

A Tablet of the Báb Revealed in Honor of Áqá Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ardīstānī,¹ Rendered in the Hand of the Báb's Scribe, Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn

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Introduction and background:

The present study offers a provisional English rendering of a hallowed Tablet revealed by the Báb during His confinement in the fortress of Máku, between early July 1847 and early April 1848. Addressed to Áqá Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ardīstānī, this Arabic Tablet belongs to the corpus of the Báb's early prison writings and bears witness to the exalted style and profound theological concerns that pervade His Revelation in this seminal period. Preserved in *'Ahd-i-Álá*, p. 237, the Tablet opens with solemn affirmations of divine testimony, declares the Báb's identity as the long-expected Qā'im, and proceeds with precise instructions for the transcription, arrangement, and preservation of sacred writings. The text is particularly notable for its symbolic use of the number nineteen, the emphasis it places on the sanctity of the revealed Word, and its assertion of the infinite value of even a single letter of God's utterance.

¹ Áqá Muḥammad Ḥusayn was among the heroic defenders of the fort of **Shaykh Ṭabarsí**. In the thick of battle he was grievously wounded and taken captive to the presence of Mírzá Mahdí-Qulí Mírzá. Summoned to disclose the condition of his companions and the circumstances within the fort, he remained steadfastly silent, refusing to betray the trust of his brethren. At length, his captors demanded of him: "*In what manner shall we put thee to death?*" To which he replied with unshaken resolve: "*In whatsoever fashion it be, so long as it be not more grievous.*" Thereupon they placed the muzzle of a musket against his right eye and fired. Thus did he, in that very instant, attain the crown of martyrdom, sealing with his life-blood the testimony of his faith (*'Ahd-i-Álá*, p. 228).

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The Báb Reveals:

“Áqá Muḥammad Ḥusayn, in the land of Sád (Iṣfahán).

He is the Greatest; God hath borne witness...³ He is the Most Great; after the Basmala,⁴ God hath borne witness...⁵ Bear ye witness that there is none other God but Him, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

And verily, I am the Qā'im, the True One of Whom all were promised. We have, verily, commanded that sheets (qurāṭīs)⁶ of the Exalted Beloved be sent unto thee.

Whereupon thou shouldst enjoin that someone inscribe in each Tablet nineteen verses arranged within nineteen sections.⁷

And in every verse let him inscribe the words ‘God is the Greatest,’ in the fairest, most comely hand. And when thou hast finished, enclose it within two seemly and befitting bindings, in such wise as may be bidden of one of the faithful.

And preserve what We have revealed unto thee, as thine eyes themselves. For indeed, a single letter from the Words of God hath no equal among all the worlds.

And when the Book is finished, call to mind what thou readest⁸ therein, for verily We have been sent as Bearers of the Message.”

³ The abbreviation الخ appears in the manuscript at this point. It is short for إلى آخره (“and so forth” or “et cetera”), indicating that the scribe did not fully write out a standard formula or sequence that would ordinarily follow. In this edition, it is **not rendered** in English, as its function is primarily scribal and does not alter the meaning of the text; the translation instead renders the full phrase: “God hath borne witness.”

⁴ The term البسملة (*al-Basmala*) refers to the phrase “Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm” (“In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”), traditionally recited at the beginning of a text. In the Báb’s writings, the Basmala serves both as a devotional invocation and as a formal prelude, sanctifying the subsequent revelation. Here, the phrase “after the Basmala” indicates that God’s testimony follows immediately upon this sacred invocation, emphasizing the authority and divine veracity of the statements that follow. In English, it is rendered as “**after the Basmala**” to preserve both the textual and spiritual structure of the original.

⁵ The abbreviation الخ appears in the manuscript at this point. It is short for إلى آخره (“and so forth” or “et cetera”), indicating that the scribe did not fully write out a standard formula or sequence that would ordinarily follow. In this edition, it is **not rendered** in English, as its function is primarily scribal and does not alter the meaning of the text; the translation instead renders the full phrase: “God hath borne witness.”

⁶ The term قراطيس (*qurāṭīs*, plural of *qurṭās*) literally denotes “sheets” or “parchments.” In the context of this Tablet, it refers to individual loose pages intended for compilation or inscription. In this edition, it is rendered as “**sheets (qurāṭīs)**” to preserve the material sense of the original while simultaneously signaling the sacred and authoritative character of the writings.

⁷ The instruction to inscribe nineteen verses arranged within nineteen sections reflects the Báb’s frequent symbolic use of the **number nineteen** in His writings. Nineteen is foundational in the Bábí and Bahá’í calendar and numerology, and the total of **nineteen squared (361)** often represents completeness, cosmic order, and spiritual unity. By structuring each Tablet in this manner, the Báb embeds His metaphysical and numerical philosophy into the very form of the revelation, linking the text’s composition to the esoteric significance of the **abjad** system and the spiritual symbolism of the number nineteen. This arrangement also mirrors the emphasis on order, harmony, and the interconnectedness of divine knowledge throughout the Báb’s Tablets.

⁸ The transcription that appears in *Ahd-i-A’lá*, p. 237, renders the text as “تراني” (lit. “thou seest Me”); however, a close visual inspection of the facsimile of the original Tablet strongly favors “نقرني” (lit. “thou readest”). This reading aligns with the Báb’s instruction to attend carefully to the contents of the completed Book. The variant “تراني” appears to be a copyist’s error, likely due to the similarity of the script.

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Rendered in the Hand of the Báḅ's Scribe, Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn ,Transcribed from a
Typed Copy**

آقا محمد حسين ارض صباد
هو الاكبر شهد الله الخ هو الاعظم بعد البسملة شهد الله الخ فلتشهدن على انه لا اله هو المهيمن القيوم و اننى انا قائم
حق الذي كل به يوعدون ولقد امرنا ان يرسل اليك قراطيس عز محبوب فلتأمرن ان يذهبن احد في كل لوح كتاب تسعة
عشر بيتاً في تسعة عشر بيت وليكتبن في كل بيت الله اكبر على احسن خط محبوب و اذا فرغت فاجلده جلدتين لطيفين
بما يؤمر ببعض من المؤمنين واحفظ ما نزلنا اليك كعينيك فان حرفاً من كلمات الله لم يعدل كل العالمين واذا فرغ
الكتاب فاذكر ما **تقرئ** فيه فانا كنا لمبلغين

A Tablet of the Báb Revealed in Honor of Áqá Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ardīstānī, Rendered in the Hand of the Báb's Scribe, Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn (facsimile of the original)

لا محمد بن علي صلوات الله عليه وآله هو الاكبر شريفاً له الحق هو الاعظم
 بعد الله محمد بن علي صلوات الله عليه وآله هو الاكبر شريفاً له الحق هو الاعظم
 صفاً له كل يوم عدون الله من اهل البيت اطهر من محبوب فتناء من ان
 به من اهل البيت كل يوم عدون الله من اهل البيت اطهر من محبوب فتناء من ان
 اسير الكرمي صفاً له كل يوم عدون الله من اهل البيت اطهر من محبوب فتناء من ان
 واصف ما يراه اهل البيت كعبتك فلان في حرمك تترسم به بعد اهل البيت وادرا
 فزع الساب فانك تولى فينا ان لمبلغت محمداً هو الاكبر شريفاً له الحق هو الاعظم
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Reproduced from 'Ahd-i A'lá, p. 237.