

# Lawḥ-i-Dunyá (Tablet of the World)

Bahá'u'lláh

Original English



- 7 -

## Lawḥ-i-Dunyá (Tablet of the World)

*In My Name, calling aloud in the Kingdom of Utterance*

Praise and thanksgiving beseem the Lord of manifest dominion Who hath adorned the mighty prison with the presence of their honors 'Alí-Akbar and Amín, and hath illumined it with the light of certitude, constancy and assurance.<sup>1</sup> The glory of God and the glory of all that are in the heavens and on the earth be upon them.

Light and glory, greeting and praise be upon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of fortitude hath shone forth and the truth hath been established that the authority to choose rests with God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained, through whom the ocean of bounty hath surged and the fragrance of the gracious favors of God, the Lord of mankind, hath been diffused. We beseech Him — exalted is He — to shield them through the power of His hosts, to protect them through the potency of His dominion and to aid them through His indomitable strength which prevaleth over all created things. Sovereignty is God's, the Creator of the heavens and the Lord of the Kingdom of Names.

The Great Announcement proclaimeth: O people of Persia! In former times ye have been the symbols of mercy and the embodiments of affection and kindness. The regions of the world were illumined and embellished by the brightness of the light of your knowledge and by the blaze of your erudition. How is it that you have arisen to destroy yourselves and your friends with your own hands?

O Afnán, O thou that has branched from Mine ancient Stock! My glory and My loving-kindness rest upon thee. How vast is the tabernacle of the Cause of God! It hath overshadowed all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and will, ere long, gather together the whole of mankind beneath its shelter. Thy day of service is now come. Countless Tablets bear the testimony of the bounties vouchsafed unto thee. Arise for the triumph of My Cause, and, through the power of thine utterance, subdue the hearts of men. Thou must show forth that which will ensure the peace and the well-being of the miserable and the downtrodden. Gird up the loins of thine

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<sup>1</sup> The two Hands of the Cause of God, Ḥájí Mullá 'Alí-Akbar Sháhmírzádí and Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan Ardakání, Amín-i-Iláhí (Trustee of Ḥuququ'lláh), were originally arrested in Ṭíhrán, imprisoned in Qazvín in the year 1891, and then transferred to prison in Ṭíhrán.



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endeavor, that perchance thou mayest release the captive from his chains, and enable him to attain unto true liberty.

Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth, and enveloped its peoples. Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this worldwide regeneration. This is the most great, the most joyful tidings imparted by the Pen of this Wronged One to mankind. Wherefore fear ye, O My well-beloved ones? Who is it that can dismay you? A touch of moisture sufficeth to dissolve the hardened clay out of which this perverse generation is molded. The mere act of your gathering together is enough to scatter the forces of these vain and worthless people.

Strife and conflict befit the beasts of the wild. It was through the grace of God and with the aid of seemly words and praiseworthy deeds that the unsheathed swords of the Bábí community were returned to their scabbards. Indeed through the power of good words, the righteous have always succeeded in winning command over the meads of the hearts of men. Say, O ye loved ones! Do not forsake prudence. Incline your hearts to the counsels given by the Most Exalted Pen and beware lest your hands or tongues cause harm unto anyone among mankind.

Referring to the land of Ṭá [Ṭíhrán] We have revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that which will admonish mankind. They that perpetrate tyranny in the world have usurped the rights of the peoples and kindreds of the earth and are sedulously pursuing their selfish inclinations. The tyrant<sup>2</sup> of the land of Yá [Yazd], committed that which hath caused the Concourse on High to shed tears of blood.

O thou who hast quaffed from the wine of Mine utterance and hast fixed thy gaze upon the horizon of My Revelation! How strange that the people of Persia, who were unrivalled in sciences and arts, should have sunk to the lowest level of degradation among the kindreds of the earth. O people! In this blessed, this glorious Day, deprive not yourselves of the liberal effusions of bounty which the Lord of abounding grace hath vouchsafed unto you. In this Day showers of wisdom and utterance are pouring down from the clouds of divine mercy. Well is it with them who judge His Cause with fairness, and woe betide the unjust.

