

The Báb's Commentary on the Ḥadīth *Every Day is 'Āshūrā'*:¹ A Treatise on the Eternal Reality and Divine Mystery of the Martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn²

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Introduction and background:

Among the manifold writings of the Báb that illumine the spiritual horizons of Shi'ih Islam, there exists a brief yet profoundly mystical commentary on the well-known ḥadīth, "*Every day is 'Āshūrā'*." No information has thus far come to light concerning the date or place of its revelation, nor is the identity of its recipient known. The present paper offers a provisional English translation of this singular composition, based on the manuscript published in the *Iran National Bahá'í Archives* (INBA), volume 67, pages 141–143.

In this luminous treatise, the Báb unveils the inner verities enshrined within the Day of 'Āshūrā—the day of the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn, the Prince of Martyrs—transcending its historical dimension to disclose its eternal and cosmic significance. He affirms that the martyrdom of Ḥusayn is not merely an event confined to the past, but an archetypal reality recurring throughout all ages, the spiritual axis around which revolve all days and all worlds. "*Every day is 'Āshūrā'*," in the Báb's revelation, signifies that the anguish, sacrifice, and divine triumph manifested in the person of Ḥusayn pervade the entire order of existence, reflecting the ceaseless struggle between the forces of light and darkness within every soul and every dispensation.

Through a mode of interpretation at once theosophical and apocalyptic, the Báb proclaims that Ḥusayn is the Pivot of all days, the Countenance of God that perisheth not, and the Living One Who dieth not. His martyrdom, though outwardly a calamity, is inwardly the consummation of divine purpose; and His being, though slain, abideth as the eternal locus of divine manifestation. The Báb declares that the sorrow of all creation for the affliction of Ḥusayn is unending; for as His light encompasses all realms, so too doth His suffering pervade them. Thus, every day becomes, in truth, an 'Āshūrā—a day of witnessing the mystery of divine revelation and concealment, of death and resurrection, of loss and eternal victory.

The work thus stands as one of the most penetrating expositions by the Báb on the mystery of martyrdom, divine manifestation, and spiritual continuity—a luminous link between the esoteric heritage of Shi'ih Islam and the dawning Revelation that He Himself was destined to inaugurate.

¹ 'Āshūrā' (lit. "tenth [day]") refers to the tenth day of Muḥarram in the Islamic lunar calendar, commemorated by Muslims—especially the Shi'ih—as the day on which Imām Ḥusayn, the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, was martyred at Karbalá in 680 CE.

² Abú 'Abdi'lláh Ḥusayn was the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the son of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Fāṭimah al-Zahrā. In the Twelver Shi'ih tradition, He is recognized as the second Imām, succeeding His father. Universally revered as the Prince of Martyrs, He was slain at Karbala in 61 AH (680 CE) in defense of truth and justice. His martyrdom endures as the supreme symbol of sacrifice, unwavering devotion, and the eternal struggle against oppression within Islamic history and Shi'ih thought.

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Thus Doth the Báb Reveal:

“In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

As for this saying, ‘Every day is ‘Āshūrā’,’ its explanation have I neither encountered in any book, nor heard from the learned, until I was assured, with absolute certitude, of its truth. Yet it is a phrase well-known and current upon the tongues of men. And should this ḥadīth be deemed among those that are hard to grasp and most difficult to comprehend—lofty, noble, subtle, rugged, and austere—none can bear its weight save an angel brought nigh, a prophet sent forth, or a believer whose heart God hath tested and proven for faith.

And we, in conformity with the description wherewith God Himself hath characterized Abú ‘Abdi’lláh al-Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—declare: its outward form is fair and its inward meaning profound. Know thou that the Day of ‘Āshūrā’ is the day whereon my Lord, the Prince of Martyrs, was slain; and it is, in truth, the first of the days which God—exalted be He—brought into being.

For the beginning is in truth identical with the end in the plane of ascent; and it is, in very truth, the Day of the Manifestation of the Qá’im—may God hasten His advent. It is the Pivot of all days, even as He Who was slain therein is the Pivot of the greater world; and all the days are His manifestations and revolve around Him. And it is a Day, great in the sight of God, for the slaying of its Master.

When my Lord, Abú ‘Abdi’lláh—peace be upon Him—was slain, all things were consumed by the burning of His liver; the hearts were rent asunder as His was torn asunder, and the Pivot of the Days was broken by reason of the intensity of His affliction. Since thus hath grief pervaded all days, each day is, in very truth, an ‘Āshūrā’.

