

Lawḥ-i-Burhán (Tablet of the Proof)

Bahá'u'lláh

Original English



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Lawḥ-i-Burhán (Tablet of the Proof)

This Tablet was revealed after the martyrdom of the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs (see God Passes By, Chapter VIII, paragraph beginning “In Iṣfahán Mullá Kázim was beheaded ...”) and was addressed to Shaykh Muḥammad Báqir, denounced by Bahá'u'lláh as the “Wolf.” In this Tablet Bahá'u'lláh refers to Mír Muḥammad Ḥusayn, the Imám Jum'ih of Iṣfahán, surnamed the “She-Serpent,” who was Shaykh Muḥammad Báqir’s accomplice in the persecution of the Bahá’ís. (See God Passes By, Chapter XII, paragraph beginning “Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh, stigmatized by Bahá'u'lláh ...”, paragraph beginning “In Iṣfahán Mullá Kázim was beheaded ...” and paragraph beginning “Nor should a review of the outstanding features of Bahá'u'lláh’s writings ...”). The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf was addressed to Shaykh Muḥammad Taqíy-i-Najafí, the son of Shaykh Muḥammad Báqir.

He is the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise! The winds of hatred have encompassed the Ark of Baṭḥá,¹ by reason of that which the hands of the oppressors have wrought. O Báqir! Thou hast pronounced sentence against them for whom the books of the world have wept, and in whose favor the scriptures of all religions have testified. Thou, who art gone far astray, art indeed wrapt in a thick veil. By God Himself! Thou hast pronounced judgment against them through whom the horizon of faith hath been illumined. Unto this bear witness They Who are the Dawning-Places of Revelation and the Manifestations of the Cause of thy Lord, the Most Merciful, Who have sacrificed Their souls and all that They possessed in His straight Path. The Faith of God hath cried everywhere, by reason of thy tyranny, and yet thou disportest thyself and art of them that exult. There is no hatred in Mine heart for thee nor for anyone. Every man of learning beholdeth thee, and such as are like thee, engulfed in evident folly. Hadst thou realized that which thou hast done, thou wouldst have cast thyself into the fire, or abandoned thine home and fled into the mountains, or wouldst have groaned until thou hadst returned unto the place destined for thee by Him Who is the Lord of strength and of might. O thou who art even as nothing! Rend thou asunder the veils of idle fancies and vain imaginings, that thou mayest behold the Daystar of knowledge shining from this resplendent Horizon. Thou hast torn in pieces a remnant of the Prophet Himself, and imagined that thou hadst helped the Faith of God. Thus hath thy soul prompted thee, and thou art truly one of the heedless. Thine act hath consumed the hearts of the Concourse on high, and those of such as have circled round the

1. Mecca.



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Cause of God, the Lord of the worlds. The soul of the Chaste One² melted, by reason of thy cruelty, and the inmates of Paradise wept sore in that blessed Spot.

Judge thou fairly, I adjure thee by God. What proof did the Jewish doctors adduce wherewith to condemn Him Who was the Spirit of God,³ when He came unto them with truth? What could have been the evidence produced by the Pharisees and the idolatrous priests to justify their denial of Muḥammad, the Apostle of God when He came unto them with a Book that judged between truth and falsehood with a justice which turned into light the darkness of the earth, and enraptured the hearts of such as had known Him? Indeed thou hast produced, in this day, the same proofs which the foolish divines advanced in that age. Unto this testifieth He Who is the King of the realm of grace in this great Prison. Thou hast, truly, walked in their ways, nay, hast surpassed them in their cruelty, and hast deemed thyself to be helping the Faith and defending the Law of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. By Him Who is the Truth! Thine iniquity hath made Gabriel to groan, and hath drawn tears from the Law of God, through which the breezes of justice have been wafted over all who are in heaven and on earth. Hast thou fondly imagined that the judgment thou didst pronounce hath profited thee? Nay, by Him Who is the King of all Names! Unto thy loss testifieth He with Whom is the knowledge of all things as recorded in the preserved Tablet. When thou didst pen thy judgment, thou wast accused by thy very pen. Unto this doth bear witness the Pen of God, the Most High, in His inaccessible station.

O thou who hast gone astray! Thou hast neither seen Me, nor associated with Me, nor been My companion for the fraction of a moment. How is it, then, that thou hast bidden men to curse Me? Didst thou, in this, follow the promptings of thine own desires, or didst thou obey thy Lord? Produce thou a sign, if thou art one of the truthful. We testify that thou hast cast behind thy back the Law of God, and laid hold on the dictates of thy passions. Nothing, in truth, escapeth His knowledge; He, verily, is the Incomparable, the All-Informed. O heedless one! Harken unto that which the Merciful hath revealed in the Qur'án: "Say not to every one who meeteth you with a greeting, 'Thou art not a believer.'"⁴ Thus hath He decreed in Whose grasp are the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if thou be of them that hearken. Thou hast set aside the commandment of God, and clung unto the promptings of thine own desire. Woe, then, unto thee, O careless one that doubtest! If thou deniest Me, by what proof canst thou vindicate the truth of that which thou dost possess? Produce it, then, O thou who hast joined partners with God, and turned aside from His sovereignty that hath encompassed the worlds!