Every man of insight will, in this day, readily admit that the counsels which the Pen of this Wronged One hath revealed constitute the supreme animating power for the advancement of the world and the exaltation of its peoples. Arise, O people, and, by the power of God's might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole earth may be freed and sanctified from its servitude to the gods of its idle fancies — gods that have inflicted such loss upon, and are responsible for the misery of their wretched worshippers. These idols form the obstacle that impedeth man in his efforts to advance in the path of perfection. We cherish the hope that the Hand of divine power may lend its assistance to mankind and deliver it from its state of grievous abasement.

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2. Prince Maḥmúd Mírzá, the Jalálu'd'Dawlih, Governor of Yazd, Persia.

In one of the Tablets these words have been revealed: O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men. This can best be achieved through pure and holy deeds, through a virtuous life and a goodly behavior. Valiant acts will ensure the triumph of this Cause, and a saintly character will reinforce its power. Cleave unto righteousness, O people of Bahá! This, verily, is the commandment which this Wronged One hath given unto you, and the first choice of His unrestrained Will for every one of you.

O friends! It behooveth you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favors which in this Divine, this soul-stirring Springtime are being showered upon you. The Daystar of His great glory hath shed its radiance upon you, and the clouds of His limitless grace have overshadowed you. How high the reward of him that hath not deprived himself of so great a bounty, nor failed to recognize the beauty of his Best-Beloved in this, His new attire. Watch over yourselves, for the Evil One is lying in wait, ready to entrap you. Gird yourselves against his wicked devices, and, led by the light of the name of the All-Seeing God, make your escape from the darkness that surroundeth you. Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self. The Evil One is he that hindereth the rise and obstructeth the spiritual progress of the children of men.

It is incumbent upon every man, in this Day, to hold fast unto whatsoever will promote the interests, and exalt the station, of all nations and just governments. Through each and every one of the verses which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed, the doors of love and unity have been unlocked and flung open to the face of men. We have erewhile declared — and Our Word is the truth — : “Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.” Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath, through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished. From the heaven of God’s Will, and for the purpose of ennobling the world of being and of elevating the minds and souls of men, hath been sent down that which is the most effective instrument for the education of the whole human race. The highest essence and most perfect expression of whatsoever the peoples of old have either said or written hath, through this most potent Revelation, been sent down from the heaven of the Will of the All-Possessing, the Ever-Abiding God. Of old it hath been revealed: “Love of one’s country is an element of the Faith of God.” The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of His manifestation proclaimed: “It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world.” Through the power released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh impulse and set a new direction to the birds of men’s hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God’s holy Book.

This Wronged One hath forbidden the people of God to engage in contention or conflict and hath exhorted them to righteous deeds and praiseworthy character. In this day the hosts that can ensure the victory of the Cause are those of goodly conduct and saintly character. Blessed are they who firmly adhere unto them and woe betide such as turn away therefrom.

O people of God! I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness. Whoso is endued with courtesy hath indeed attained a sublime station. It is hoped that this Wronged One and everyone else may be enabled to acquire it, hold fast unto it, observe

it, and fix our gaze upon it. This is a binding command which hath streamed forth from the Pen of the Most Great Name.

This is the day when the gems of constancy that lie hid in the mine of men's inner selves should be made manifest. O people of Justice! Be as brilliant as the light and as splendid as the fire that blazed in the Burning Bush. The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin. We beseech God that He may shield His creatures from the evil designs of His enemies. He verily hath power over all things.

