

this mortal world. Then render thanks unto Thy Lord, the Well-Informed. [4] If He desired that He might cause the rays of the Sun to appear from a tiny atom (al-dharat) or disclose the waves of the ocean from a mere droplet (al-qatra), He is assuredly capable of this; even as He hath enabled the knowledge of what was and what is to emerge from a single Point (al-nuqta)!”

Speaking as if enthroned upon the celestial “Throne” (al‘arsh), Bahá’u’lláh states that he is going to recount his vision (ru’yá). This that the recipient of the Tablet might thereby gain a glimpse of the spiritual world of lights while yet in this mortal world. The ensuing paragraphs (II-XIV) of the Tablet recount aspects of a mystical vision centering upon the symbolic tale of a “Luminous Maiden” (waraqat al-núrání; lit. ‘Luminous Leaf,’ ‘Nightingale’ ...) clad in a “snow-white robe” and appearing as the “full moon” (al-badr).

This “Maiden” primarily symbolizes the Reality of the Báb Whose birthday is being allusively commemorated and Who, as a Manifestation of God, is mystically “One” with Bahá’u’lláh, the “the Temple of God” (see X) . The relationship of oneness and heraldship between the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh is also celebrated in the course of the symbolic vision; as for, example, in [VIII] below:

[1] We investigated the depth of her Countenance and discovered the Hidden Point (al-nuqtaḥ al-mastúrah) neath the Veil of Unicity (hijáb alwáh idiyya), radiating forth from the horizon of her Bosom (ufq al-jayb).

Note also these lines:

“[1] Then did the Temple of God (haykal Alláh) [Bahá’u’lláh] rise up and walk forth
[2] whereon the Maiden [the Báb] also did walk along behind, listening, trembling
and enraptured at the verses of her Lord.” [X].

Between the main body of the narrative of the vision of the Maiden is an ongoing (and once variant) refrain giving exaltation to God Who originated the celestial, exquisitely beautiful ‘Maiden’, and declaring her incomparability. This refrain punctuates most of account of the vision and usually reads:

“Exalted be God, her Originator (mawjuduhá), for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!”

Towards the end of the vision (para. XIV) there is, according to the interpretation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’, a figurative prophecy of Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension. We read of a “most secreted mystery” (al-sirr al-mustasirr), foreshadowing the passing of Bahá’u’lláh into the worlds of the afterlife:

“Thereupon did the Maiden [the Báb] bow her head and place her Countenance upon her two fingers. [2] It was as if the new Moon [the Báb] (al-hilál) was conjoined with an wholly full Moon [Bahá’u’lláh] (al-badr al-tamám). [1] Thereupon she wailed and exclaimed, ‘May all in existence be a sacrifice for Thy woes (balá’), O Sovereign of earth and heaven! [2] Wherefore didst Thou set Thyself amongst such as are in the city of ‘Ákká’? [3] Hasten Thou! Unto Thine other realms (mamálikaka alukhrá); unto [Thy] retreats on high (al-maqámát) whereon the eyes of the people of names have never fallen.’ ...”

With this prophetic allusion to His leaving this mortal world, Bahá’u’lláh comments by stating, “At this We smiled” --- cf. the brevity of the Gospel “Jesus wept!” or the “It is finished” of Jesus...

The Lawh-i-Ru’yá concludes with a plea that its symbolism be contemplated by the Bahá’ís, the “possessors of knowledge among the companions of the Crimson Ark (asháb safinat al-hamrá’).”

It is clearly stated that the Tablet was “a commemoration (al-dhikr)” which “coincided with the day in which the Herald (mubashshir) [the Báb] was born, who cried out after My [Bahá’u’lláh’s] Remembrance (bi-dhikrī) and Our Sovereignty (sultánī).” The Báb had given the people news of the manifestation and identity of Bahá’u’lláh, the guarded mystery of the “Greatest Name” of God. The Day of God was honoured with another dispensation: the Bahá’í Faith followed that of the Báb. The people were tested and “thunderstruck” with bewilderment. Yet, all might attain truth, for “This Day every seeker attaineth the Desired One (almaqsúd), every mystic aspirant (‘árif) achieveth Real Gnosis (alma‘rúf) and every wayfarer reacheth the Straight Path.”

A brief prayer of thanksgiving concludes the Tablet.

-- Stephen Lambden

Lawh-i-Ru’yá (Tablet of the Vision)

by Bahá’u’lláh:

A PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION.

Stephen Lambden

In My Name, that warbleth upon the Twigs!

