

The Visitation Tablet for Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím¹ Revealed by the Báb

Mohammad Norozi²

17 July 2025

Introduction and background:

What follows is a provisional English translation of a sacred Tablet revealed by the Báb in honor of *Sháh ‘Abdu’l -‘Azím*.

This Tablet is dedicated to the revered figure of *Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím* son of ‘*Abdu’lláh al-Ḥasaní*—also known as *Abú’l-Qásim ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím*, a descendant of Imám Ḥasan through a distinguished line that includes his father ‘*Abdu’lláh*, and forebears ‘*Alí, al-Ḥasan, Zayd*, and Imám Ḥasan, son of ‘*Alí*, the son of *Abí Tálíb*. His mother was the noblewoman *Fáṭimah daughter of Ibn Qays*.

He was among the foremost scholars and transmitters of traditions, and a devoted companion of the Imáms ‘*Alí al-Riḍá, Muḥammad al-Jawád*, and ‘*Alí al-Hádí*. Born in *Madīnah* on the 4th of *Rabí‘ al-Thání*, 173 AH (789 CE), he fled the tyranny of the ‘Abbásid caliph *al-Mutawakkil* in *Sāmarrā’* and took refuge in *Rayy*, south of *Ṭíhrán*, where he was received with honor and respect. He passed away there on the 15th of *Shawwál*, 252 AH (866 CE), and was interred in the city of *Rayy*. His shrine remains an object of veneration to this day.

The Báb revealed this Tablet during His journey from Isfahán to His confinement in the fortress of *Mákú* in early April 1847 C.E., while He was in the vicinity of *Rayy*. He entrusted the Tablet to a certain *Mírzá Sulaymān-Qulī Khān*, known by the honorific *Khaṭīb al-Raḥmán*, assigning him the solemn duty of reciting it at the sacred site of *Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīm’s* tomb.³

Within the text, *Sháh ‘Abdu’l -‘Azím* is the object of profound praise and veneration; his resting place is described as a fragment of the very gardens of Paradise. The shrine is also the burial site of several prominent historical figures, including *Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh* and *Manūchihr Khān Mu‘tamad al-Dawlih*.⁴ This Tablet was revealed in Arabic and is published in ‘*Ahd-i-A‘lá*, pp. 260-261.

¹ In his masterful translation of *Tárikh-i-Nabíl*, the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, entitled this Tablet *Ziyárat-i-Sháh-‘Abdu’l-‘Azím*. (see *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl’s Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá’í Revelation*, trans. Shoghi Effendi [Wilmette, IL: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1932], chap. 23, pp. 520–521).

² Contact email address: nsm_dist@hotmail.com.

³ *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl’s Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá’í Revelation*, trans. Shoghi Effendi [Wilmette, IL: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1932], chap. 23, p. 521).

⁴ *Manābi‘-i Muṭāla‘ih-yi Amrī*, vol. 1, by Ḥabibu’lláh Hisāmī, p. 55.

The Tomb of Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím:

"Tíhrán is thus endowed in respect of the mausoleum and sanctuary of Shah Abdu'l'-Azim. Reposing beneath a golden-plated dome, whose scintillations I had seen from afar while riding towards the city, the remains of this holy individual are said to attract an annual visitation of 300 thousand people. I find that most writers discreetly veil their ignorance of the identity of the saint by describing him as a holy Muslim, whose shrine is much frequented by the pious Tíhránis. It appears, however, that long before the advent of Islam this had been a sacred spot, as the sepulchre of a lady of great sanctity, in which connection it may be noted that the shrine is still largely patronised by women. Here, after the Islam conquest, was interred Imam-Zadih Hamzih, the son of the seventh Imam, Musa-Kazim; and here, fleeing from the Khalif Mutavakkil, came a holy personage named Abu'l-Qasim Abdu'l-'Azim, who lived in concealment at Rayy till his death in about 861 A.D. (This is the account given by the Persian Kitab-i-Majlisi, quoting Shaykh Najashi, quoting Barki.) Subsequently his fame obscured that of his more illustrious predecessor. Successive sovereigns, particularly those of the reigning dynasty, have extended and beautified the cluster of buildings raised above his grave, the ever-swelling popularity of which has caused a considerable village to spring up around the hallowed site. The mosque is situated in the plain, about six miles to the south-southeast of the capital, just beyond the ruins of Rayy, and at the extremity of the mountain-spur that encloses the Tíhrán plain the southeast." (Lord Curzon's "Persia and the Persian Question," pp. 345-7.)⁵

