báb, *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'*, Súrah of Joseph).

Collectively, these eighteen disciples and the Báb Himself constitute what the Báb termed the *First Vahid* (Unity) of His Dispensation. The term *Vahid*, meaning "One," bears the numerical value of nineteen in the Abjad system (MacEoin, Denis. 2009. *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*. Leiden: Brill., pp. 32–33), thus signifying unity and completeness. The number nineteen therefore represents not only a numerical structure but also a theological statement of wholeness, with the Báb at the center and the eighteen Letters as emanations of His revelation.

The Letters of the Living are thus more than the earliest believers; they embody the spiritual completeness and unfolding of the Báb's message. As the "points" from which the letters emerge, they herald the transformation of the spiritual order and prepare the way for the advent of the next Manifestation—the Promised One foretold by the Báb (Báb, *Persian Bayán* II:7; Amanat, Abbas. 1989. *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844–1850*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press., pp. 166–167).

In the Bábí and Bahá'í sacred writings, the Arabic term *Haykal*—literally "temple" or "body"—carries profound symbolic and theological significance. In the writings of the Báb, it can denote the physical form (*jasad*) of the Manifestation of God, the Manifestation's perfect spiritual reality, or a mystical archetype representing divine revelation itself (Báb, *Persian Bayán* V:7). The *Haykal* frequently designates the Manifestation as the living Temple of God—the visible locus of the invisible divine will (Bahá'u'lláh, *Súriy-i-Haykal*, ¶1).

One of the most distinctive symbolic representations of the *Haykal* in the Bábí dispensation is the five-pointed star. This star is composed of five intersecting lines which form six internal chambers—together yielding a total of eleven distinct elements.

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In the Abjad numerical system, the word *Huwa* (“He”) has the value of eleven (Saiedi, Nader. 2008. *Gate of the Heart: Understanding the Writings of the Báb*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press., pp. 150). Thus, the very geometry of the five-pointed star becomes a visual declaration of divine unity, representing the Manifestations of God as the earthly embodiment of the eternal “He.”

In the Bábí context, the *Haykal* can signify:

1. The Manifestation’s own physical person (*jasad*), as the Temple of God (Báb, *Persian Bayán* V:7).
2. The perfect spiritual reality of the Manifestation, reflecting all divine Names.
3. A representative believer who serves as a locus of the Cause in their time.
4. A symbolic geometric form (especially the five-pointed star) used to convey mystical truths.

In all these senses, the *Haykal* functions as a bridge between the unseen realm and the visible world, embodying the purpose of revelation: to make God’s will manifest in creation. As Bahá’u’lláh later affirmed: “This is the Temple of God amongst you, and His Tabernacle in your midst” (*Súriy-i-Haykal*, authorized trans., Bahá’u’lláh 1978).

As indicated by the superscription of the Tablet under study, it is clear that the Báb revealed it specifically for the Nineteenth Temple. As previously noted, the first eighteen individuals who embraced His divine mission are designated as the Letters of the Living. Together with the Báb Himself, Who is symbolized as the Point, they constitute what is known as the First Vahid, or First Unity, of His Dispensation.

Significantly, the Tablet appears to be revealed by the Báb in a dual capacity—both as the divine Messenger and as the representative of the collective unity of the Letters.

In addition to this central Tablet, the Báb also revealed eighteen separate Tablets, each dedicated to one of the Letters of the Living, thereby honoring their foundational roles in the unfolding Revelation. Furthermore, He revealed one Tablets addressed to Him Whom God Shall Make Manifest—Bahá’u’lláh—the Promised One foretold by the Báb, who would succeed and complete the cycle of divine Manifestations.

This intricate literary and theological structure not only reflects the Báb’s profound awareness of His own station and that of His disciples but also situates the Nineteenth Temple as the culminating point of the initial phase of the Bábí Dispensation, pointing forward to the coming of Bahá’u’lláh and the subsequent Bahá’í Revelation.

This sacred *Tablet*, revealed wholly in Arabic at some point in the year 1844 C.E., dates from the earliest days of the Báb’s ministry.

