The Báb's Tablet: The Utterances of the Unlettered and the Proof of the Divine Call[1]

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Introduction and Background:

This profound Tablet of the Báb reveals in luminous clarity the nature of His divine proclamation and the intrinsic authority of His unlettered utterances.

Its pages attest that this Cause hath not been manifested through any process of human acquisition; whether appearing as sermons, these utterances echo the majesty of the *Nahj al-Balāghah*; whether cast in the form of supplications, they follow the manner of the *Ṣaḥīfah* (Sajjādiyyah); and whether revealed as Verses, they conform to the mode of the Book of God.
The Tablet asserts the undeniable reality that every word therein proceeds from One Who—though unlettered and Persian (non-Arab)—is the very vessel of divine proof, and that a single proof, in a divine summons drawn from the explicit text of the Book of God, is sufficient to establish His claim.

The Báb underscores that His own God-given inner nature, unerring and spontaneous, bears witness in every utterance—speaking without hesitation and writing without pause—requiring no extraordinary acts, for the inherent Proof renders all other signs superfluous. Interspersed within the Tablet are vivid, personal allusions, as when He pauses on the road to Medina for tea, yet even such seemingly simple moments are suffused with divine significance, illustrating the reality of God's ordinance and the supremacy of spiritual over worldly knowledge.

Throughout, the Báb expounds the principles of His Call, affirming the Oneness of God and the ordinances of the Qur'án, emphasizing that no intention of associating partner with God hath been in any wise contemplated. He further instructs that no imagined cause be inferred from this writing, and that its Reality is as previously declared—free from any veil that might diminish certitude.
The Tablet concludes with a declaration that, had the Cause brought the slightest abasement to any soul, He would not have manifested it, and with the highest praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.

No information within the manuscript permits a determination of the date, place of revelation, or the intended recipient of this Tablet; these particulars must therefore remain unknown, awaiting the careful study of future researchers and historians of the Faith to shed further light upon them.

What follows is a provisional English rendering of this sacred Tablet, revealed in Persian, based on the manuscript preserved in the Iran National Bahá'í Archives (INBA), Vol. 91, pp. 197-199. I am profoundly indebted to Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir for his meticulous review and for the illuminating insights he kindly contributed to this study.

[1] This Tablet bears no title in the original manuscript. The designation "The Báb Tablet: The Utterances of the Unlettered and the Proof of the Divine Call" has been assigned by the translator in accordance with the central motif and thematic essence of the Tablet, namely, the unlettered nature of the Báb and the divine proof manifested in His utterances.
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Thus, doth the Báb reveal:

"He is the Exalted, the Most Great

This Concealed Cause—being a cardinal foundation—must not be conceived as idle fancy. And if in any place a station be mentioned, or knowledge embracing all things be affirmed, it is by virtue of the grandeur of the station of Divine Unity, that before which all stations are humbled and even as utter nothingness.

This Cause hath not been manifested through any process of acquisition.[3] Whenever My utterances appear in the form of a sermon, that sermon tone is an echo of the Nahj al-Balāghah;[4] and whenever My utterance appeareth as supplications, it is after the manner of the Ṣaḥīfah (Sajjādiyyah);[5] and whenever it descendeth in the form of Verses, it followeth the mode of the Book of God.[6]

And the truth is that these writings proceeded from One Who is in reality but unlettered and Persian (non-Arab); and every utterance therein is in itself a proof; and a single proof in a Divine summons, drawn from the explicit text of the Book of God, sufficeth.

As He hath revealed:
'Summon thou unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation…' and so forth.[7]

The Lord of the Worlds beareth witness: I am powerless to perform any extraordinary act—and there is no need for it; for a Proof has been vouchsafed before which all other supernatural signs are brought to naught; and it is the testimony of My Own God-given inner nature, Who speaks without hesitation and writes without pause.

On the road to Medina, at dawn, we halted for tea; I said: 'Zabīḥ, give Me to drink a cup of the 'flowing water' suffused upon a green leaf,' for the onset of cold requires water, that has been proximate unto fire. 'O My fellow-traveller! Grant Me a little sugar.' For, by the decree: 'Produce a discourse like unto it'—this stands as proof.[8]

And all knowledge is proof for him who attains it through study and customary understanding. And yet these writings are cast in the mould of established terminology. And if, at any point, there be divergence, it is due to the haste of the Pen, notwithstanding its conformity with established rule, even as (in the Qur'án) 'Indeed these two are sorcerers,'[9] and 'Indeed it is one of the mighty ones.'[10]

