

Tablet of the Peacock¹

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Introduction and Background:

Bahá'u'lláh revealed this luminous Tablet in response to a devoted friend, whose heart, stirred by the ardor of love and reverence, offered a peacock³ as a token of homage.

It was in the year 1887 C.E., when the radiant decree of Providence bridged two distant cities: 'Akká, the place of exile for the prisoners of the Ottoman Empire, and Alexandria, within the realm of Iraq. The devoted friend, yearning to present some token of his devotion to his Master, found nothing in that land worthy of His august presence. At length, that which was most rare, and seemingly unattainable—a peacock—was secured and brought forth.⁴

Perchance his heart was moved by the exalted words of the blessed Báb:

“Know thou that in the treasures of God all things exist, and thou, therefore, shouldst present unto Him that which is not found in His treasures.”

With unwavering fidelity, the peacock was carried into the presence of the Ancient Beauty. In the plenitude of His mercy and bounty, Bahá'u'lláh revealed a Tablet in reply, wherein the word “peacock” was illuminated and attributed to the sender himself.

This Tablet, resplendent with grace and subtle power, stands as a testimony to the gentleness, refinement, and luminous nature of the Ancient Beauty, and to the unbounded bounty, favor, and gracious attention of God as manifested through Him, toward a servant wholly devoted to His threshold.

¹ This title has been assigned by the author for the purposes of this article; the work is not otherwise known as the ‘Tablet of the Peacock.’

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³ The peacock emerges in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings as a rich and multifaceted symbol. In the *Tablet of the Bell* (*Lawḥ-i-Náqús*), He speaks of the “Peacock of the Divine Unity”, whose plaintive cry resounds amid the thickets of the celestial realms, stirred by the heavenly melody of God (Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawḥ-i-Náqús*, trans. Stephen Lambden, available at Bahá'í Library Online). On another occasion, Bahá'u'lláh draws upon an Arabic proverb regarding the peacock: it is contented because it looks not upon its unsightly feet, but always upon its resplendent plumage—an admonition to focus on the divine blessings conferred rather than one's own shortcomings ('Abdu'l-Bahá, story recounted in *Bahá'í Stories*, Bahá'í Library Online). In still other Tablets, the peacock is invoked alongside mystical birds such as the Simurgh and the Phoenix—vehicles of super sensory, divine realities. For instance, Bahá'u'lláh refers to the “Simurgh of the love of the Abhá Beauty” and the “Peacock of the most sublime heaven,” symbolizing the enduring power of the Word of God and the spiritual potency that emanates from the Divine Manifestation (selections cited in Bahá'í compendiums on symbolic edifices and bird imagery).

⁴ Badi' Bushrū'i, *Ahang-i Badī'*, 6th year, nos. 16–17, p. 291

Here, in this sacred interchange, the passage of divine grace is made manifest, as the light of the Eternal Bestower descends upon hearts attuned to the melodies of devotion and the spirit of steadfast love.

What follows is a provisional English rendering, translated with utmost reverence and care, of this sacred tablet, originally revealed in Persian. The Persian text is published in an article by Badī' Bushrū'ī, published in *Ahang-i Badī'*, 6th year, nos. 16–17, p. 291.

Bahá'u'lláh Reveals:

“Thou didst send a peacock; it was from the Holy Isle, for it had attained unto its destined station.

The letter Ṭā⁵ of ṭalab (quest) is enshrined in its name, a token that it shall attain the Object of its search.

Its Alif is the Alif of steadfastness, ever upheld in service; and this is a sign of your constancy in devotion.

Its Wāw crieth aloud, proclaiming: ‘The promise of God is fulfilled; the Promised One is made manifest in the Name of the All-Loving.’

Its second Wāw, conjoined, is laden with tidings and mysteries.

Its Sīn hath come unto Sinai,⁶ and hath partaken of the effulgences thereof.

Glorified, Sanctified, is our Lord, the Lord of the angels and of the Spirit.

