

Lawh-i-Quds

Bahauallah

Provisional translation by Adib Masumian from the original Persian



Lawh-i-Quds - Provisional Translation -

by Adib Masumian 12 April 2023

Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh known as the Lawh-i-Quds (“The Tablet of Holiness”), the original text of which has been digitally published on the Bahá'í Reference Library. This is one of many Works identified by Shoghi Effendi as a “Best-Known Writing of Bahá'u'lláh.”

Lawh-i-Quds

To Jináb-i-Dhabíh in Káf

[¶ 1]

He is the Most Holy, the Most Sublime, the Most Glorious

This is the Tablet of Holiness; in it is mentioned what will kindle a flame in the hearts of the servants, that haply it may burn away every veil and allusion, making their souls wholly devoted to God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Beauteous. By the righteousness of the One True God! Whoso reciteth the verses of the Lord according to the manner in which they flow from His Tongue shall verily be detached from all who dwell in heaven and on earth, and nigh will they draw unto the Seat of Holiness—this effulgent and resplendent Vision. Were God's servants to be told of the love through which these words are streaming forth at this moment, they would assuredly offer up their lives for this Wronged One Who hath been sore tried amidst the stirrers of sedition, and Who hath found no helper for Himself save God, the Sovereign, the All-Powerful, the All-Bountiful.

[¶ 2]

As for thee, O Dhabíh, hearken thou to what is being revealed from the habitation of grandeur, the Seat of Him Who hath established Himself upon the Throne of thy Lord,



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the Exalted, the Most High—that I am He Who liveth in the Most Glorious Realm. I hear and I see what the ungodly have perpetrated against My latter Beauty following My former Manifestation. A witness am I to all things, and I am the Omnipotent, the Help in Peril, the Most Glorious, the Most Powerful.

[¶ 3]

O Dhabíh! Waver not in the Cause of God. Testify to that whereunto God Himself testified ere the creation of earth and heaven, then sever thyself from the embodiments of earthly names, turn thy gaze to Him Who created them through a command from His behest, and be not of them that tarry. Purify thy soul of all suggestions and cleanse from thine eyes the obscuring film of words. Then, with My sight, look thou upon My Beauty; celebrate My praise with My words; and recognize, with My eyes, this pure, this radiant, this sanctified, this wondrous Beauty.

[¶ 4]

O My servant! Arise thou by My might, then break the chains of blind imitation in My Name and the manacles of vain imagining by My all-powerful, all-glorious, and all-encompassing sovereignty. I swear by Him Who hath made the dawn to voice My praise! Shouldst thou wish to know Me through aught else but Myself, then thou shalt never know, and unto this hast thou been bidden in the Tablets of God, the Most Holy, the All-Glorious, the Most Exalted.

[¶ 5]

O Dhabíh! We are indeed astonished at these servants. By the One True God! Unto them have We revealed verses which, if We should recite them unto a mountain, would cause it to crumble, and likewise would they rend the heavens asunder and cleave the earth in twain. Yet in spite of this, these verses have not stirred the souls of these servants, who have failed to soar unto God for so much as a single instant. Their hearts have been hardened by their adherence to their selfish passions and desires, causing them to turn away from Him Who, with but a single command, created the heavens and the earth. By thy life! Were one to bid them worship the Calf, this would they do day and night, taking it for themselves as a lord other than God, failing to examine it that they might rightly recognize it, and bowing before it bereft of understanding. Such is the state of affairs, couldst thou but know it. And were God to come unto them with His sovereignty, the angels of heaven bearing witness at His side—and were He to manifest unto them every possible sign—they would never believe in Him, rather would they continue to adore an idle fancy in their hearts without a clear proof or a perspicuous Book.