⁵ A footnote on page 520 of *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation*, trans. Shoghi Effendi [Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1932] refers to the tomb of Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím.

“He is the Adored One, the Praised, the Desired One

Peace be upon him whom God hath distinguished through Muḥammad, His Beloved—He Who was singled out from the Sanctuary of Eternal Pre-existence above all other contingent beings; and peace be upon him whom God hath chosen through ‘Alī⁶, His Wali (Guardian)—He Whom He fashioned for His own Self and appointed as the sovereign over all created things; and peace be upon him whom God elected through Ḥasan⁷, His Proof—He Who was well-pleased with him through His knowledge and made to be the station of His own Self in every station; and peace be upon him whom God selected through Ḥusayn⁸, His Vengeance—He Who endowed him with martyrdom and made him the token of His Manifestation in all allusions.

Peace be upon thee, O thou radiant Light gleaming from the vesture of Oneness; and the resplendent Splendour shining from the robe of the Countenance of Divine Singleness, and the star rising from the firmament of the Muḥammadan Reality; and the luminous orb shining forth from the heaven of the Divine Elevation; and the effulgent radiance glowing at the Throne of Ḥasanid Glory!⁹

How can I reckon thy praise, O thou scion of the Divine Tree; and the sacred, everlasting Leaf, and the ripe Fruit borne of the Tree of Divinity; and the effulgent Countenance shining with the light of the Realm of Dominion; and the radiant Garment of the Kingdom of Heaven!

How, then, can I make mention of thy relation to the Inmost Essence of the First Remembrance (i.e., the Báb) from Eternity. One pillar of whom pointeth to the-Inmost Essence of the Divine Will¹⁰ in its essentiality; and a pillar of whom upon the essential

⁶ Imám ‘Alí (peace be upon Him), the first Imám in Shí‘í Islam and cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, is revered for his unparalleled devotion, eloquence, and embodiment of divine justice. He is regarded by the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh as the archetype of true faith and the Bearer of the divine trust after the Prophet.

⁷ Imám Ḥasan (peace be upon Him), the eldest grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad and the second Imám in Shí‘í Islam, is venerated for his forbearance, piety, and sacrifice. He is remembered for his peace treaty with Mu‘āwiyah, which he accepted to preserve the unity of the Muslim community.

⁸ Imám Ḥusayn (peace be upon Him), the younger grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad and the third Imám in Shí‘í Islam, is revered for his martyrdom at Karbala in 680 CE. His stand against tyranny symbolizes ultimate sacrifice, steadfastness, and devotion to justice.

⁹ The phrase “Throne of Ḥasanid Glory” refers to the shrine and exalted spiritual station of Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím a direct descendant of Imám Ḥasan, the second Imám of Shí‘í Islam. The term *Throne* (‘*arsh*) connotes both the earthly locus of sanctity and the heavenly station of one descended from the House of the Prophet. The use of *Ḥasanid*—a reference to his lineage through Imám Ḥasan—underscores the spiritual nobility and Imámic dignity that the Báb sought to honour in this act of devotional homage.