And when, at the moment of His martyrdom—peace be upon Him—the limbs and the heart inclined toward the left side, all things wept for Him for forty days.⁴ And because mixture and stain were present in certain things, some of them wept at certain times.⁵ But as for the people of moderation, they persevere in their mourning, unceasing in their lamentation in all things. There is no cessation therein.

God is greater than this weighty calamity and its mighty affliction! There is not a thing but that it weepeth for Him. The dwellers of Paradise—their weeping, by reason of the permanence of God, endureth forever and knoweth no end. And the inhabitants of Hell—their weeping likewise is

⁴ The Báb’s utterance here alludes to the universal lamentation of creation at the hour of Ḥusayn’s martyrdom. His turning of the blessed heart and limbs to the left—a detail preserved in Shí’ih devotional narratives—signifies, in the Báb’s cosmology, the descent of divine sorrow into the world of form, the veiling of the divine countenance, and the rent of separation that pierced the heart of existence itself. The statement that “*all things wept for Him for forty days*” evokes not merely a span of temporal mourning, but a symbol laden with mystical meaning. In Islamic and Sufi tradition, the period of forty days (*arbaʿín*) marks the cycle of spiritual purification, the completion of a covenant between the human and the divine, and the consummation of inner transformation. The Báb thus intimates that the grief of creation endures not as an event in time, but as a sacred process of renewal—an ever-recurrent act of remembrance through which the cosmos itself participates in the mystery of sacrifice and resurrection.

⁵ In this passage, the Báb alludes to the ontological condition of creation—the mingling of light and shadow, purity and defilement, reality, and illusion—that characterizes the world of contingency. The “*mixture and stain*” signify the admixture of divine and material elements within all created things, a condition that veils their full participation in the grief of the divine world. Hence, while all beings are inwardly moved by the martyrdom of Ḥusayn, only those purified from the dross of self and passion can weep perpetually with the people of moderation—the souls steadfast in remembrance. Others, tainted by the residue of separation, can only weep “*at certain times*,” when their hearts are momentarily illumined by a ray of divine sorrow. Thus, the Báb discloses in veiled language a vision of existence itself as a mirror of spiritual impurity and purification, where each soul’s capacity to mourn reflects its nearness to the sanctified reality of the Imām.

unending; and that very weeping is the very severity of their torment when they weep for Him.⁶ And for the people of Paradise, their supreme delight is found in their weeping for Him. Indeed, in this world of time, the day which cometh differs from the day that hath passed; But in the realm of perpetuity and eternity, there is but a one Day. This ḥadīth may be interpreted in this wise.

Another interpretation is this: every thing hath two aspects—one aspect from its Lord, the Sign which is Ḥusayn, peace be upon Him; and another aspect from His own Self, the Sign of His slayer, upon whom be God's curse. And when the aspect of His Lord surrendered to the aspect of His Self⁷—in the fulfilment of the Proof and the completion of the Favour—then did the Self prevail over Him, and the Day of 'Āshūrā' was made manifest.

Thus, whosoever beholdeth aught save Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—every day is, for him, an 'Āshūrā'. Yet few indeed are they who believe in this truth. For it is a Word that issueth forth from Mount Sinai, bringing forth essence and tincture for those who partake thereof.

Know thou that, were the Proof of the Lord slain, yet would He not die; And He is, by God, the Countenance of God that perisheth not; and His Light that can never be extinguished; and He is the Living One, Who dieth not. For God hath created Him for continuance, not for annihilation; Even as al-Ṣādiq⁸—peace be upon Him—hath alluded in the Visitation Tablet of Ḥusayn—peace be upon Them both—on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'bān.⁹

And were it not for the preordained decree, were but a single hair to stray from the body of Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—all the worlds would perish. By God! all that is in existence, in respect of a single particle of His blood—both before His martyrdom and after it—are as a ring upon His finger; He directs it wheresoever He willeth.