[¶ 6]

Consider the time when ‘Alí appeared with the sovereign might of God, invested with His verses and testimonies, and how most of humanity repudiated Him as they followed the vain imaginings in their hearts. Numbered were they with the heedless! They sought to establish the truth with their grasp of the Words of God, as well as the words of them that were fashioned through a single Word on His part, and then did they turn away from the One Who created the Revealer of the verses through His irrevocable, His transcendent, His glorious, His sublime decree. Had they beheld God through God Himself and wished to recognize Him by His own Self, they would not have been shut out from Him as by a veil and kept back from His presence, nor would they have strayed from the Path. Consider thou likewise every Revelation from the beginning that hath no beginning to the end that hath no end, that thou mayest be of them that comprehend. Notwithstanding that My former Manifestation dispelled, by the power of God, every vain imagining—and though He admonished the people, in every recorded line, not to protest against the One Who would be manifested in truth, He for Whose advent all the denizens of the Concourse on High and them that have been fashioned between heaven and earth have yearned—yet when He appeared through the power of truth, they turned away from Him and wrapped themselves in the veils of their selfish desires, and thus were they reckoned with the repudiators. And when it would be asked of them, “By what proof have ye believed in ‘Alí aforetime?”, they would reply, “By His verses.” Yet when the verses of thy Lord—the Almighty, the All-Knowing—were recited for them, they were shamefaced and defeated; they put the fingers of denial in their ears, lest they should hear the Words of God. In this wise were they enwrapped in the veils of heedlessness and accounted with the lost. And wert thou to incline thine inner ear unto what proceedeth from their mouths, thou wouldst hear from them what thou didst hear from the people of the Qur’án when God appeared upon the seat of holiness and the decree was ordained by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

[¶ 7]

Yet if thou wouldst hearken unto My words, do thou forsake those people; renounce all mention of them and abandon the things they possess. Set thy face, then, toward the beauty of thy Lord; have no fear of anyone, and be not of them that tarry. Seize the chalice of immortality with thy right hand, then quaff it in My Name, the All-Glorious. Rely thou upon God; He shall cause thee to speak in truth and enable thee to know that which none other knoweth.

[¶ 8]

Were We to recount for thee what hath befallen Us, the pen and ink could never exhaust it, nor multiple Tablets ever suffice to contain it, and unto this is God an omniscient witness. Nevertheless, We beseech God to make thee present before Our Throne, that thou mayest behold and become apprised of those mysteries which We have concealed from Our servants, and not one word of which We have mentioned amidst the whole of creation. Arise, therefore, to assist God and champion His Cause. By God! Concerning him whom the people have taken unto themselves as their beloved other than God, O would that he were like unto one of them! But the people are enslaved to vain imaginings and mere idols. Thus are their names mentioned before thy Lord in these days wherein We have been left amidst the people with none to help and succor Me.

[¶ 9]

We previously sent a Tablet unto thee, and another Tablet before that one, and yet another Tablet before that one. We implore God to sustain thee therewith and manifest unto thee what hath been treasured therein; He is indeed the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. Thy letter reached Us in this prison. We read it and inhaled therefrom the sweet savors of thy love of God, thy Lord and the Lord of thy forefathers. We recognized thy yearning for God and thy longing to attain His Presence—that thou hast desired to reach the habitation of thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the Inaccessible. We, verily, have not gone back on Our promise, rather have We kept Our word. Thus have We pledged Ourselves in truth ere the creation of the heavens and the earth. It was Our wish to summon thee to appear before Our Countenance, but the ungodly intervened between us; they cast Us out from the land and ultimately made Us a Prisoner in this far-off place. Shouldst thou now wish to leave thy home and journey unto God, the Sun of permission hath dawned from the horizon of revelation, in order that thou mayest do as thou pleasest. We hereby allow thee to stand in Our Presence, where thou canst witness what none of Our servants have witnessed and learn of what lay concealed from the eyes of mankind.

[¶ 10]

O Dhabīḥ! The Pen of God hath purposed to speak unto thee in the wondrous tongue of Persian, for His love hath ever been with thee, and, God willing, it shall so remain. Harken, then, unto the melodies of divine holiness, a single word of which hath enraptured, and will continue to enrapture, the hearts of the detached. Never hast thou been forgotten, and God grant thou mayest never be. Three sublime Tablets were given thy brother to send thee; perhaps they have been delayed for an expedient reason concealed in a secret he is keeping. In any case, regard thou all creation as a

tablet, and at its heading, behold these words of consummate sweetness written in a most glorious script with the pen of loftiest sanctity:

[¶ 11]

O servants! From time immemorial, the Revelation of God hath been distinguished from aught else besides it. Ever hath He been and eternally shall He be—through His acts, His deeds, and His attributes—sanctified from all humanity, inasmuch as He hath been known through His own Self, and all else similarly known by that same Criterion. Take heed, O people, that ye not turn to anything but Him, for whatsoever is other than Him is a thing created and fashioned at His behest.