O foolish one! Know thou that he is truly learned who hath acknowledged My Revelation, and drunk from the Ocean of My knowledge, and soared in the atmosphere of My love, and cast away all else besides Me, and taken firm hold on that which hath been sent down from the Kingdom of My wondrous utterance. He, verily, is even as an eye unto mankind, and as the spirit of life unto the body of all creation. Glorified be the All-Merciful Who hath enlightened him, and caused him to arise and serve His great and mighty Cause. Verily, such a man is blessed by the Concourse on high, and by them who dwell within the Tabernacle of Grandeur, who have quaffed My sealed Wine in My Name, the Omnipotent, the All-Powerful. O Báqir! If thou be of

2. Fáṭimih, daughter of Muḥammad.

3. Jesus.

4. Qur'án 4:96.

them that occupy such a sublime station, produce then a sign from God, the Creator of the heavens. And shouldst thou recognize thy powerlessness, do thou rein in thy passions, and return unto thy Lord, that perchance He may forgive thee thy sins which have caused the leaves of the Divine Lote-Tree to be burnt up, and the Rock to cry out, and the eyes of men of understanding to weep. Because of thee the Veil of Divinity was rent asunder, and the Ark foundered, and the She-Camel was hamstrung, and the Spirit⁵ groaned in His sublime retreat. Disputest thou with Him Who hath come unto thee with the testimonies of God and His signs which thou possessest and which are in the possession of them that dwell on earth? Open thine eyes that thou mayest behold this Wronged One shining forth above the horizon of the will of God, the Sovereign, the Truth, the Resplendent. Unstop, then, the ear of thine heart that thou mayest hearken unto the speech of the Divine Lote-Tree that hath been raised up in truth by God, the Almighty, the Beneficent. Verily, this Tree, notwithstanding the things that befell it by reason of thy cruelty and of the transgressions of such as are like thee, calleth aloud and summoneth all men unto the Sadratu'l-Muntahá⁶ and the Supreme Horizon. Blessed is the soul that hath gazed on the Most Mighty Sign, and the ear that hath heard His most sweet Voice, and woe to whosoever hath turned aside and done wickedly.

O thou who hast turned away from God! Wert thou to look with the eye of fairness upon the Divine Lote-Tree, thou wouldst perceive the marks of thy sword on its boughs, and its branches, and its leaves, notwithstanding that God created thee for the purpose of recognizing and of serving it. Reflect, that haply thou mayest recognize thine iniquity and be numbered with such as have repented. Thinkest thou that We fear thy cruelty? Know thou and be well assured that from the first day whereon the voice of the Most Sublime Pen was raised betwixt earth and heaven We offered up Our souls, and Our bodies, and Our sons, and Our possessions in the path of God, the Exalted, the Great, and We glory therein amongst all created things and the Concourse on high. Unto this testify the things which have befallen Us in this straight Path. By God! Our hearts were consumed, and Our bodies were crucified, and Our blood was spilt, while Our eyes were fixed on the horizon of the loving-kindness of their Lord, the Witness, the All-Seeing. The more grievous their woes, the greater waxed the love of the people of Bahá. Unto their sincerity hath borne witness what the All-Merciful hath sent down in the Qur'án. He saith: "Wish ye, then, for death, if ye are sincere."⁷ Who is to be preferred, he that hath sheltered himself behind curtains, or he that hath offered himself in the path of God? Judge thou fairly, and be not of them that rove distraught in the wilderness of falsehood. So carried away have they been by the living waters of the love of the Most Merciful, that neither the arms of the world nor the swords of the nations have deterred them from setting their faces towards the ocean of the bounty of their Lord, the Giver, the Generous.

By God! Troubles have failed to unnerve Me, and the repudiation of the divines hath been powerless to weaken Me. I have spoken, and still speak forth before the face of men: "The door of grace hath been unlocked and He Who is the Dayspring of Justice is come with perspicuous signs and evident testimonies, from God, the Lord of strength and of might!" Present thyself

5. Jesus.

6. The Sacred Lote-Tree, the Tree beyond which there is no passing (See Qur'án 53:8-18). A symbol of the Manifestation of God. (See *God Passes By*, Chapter VI, paragraph beginning "In the name He bore...".)