¹⁰ In the metaphysical cosmology articulated by the Báb and further developed by Bahá’u’lláh, the arc of descent (*qaws-i-nuzúl*) delineates the process by which divine creative energy is progressively unfolded from the unmanifest realm to the world of creation. God is the Unknowable Essence, the Hidden Treasure—the source of all being—utterly beyond human comprehension or approach; He can only be known through His Will as manifested by His chosen Intermediaries. This ontological descent comprises seven stages (the seven stages of divine creation): **Will of God/Will** – the primal intention of God, revealed to humanity through His Manifestations; **Determination** – the initial delimitation of the Will; **Destiny** – the specification of the form that creation will assume; **Decree** – the formalization of that destined form; **Permission** – the divine consent for existence; **Term** – the temporal limit or allotted span of existence; and **Book** – the archetypal record of all created things, often associated with the Preserved Tablet (*Lawḥ-i-Mahfūz*). These stages represent the modalities through which the infinite and unknowable Will of God is articulated

selfhood of the Divine Determination¹¹ in its abstraction; and a pillar of whom upon the soul-like nature of Destiny and its vast expanse; and a pillar of whom upon the ipseity of Decree¹² and its manifestation.

How sweet is thy remembrance, O thou son of Him who drew nigh and then descended, until He (i.e., the Báb) was distance of two bows' length or nearer!¹³ And how exalted is thy station, O thou son of Him who revealed Himself by His Manifestation unto them that dwell in the heavens and the Throne, and spoke from behind the veils, by the leave of God, with Him who drew nigh—above all else or nearer still!

And how hidden is thy rank, O thou son of Him by whom every soul that believed and then was truly God-fearing attained unto victory! And how radiant thy seat in the First Paradise, and beside the Lote-Tree, beyond which there is no passing¹⁴ in the Garden of Retreat! May My soul and the soul of my mother be thy sacrifice, O thou who feared God with the truest righteousness!

Through Muḥammad, thy supreme forefather, were realized the Inmost Essences of the immaterial realities¹⁵ the thicket of the hollow reeds¹⁶ of the Realm of Divinity (Láhūt);¹⁷

and actualized within the temporal realm. See Nader Saiedi, *Logos and Civilization: Spirit, History, and Order in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2000), pp. 131–134.

¹¹ See footnote 10 for further discussion.

¹² See footnote 10 for further discussion.

¹³ The phrase “distance of two bows' length or nearer” (Arabic: قَاب قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى) is a classical idiom denoting intimate proximity, and it appears in the Qur'an in Surah al-Najm (53:9): “And was at a distance of two bows' length or nearer.” This verse describes the angel Gabriel's extraordinary closeness to the Divine Presence, symbolizing the highest conceivable spiritual nearness short of absolute unity.

In the context of this Tablet, revealed by the Báb near the sacred shrine of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azím, the phrase holds a profound dual significance. Spiritually, it praises the exalted station of Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azím's forefather (Imám Hassan)—who is described as “He who drew nigh and then descended,” thus signifying His eminent rank and proximity to the Divine. Physically, it poignantly reflects the Báb's actual nearness to the shrine during His passage, a distance limited by earthly restrictions but filled with spiritual yearning. The phrase beautifully entwines the metaphysical intimacy of the unseen realms with the tangible limitation of physical separation.

¹⁴ The “Sacred Lote-Tree, the Tree beyond which there is no passing” (Arabic: Sidrat al-Muntahā) as referred in the Qur'an (53:8–18) as a sublime symbol marking the utmost boundary of human knowledge and vision in the divine realm. In Bahá'í and Islamic mystical writings, it is often interpreted as a metaphor for the Manifestation of God—the transcendent, inaccessible point beyond which no created being may proceed, signifying the threshold between the created and the Divine Essence.

¹⁵ The term “immaterial realities” (Arabic: al-mujarradāt) refers to the non-physical, spiritual essences that constitute the higher realms of existence in Islamic and Bahá'í cosmology. It denotes entities or realities that transcend the material world and pertain to the Realm of Divinity (Láhūt)—the highest divine realm, characterized by pure attributes and the immediate presence of God. These immaterial realities are often contrasted with the corporeal and contingent beings of the physical world, representing the archetypal and eternal principles underlying all existence. The phrase emphasizes the metaphysical and exalted nature of the “Inmost Essences” actualized through Muḥammad, the supreme forefather.

