

The Wrathful Voice of Divine Justice:

An Exposition on the Fourth Epistle of the Báb to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí

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Introduction

Few compositions in the sacred writings of the Báb radiate with such awe-inspiring majesty and the tempestuous force of divine indignation as the Fourth Epistle addressed to Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí.

This extensive and formidable Epistle, widely known as the *Tawqīʿ-i-Qahriyyih* (“The Epistle of Divine Wrath”), was revealed in Arabic at Chihríq shortly after the Báb’s public interrogation in Tabríz in 1848—an event that stands as a pivotal moment in the early Bábí Dispensation. The Báb entrusted this Epistle to the illustrious Ḥujjat of Zanján, who faithfully delivered it to its intended recipient, the Prime Minister of Persia, Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí. It was later affirmed by Bahá’u’lláh Himself that Ḥujjat had committed the entire text to memory and recited it in full before Him and others during the Bábí prisoners’ time in ‘Akká.

Replete with dense theological discourse, searing invective, exalted glorifications of the Divine Essence, and proclamations of judgment drawn from the very heart of revelation, the *Tawqīʿ-i-Qahriyyih* is unparalleled in its intensity. It represents the most unrestrained and awe-striking expression of divine wrath in the recorded Writings of the Báb. More than a polemical response to a corrupt minister, it is a theophanic address—an irrefutable and majestic proclamation issued from the court of the Manifestation of God against the earthly embodiment of oppression and hypocrisy.

A provisional English translation of this Epistle, rendered by the author of the present article, is available online. It is accompanied by an extensive introduction and critical footnotes that illuminate the theological, historical, and rhetorical dimensions of the text. [The Fourth Epistle Revealed by the Báb to Mírzá Áqásí.](#)

The purpose of the present article is to explore the central themes, structure, and theological dimensions of this remarkable document. Drawing upon the Báb’s own words, as well as the author’s translation, historical context, and textual annotations, it seeks to elucidate the deep spiritual significance of the Fourth Epistle, both as an

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indictment of 19th century tyranny and as an enduring testament to the majesty of divine justice.

I. Divine Transcendence and Delegated Wrath

The Epistle opens not with condemnation, but with a magnificent prelude of divine glorification. Through a dense cascade of exaltations, the Báb extols the majesty of God in terms so elevated that language itself is strained beyond its ordinary capacities:

"Praise be unto God, Who hath subjugated—through the Subjugation of the subduing Subjugation of the Constraint of the Compulsion of His Omnipotence—the realities of the associators from among the contingent beings."

This phrase, and others like it, demonstrate the Báb's characteristic use of intensification (*mubālaghah*), whereby divine attributes are exalted in a manner that renders them conceptually unapproachable. God is described as subduing, magnifying, empowering, ordaining—and each act is done through a further act, a veil upon a veil, in keeping with the theology of divine transcendence.

From this lofty starting point, the Báb introduces the principle of divine delegation: that God, far too exalted to be affected by wrath or emotion, manifests His justice, power, and vengeance through His chosen ones. This includes the Prophet Muḥammad and the Imáms, and by extension, Himself:

"And He made them the Manifestations of His Justice and His Omnipotence in wrath, and the Mines of His Forbearance and His Compelling Power in indignation... For as He is, exalted be He, He subdueth not through His Essence aught..."

Here the Báb addresses a central paradox: God does not Himself grow wrathful, for He is utterly above all contingency, yet wrath is real, and is exercised in history through His Manifestations. Thus, divine vengeance finds tangible expression through the prophetic Figure. The Báb confirms this interpretation with a Qur'anic citation:

"But when they angered Us, We exacted vengeance upon them" (Qur'ān 43:55).

In the Báb's reading, this verse refers not to a metaphysical emotion in God but to the visible response of the Manifestations, whose acts of justice are in truth acts of God.

II. The Condemnation of Ḥájí Mírzá Áqásí: Rebellion Embodied

Having established the framework of divine justice and wrath, the Báb addresses the Prime Minister with unflinching severity:

"But now, know thou—O thou that disbelievest in God, that ascribest partners unto His signs, that turnest away from His Threshold, and that waxest proud before His Gate..."

From the outset, Áqásí is not simply a political adversary—he is depicted as a blasphemer, a rebel, a polytheist. The Báb catalogues his sins not only in religious terms but in cosmic ones. The minister's injustice is so severe that even the celestial realms are stirred:

"Alas, alas! At thy tyranny hath Paradise itself cried out, and all who dwell therein; the earth hath been convulsed... the leaves yellowed, the branches withered, and the fruits cut off."

Such language recalls apocalyptic imagery, evoking the very dissolution of the created order in response to tyrannical injustice. Nor is the grief merely metaphorical:

"Indeed, the liver of Muḥammad and the Family of God... hath been set aflame in the chambers of Riḍwán."²

This profoundly Shi'í image, adapted from traditions concerning the suffering of the Imáms, is here applied to the Báb Himself, revealing His claim to be the true heir and continuation of the Prophetic Household. The suffering of the Manifestation is thus not only personal but theological: it reflects the rebellion of the age against God.