What follows is a provisional English rendering of this luminous *Tablet*, translated with the utmost reverence and care. The original text is published in Muḥammad Labīb, توقيعات مبارکه حضرت باب خطاب به حروف حيّ بخطّ آن حضرت و بخطّ كاتب (Tawqī'āt Mubārakah Ḥaḍrat al-Bāb Khaṭīb biḥ Ḥurūf-i-Ḥayy bi-Khaṭṭ-i-Ān Ḥaḍrat wa bi-Khaṭṭ-i-Kātib).

The Báb Reveals:

“This is what We have revealed unto the Temple of the Ninth, before the Tenth,² the Convocation of the Temples, from God, the Almighty, the Self-Subsisting.

He

In the Name of God, the Living, the All-Glorious, the Manifest,³ the Near

Glorified be He Who standeth firm upon His Cause,⁴ Who knoweth what issueth forth from the heaven, and what descendeth upon the earth, and what ascendeth unto it.

Say: All are filled with awe and trembling before Him. He it is Who rewardeth every soul according to that which it hath earned.

Say: All prostrate themselves before Him. To Him belong creation and command, in the past and in the future. And all, by His command, are made to know.

² The Arabic phrase تاسع قبل عشر literally reads “the Ninth before the Tenth.” In Bábí/Bahá’í symbolism such numerical locutions are frequently used in a non-literal, symbolic way to indicate the position within the nineteen-unit system (the first eighteen Letters of the Living + the Báb’s special station), and therefore may be taken to signify the Nineteenth in a symbolic sense.

³ The term *al-Badūh* (البدوح), appearing among the Divine Attributes in the Báb’s invocation, derives from the root *b-d-ḥ*, which encompasses meanings of “open expanse” and “to reveal or disclose.” In the sacred context of this Tablet, and consistent with classical Islamic theology and Bahá’í interpretive tradition, *al-Badūh* is best understood as a Divine Name signifying “*the Manifest*”—the One who unveils and reveals His Presence and Essence. This rendering aligns with Shoghi Effendi’s stylistic precedent in translating divine epithets that emphasize God’s self-revelation, and maintains the solemn sequence of Names: the Living, the All-Glorious, the Manifest, and the Near. Although the lexical roots suggest notions of spatial vastness and revelation, theologically the term functions as an elevated Divine Attribute rather than a created entity or angelic figure.

⁴ The phrase *al-Qā’im* (الذي قائم على أمره) literally means “He Who standeth firm upon His Cause,” emphasizing God’s sovereign authority and firm establishment over His command. This rendering aligns with Shoghi Effendi’s authoritative style in translating divine epithets, as seen in *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*. Although the root *q-w-m* can also mean “to arise,” the phrase here refers primarily to God’s active governance rather than the Promised Qā’im, a title the Báb adopts elsewhere for Himself. In the context of this Tablet, revealed by the Báb for Himself, the expression carries a layered meaning: it denotes both God’s unchallengeable dominion and the Manifestation’s station as the One who arises to establish and fulfill that divine command. This dual significance reflects the theophanic voice of God speaking through the Manifestation, uniting the transcendent and manifest aspects of the divine reality. For this reason, the translation preserves the phrase’s literal form in the text while the additional interpretive nuance is reserved for commentary. See Shoghi Effendi, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 164; Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*; and Nabil-i-Azam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, for further elaboration on the Qā’im’s station.

Say: He is the Most Exalted above all things. And He is the Inaccessible, the Well-Beloved. Unto Him belong whatsoever is in the heavens and on the earth and whatsoever lieth between them.

And all, by reason of fear of Him, are filled with reverent awe. He is God; there is none other God but Him. O My servants, fear ye Me.

Say: These are verily perspicuous verses from the Letter Thā⁵ unto the Letter of the Ninth, before the Tenth, the Convocation of the Temples.

Bear thou witness that there is none other God but Him, the Sovereign, the Most Holy. He it is Who knoweth what is in the heavens, and on the earth, and whatever lieth between them.

And all before Him shall be presented. To Him belong bounty and grace, in the past and in the future. He singeth out whomsoever He willeth for His mercy.

Say: All ask of His bounty. Unto Him belong whatsoever He hath brought into being in the heavens and on the earth. And all do His bidding.

He giveth life and causeth death, then, by His grace, giveth life again,⁶ howsoever He willeth.

Say: All are fearful because of His dread. He is God; there is none other God but Him.