[1]

O My Name! Harken unto My Call which cometh from the precincts of the heavenly Throne[2] that it might enable thee to attain unto the shore of an opulent Ocean; the fathomless deep of which no seeker[3] hath ever attained. And Thy Lord is assuredly One Knowing and Generous. [2] We indeed desired to cast Our Bounty upon thee by making mention of that which We visioned. [3] This to the end that thou mayest witness the Luminous World[4] in this nether world of darkness[5] and be firmly assured that for Us there is many a world within this

mortal world. Then render thanks unto Thy Lord, the Well-Informed. [4] And if He desired that He might cause the rays of the Sun[6] to appear from a tiny atom[7] or disclose the waves of the ocean[8] from a mere droplet,[9] He is assuredly capable of this; even as He hath enabled the knowledge of what was and what is to emerge from a single Point![10]

[II]

[1] We were enthroned upon the heavenly Throne[11] when there entered a Luminous Maiden[12] clad in a beauteous, snow white robe. [2] Even as the full moon[13] did her brilliant morning light dawn forth from the horizon of heaven.

[3] Exalted be God, her Originator,[14] for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[III]

[1] When she untied her face covering veil,[15] the heavens and the earth beamed forth;

[2] Pre-Existent Being,[16] by virtue of her Radiant Lights, disclosed theophanic splendour[17] thereon.

[3] Exalted be God, her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[IV]

[1] Then she smiled and bent obliquely, [2] like the stem of a balsam plant[18] before the gaze of the All-Merciful.[19]

[3] Exalted be He Who Manifested her for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[V]

[1] Then did she move about and circumambulate with neither intention nor desire on her own part

[2] but as if the needle of her yearning[20] were attracted by the magnetic intensity of the Beauty[21] which beamed forth before her Countenance.

[3] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[VI]

[1] When she walked forth the Divine Glory[22] attended her whilst the Kingdom of Beauty[23] heralded her from behind.

[2] This on account of the wonder of her comeliness,[24] her amorous ways[25] and the perfect symmetry of her form.[26]

[3] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[VII]

[1] Then We discovered her jetblack locks[27] cascading over the length of her snow-white neck[28] [2] as if night and noontime embraced in this most beautiful[29] locale[30] and most elevated goal.[31]

[3] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[VIII]

[1] We investigated the depth of her Countenance and discovered the Hidden Point[32]

neath the Veil of Unicity,[33] radiating forth from the horizon of her Bosom.[34]

[2] Through it were the Tablets of the Love of the All-Merciful[35] differentiated in the continent world as well as the registers of the enraptured lovers[36] in the Horizons.[37]

[3] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[IX]

[1] And the circumstance of that Point[38] was narrated by the Subsequent Point[39] situated above and to the right-hand of side her Breast.[40]

[2] Exalted be the Lord of the Hidden and Manifest[41] who created her!

[X]

[1] Then did the Temple of God[42] rise up and walk forth

[2] whereon the Maiden also didst walk along behind, listening, trembling and enraptured at the verses of her Lord.

[3] Exalted be He Who created her, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[XI]

[1] Then were the joy, rapture, and yearning of the Maiden multiplied to the extent that she was transformed and swooned away.

[2] When she recovered from her swoon she drew nigh said: 'May my soul be a sacrifice for thine incarceration, O Mystery of the Unseen[43] in the Kingdom of Existence.'

[3] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[XII]

[1] Then did she gaze toward the Orient Light of the Throne[44] even as one in a state of intoxication and mystical bewilderment;[45]

[2] until that is, she set her hand upon the neck of her Lord and drew Him nigh in unity.

[3] When the Maiden drew nigh, We also drew nigh and found with her that which

was sent down by Our Exalted Pen[46] in the treasured Crimson Scroll.[47]

[4] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[XIII]

[1] Then did the Maiden bow her head and place her Countenance upon her two fingers.

[2] It was as if the new Moon[48] were conjoined with an wholly full Moon. [49]

[3] Exalted be her Originator, for no eye hath ever beheld anything like unto her!

[XIV]

[1] Thereupon she wailed and exclaimed, 'May all in existence be a sacrifice for Thy woes,[50] O Sovereign of earth and heaven!'

[2] Wherefore didst Thou set Thyself amongst such as are in the city of 'Akká'?

[3] Hasten Thou! Unto Thine other realms;[51] unto [Thy] retreats on high[52] whereon the eyes of the people of names have never fallen.' [4] At this, We smiled.