The Báb presses this point further by comparing Áqásí's treatment of Him with a hypothetical encounter with the son of the Russian Tsar:

"Had the son of the Czar of Russia come unto thee, wouldst thou have commanded that he be cast into prison? Is not the son of the Messenger of God, in thine eyes, more abased than he?"

The indignation is acute. A descendant of the Prophet is imprisoned, exiled, and dishonored, while foreign dignitaries would be treated with decorum. This rhetorical device exposes not only Áqásí's personal failing but the deep dislocation of values within the Qājār state.

III. The Inversion of Justice and the Burden of Tyranny

The Báb offers specific examples of Áqásí's complicity in oppression, particularly in relation to the actions of Ḥusayn Khān, the governor of Fārs. Though fully capable of

² "The chambers of Riḍwán" (*ghurafāt al-Riḍwān*) denotes the exalted celestial precincts wherein the good-pleasure of God (al-Riḍwān) is fully realized—a realm of nearness, delight, and beatitude reserved for the sanctified souls who have attained His presence. The word *ghurafāt* (chambers or pavilions) evokes the image of lofty, luminous abodes promised in the Qur'ān to the righteous:

"They shall have chambers raised high, beneath which rivers flow..." (Qur'ān 39:20).

In this context, the phrase signifies not merely a spatial metaphor but a spiritual station of utmost sanctity. That the liver of Muḥammad and His kindred is said to have "been set aflame in the chambers of Riḍwán" conveys a paradox of divine grief in the very realms of bliss—underscoring the magnitude of the injustice done and the spiritual pain it inflicted upon the Holy Family, even within the celestial abode of God's good-pleasure.

restraining this official, Áqásí turned a blind eye, thereby becoming himself guilty before God:

"And yet, hadst thou but written him a single line, he would never have dared approach Me."

The Báb emphasizes that the silence of a powerful man in the face of oppression is itself a crime of vast proportions. His condemnation of the governor is unsparing:

"He whose deeds would shame even the infidels in their treatment of one another... I doubt not that he hath left neither a major nor a minor sin undone."

To have allowed such a man unchecked power is, in the Báb's estimation, to have *"gathered the firewood of Hell as provision"* for one's own soul.

IV. The Glory of Divine Detachment and the Vindication of the Prophet

Despite the raging indictment, the Báb repeatedly affirms His own spiritual detachment and purity of motive. He testifies:

"By Him in Whose hand is My soul—not even the weight of a mustard seed would have been diminished from thy glory, nor did I covet aught of thy dominion, even to the measure of a grain."

In one of the Epistle's most poignant turns, the Báb writes:

"Behold, though I stand within the prison, yet do I seem as one dwelling in Paradise, in the presence of My Lord. For I behold no delight save in nearness unto Him."

Thus, the true sovereign is not the Prime Minister upon the carpet of sovereignty, but the wronged Prisoner, whose very presence is the locus of divine good-pleasure.

V. Apocalyptic Imagery and the Prophetic Voice

The Tawqī'-i-Qahriyyih employs a constellation of eschatological and apocalyptic images to underscore the gravity of Áqásí's actions and the certitude of divine recompense:

"The waters have altered, the winds have shifted, the lands are laid waste, the mountains leveled..."

The Báb's prophetic voice is unmistakable. The cosmos itself testifies to the magnitude of the crime.

VI. Historical Figures: Ḥusayn Khān and Manūchehr Khān

The Báb contrasts Áqásí's criminal negligence with the nobility of Manūchehr Khān Mo'tamad al-Dawlah, who honored Him in Isfahán:

"I came upon one born among the Christians, who honored Me and supported Me..."

This striking juxtaposition subverts sectarian assumptions: true recognition lies in action, not identity.

VII. Ontological Rebuke and the Futility of Tyranny

"Behold! Thou wert but a drop of water... and soon shalt thou return beneath the dust..."

Áqásí's arrogance is dismantled through reminders of his mortality and the futility of power.

VIII. Final Admonition and Divine Closure

"Indeed, I have apprised thee of but a portion of that which thy hands have wrought, that perchance thou mightest return..."

The Báb's wrath is inseparable from mercy. Even in judgment, He calls the soul to repentance.

Conclusion

The Tawqī'-i-Qahriyyih is not merely a historical letter of rebuke—it is a revelation. Its cadences surge with the force of divine authority; its imagery rends the veil of complacency; its pronouncements shake the very throne of human presumption. Through it, the Báb declares not only His innocence and the injustice of His persecutors, but the advent of a new divine order.

Here, in this thunderous proclamation from the fortress of Chihríq, the voice of the Lord of Hosts is heard proclaiming judgment: not only upon a single man, but upon a world drunk with its own illusions of power.

May the reader, then, draw from this Epistle a fresh awareness of the majesty of divine justice and the exalted station of Him Who was sent as its Manifestation.