[¶ 12]

O servants! Look ye, with the purest sight, to the Most Great Vision. From everlasting, ye have been enjoined to do this yourselves, and the faculty of recognizing the All-Merciful hath existed in you. He, verily, biddeth not His servants to do that which lieth neither at their disposal nor within their power. Should this station be present in man, then he is obligated to recognize God on his own and hath no need of anyone else—yet if this faculty be lacking, he shall incur no blame, and the Pen of injunction and prohibition would never write against him.

[¶ 13]

Incline thine ear to the call of this warbling Bird resounding in all things. Neither be shut out by any veil nor debarred by any barrier. Behold the Cause of God with thine own eyes, and ponder the appearance of this Servant in the midst of mankind—reflecting on hiding away all else but Him and promoting His Cause—that haply thou mayest become informed of the subtlety of a Revelation not known to anyone, and attain to the celestial river of eternity and the soft-flowing waters of utmost purity. By Him Who hath caused Me to speak between heaven and earth! Were I to relate unto thee the trials and tribulations that have befallen Me in this place, thou wouldst certainly be saddened and seek refuge in the wilderness. Hence, to protect thee, they have not been mentioned here; perchance they will be recounted face to face, and this indeed would not be hard of accomplishment for God.

[¶ 14]

Thou art aware that this Servant hath not spent even less than a moment preserving His own life. Night and day did He lie in the clutches of the ungodly, until the Cause of God was raised up and the Name of the All-Powerful established Himself upon His Throne. I swear by God, besides Whom there is none other God, that with regard to the

one who was taught just as the people of India teach their parrots, I educated and protected him in that same way. When he saw that this Servant appeared with the utmost conspicuousness amidst mankind—observing that no harm came to Him as a result, nor did anyone in this land persecute Him—he emerged from behind the veil. He arose to slay Me, and when he found himself thwarted, he took up the pen in calumny, writing what he wrote. Shouldst thou peruse, with a discerning eye, the allegations he hath made against this Servant, thou wouldst behold their falsity clearly as the sun, and perceive that his sole objective in uttering these evil whisperings hath been to hinder people from the Source of revelation. It is thus evident what this imprisoned Youth hath undergone. Powerful over him though I was, with all attesting that I was capable of accomplishing whatsoever I purposed, yet in spite of this—and notwithstanding My knowledge of him and what lay in his heart—I protected him with the hands of My power, yet now hath he emerged and imputed such falsehoods to this Servant as the pen is ashamed to recount.

[¶ 15]

O would that thou might become apprised of the Source of this Cause! If an eye were now found that would read His words, it would discern their true meaning. Wondrous Tablets have been sent down from the heaven of eternity in response to the objections that have been raised against the True One; please God, thou wilt see them. Reflect rightly and consider well; God willing, thou shalt attain to the pearls deposited therein. Harken thou to My call in these concluding words: Account all these created things as sheer nothingness, save for those souls who in this day are firm and steadfast in the Cause of God. Such is the utterance of truth, and “naught is there beside the truth but error.” My hope is that thou mayest not be kept back from the clouds of God’s mercy and deprived of the outpourings of His bounty.

[¶ 16]

O Dhabíh! Look thou into the wonders of My wisdom, for in all things fashioned between earth and heaven are signs of wisdom and evidences of creation readily apparent. Illusory suggestions have ever left the people bereft of the Quintessence of celestial glory and the Spirit of essential divinity. Be not perturbed by the changes and chances of this world, inasmuch as these vicissitudes have existed and will continue to exist in all things; yet there lieth concealed, in whatever is manifested, a wisdom so infinitesimally subtle that none but the pure in heart can apprehend it. For example, consider the physical sun, which nurtureth all who dwell on earth, and in this respect is the act of allotting to each whatever is its due clearly demonstrated by it. The lamp, however, suffereth a complete loss, and likewise the moon and the stars, for in themselves they shall all remain without the capacity to give light, as in the daytime no effusion of bounty proceedeth from these names. And yet, the sun hath not been at

fault; it is simply that its appearance hath eclipsed whatever light is inferior to its own. Consider now how the moon, the stars, and the lamp—all light-giving and accounted as ranking among the greatest of created things—are, in this sense, deprived of the sun and its nurturing influence, and yet how, through that same influence of the sun, the feeble things in creation come to appear in the utmost conspicuousness and exaltation. Ponder this, then, within thyself, that thou mayest be of them that attain; haply thou mightest arrive at the purpose of God and not be hindered by the suggestions of the repudiators.