As, after His martyrdom, there appeared from His sacred head that which was made manifest.¹⁰

⁶ Here the Báb unveils, in a language at once mystical and apocalyptic, the mystery of eternal joy and eternal sorrow as reflections of one divine reality. The weeping of the dwellers of Paradise, He declares, endureth forever, not as a token of grief but as an expression of perpetual love and remembrance—an unceasing outpouring of devotion before the Countenance of the Beloved. Their tears are tears of ecstasy, born of nearness to the Divine Presence, and endure by reason of the permanence of God Himself. In contrast, the inhabitants of Hell likewise weep without end, yet their tears are tears of remorse and separation—the very essence of their chastisement. Thus, paradise and hell are here disclosed not as fixed abodes but as two conditions of the soul before God: one of joyous weeping in union, the other of bitter weeping in remoteness. Both are eternal, for both derive from the immutable reality of the Manifestation, before Whose martyrdom all creation must lament.

⁷ The phrase “*when the aspect of His Lord surrendered to the aspect of His self*” (فلما استسلم جهة ربه لجهة نفسه) may at first appear to invert the expected hierarchy of the divine and human aspects. Yet in the Báb's mystical cosmology, this inversion is deliberate and theologically charged. The *jihah rabbāniyyah* (“aspect of His Lord”) denotes the divine reality inherent in the Manifestation, while the *jihah naḥsiyyah* (“aspect of His self”) signifies His human form and station of servitude. The act of “surrender” does not imply the subjugation of the divine to the human, but rather the voluntary submission of the divine will to its own preordained manifestation—the acceptance, through the human aspect, of the destined martyrdom. In other words, the “surrender” of the divine aspect to the self signifies that the divine reality within Him consented to manifest the decree of martyrdom through His human aspect. Through this profound interplay, the outward triumph of the Self marks the temporal victory of the world, even as the divine Proof is inwardly fulfilled and the heavenly Favour completed.

⁸ Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ṣādiq was the sixth Imām in the line of the Twelve Imāms, renowned for his profound knowledge of jurisprudence, theology, and esoteric sciences.

⁹ The night of the fifteenth of Sha'bān holds special significance in Islamic and mystical traditions as a time of divine mercy, illumination, and spiritual ascent. It is regarded as a night when the heavens are opened, supplications are heard, and the secrets of the unseen are made accessible to hearts purified and attuned. By situating the Visitation Tablet of Ḥusayn on this night, the Báb subtly emphasizes the confluence of temporal remembrance with the eternal order, whereby human devotion mirrors cosmic harmony and the remembrance of the Martyr's sacrifice is sanctified by celestial grace.

¹⁰ The expression “from His sacred head that which was made manifest” alludes to the outward signs and inner realities revealed at the martyrdom of Abū 'Abdī'llāh Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—at Karbala. While the text may be read literally as referring to physical occurrences at the moment of His slaying, it also carries profound spiritual significance: it indicates the unveiling of divine truths and cosmic realities through His sacrifice. In the Shī'ih and wider Islamic mystical perspective, the martyrdom of Ḥusayn served as a cosmic pivot, exposing both the hidden spiritual order and the immutable justice of God.

God is the Most Great! None hath truly known Him as He should be known, nor hath any measured Him with true power. The entire earth is within His grasp, and the heavens are folded in His right hand. Glorified be God—exalted is He above all that they ascribe unto Him! Know thou that Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—possesseth a station where none can wrong Him or seize His right. As the Imām—peace be upon Him—hath said in the ḥadīth.

And how could it be otherwise, when all are under God, Who suffereth no injustice?¹¹ And the sovereignty of God none can subdue. For He is the Manifestation of God amidst His creation, His adored Countenance in the beginning and in the end. He is the Word of God which may not be described, the Mystery of God which none can fathom—after Him there is no mystery. Unto Him pertain creation and command.

Beyond Him there is no goal, nor unto Him any end. And what is there after Truth except error? For whosoever hath known Him, hath truly known Him; yet naught in all creation knoweth Him. And whosoever hath been ignorant of Him, hath indeed been ignorant; yet naught is ignorant of Him.

Glorified, glorified, glorified is He!

He is the Reality upon Whom neither name nor likeness can be conferred. He is the Gate of Forgiveness and Remission of Sins. And there is no power nor might save in God, the Most High, the Most Great.”