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[3] The phrase *"any process of acquisition"* refers to the fact that the Báb's writings and proclamations did not arise through formal learning, study, or scholarly effort. As an unlettered and unschooled person, He emphasizes that His Revelation is of divine origin, and not the product of human instruction or methodical acquisition of knowledge.
[4] *Nahj al-Balāghah* is the celebrated collection of sermons, letters, and maxims attributed to Imām 'Alī, compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1016), long esteemed as a masterpiece of Arabic eloquence and a cornerstone of Shī'ī thought.
[5] *Ṣaḥīfah Sajjādiyyah* often rendered as *The Psalms of Islam*, this is a seminal collection of supplications and whispered prayers revealed by ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 713 CE), the fourth Shīʿah Imām. Renowned for its profound spiritual insight and eloquence, the work serves as a model of devotional language and mystical reflection. The Ṣaḥīfah is highly esteemed in Shīʿah tradition, providing guidance on the inner life, moral conduct, and the cultivation of humility and reliance upon God.
[6] The Qur'an.
[7] The Qur'an: 16:125.
[8] In this passage, the Báb interweaves ordinary experience, mystical insight, and divine authority: the simple act of halting for tea, requesting a cup of flowing water upon a green leaf, and seeking a morsel of sugar conveys both human intimacy and spiritual symbolism, while the concluding reference to the divine decree—'Produce a discourse like unto it'—affirms the inimitable authority of His Revelation; this interpretation reflects the translator's own understanding and may not capture all layers intended by the Báb.
[9] The Qur'an: 20:63.
[10] The Qur'an: 74:35.

And in the tradition concerning the verse: 'As for the Prophets, verily, We are the Reality.'

Moses was asked upon the Mount (Sinai): 'Whence dost thou know with certainty that this is the Word of God?' He replied: 'Because it comes from beyond the six directions, and resembles not the word of men.'

This Insignificant One likewise beheld this power in My own tongue. I reflected: God would not leave this in vain, nor is it like the word of men; assuredly, it is proof!

In this way have I issued a noble summons, lest I be accounted remiss. As for the judgment whereby the name of the Evil One is ascribed unto Him who is invested with the Greatest Name—I have not comprehended it.[11] *For this Call hath been raised in affirmation of the Oneness of God and the ordinances of the Qur'án; no intention to associate a partner with God hath been in any wise contemplated.*

This is My account, and God is Witness and All-Seeing. Let no imagined cause be inferred from this writing, but rather, the Reality is as hath been set forth on the opposite page. And this statement was made for the reason that no deliberate concealment was intended, lest doubt—through any veil—diminish certitude.

And God beareth witness: Were I to know that this Cause would bring the slightest abasement to any soul, I would not have brought it into being. And sufficient is God as a witness unto Me. And praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds."

[11] "*Him who is invested with the Greatest Name*" refers to the Báb Himself, affirming His station as the Manifestation of God and the bearer of the Greatest Name (al-Asmā' al-A'ẓam). The phrase underscores the contrast between His exalted, divine station and the erroneous attribution of the "name of the Evil One" by certain observers, which He declares He does not comprehend.

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(According to the Typed Version of the Manuscript)

هو العليّ الكبير

امر مستور كه ركن است موهوم تصور نشود اكر در جائى ذكر
مقامى يا علم لكل شيء ذكر شده بواسطه عظمة مقام توحيد بوده
كه كل مقامات نزدان خاشع و معدوم است اين امر از جهة تحصيل ظاهر
نشده هر كاه در خطبه امده حكاية از نهج البلاغة و هر كاه در مناجاة امده
از صحيفه و هر كاه در ايات امده از كتاب الله و واقع امى و عجمى در اين اثار
بوده هر كلام اينها بنفسه حجة است و يك دليل در دعوت بنص كتاب
الله كافيست ادع لا سبيل ربك بالحكمة و الموعظه الى اخرها خداوند
عالم گواه است قادر بر هيچ خارق عادتى نيستم و احتياج هم نيست زيرا كه
اتيان بحجتى شده كه كل ايات نزدان مضمحل است و دليل فطرت محض است
كه بلا تامل ميكويد و بلا سكون مينويسد در راه مدينه صبح سر ما در مقام
چائى بود كفتم ذبيح اسقنى كاسا من الماء المعين بالورقة المخضرة فان ناشئة
البرد يطلب ماء
ذومس
من النار قريبا يا صاحبى الركب هب لى شيئا
من سكر قليل و بحكم فلياتوا بحديث من مثله دليل است و كل علوم
حجة است از براى كسيكه از طريق تحصيل و عرف نمايد و حال انكه
نوشته جات بر نهج اصطلاح است اكر جائى خلاف باشد از قلم تعجيل گذشته
با انكه بر قاعده واقع است مثل ان هذان لساحران و انها لاحدى الكبر و در حديث
فى شان الايه و اما النبيون فانا الواقع از موسى سؤال شد در طور از
كجا يقين ميكنى كه كلام حق است كفت از انكه از جهت شش مى ايدو شبه
كلام عباد نيست حقيرهم در لسان خود اين قسم قدرت راديدم فكر كردم
خداوند عبث نكذارده و شبه كلام بشر نيست يقين حجة است از اين
صراط دعوتي عاليانه نموده كه مبادا مقصر باشم ديكر از جهة حكم اسم اعظم بشيطان
نفهميدم زيرا كه بر توحيد و احكام قران دعوة نموده جهة شرك ملحوظ نبوده
اين شرح حال است و خداوند شاهد و بصير است نه از اين نوشته دليل
امرى تصوّرى فرمايند بل واقع همان است كه در ورقه مقابل عرض شده و عرض
اين
از
جهة
اين بوده كه موقوفى قصد نبوده كه
شك
براحتجاب يقين نقصانى
و خدا كواه است كه هر كاه ذره ذلة ان براى نفسى در اين امر ميدانستم امر اظهار نميكردم و كفى بى
شهيدا و الحمد لله ربّ العالمين