

This is a letter from this youth to all who are upon the earth. Worship none but God, the king, the exalted, the mighty. Thus has the decree been revealed in all the tablets from the powerful, the Omnipotent.

We heard that some of our opponents desired to come into the presence of this youth. Say: Come, and do not delay! We have appointed as the meeting-place the house of God, which was erected by one of the emperors, and was called "Selim" in the kingdom of names, if you but knew. We selected as the days for the meeting Sunday and Monday. God was a witness to what I say. Were all who are on earth to gather, this youth would come to them With a mighty announcement. Say: When he stirs, there move with him the hosts of the invisible, then the people of the concourse on high, then the realities of the worlds. Fear God, concourse of opponents, then judge equitably with regard to the Cause of this youth and what he has brought, and be not of the wrongdoers. He is the one intended by your lord, the knowing, the wise.

Source: Qazvini letter quoted in Fadil Mazandarani, *Tarikh-i Zuhur al-Haqq* Volume 5 (East Lansing, Mi.: H-Bahai, 1999), page 29.

2. Baha'u'llah quoted in a Letter of Mirza Javad Qazvini, Autumn, 1867[1]

When we heard, we issued from our house with manifest sovereignty.[2] We said, "Muhammad, the spirit has departed from its seat and along with it the spirits of the pure ones went forth, as did the realities of the Messengers. In truth, you shall behold the people of the most exalted panorama above my head. Then in my grasp are the proofs of the prophets. Then open your eyes. This is `Ali [the Bab], then Muhammad, the messenger of God, who has risen above the horizon of the House with evident sovereignty and come to you with all the verses from God, the mighty, the Omnipotent."

Say: Were all the clergy and mystics on earth, and all the kings and emperors, to be gathered, I would stand before them and recite the verses of God, the king, the glorious, the wise. I am he who fears no one, even should all who are in the heavens and the earth assemble against me. The very verses have humbled themselves before my countenance, and all sounds are submissive before my wondrous and most amazing melodies. This is my palm, which God has rendered white for all the worlds. And this is my staff. Were we to cast it down, it would swallow[3] the entire creation. All that has been created between the heavens and the earth is but a handful of clay to your lord.

Go, Muhammad, to the concourse of idolaters and say, "The youth has come to you and with him are the hosts of revelation and inspiration. The kingdom of the Cause marches before him, and behind him are the tribes of the concourse on high and the inhabitants of the cities of eternity then the angels who are near." Say: Fear God, and do not oppose the one by whose command every wise decree was ordained. Then come into the presence of God with your ropes and your staffs and with whatever you possess, if you are able to do so. We go now to the house of God that was erected by one of the kings and named the "Selim." I, alone, have come to you from the dawning place of eternity with a great, a most great announcement. I shall wait until the sun sets in the

west, so that perhaps my opponents will find the opportunity within themselves to repent.

Know that God forbade his friends from meeting with the idolaters and hypocrites. Nevertheless, we departed from our house depending upon God, gaze set toward the precincts of the Cause, so that thereby the heedless servants of God might be made aware. Those who have denied God or joined partners with him shall never believe in God, even should he bring them the sacred scrolls, or the hosts of the Invisible, or the proofs of the Messengers [and meeting with God only increases them in their oppression and unbelief].[4] Thus was it revealed in the tablets, and in this mighty and inaccessible Tablet.

Know, Muhammad, that every Name that is related to my self has been exalted in the kingdom of names, if you but knew. Say: Today, the bond with all loved ones has been severed, save for those who entered under the shadow of this radiant and illumined Countenance.[5] Whoever clings to one of the divine Names, while turning away from its Creator, is not of me, and God is innocent of him. In truth, we created the names just as we created any other thing, if you but knew. Say: Verily, I have manifested myself for the sake of God, and have gone out for the sake of God, and I speak before all who are on earth just as I speak before your face. I fear no one. My actions testify to that, if you but knew. Say: In truth, the signs of the Absolute Truth are as obvious as the light and rays of the sun. Nay, by God, they are even more apparent to anyone with sharp vision. Do you think anyone other than he can exist alongside him? No, by his exalted and mighty self. Say: All the realities of all things walk when this youth walks, and when he becomes still, so too do our steadfast servants. Sever yourself from the Names, and be satisfied with your Lord, and be not among the ignorant. Those who have devoted themselves to the divine names, they are worshippers of idols, if you would bear witness. Verily, a prophet is one who prophesies to the people of these pre-existent and most precious tidings. A messenger is one who fulfills my mission to[6] those who have lost their path. The vicar [imam] is one who stands before my countenance with manifest humility. The lieutenant [vali] is one who seeks shelter in the fortress of my secure protection. The successor [vasi] is one who counsels the people with what we have commanded them[7] in a guarded tablet.]