These favours and utterances derive from the fact that it was taken for the sake of God and sent forth in the path of God. Every deed accomplished for God is endowed with effulgences, with manifestations, with effects and fruits. Blessed art thou!

But the peacock hath gone to the garden, while this Wronged One hath for some time been imprisoned in the house renowned for the remembrance of God—exalted be His glory.

⁵ The word “طاووس” (peacock) in Persian is composed of the letters ط (Ṭā'), ا (Alif), و (Wāw), and س (Sin). In this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh considers each letter individually, expounding upon its spiritual significance and symbolic import. Through this method, He demonstrates how the constituent letters convey hidden meanings, reflect divine attributes, and signify deeper metaphysical realities, thereby revealing the profound interplay between language, the sacred Word, and the spiritual truths inherent in creation.

⁶ In Abrahamic scripture, Mount Sinai is the archetypal mountain of revelation. Bahá'u'lláh re-appropriates this image, presenting Himself as the new Sinai from which God's voice is heard. Just as Moses beheld the Burning Bush and heard God's call, humanity is now summoned to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as the locus of divine manifestation. This aligns with His frequent use of Sinai to symbolize theophany, divine lawgiving, and the renewal of the Covenant.

We entreat God that the chosen ones of that land may be confirmed. Praise be to God, they have indeed been, and are, confirmed.

Once again, We entreat God that He may adorn the head with the crown of noble character, the body with the breastplate of piety, and the limbs with righteous deeds, that the horizons may be illumined with the radiance of that company.

In very truth, ye have carried off the prize of felicity.

Beseech ye God to safeguard it, and implore Him that with every passing day He may increase that which is yours—namely, praiseworthy character and goodly deeds.

The fragrance of the remembrance of the chosen ones of those regions hath been diffused abroad—a blessing unto you!

We send greetings to all the chosen ones of that land, and for each one We supplicate that which endureth and abideth forever.

He, verily, is the Hearer, the Answerer; and all praise be to God, the One, the Watchful, the Near at hand.”

A Tablet from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Transcribed from a Typed Copy

طاووس فرستادی ؛ از جزیره قُدّوس بود . چه که به مقامش رسید .
طاء طلب در اسمش موجود . این دلیل بر آن است که به مطلوب فائز شود .
الفش الف استقامت است که بر خدمت قائم است و این دلیل است بر قیام شما بر خدمت .
واوش ندا می‌کند . می‌گوید وعده الهی ظاهر ، موعود به اسم ودود مشهود .
واو دیگر مُدغم و دارای اخبار و اسرار . سینش به سینا آمده و از تجلیات قسمت برده .
سَبُوخ قُدّوس رَبُّنَا وَ رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرَّوْح .
این عنایات و اذکار نظر به آن است که الله اخذ شد و فی سبیل الله ارسال گشت .
هر عملی که الله واقع شود ، دارای ظهورات و بروزات و آثار و اثمار است . هِنِئاً لَكَ .
و لکن طاووس به بستان رفته و این مظلوم مدّتی است در سجن در بیت معروف به ذکر حقّ جلّ جلاله مشغول .
از حق می‌طلبیم اولیای آن ارض را مؤیّد فرماید . لله الحمد مؤیّد بوده و هستند . مرّة أُخری از حق می‌طلبیم رأس
را به تاج اخلاق و هیکل را به درع تقوی و ارکان را به اعمال طیبیه مزین فرماید تا آفاق به انوار آن
حزب منور گردد .
فی الحقیقه گوی سعادتی را برده‌اید . از حق حفظش را طلب نمائید و مسئلت کنید تا در هر یوم بر آنچه با شما
است بیفزاید ؛ یعنی بر اخلاق مرضیه و اعمال طیبیه .
عرف ذکر اولیای آن اطراف در دیار متضوّع - نعیماً لکم - جمیع اولیای آن ارض را سلام می‌رسانیم و از
برای هر یک می‌طلبیم آنچه را که باقی و دائم است . إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمْعُ الْمَجِيبُ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْفَرْدِ الرَّقِيبِ الْقَرِيبِ .