All praise be to the one true God — exalted be His glory — inasmuch as He hath, through the Pen of the Most High, unlocked the doors of men's hearts. Every verse which this Pen hath revealed is a bright and shining portal that discloseth the glories of a saintly and pious life, of pure and stainless deeds. The summons and the message which We gave were never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only. Mankind in its entirety must firmly adhere to whatsoever hath been revealed and vouchsafed unto it. Then and only then will it attain unto true liberty. The whole earth is illuminated with the resplendent glory of God's Revelation. In the year sixty He Who heralded the light of Divine Guidance — may all creation be a sacrifice unto Him — arose to announce a fresh revelation of the Divine Spirit, and was followed, twenty years later, by Him through Whose coming the world was made the recipient of this promised glory, this wondrous favor. Behold how the generality of mankind hath been endued with the capacity to hearken unto God's most exalted Word — the Word upon which must depend the gathering together and spiritual resurrection of all men.

Whilst in the Prison of 'Akká, We revealed in the Crimson Book that which is conducive to the advancement of mankind and to the reconstruction of the world. The utterances set forth therein by the Pen of the Lord of creation include the following which constitute the fundamental principles for the administration of the affairs of men:

First: It is incumbent upon the ministers of the House of Justice to promote the Lesser Peace so that the people of the earth may be relieved from the burden of exorbitant expenditures. This matter is imperative and absolutely essential, inasmuch as hostilities and conflict lie at the root of affliction and calamity.

Second: Languages must be reduced to one common language to be taught in all the schools of the world.

Third: It behooveth man to adhere tenaciously unto that which will promote fellowship, kindness and unity.

Fourth: Everyone, whether man or woman, should hand over to a trusted person a portion of what he or she earneth through trade, agriculture or other occupation, for the training and education of children, to be spent for this purpose with the knowledge of the Trustees of the House of Justice.

Fifth: Special regard must be paid to agriculture. Although it hath been mentioned in the fifth place, unquestionably it precedeth the others. Agriculture is highly developed in foreign lands,

however in Persia it hath so far been grievously neglected. It is hoped that His Majesty the Ṣháh — may God assist him by His grace — will turn his attention to this vital and important matter.

Were men to strictly observe that which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed in the Crimson Book, they could then well afford to dispense with the regulations which prevail in the world. Certain exhortations have repeatedly streamed forth from the Pen of the Most High that perchance the manifestations of power and the dawning-places of might may, sometime, be enabled to enforce them. Indeed, were sincere seekers to be found, every emanation of God's pervasive and irresistible Will would, for the sake of His love, be revealed. But where are to be found earnest seekers and inquiring minds? Whither are gone the equitable and the fair-minded? At present no day passeth without the fire of a fresh tyranny blazing fiercely, or the sword of a new aggression being unsheathed. Gracious God! The great and the noble in Persia glory in acts of such savagery that one is lost in amazement at the tales thereof.

Day and night this Wronged One yieldeth thanks and praise unto the Lord of men, for it is witnessed that the words of counsel and exhortation We uttered have proved effective and that this people hath evinced such character and conduct as are acceptable in Our sight. This is affirmed by virtue of the event which hath truly cheered the eye of the world, and is none other than the intercession of the friends with the high authorities in favor of their enemies. Indeed one's righteous deeds testify to the truth of one's words. We cherish the hope that men of piety may illumine the world through the radiant light of their conduct, and We entreat the Almighty — glorified and exalted is He — to grant that everyone may in this Day remain steadfast in His love and stand firm in His Cause. He is, in truth, the Protector of those who are wholly devoted to Him and observe His precepts.

O people of God! Countless are the realms which Our Pen of Glory hath revealed and manifold the eyes to which it hath imparted true enlightenment. Yet most of the people in Persia continue to be deprived of the benefits of profitable counsels and remain sorely lacking in useful sciences and arts. Formerly these sublime words were especially revealed by the Pen of Glory in honor of one of the faithful, that perchance those that have gone astray may embrace the Truth and become acquainted with the subtleties of the Law of God.