¹⁶ The phrase “the thicket of the hollow reeds” (‘ajmat qaṣabāt) alludes to a symbolic imagery in Shí'í mystical literature wherein the Imáms—particularly 'Alí, Fāṭimah, and the Eleven Imáms following them—are likened to hollow reeds (qaṣabāt). Just as a reed has no voice of its own but produces sound only when the Divine Breath passes through it, so too are these sanctified Beings utterly effaced of self and naught but channels for the Voice of God. The expression evokes a sacred, inner realm—here identified with the Realm of Divinity (Láhūt)—in which the immaterial realities (mujarradāt) were brought into being through the agency of the Prophet Muḥammad, referred to in this passage as “thy supreme forefather.” (See *Asráru'l-Āthār*, vol. 3, p. 554)

¹⁷ In the Islamic and Bábí-Bahá'í cosmological schema, reality is conceived as a hierarchy of five ontological realms, each representing a descending degree of manifestation from the Divine Essence to the world of mortal existence. At

Then through ‘Alí, thy leonine forefather, were individuated the essences from the intrinsic realities the thicket of the hollow reeds of the Realm of Dominion (Jabarūt).¹⁸ Then through Ḥasan, thy lion-hearted forefather, were manifested the material realities from the contingent beings the thicket of the hollow reeds in the Kingdom of Earth (Mulk)¹⁹ and the Kingdom of Heaven (Malakūt).²⁰

And indeed, through them have the hearts tasted the first fruits of the gardens of their outpouring, in the Paradises of Ṣāqūrā²¹ upon the ruby-hued earth.

And indeed, through them were all things created—those dwelling upon the heights of Paradise, and those abiding beneath the sombre shadows of Ephredous,²² in the realm of mortal existence.

By Him Who caused this flatering tongue of Mine to speak thy praise, I have fallen short of the utmost in extolling thy beauty. Though Mine own foreordained circumstances have constrained Me from extolling thy praise as it beseemeth thee.²³

And how could it be otherwise, when the conclusive Proof of God (i.e., the Báb) hath equated the bounty of visiting thee with the bounty of visiting Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—albeit no bounty in the heavens or on the earth can equal His.

the summit lies *Lāhūt* (اللاهوت), the Realm of the Divinity, signifying the unknowable and transcendent Divine Essence. Below it is *Jabarūt* (الجبروت), the Realm of Dominion, the plane of divine archetypes and immutable realities. Descending further is *Malakūt* (الملکوت), the Realm of Heavenly Kingdom, the domain of souls and angelic intelligences. The next level, *Mulk* (الملک), the Realm of Earthly Kingdom, encompasses the physical cosmos and the world of form. Finally, *Nāsūt* (الناسوت), the Realm of Humanity, represents the corporeal condition of mortal flesh, wherein the soul is tested and refined. These gradations of being serve not only to articulate metaphysical principles but also to delineate the stages of divine descent and return, as reflected in the writings of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh.

¹⁸ See footnote 17 for further discussion.

¹⁹ See footnote 17 for further discussion.

²⁰ See footnote 17 for further discussion.

²¹ The term *Ṣāqūrā* (الصاقورة), derived from *ṣāqūr* (صاقور), is originally used to denote a large pickaxe or mattock employed for breaking stones. By extension, it can signify a sharp or cutting tongue, and—more figuratively—a grievous calamity or severe affliction. In this passage, however, the Báb transfigures the term beyond its conventional meanings. By referring to the “gardens of their outpouring” located in the “Paradises of Ṣāqūrā upon the ruby-hued earth,” He elevates what is typically associated with trial and hardship into a realm of sanctified receptivity and divine effulgence. The term thus becomes a symbolic allusion to the spiritual stations attained through suffering, sacrifice, and detachment. The hearts, through the tribulations borne by the chosen ones of God, are made to taste the first fruits of divine grace within these paradisiacal realms. In this way, *Ṣāqūrā* functions as a rhetorical and mystical emblem of the soul’s ascent through affliction transmuted into spiritual triumph.