7. Qur'án 2:88.

before Me that thou mayest hear the mysteries which were heard by the Son of 'Imrán⁸ upon the Sinai of Wisdom. Thus commandeth thee He Who is the Dawning-Place of the Revelation of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, from His great Prison.

Hath leadership made thee proud? Peruse thou what God hath revealed to the Sovereign ruler, the Sulṭán of Turkey, who hath incarcerated Me in this fortified stronghold, so that thou mayest be informed of the condition of this Wronged One, as decreed by God, the One, the Single, the All-Informed. Art thou happy to see the abject and worthless as thy followers? They support thee as did a people before them, they that followed Annas, who, without clear proof and testimony, pronounced judgment against the Spirit.⁹

Peruse thou the Kitáb-i-Íqán and that which the All-Merciful hath sent down unto the King of Paris¹⁰ and to such as are like him, that thou mayest be made aware of the things that have happened in the past, and be persuaded that We have not sought to spread disorder in the land after it had been well-ordered. We exhort, wholly for the sake of God, His servants. Let him who wisheth turn unto Him, and him who wisheth turn aside. Our Lord, the Merciful, is verily the All-Sufficing, the All-Praised. O concourse of divines! This is the day whereon nothing amongst all things, nor any name amongst all names, can profit you save through this Name which God hath made the Manifestation of His Cause and the Dayspring of His Most Excellent Titles unto all who are in the kingdom of creation. Blessed is that man that hath recognized the fragrance of the All-Merciful and been numbered with the steadfast. Your sciences shall not profit you in this day, nor your arts, nor your treasures, nor your glory. Cast them all behind your backs, and set your faces towards the Most Sublime Word through which the Scriptures and the Books and this lucid Tablet have been distinctly set forth. Cast away, O concourse of divines, the things ye have composed with the pens of your idle fancies and vain imaginings. By God! The Daystar of Knowledge hath shone forth above the horizon of certitude.

O Báqir! Read and call thou to mind that which was said of old by a believer of thy stock: "Will ye slay a man because he saith my Lord is God, when He hath already come to you with signs from your Lord? If he be a liar, on him will be his lie, but if he be a man of truth, part of what he threateneth will fall upon you. In truth God guideth not him who is a transgressor, a liar."¹¹

O thou who art gone astray! If thou hast any doubt concerning Our conduct, know thou that We bear witness unto that whereunto God hath Himself borne witness ere the creation of the heavens and of the earth, that there is none other God but Him, the Almighty, the All-Bounteous. We testify that He is One in His Essence, One in His attributes. He hath none to equal Him in the whole universe, nor any partner in all creation. He hath sent forth His Messengers, and sent down His Books, that they may announce unto His creatures the Straight Path.

Hath the Şháh been informed, and chosen to close his eyes to thine acts? Or hath he been seized with fear at the howling of a pack of wolves who have cast the Path of God behind their

8. Moses.

9. Jesus.

10. Napoleon III.

11. Qur'án 40:29.

backs and followed in thy way without any clear proof or Book? We have heard that the provinces of Persia have been adorned with the adornment of justice. When We observed closely, however, We found them to be the dawning-places of tyranny and the daysprings of injustice. We behold justice in the clutches of tyranny. We beseech God to set it free through the power of His might and His sovereignty. He, verily, overshadoweth all that is in the heavens and on earth. To none is given the right to protest against anyone concerning that which hath befallen the Cause of God. It behooveth whosoever hath set his face towards the Most Sublime Horizon to cleave tenaciously unto the cord of patience, and to put his reliance in God, the Help in Peril, the Unconstrained. O ye loved ones of God! Drink your fill from the wellspring of wisdom, and walk ye in the garden of wisdom, and soar ye in the atmosphere of wisdom, and speak forth with wisdom and eloquence. Thus biddeth you your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

O Báqir! Rely not on thy glory, and thy power. Thou art even as the last trace of sunlight upon the mountaintop. Soon will it fade away, as decreed by God, the All-Possessing, the Most High. Thy glory and the glory of such as are like thee have been taken away, and this verily is what hath been ordained by the One with Whom is the Mother Tablet. Where is he to be found who contended with God, and whither is gone he that gainsaid His signs, and turned aside from His sovereignty? Where are they who have slain His chosen ones and spilt the blood of His holy ones? Reflect, that haply thou mayest perceive the breaths of thine acts, O foolish doubter! Because of you the Apostle¹² lamented, and the Chaste One¹³ cried out, and the countries were laid waste, and darkness fell upon all regions. O concourse of divines! Because of you the people were abased, and the banner of Islám was hauled down, and its mighty throne subverted. Every time a man of discernment hath sought to hold fast unto that which would exalt Islám, ye raised a clamor, and thereby was he deterred from achieving his purpose, while the land remained fallen in clear ruin.