[XV]

[1] Consider ye this most exquisite commemoration[53] and what We have intended by the most secreted mystery,[54] [2] a matter evident yet most hidden,[55] O ye possessors of knowledge among the companions of the Crimson Ark.[56]

[XVI]

[1] This commemoration[57] hath coincided with the day in which the Herald[58] was born who cried out after My Remembrance[59] and Our Sovereignty. [2] He announced unto the people the tidings of My Will, the ocean of My Intention and of the Sun of My Theophany.[60] [3] We honoured Him with another Day in which the Hidden Unseen, the Treasured Mystery and the Well-Guarded Symbol[61] hath been manifested. [4] The One, that is, through Whom the dwellers of the Kingdom of Names were disarrayed[62] and whomsoever were on earth and in heaven were thunderstruck; [5] save that is, such as We safeguarded through a Sovereignty and a Power which cometh from Us. [6] I, verily, am One Powerful to accomplish whatsoever He willeth. No God is there except Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. [7] Blessed be whomsoever hath caught the fragrance of God[63] in this Day, which is the Dawning-Place of the Theophany,[64] the Orient of My Name, the Forgiving. [8] Thereon hath the Breath wafted, the Breeze come forth and the ecstasy of the Theophany entranced all such as are lie in the graves. [9] [On that Day] Mount Sinai[65] crieth out saying. 'The Kingdom is God's, the Powerful, the Transcendent, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.' [10] This Day every seeker attaineth the Desied One,[66] every mystic aspirant[67] achieveth Real Gnosis[68] and every wayfarer reacheth the Straight Path.

[XVII]

[1] Praised be unto Thee, O my God. May Thy lovers be blessed in such wise that Thou send down upon them from the heaven of Thy Bounty, that which will enable them to be detached from all that is other than Thee. [2] Do Thou orient them in the direction of that Horizon from which beameth forth the Sun of Thy Bounty. [3] Empower them, O my God, with what will benefit them in both this world and the world to come. [4] Thou in Truth art the Powerful, the Transcendent, the Benefactor, the One Who Giveth Forth, the Wealthy, the Generous.

Notes

(Special Note: I am especially thankful to Mehrán Ghasempour, who kindly corrected the transliterations of the Arabic terms for this Tablet - MW)

[1] Risalih Ayam Tis‘ih pp. 16-20; Athar-i-Qalam-i-A‘la Vol. 2 p 176(c). An early translation of this Tablet appeared in Bahá‘í Scriptures, pp 249-51, Secion 525.

[2] al‘arsh

[3] lit. ‘swimmer’, sábbah

[4] al-‘álam al-núrání

[5] al-‘álam al-zalmání

[6] anwár al-shams

[7] al-dharra

[8] anwáj al-bahr

[9] al-qatra

[10] al-nuqta

[11]al-‘arsh

[12] lit. ‘Leaf’, ‘Nightingale’.. waraqat al-núrá’

[13] al-badr

[14] mawjuduhá

[15] al-lithán

[16] kaynúnat al-qidam

[17] tajalliyat

[18] myrorebalan; kaghusn al-albán

[19] fí manzar al-rahman

[20]‘ibarat al-‘ishq

[21] maghnátísh aljamál

[22] al-jalál

- [23] malakút al-jamal
- [24] badí‘ hasanihá
- [25] dalálihá
- [26] I‘tidál alirkánihá
- [27] al-sha‘arát al-sawdá
- [28] ‘alá tawl ‘anaqihá albaydá’
- [29] abhá
- [30] al-maqarr al-abhá
- [31] maqsid al-aqsá
- [32] al-nuqtah al-mastúrah
- [33] hijáb alwáhidyya
- [34] ufq aljayb
- [35] alwáh muhabbat al-rahman
- [36] dafátir al‘ushsháq
- [37] al-áfáq
- [38] al-nuqtah
- [39]
nuqtat ukhrá
- [40] thadyihá
- [41] al-sirr wa’l‘alin
- [42] haykal Alláh
- [43] sirr al-ghayb
- [44] mashriq al‘arsh
- [45] fí báta al-sukr wa hairah)
- [46] qalamí ala‘lá
- [47] alsáhífa almakhzún alhamrá’
- [48] al-hilál
- [49] al-badr al-tamám
- [50] bala’
- [51] mamálikaka alukhrá
- [52] almaqámát
- [53] al-dhikr al-ahlá

[54] al-sirr al-mustasirr

[55] al-záhir al-akhfá

[56] asháb safinat al-hamrá'

[57] al-dhikr

[58] mubashshir [the Báb]

[59] bidhikr

[60] shams al-zuhúrí

[61] al-ramz al-mazún

[62] idtiráb

[63] 'arf Alláh

[64] matla' al-zuhúr

[65] al-túr

[66] al-maqsúd

[67] 'árif

[68] al-ma'rúf

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