He whom the idolaters have taken to themselves as their lord, whereby they have risen in opposition to God, the mighty, the august, the beautiful—he was just like any of the servants. He used to come into my presence morning and night. Then there wafted upon him from the region of his base self the gales of passion, as a result of his past behavior. Finally, they cast him down off his seat and abandoned him in the lowest depths. We had made his name renowned among the servants for a secret reason of our own. In truth, your lord is ruler over what he desires.

Notes

(1) I have taken as the base text here the one in the 1867 letter of Mirza Javad Qazvini in Asadu'llah Fadil Mazandarani, *Tarikh-i Zuhur al-Haqq*, vol. 5

(East Lansing, Mi.: H-Bahai, 1999), pp. 29n-44n. Much but not all of this discourse is also in `Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq-Khavari, ed. Ma'idih-'i Asmani, 9 vols. (Tehran: MMMA, 1973), 4: 277-281, with minor textual variations.

(2) Another translation of some of this passage can be found in Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970), pp. 168-169.

(3) The printed text gives *tablaghu*, to reach, which does not seem to me to make much sense. The manuscript of Qazvini's 1867 letter gives *tatla`u*, to "stretch the neck forward." This latter is very possible. However, since the miracle of Moses' staff, being referred to here was to swallow the magician's serpents, and since the shape of *tabla`u*, to swallow, is the same as that of the other two words given by copyists, I feel certain that it is the best reading here.

(4) Passages in brackets are in the 1867 Qazvini letter but omitted from the *Lawh-i Mubahalih*. Some of these passages, but not all, are in Ishraq-Khavari, *Ma'idih-'i Asmani*, 7:243-744.

(5) Qazvini gives *wajh* or "countenance" here, whereas the printed text gives "amr" or Cause: Ishraq-Khavari, *Ma'idih-'i Asmani*, 7:243.

(6) Ishraq-Khavari, *Ma'idih-'i Asmani*, 7:244 adds and guides (*hada*)

(7) Ishraq-Khavari, *Ma'idih-'i Asmani*, 7:244 gives *has come to him* (*atahu*)

3. Tablet concerning the Divine Test

(An Akka-period (1880s?) Tablet of Baha'u'llah via Khadimu'llah to Mulla Sadiq-i Khurasani concerning the Surah of the Divine Test)

It will have been known to the friends of God that one day the antichrist[1] arose with a new scheme, in order to sow doubts in the hearts of the servants.[2] Yes, in Edirne[3] he advertised his intention to the Iranians, saying, "Today we have resolved that he[4] shall come to the Sultan Selim mosque, and we also shall attend, and shall make the truth manifest. Thus might truth be distinguished from falsehood."

Mir Muhammad Shirazi became aware of this saying, and informed Aqa Mirza Muhammad Quli. The latter repeated it in the most glorious presence. When he (4) was informed, he departed that very hour and set out for the above-mentioned mosque. There are more details, but we shall mention only those necessary to telling the story. He said to Mir Muhammad, "Go and inform the gentleman (1) that I am waiting in the mosque." The aforementioned Mir Muhammad gave the news to that accursed one. Azal excused himself, saying that it was not possible that day. "The appointment will have to be fixed on another day."

Then Mir Muhammad said to that wicked one, "You yourself chose these arrangements. You stated a preference for this matter. You wrote a document saying that whoever did not appear today is false and far from the truth. Then how can any word of yours be depended upon?"

In short, he stayed at the mosque until sundown, but that wicked one avoided coming. As he passed through the market, the tongue of God addressed Mir Muhammad with these holy and eternal verses. All the people heard it, and were astonished at their revelation. This is the content of the aforementioned discourse:

When we heard, we issued from our house with manifest sovereignty.[5] We said, “Muhammad, the spirit has departed from its seat and along with it the spirits of the pure ones went forth, as did the realities of the Messengers. In truth, you shall behold the people of the most exalted panorama above my head. Then in my grasp are the proofs of the prophets. Then open your eyes. This is `Ali [the Bab], then Muhammad, the messenger of God, who has risen above the horizon of the House with evident sovereignty and come to you with all the verses from God, the mighty, the Omnipotent.”

Say: Were all the clergy and mystics on earth, and all the kings and emperors, to be gathered, I would stand before them and recite the verses of God, the king, the glorious, the wise. I am he who fears no one, even should all who are in the heavens and the earth assemble against me. The very verses have humbled themselves before my countenance, and all sounds are submissive before my wondrous and most amazing melodies. This is my palm, which God has rendered white for all the worlds. And this is my staff. Were we to cast it down, it would swallow[6] the entire creation. All that has been created between the heavens and the earth is but a handful of clay to your lord.