Consider the Sultán of Turkey! He did not want war, but those like you desired it. When its fires were enkindled and its flames rose high, the government and the people were thereby weakened. Unto this beareth witness every man of equity and perception. Its calamities waxed so great that the smoke thereof surrounded the Land of Mystery¹⁴ and its environs, and what had been revealed in the Tablet of the Sultán was made manifest. Thus hath it been decreed in the Book, at the behest of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

O My Supreme Pen! Leave Thou the mention of the Wolf, and call Thou to remembrance the She-Serpent¹⁵ whose cruelty hath caused all created things to groan, and the limbs of the holy ones to quake. Thus biddeth Thee the Lord of all names, in this glorious station. The Chaste One¹⁶ hath cried out by reason of thine iniquity, and yet thou dost imagine thyself to be of the family of the Apostle of God! Thus hath thy soul prompted thee, O thou who hast withdrawn thyself from

12. Muḥammad.

13. Fáṭimih, daughter of Muḥammad.

14. Adrianople.

15. The Imám-Jum'ih of Iṣfahán, see Lawḥ-i-Burhán, beginning note

16. Fáṭimih.

God, the Lord of all that hath been and shall be. Judge thou equitably, O She-Serpent! For what crime didst thou sting the children¹⁷ of the Apostle of God, and pillage their possessions? Hast thou denied Him Who created thee by His command "be, and it was"? Thou hast dealt with the children of the Apostle of God as neither 'Ád hath dealt with Húd, nor Thamúd with Şáliḥ, nor the Jews with the Spirit of God,¹⁸ the Lord of all being. Gainsayest thou the signs of thy Lord which no sooner were sent down from the heaven of His Cause than all the books of the world bowed down before them? Meditate, that thou mayest be made aware of thine act, O heedless outcast! Ere long will the breaths of chastisement seize thee, as they seized others before thee. Wait, O thou who hast joined partners with God, the Lord of the visible and the invisible. This is the day which God hath announced through the tongue of His Apostle. Reflect, that thou mayest apprehend what the All-Merciful hath sent down in the Qur'án and in this inscribed Tablet. This is the day whereon He Who is the Dayspring of Revelation hath come with clear tokens which none can number. This is the day whereon every man endued with perception hath discovered the fragrance of the breeze of the All-Merciful in the world of creation, and every man of insight hath hastened unto the living waters of the mercy of His Lord, the King of Kings. O heedless one! The tale of the Sacrifice¹⁹ hath been retold, and he who was to be offered up hath directed his steps towards the place of sacrifice, and returned not, by reason of that which thy hand hath wrought, O perverse hater! Didst thou imagine that martyrdom could abase this Cause? Nay, by Him Whom God hath made to be the Repository of His Revelation, if thou be of them that comprehend. Woe betide thee, O thou who hast joined partners with God, and woe betide them that have taken thee as their leader, without a clear token or a perspicuous Book. How numerous the oppressors before thee who have arisen to quench the light of God, and how many the impious who murdered and pillaged until the hearts and souls of men groaned by reason of their cruelty! The sun of justice hath been obscured, inasmuch as the embodiment of tyranny hath been stablished upon the throne of hatred, and yet the people understand not. The children of the Apostle have been slain and their possessions pillaged. Say: Was it, in thine estimation, their possessions or themselves that denied God? Judge fairly, O ignorant one that hath been shut out as by a veil from God. Thou hast clung to tyranny and cast away justice; whereupon all created things have lamented, and still thou art among the wayward. Thou hast put to death the aged, and plundered the young. Thinkest thou that thou wilt consume that which thine iniquity hath amassed? Nay, by Myself! Thus informeth thee He Who is cognizant of all. By God! The things thou possessest shall profit thee not, nor what thou hast laid up through thy cruelty. Unto this beareth witness Thy Lord, the All-Knowing. Thou hast arisen to put out the light of this Cause; ere long will thine own fire be quenched, at His behest. He, verily, is the Lord of strength and of might. The changes and chances of the world, and the powers of the nations, cannot frustrate Him. He doeth what He pleaseth, and ordaineth what He willeth through the power of His sovereignty. Consider the she-camel. Though but a beast, yet hath the All-Merciful exalted her to so high a station that the tongues of the earth made mention of her and celebrated her praise. He, verily, overshadoweth all that is in the heavens and on earth. No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Great. Thus have We adorned the heaven of Our Tablet with the suns of Our words. Blessed the man that hath attained thereunto and been illumined with

17. The King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs.

18. Jesus.

19. Ishmael.

their light, and woe betide such as have turned aside, and denied Him, and strayed far from Him. Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds!