[¶ 17]

Observe thou similarly the Sun of the heaven of inner significances, and meditate on the divine mysteries latent within them and the celestial secrets they hold, that perchance thou mayest not be deprived of the gracious outpourings of this Most Great Ocean, from Which all the Oceans of former ages and of more recent times have appeared and were derived. The Tongue of God proclaimeth: Fix thy gaze on the Source of revelation in this Dispensation and what hath been manifested through the absolute power of God, be it His weighty signs or His evidences in the world and in the human soul, that thou mayest remain steadfast in His Cause. Furthermore, compare not the Word of God with any other words, for It hath been and shall continue to be distinguished above all else besides It—and every soul will, upon hearing It, rest assured that this is indeed the truth.

[¶ 18]

Consider My previous Revelation; apart from certain insinuations, the words current among the people did not debar them from the right hand of the All-Merciful. Since their ears were unpurified and overly attached to the Words of ages gone by, they were deprived of hearing and comprehending the heavenly melodies and Words of everlasting glory on the Day of Resurrection. Thus with the Tongue of subduing might have I revealed in every Book and Scripture, every Scroll and Tablet, that one must, at the time of revelation, cleave only to that revelation itself, for the wayfarer on the path of guidance shall not reach his true homeland—a place which is the innermost sanctuary of the human soul—unless he sanctify his heart, his eyes, and his ears from all he hath heard. This command hath proved exceedingly difficult for all the world's peoples to obey at times of revelation, inasmuch as every people hath been wrapped in the densest veils on account of allusions in the Words of past ages. This is abundantly clear; no need is there to elaborate.

[¶ 19]

Thou didst behold the Revelation of the year sixty with thine own eyes and hear it with thine own ears, but it ill beseemeth the people of the Bayán to be veiled from the Ancient Beauty—shining resplendent from His zenith, invested with sovereign grandeur and glory—for my former Manifestation rent all the previous veils asunder. With the most explicit utterances and the most wondrous expositions did He exhort all humanity, and in none of His Tablets did He condition one's recognition of the Ancient Being upon any matter. O the misery of these people who have conditioned nevertheless the recognition of God and His Self upon what hath been created through His all-compelling, His weighty, His binding utterance! The nature of mankind hath ever been such that, in the Days of God when the Sun dawneth and shineth with conspicuous resplendence, they have refused to pay It any heed and wrapped themselves in the veils of self and passion. Following the disappearance of that Sun, some group or other hath professed their belief once again through sheer fancy, yet have they been unaware that the fierce winds of tests are blowing at all times and the tempestuous gales of trials sent forth from the direction of the All-Merciful, splitting atom from atom and one strand of hair from another.

[¶ 20]

O Pen of the Ancient of Days! Change thy tongue and warble in the lucid language of Arabic, that haply it may attract the hearts of all created things toward the Court of Thy sanctity and draw them nigh unto Thy most holy Face—a Face supremely immaculate, pure, and radiant. May it detach them, moreover, from such as have clung devotedly to the idols of their selves and passions, and turned away from Him unto Whom all living beings have testified that He, verily, is God, the Powerful, the Exalted, the Great.

[¶ 21]

Say: O people! Step upon this white Sand that hath appeared in the color of a crimson Dune upon the shore of the Sea of grandeur. By God, the True One! Couldst thou but see It with My eyes, thou wouldst behold in It every color, notwithstanding that God hath sanctified It from all colors and whatsoever hath been fashioned between heaven and earth. Say: Do ye reject Me and then recite what hath proceeded from My Pen? Alas for you, O heedless ones!