The unbelievers and the faithless have set their minds on four things: first, the shedding of blood; second, the burning of books; third, the shunning of the followers of other religions; fourth, the extermination of other communities and groups. Now however, through the strengthening grace and potency of the Word of God these four barriers have been demolished, these clear injunctions have been obliterated from the Tablet and brutal dispositions have been transmuted into spiritual attributes. Exalted is His purpose; glorified is His power; magnified is His dominion! Now let us beseech God — praised be His glory — to graciously guide aright the followers of the Ṣhí'ih sect and to purge them of unseemly conduct. From the lips of the members of this sect foul imprecations fall unceasingly, while they invoke the word "Mal'ún" (accursed) — uttered with a guttural sound of the letter 'ayn — as their daily relish.

O God my God! Thou hearest the sighing of Him Who is Thy Light (Bahá), hearkenest unto His lamentations in the daytime and in the night season and knowest that He desireth naught for Himself but rather seeketh to sanctify the souls of Thy servants and to deliver them from the fire with which they are beset at all times. O Lord! The hands of Thy well-favored servants are raised

towards the heaven of Thy bounty and those of Thy sincere lovers are lifted up to the sublime heights of Thy generosity. Disappoint them not, I entreat Thee, in that which they seek from the ocean of Thy favor and from the heaven of Thy grace and the daystar of Thy bounty. Aid them, O Lord, to acquire such virtues as will exalt their stations among the peoples of the world. Verily Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Most Generous.

O people of God! Give ear unto that which, if heeded, will ensure the freedom, well-being, tranquility, exaltation and advancement of all men. Certain laws and principles are necessary and indispensable for Persia. However, it is fitting that these measures should be adopted in conformity with the considered views of His Majesty — may God aid him through His grace — and of the learned divines and of the high-ranking rulers. Subject to their approval a place should be fixed where they would meet. There they should hold fast to the cord of consultation and adopt and enforce that which is conducive to the security, prosperity, wealth and tranquility of the people. For were any measure other than this to be adopted, it could not but result in chaos and commotion.

According to the fundamental laws which We have formerly revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and other Tablets, all affairs are committed to the care of just kings and presidents and of the Trustees of the House of Justice. Having pondered on that which We have enunciated, every man of equity and discernment will readily perceive, with his inner and outer eyes, the splendors of the daystar of justice which radiate therefrom.

The system of government which the British people have adopted in London appeareth to be good, for it is adorned with the light of both kingship and of the consultation of the people.

In formulating the principles and laws a part hath been devoted to penalties which form an effective instrument for the security and protection of men. However, dread of the penalties maketh people desist only outwardly from committing vile and contemptible deeds, while that which guardeth and restraineth man both outwardly and inwardly hath been and still is the fear of God. It is man's true protector and his spiritual guardian. It behooveth him to cleave tenaciously unto that which will lead to the appearance of this supreme bounty. Well is it with him who giveth ear unto whatsoever My Pen of Glory hath proclaimed and observeth that whereunto he is bidden by the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days.

Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend. The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.

O ye that dwell on earth! The distinguishing feature that marketh the preeminent character of this Supreme Revelation consisteth in that We have, on the one hand, blotted out from the pages of God's holy Book whatsoever hath been the cause of strife, of malice and mischief amongst the children of men, and have, on the other, laid down the essential prerequisites of concord, of understanding, of complete and enduring unity. Well is it with them that keep My statutes.

Time and again have We admonished Our beloved ones to avoid, nay to flee from, anything whatsoever from which the odor of mischief can be detected. The world is in great turmoil, and the minds of its people are in a state of utter confusion. We entreat the Almighty that He may graciously illuminate them with the glory of His Justice, and enable them to discover that which will be profitable unto them at all times and under all conditions. He, verily is the All-Possessing, the Most High.

We have ere this uttered these sublime words: Let them that bear allegiance to this Wronged One be even as a raining cloud in moments of charity and benevolence and as a blazing fire in restraining their base and appetitive natures.