The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Living, the All-Watchful, the Self-Subsisting. He it is Who, by His command, succoureth whomsoever He willeth.

Say: We all beseech of the bounty of God. O thou that Name!⁷ Magnify, through God, thy Lord, for that there is none other God but Him, the Sovereign, the All-Powerful.

That the command of God, thy Lord, may reach unto every thing — a bounty from Him, an existence proceeding from His Presence; there is none other God but Him, unto Whom all shall be raised.

⁵ Cf. The Bab, Selections 3: "This is the first letter of 'Thamarih' which means 'fruit'. Shoghi Effendi, in his writings, refers to the Bab as the 'Thamarih' (fruit) of the Tree of God's successive Revelations." (See Shoghi Effendi's letter to the Baha'is of the East dated Naw-Ruz 110, page 5)."

⁶ Qur'ān 2:28

⁷ The phrase "O thou that Name!" (ان يا ذلك الاسم) is a profound self-address by the Báb to His own exalted station as the Manifestation of God's Name in this dispensation. In Bábí and Bahá'í theology, the "Name" signifies the divine Reality through which God's attributes are made manifest to humanity. Here, the Báb invokes His sacred station, exhorting it to magnify and glorify God, thus underscoring the intimate relationship between the Manifestation and the Divine Source. This usage aligns with the Qur'anic and mystical tradition wherein the "Name" of God represents the eternal and ineffable divine essence (cf. Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh; God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi). The Báb's self-referential invocation emphasizes the unity of the speaker and the revealed Word, marking His unique role as the "Promised Qá'im" and the divine Manifestation of the Names and Attributes of God in this sacred Tablet revealed by Himself for Himself.

And verily unto Him belongeth the Dominion of the heavens and the earth; unto Him shall all return.

He it is before Whom those in the heavens and on the earth are filled with reverent awe; and all, in very truth, are devoted unto God.

Say: Fear ye God, O concourse, then Him shall ye fear.

He it is Who created you from one and the same substance⁸ — will ye then still do wrong?

Verily the command of God, thy Lord, hath come; yet most among men have no certitude — yea, the greater part of them are in error and perceive it not.

He it is Whom naught in the Realm of the Divine Dominion can frustrate — the Might of all — and unto Him all are devoted.

Say: He is the All-Prevailing over those in the heavens and on the earth.

Say: He is the All-Powerful over His Cause; He createth whatsoever He willeth by His Wisdom — ‘Be, and it is.’

Say: He is the All-Prevailing over those in the heavens and on the earth. And all, by reason of fear and trembling at His Presence, are submissive unto Him; and all are bowed low before Him.

He it is Who created us and provided for us by His command — “Be,” and it is. To Him belongeth whatsoever hath appeared and whatsoever shall appear in the realm of His Divinity — all things — and unto Him are the returners.

Be not grieved by the concealment of men from their Creator; verily, they shall not attain success. Most of them are in error, and those are indeed the losers.

God shall recompense them with the blazing Fire, a requital for what they have earned.

Say: We are, all of us, those who seek His forgiveness.

And thus God — our Lord, the Lord of the heavens and the earth — there is none other God but Him; unto Him do all return.

Say: Do not buy the verses of God for a paltry price,⁹ if ye are possessed of understanding.

⁸ “عنصر واحدة” is rendered ‘one and the same substance’; manuscript variant may reflect orthographic/grammatical lapse — translation follows contextual sense.”

⁹ The admonition “Do not buy the verses of God for a paltry price” echoes a recurring Qur’ānic injunction (e.g., Qur’ān 2:41, 2:79, 3:187, 5:44) condemning the act of bartering away divine revelation for worldly gain or advantage. In the Bábí and Bahá’í contexts, such counsel serves both as a moral warning against the commodification of sacred truth and as a call to preserve the purity of God’s verses from the distortions of personal ambition, sectarian interest, or material desire.

Say: Lo! the life of this world is vain; and unto God shall they be gathered.

Say: Verily, the Dominion of the Hereafter endureth — have ye then no understanding?

Say: God sendeth down what He willeth by His command; and verily we have certitude therein.

Say: He is the All-Watchful over His Cause; and all are humble before Him.

Say: If ye desire whatsoever is good, ye shall attain it.