²² “Ephredous” (Arabic: الإفریدوس) is a stylized rendering of Firdaus, a term of Persian origin widely adopted into Arabic and Qur’anic usage to signify the loftiest station of Paradise. In Islamic cosmology, al-Firdaus al-A’lā (“the highest Paradise”) is described as the most exalted and intimate realm of divine nearness. The Báb here invokes it with an esoteric inflection—possibly as “Ephredous”—to evoke both its sublime majesty and the veiled, transcendent realities that lie beneath its shadow. The expression “the sombre shadows of Ephredous” intimates a metaphysical descent from the zenith of Paradise into the realms of limitation, mortality, or concealment, in keeping with the imagery of ontological gradation found throughout the Báb’s writings.

²³ A veiled reference to the circumstance that, although the Báb cherished the desire to visit the sacred Shrine of Sháh ‘Abd al-‘Azím, He was unable to fulfill this wish. At the time, He was under close surveillance by the soldiers entrusted with escorting Him to His place of confinement in the remote fortress of MáKú, and thus was denied the opportunity to offer His devotions at that hallowed sanctuary.

For He—may My soul and the souls of all who dwell in the dominion of creation and command be His ransom—hath said: "Whoso visiteth Ḥusayn—peace be upon Him—recognizing his right, it is as though he hath visited God upon His Throne."²⁴

I bear God, His angels, His Prophets, and His Messengers witness that this is a truth wherein there is no doubt.

Unto thee do I complain of him who hath hindered Me from visiting thee, and from attaining unto the court of thy glory.²⁵

By Him in Whose hand is My soul! Were God to grant Me possession of all that is upon the earth, I would be content to give it all in exchange for being admitted to thy sanctuary—for it is a portion of the gardens of Paradise, and the judgment governing it is as the judgment of the Holy Valley in the Sacred Spot—as becometh one who hath beheld, with the eye of certitude, the decree of the Bayán.²⁶

Yet God is My witness that, to the utmost of My power, I longed for thee—but I was unable, and thou art fully aware of the cause thereof, in thy station among thy pure forefathers.

So, bear thou witness for Me on the Day of Resurrection, that I have borne witness unto God, even as He bore witness unto His own Self, for His own Self.

And I bear witness unto Muḥammad and His chosen ones—the Imáms of religion—according to that which God hath willed for them in the knowledge of the unseen.

Then unto My own self that I am a servant who hath believed in God and in His signs, and desired naught but God and His good-pleasure. And sufficient is He as a Witness over Me.

Then I bear witness to all things with that which God loveth and wherewith He is well-pleased. Verily, He is the All-Sufficing, the Most Exalted."

²⁴ From Abū 'Abdillāh (Imám al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon Him): "Whoever visits the grave of Abū 'Abdillāh [al-Ḥusayn] (peace be upon Him) on the Day of 'Āshūrā, knowing His true station, it is as though he has visited God, exalted be He, upon His Throne." (Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, vol. 6, Kitāb al-Mazār, p. 51)

²⁵ A veiled reference to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí, the Grand Vizier of Muḥammad Sháh, who played a central role in instigating the decision to banish the Báb to the remote fortress of MáKú. Motivated by fear, envy, and the mounting pressure from the clergies, he sought to suppress the growing influence of the Báb and curtail the spread of His teachings by consigning Him to an obscure and isolated stronghold in the northwestern extremity of the realm.

²⁶ The Báb applies the word Bayán specifically to the mode of divine verses as well as more generally to all His writings, stating: "Whatever is revealed by the Point hath been designated as the Bayán. However, this name referreth in its primary reality to the divine verses..." (The Persian Bayán, p. 7).