[¶ 22]

O Dhabíh! Reflect on him whose outer being We made so apparent an example unto the discerning among Our servants that if one of them were to witness his very gait, that one would know of a certainty that he hath ever disbelieved in God, joined

partners with Him, and turned away from His presence, deluding himself in His Cause, cleaving to what pertaineth not unto Him, and holding fast to the hem of every hostile infidel. Even though God manifested Himself through His sovereignty and sealed the station of Prophethood through Muḥammad, His Apostle, this man seeketh nonetheless to establish proofs through the Imamate and what Ḥusayn ibn-i-Rúḥ hath said, in spite of the fact that he wrapped the people in veils with the words that are still transmitted from him—that the Qá'im is in Jábulqá and other things of that sort—just as thou hast heard with thine own ears. Indeed, thou art of them that have heard it! Wert thou to observe aright on this Day, thou wouldst recognize that the people of Islám have remained shut out as by a veil from God and the Manifestation of His Self solely because of what that man narrated, and God is an omniscient Witness unto what I say. And shouldst thou see him, say: “O thou who hast disbelieved in God, turned away from His presence, joined partners with His Beauty, and rejected His signs, which encompass all worlds!” Should it be Our will, in this Day, to invest all things with the station of successorship, We would be able to do this through a Word streaming from Our Pen, which moveth by the fingers of Our transcendent, Our exalted, Our compelling might.

[¶ 23]

Perish in thy wrath, O thou who hast repudiated God from time immemorial! For hadst thou believed in God at any time, thou wouldst not have failed to believe in Him during these Days wherein He hath appeared with a sovereignty that hath overshadowed the whole of creation. Say: O rejected one, thou who art the embodiment of Nimrod! By what proof didst thou believe in 'Alí aforetime; and before Him in Muḥammad, the Apostle of God; and before Him in My Son, Who was named “the Spirit”; and before Him in the Interlocutor, unto Whom We called out through that Burning Bush to which the eye of God was once turned, and which proclaimed at all times, “Verily, I am God; no God is there but Me, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Bounteous!”?

[¶ 24]

Say: O thou who art but a handful of dust! Why hast thou turned away from the Lord of Lords notwithstanding that, after the clouds of revelation were dissipated, He came down from the heaven of holiness and the Decree was fulfilled by God, the One, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise? Say: By God! On this account doth every atom curse thee, and so doth 'Alí amongst the Concourse on High, yet thou art shrouded in the veils of thy self, engrossed in the fact that thou wast entitled with a name in which thou pridest thyself amid such as are like thee. Numbered indeed art thou with the veiled ones!

[¶ 25]

Beware, O Dhabíḥ, lest thou, too, be wrapped up in the veils of his self. By God, the True One! Today Iblís himself fleeth from his deception, and the Dajjál from his misguidance. Protect thyself, therefore, from the odors he diffuseth. I swear by God that they waft from the depths of hell, and that He hath made of him an object-lesson unto them that dwell on the earth, such that he is incapable of walking upon “a peaceful hillside,” how much less upon the Path of God, “thinner than a hair’s breadth and sharper than a cutting sword of iron!” Recognize the purpose of God in what the Tongue of Truth hath proclaimed, that thou mayest be of them that comprehend.

[¶ 26]

By thy life, O Dhabíḥ! Never have I harbored hatred in My heart for anyone among the concourse of creation, for God hath purified it of every allusion and anything at all that can be given a name, and He Himself is a witness to what I say. Yet when these people discovered His Gift with their eyes and their hearts only to reject it, He revealed, from the haven of security and peace—the habitation of the Throne of thy Lord, the Most Merciful—that which rouseth His servants to vigilance. Thus might they be reckoned with the heedful, lest the near ones affirm their wretched state, for then would they be seized by the odors of torment wafting from that man, and also from them who have disbelieved in God and joined partners with Him despite the fact that He descended from the heaven of revelation with a company of angels at His side.

[¶ 27]

As for thee, ponder what hath flowed from the Pen of God and contemplate His Words, that haply thou mayest reach those pearls treasured therein which are peerless in the realm of creation, and become rich enough therewith to dispense with all the world. Thus have We apprised thee once again as a token of grace on the part of thy Lord—the Exalted, the Most High—unto thee and them that are with thee, that thou mightest be informed of it and acquainted with what hath proceeded from His Pen and His mouth. Thereby mayest thou be clear in thy discernment and say at all times, “Praised be God, Who hath guided us unto His transcendent, His omniscient, His all-encompassing Self!”