Hereunto, upon the Crimson Truth,¹⁰ ye inscribe— God beareth witness: there is none other God but Him, and all remember Him by His Signs.

Say: If ye desire Him Whom God shall make manifest,¹¹ ye will believe; behold, these are His Signs which ye read at every season.

The Dominion belongeth to God, before and after; He maketh manifest whom He willeth by His command — and we are assured thereof.

Say: If ye desire to dwell in the shelter of God, ye shall be guarded; behold, all His gifts from every quarter have been brought unto you,¹² and thereby do ye recognize Him.

He it is Who sufficeth all things with regard to every thing; naught in the heavens and on the earth can suffice Him.

And He was, over all things, a Reckoner. God beareth witness that there is none other God but Him, and unto Him they shall all return.

God beareth witness: there is none other God but Him, and all Manifestations proceed from Him alone.

¹⁰ In the text provided by Muḥammad Labib, the Arabic phrase appears as "الحَقِيقُ الحمر". However, the correct and established term is "الحَقِيقَةُ الحمراء", meaning "the Crimson Truth." This discrepancy is presumed to be a typographical error. Accordingly, the present rendering adopts the latter, which aligns with the established usage in Bahá'í sacred writings and preserves both linguistic accuracy and spiritual significance. The phrase "Crimson Truth" (الحَقِيقَةُ الحمراء) is a symbolic expression found in Bábí and Bahá'í writings, evoking the spiritual reality imbued with sacrifice and divine revelation. The term "crimson" is preferred over "red" to reflect the sacred significance of the color, which is commonly associated with martyrdom and the profound truths manifested through the blood of the Cause. This usage aligns with the elevated and poetic style of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, as well as authoritative Bahá'í texts such as "The Crimson Ark" (Safinat al-Hamra). The capitalization of "Crimson Truth" highlights its status as a distinctive spiritual concept.

¹¹ "Him Whom God shall make manifest" is a distinct title employed by the Báb, particularly in the *Bayán*, to refer to the Promised Manifestation who is to follow Him—Bahá'u'lláh. This phrase signifies the awaited divine Revelation destined to succeed the Báb's own mission and complete the cycle of spiritual renewal. The designation embodies both a prophetic promise and a recognition of the continuity of divine guidance, affirming Bahá'u'lláh's unique station as the fulfillment of the Báb's revelation (cf. *Bayán*, various Tablets; Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*). The usage of this title underscores the Báb's role as the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh and marks a pivotal theological cornerstone in the Bahá'í Faith.

¹² In the text provided by Muḥammad Labib, the phrase is rendered as "كلك الآتية عن كل شطرينتهى", which appears to be a typographical error. The correct and coherent reading is "كُلُّ آتِيَةٍ عَنْ كُلِّ شَطْرٍ انْتَهَى إِلَيْكُمْ", meaning "His gifts from every quarter have been brought unto you." The corrected version is adopted here to maintain textual fidelity and clarity in accordance with authoritative Bahá'í sources.

The Truth, from the One Who hath no beginning unto the One Who hath no end. And we are all grateful unto Him. And unto Him belong the Keys of the heavens and the earth, which He revealeth unto whom He willeth by His command.

Say: All ask of His bounty. And that thou mayest deliver from God, thy Lord, a bounty from His presence upon all things.

There is none other God but Him, the Self-Subsisting, the Ever-Watchful. And unto Him belongeth all praise, in the Hereafter and the former world. There is none other God but Him, and unto Him are all those who give praise.

His servant, the Remembrance.”¹³

¹³ The title “Remembrance” (*al-Dhikr*) is one of the exalted names of the Báb, signifying His role as the Divine Reminder who calls humanity to the awareness of God’s presence. This title appears in both the Báb’s writings and Bahá’í authoritative texts, and is rendered by Shoghi Effendi as “*the Remembrance*” to reflect His spiritual station. (See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1970), and selected Tablets of the Báb).