¹¹ The Bab's declaration here affirms the absolute and transcendent justice of God. All creatures exist under His sovereign dominion, yet none can claim to escape His equity or to impose injustice upon another, for all power and authority are rooted in His will alone. In this all-encompassing order, every event, every trial, and every station of creation unfolds under His perfect decree, reflecting both His mercy and His justice. Thus, the faithful are reminded that apparent inequities in the world are veiled by His wisdom, and ultimate justice rests solely with Him.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

ما هذا الحديث كل يوم عاشوراء هذا الجواب لم أره في محل ولا سمعته من العلماء حتى ايقن بصحته ولكن في الالسن مشهور وعلى فرض كونه الحديث صعب مستصعب اجود كريم ذكوان وعزّ خشن لا يحتمله الا ملك مقرب او نبي مرسل او مؤمن امتحن الله قلبه للايمان ونحن على وصف الله الذى وصف ابو عبدالله الحسين عليه السلام نفسه اقول ظاهره انيق وباطنه عميق واعلم ان يوم عاشورا يوم قتل مولاي سيد الشهداء وهو اول يوم خلقه الله سبحانه لان البدء نفس الختم فى الصعود وهو بعينه يوم ظهور القائم عجل الله فرجه وهو قطب الايام كما ان المقتول فيه قطب العالم الاكبر وكل الايام ظهوراته وتدور عليه وهو يوم عند الله كبير لقتل صاحبه فلما قتل سيدى ابو عبدالله عليه السلام تحرق كل شيء لحرقه كبده وتفرقت الاكباد لتفرق كبده وتكسر قطب الايام لشدة مصيبتة فلما كان الامر هكذا فى كل الايام من الالم كان يوم عاشوراء ولما كان عند قتله عليه السلام قرب الجوارح والقلب الى جهة اليسر بكى كلشئ عليه اربعين يوما ولما كان الخلط واللطخ موجود فى بعض الاشياء بكى بعض الاشياء فى بعض الاوقات واما اهل الاعتدال فهم على بكائهم ودائمون الاشياء لا انقطاع فيه الله اكبر من هذا الخطب الجسيم ومصيبته العظيم ما من شيء الاباكيا عليه اهل الجنة بكائهم دائم ببقاء الله لا زوال له واهل جهنم بكائهم دائم وهو شدة عذابهم عند بكائهم عليه واهل الجنة منتهى لذتهم عند بكائهم وان فى هذا العالم الزمانى يوم الاتى غير اليوم الماضى ولكن فى عالم الدهر والسرمد اليوم واحد يمكن ان يؤل الحديث بهذا وتاويل آخر ان لكل شيء جهتان جهة من ربه وهو اية الحسين عليه السلام وجهة من نفسه وهى اية قاتله عليه اللعنة فلما استسلم جهة ربه لجهة نفسه اتماماً للحجة واكمالا للنعمة غلبت عليه النفس فح قام يوم عاشوراء فكل من راي غير الحسين عليه السلام فكل يوم يوم عاشوراء ولكن لا يؤمن بذلك الاقلون لانه كلمة تخرج من طور سيناء تنبت بالدهن وصبغ الاكلىن واعلم ان حجة الرب لو قتل لم يموت وهو والله وجه الله الذى لا يهلك ونوره الذى لا يطفأ وهو حي لا يموت لان الله خلقه للبقاء لا للفناء كما اشار الصادق عليه السلام فى زيارة الحسين عليهما السلام فى ليلة النصف من شعبان ولولا تقدير المحتوم لوشذ شعرة من جسم الحسين ع لهلك العالمون جميعا فو الله كل من فى الوجود عند ذرة من دمه قبل قتله وبعد قتله كالخاتم فى اصبعه يتصرف كيف يشاء كما ظهر بعد قتله من راسه الشريف ما ظهر الله اكبر ما عرفه احد حق المعرفة وما قدره احد حق القدرة والارض جميعا قبضته والسموات مطويات بيمنه سبحانه الله تعالى عما يصفون واعلم ان الحسين عليه السلام له مقام لا يظلم ولا يغصب حقه احد كما قال الامام عليه السلام فى الحديث وكيف لا يكون كل وجنب الله لا يظلم وسلطنة الله لا يقهر وهو ظاهر الله فى الخلق ووجهه المعبود فى البدء والختم وهى كلمة الله التى لا توصف وسر الله الذى لا يعرف لا بعده سر وله الخلق والامر لا بعده غاية ولا له نهاية وما ذا بعد الحق الا الضلال فانى تعرفون عرفه من عرفه ولا يعرفه شيء وجهه من جهله ولا يجهله شيء سبحانه سبحانه سبحانه وهو المعنى الذى لا يقع عليه اسم ولا شبه وهو باب حطة ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلى العظيم