**The Visitation Tablet for Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azím Revealed by the Báb: Transcription from
a Typed Copy**

هو المعبود المحمود المقصود

السلام على من اختصه الله بمحمد حبيبه الذي استخلصه من بحبوحة القدم على سائر الممكنات والسلام على من اصطفاه الله بعلي وليه الذي اصطنعه لنفسه وجعله مهيمنا على كل الموجودات والسلام على من انتجبه الله بالحسن حجته الذي ارتضاه بعلمه وجعله مقام نفسه في كل المقامات والسلام على من انتخبه الله بالحسين ثاره الذي هباه بالشهادة وجعله آية طلعت في كل الدلالات السلام عليك يا أيها النور اللاح من طراز الأحديّة والبهاء اللامع من قمص طلعة الواحدية والنجم الطالع من أفق المحمدية والكوكب المشرق من سماء العلوية والضياء المتألق بالعرش الحسنية كيف أحصي ثنائك يابن الشجرة الإلهية والورقة المباركة الأزلية والثمرة الجنّية اللاهوتية والطلعة الشعشعانية الجبروتية والقمص المشرقة الملكوتية ثم كيف أذكر انتسابك إلى كينونية الذكر الأول من الأزل الذي ركن منه يدلّ على كينونية المشية بجوهريتها وركن منه على ذاتية الإرادة بتجريدتها وركن منه على نفسانية القدر وسعته وركن منه على إثنية القضاء وظهوره فما أحلى يابن من دنا فتدلى فكان قاب قوسين أو أدنى ذكرك وما أعلى يابن من تجلّى بظهوره لمن في السموات والعرش ونطق من وراء الحجب بإذن الله مع من دنى فوق أو أدنى شأنك وما أخفى رتبك يابن من فاز به كلّ من آمن به ثمّ واتقى وما أجلى مقعدك

في

الجنة الأولى وعند سدرة المنتهى من جنة المأوى بأيّ وأمي يا من اتقى من خشية الله حق التقى فبمحمد جدّك الأكبر تحققت الكينونيات من

المجردات في أجمة قصبات عالم اللاهوت، ثمّ بعلي جدك القصور تذوّت الجوهريات من الذاتيات في أجمة قصبات الجبروت، ثمّ بالحسن جدّك الغضنفر تظهرت الماديات من الممكنات في أجمة قصبات الملك والملكوت، وإنّ بهم ذقت الأفئدة أبكار حدائق فيضهم في جنّات الصاقورة على أرض الياقوت، وإنّ بهم

وجدت الموجودات ممّن هو في ذروة على الفردوس بما هو قائم تحت ظلال مكفهرات الإفریدوس في أرض الناسوت فوالذي أنطق هذا الكال لساني بثنائك قد قصرت القصارى في جميل ثنائك مع ما عجزتني من قضاياي المقضية عن حسن ثنائك وكيف لا وإنّ حجة الله البالغة قد جعل فضل زيارتك فضل زيارة الحسين - عليه السلام - مع أنّه لا يعادله - فضل في السموات ولا في الأرض حيث قال - روي ومن في ملكوت الخلق والأمر فداه من زار الحسين - عليه السلام عارفا بحقه كمن زار الله فوق عرشه " أشهد الله وملائكته وأنبيائه ورسله أنّ ذلك حق لا

ريب فيه فأليك أشكو ممن حال بيني وبين زيارتك والورود على بساط عزّتك فوالذي روي بيديه لو ملكني الله ما على الأرض كلّها لرضيت بأن أعطى وأدخل حرمك لأنه قطعة من روضات الجنان ويجري في حكمها حكم واد المقدس في البقعة ممن نظر بالعيان إلى حكم البيان ولكنّ الله شاهد عليّ بأيّ على منتهى جهدي رغبت فيك وما استطعت بما أنت أعلم به في مقامك عند آبائك الطاهرين

فاشهد لي يوم القيمة بأيّ أشهد الله كما شهد ذاته لذاته وأشهد لمحمد وأوصيائه * أئمة الدين بما شاء الله لهم في علم الغيب ثمّ لنفسى بأيّ عبد * آمنت بالله وآياته وما أردت إلّا الله ورضاه وكفى به

عليّ شهيدا ثمّ أشهد لكلّ شيء بما

أحب الله ويرضى

إن

هو الغني

المتعال