The Báb's Tablet to the Nineteenth Letter of the Living, Transcribed from a Typed Copy

هذا ما نزلنا الى هيكल التاسع قبل عشر مجمع الهيكل من عند الله العزيز
القيوم

هو

بسم الله الحي المستعزز البدوح القريب

سبحان الذي قائم على امره يعلم ما يخرج من السماء وما ينزل في الارض وما يصعد اليها قل كل من خيفته وجلون هو الذي
يجزى كل نفس بما كسبت قل كل اياه ساجدون له الخلق والامر من قبل ومن بعد وكل بامرهم يعلمون قل هو الفاخر فوق كل
شئ وهو الممتنع المحبوب له ما في السموات والارض وما بينهما وكل من خشيته يشفقون هو الله لا اله الا هو ان يا عباد
فاتقون فقل تلك آيات بينات من عند الله الى حرف التاسع قبل عشر مجمع الهيكل فاشهد على أنه لا اله الا هو الملك القدوس
هو الذي يعلم ما في السموات والارض وما بينهما وكل عليه

ليعرضون له الجود والفضل من قبل ومن بعد يختص من يشاء برحمته قل كل من جوده

يسئلون وله ما بدع في السموات والارض وكل بامرهم عاملون هو الذي يحيى و

يميت ثم يحيى بفضلته كيف يشاء قل كل من رعبه خائفون هو الله لا اله الا هو عالم الغيب والشهادة الحي المهيمن القيوم هو
الذي ينصر من يشاء بامرهم قل انا كل من فضل الله سائلون ان يا ذلك الاسم فاشيد بالله ربك بانه لا اله الا هو الملك القدور
ولتبلى امر الله ربك الى كل شئ فضلاً من عنده وجوداً من لدنه لا اله الا وان اليه كل يبعثون وان له ملك السموات والارض
وكل اليه راجعون هو الذي يشفق له من في السموات والارض وكل اياه عابدون قل اتقوا الله يا ايها الملاء ثم اياه تتقون هو الذي

خلقكم من عنصر واحدة الا

تظلمون ولقد جاء امر الله ربك ولكن اكثر الناس لا يؤمنون وان اكثرهم لفي ضلالة ولا هم يشعرون هو الذي لن يعجزه من شئ
في لاهوت عز كل له عابدون قل

هو

القادر على امره يخلق ما يشاء بحكمه كن فيكون قل هو الغالب على من في السموات والارض وانا كل من خيفته وجلون وانا
كل له خاضعون هو الذي خلقنا و

رزقنا بامرهم كن فيكون وله ما ظهر و يظهر في لاهوت كل شئ وكل اليه المنقلبون و لا يحزنك احتجاب الناس عن بارئهم تا
الله هم لا يفلحون وان اكثرهم لفي ضلالة و ان اولئك لهم الخاسرون يجزيهم الله نار الحريق جزاء بما كسبو قل انا كل اياه
لمستغفرون وكذلك الله ربنا رب السموات والارض لا اله الا هو وكل اليه يقلبون قل لا تشتروا آيات الله بثمن معدودة ان كنتم
تعقلون قل ان حياة الدنيا باطلة وهم الله ليحشرون قل ان ملك الآخرة باقية افلا تعلمون قل الله

ينزل ما يشاء بامرهم وانا كل به موقنون قل هو المهيمن على امره وكل ل

خاشعون قل ان تريدون كل الخير تدركون هنا لك على الحقيق الحمر تنقشون شهد الله

لا اله الا هو وكل بآياته ذاكرون قل ان تريدون من يظهره الله تؤمنون هنا لك

هذه الآيات في كل حين تقرؤن الملك الله من قبل ومن بعد يظهر من يشاء بامرهم وانا كل به موقنون قل ان تريدون في كنف الله
تحرسون هنا لك تلك الآيات عن كل شطرينتهى اليكم ثم اياه تعرفون هو الذي يكفى كل شئ عن كل شئ ولا يكفيه من شئ في
من في السموات والارض وانه كان بكل شئ حسيباً شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو وكل اليه يرجعون شهد الله له لا اله الا هو وانما
الظهورات من عنده لحق من قبل الذي لا قبل له الى بعد الذي لا بعد له وانا كل له شاكرون وله مفاتيح السموات والارض
ينزلها على من يشاء بامرهم قل كل من فضله يسئلون ولتسلمن من عند الله ربك على كل شئ فضلاً من لدنه لا اله الا هو
المهيمن القيوم وله الحمد في الآخرة والاولى لا اله الا هو وكل له حامدون . عبده الذكر