Gracious God! A thing hath recently happened which caused great astonishment. It is reported that a certain person<sup>3</sup> went to the seat of the imperial throne in Persia and succeeded in winning the good graces of some of the nobility by his ingratiating behavior. How pitiful indeed, how deplorable! One wondereth why those who have been the symbols of highest glory should now stoop to boundless shame. What is become of their high resolve? Whither is gone the sense of dignity and honor? The sun of glory and wisdom hath unceasingly been shining above the horizon of Persia, but nowadays it hath sunk to such a low level that certain dignitaries have allowed themselves to be treated as playthings in the hands of the foolish. The aforesaid person hath written such things concerning this people in the Egyptian press and in the Beirut Encyclopedia that the well-informed and the learned were astonished. He proceeded then to Paris where he published a newspaper entitled '*Urvatu'l-Vuṭḥqá* [The Sure Handle] and sent copies thereof to all parts of the world. He also sent a copy to the Prison of 'Akká, and by so doing he meant to show affection and to make amends for his past actions. In short, this Wronged One hath observed silence in regard to him. We entreat God, the True One, to protect him and to shed upon him the light of justice and fairness. It behooveth him to say:

O God my God! Thou seest me standing before the door of Thy forgiveness and benevolence, turning my gaze toward the horizon of Thy bountiful favors and manifold blessings. I beg of Thee by Thy sweet accents and by the shrill voice of Thy Pen, O Lord of all mankind, to graciously aid Thy servants as it befitteth Thy days and beseemeth the glory of Thy manifestation and Thy majesty. Verily potent art Thou to do whatsoever Thou willest. All they that dwell in the heavens and on the earth bear witness to Thy power and Thy might, to Thy glory and Thy bounteousness. Praise be to Thee, O Lord of the worlds and the Well-Beloved of the heart of every man of understanding!

Thou beholdest, O my God, the essence of poverty seeking the ocean of Thy wealth and the substance of iniquity yearning for the waters of Thy forgiveness and Thy tender mercy. Grant Thou, O my God, that which beseemeth Thy great glory and befitteth the loftiness of Thy boundless grace. Thou art in truth the All-Bountiful, the Lord of grace abounding, the Ordainer, the All-Wise. No God is there but Thee, the Most Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Omnipotent.

O people of God! In this day everyone should fix his eyes upon the horizon of these blessed words: "Alone and unaided He doeth whatsoever He pleaseth." Whoso attaineth this station

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<sup>3</sup> Jamálu'd-Dín-i-Afḡhání. (See *God Passes By* Chapter XX, paragraph beginning "In Persia, the cradle of the Faith..." and Chapter XXI, paragraph beginning "To the assassination of the tyrannical Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh...".)

hath verily attained the light of the essential unity of God and is enlightened thereby, while all others are reckoned in the Book of God among the followers of idle fancy and vain imagination. Incline your ears to the Voice of this Wronged One and safeguard the integrity of your stations. It is highly necessary and imperative that everyone should observe this matter.

Unveiled and unconcealed, this Wronged One hath, at all times, proclaimed before the face of all the peoples of the world that which will serve as the key for unlocking the doors of sciences, of arts, of knowledge, of well-being, of prosperity and wealth. Neither have the wrongs inflicted by the oppressors succeeded in silencing the shrill voice of the Most Exalted Pen, nor have the doubts of the perverse or of the seditious been able to hinder Him from revealing the Most Sublime Word. I earnestly beseech God that He may protect and purge the people of Bahá from the idle fancies and corrupt imaginings of the followers of the former Faith.

O people of God! Righteous men of learning who dedicate themselves to the guidance of others and are freed and well guarded from the promptings of a base and covetous nature are, in the sight of Him Who is the Desire of the world, stars of the heaven of true knowledge. It is essential to treat them with deference. They are indeed fountains of soft-flowing water, stars that shine resplendent, fruits of the blessed Tree, exponents of celestial power, and oceans of heavenly wisdom. Happy is he that followeth them. Verily such a soul is numbered in the Book of God, the Lord of the mighty Throne, among those with whom it shall be well.

The glory which proceedeth from God, the Lord of the Throne on High and of the earth below, rest upon you, O people of Bahá, O ye the companions of the Crimson Ark, and upon such as have inclined their ears to your sweet voices and have observed that whereunto they are bidden in this mighty and wondrous Tablet.