Go, Muhammad, to the concourse of idolaters and say, “The youth has come to you and with him are the hosts of revelation and inspiration. The kingdom of the Cause marches before him, and behind him are the tribes of the concourse on high and the inhabitants of the cities of eternity then the angels who are near.” Say: Fear God, and do not oppose the one by whose command every wise decree was ordained. Then come into the presence of God with your ropes and your staffs and with whatever you possess, if you are able to do so. We go now to the house of God that was erected by one of the kings and named the “Selim.” I, alone, have come to you from the dawning place of eternity with a great, a most great announcement. I shall wait until the sun sets in the west, so that perhaps my opponents will find the opportunity within themselves to repent.

Know that God forbade his friends from meeting with the idolaters and hypocrites. Nevertheless, we departed from our house depending upon God, gaze set toward the precincts of the Cause, so that thereby the heedless servants of God might be made aware. Those who have denied God or joined partners with him shall never believe in God, even should he bring them the sacred scrolls, or the hosts of the Invisible, or the proofs of the Messengers [and meeting with God only increases them in their oppression and unbelief.[7] Thus was it revealed in the tablets, and in this mighty and inaccessible Tablet.

Know, Muhammad, that every Name that is related to my self has been exalted in the kingdom of names, if you but knew. Say: Today, the bond with all loved ones

has been severed, save for those who entered under the shadow of this radiant and illumined Countenance.[8] Whoever clings to one of the divine Names, while turning away from its Creator, is not of me, and God is innocent of him. In truth, we created the names just as we created any other thing, if you but knew. Say: Verily, I have manifested myself for the sake of God, and have gone out for the sake of God, and I speak before all who are on earth just as I speak before your face. I fear no one. My actions testify to that, if you but knew. Say: In truth, the signs of the Absolute Truth are as obvious as the light and rays of the sun. Nay, by God, they are even more apparent to anyone with sharp vision. Do you think anyone other than he can exist alongside him? No, by his exalted and mighty self. Say: All the realities of all things walk when this youth walks, and when he becomes still, so too do our steadfast servants. Sever yourself from the Names, and be satisfied with your Lord, and be not among the ignorant. Those who have devoted themselves to the divine names, they are worshippers of idols, if you would bear witness. Verily, a prophet is one who prophesies to the people of these pre-existent and most precious tidings. A messenger is one who fulfills my mission to[9] those who have lost their path. The vicar [imam] is one who stands before my countenance with manifest humility. The lieutenant [vali] is one who seeks shelter in the fortress of my secure protection. The successor [vasi] is one who counsels the people with what we have commanded them[10] in a guarded tablet.]

He whom the idolaters have taken to themselves as their lord, whereby they have risen in opposition to God, the mighty, the august, the beautiful—he was just like any of the servants. He used to come into my presence morning and night. Then there wafted upon him from the region of his base self the gales of passion, as a result of his past behavior. Finally, they cast him down off his seat and abandoned him in the lowest depths. We had made his name renowned among the servants for a secret reason of our own. In truth, your lord is ruler over what he desires.

Also, there is a man by the name of Hasan Aqa in that land, a tobacconist. The antichrist was with him when he issued the aforementioned challenge. The text was written out with his knowledge. Indeed, in reality on that day the truth was fulfilled and perfect. Rather, it became most seasoned and most perfect.

When Mir Muhammad came into the presence of the Beauty of God[4], he said, “I informed that accursed one (that is, Mirza Yayha), that Baha’u’llah was waiting in the mosque, and I said, ‘You should come and demonstrate your own truth.’

“That accursed one said, ‘Today it will have to be postponed. Choose another day.’”

Afterwards the tongue of God spoke forth, saying that with God it had been known that that scoundrel would not appear, and the purpose was to complete the proof. Rather, the proof had been complete from pre-eternity against those deniers of the beauty of the lord of the worlds.

The beauty of God departed from the mosque. It so happened that the store of

the aforementioned Hasan Aqa was on Baha'u'llah's route. When he arrived at the store, the tongue of God said, "Based on the decision that the gentleman had announced in his proclamation, the countenance of the All-Merciful presented himself, whereas the idolaters repudiated their own agreement."

The next day, this sublime pronouncement was issued to Hasan Aqa. But that accursed one gave it no attention. The text of the letter is as follows:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

This is a letter from this youth to all who are upon the earth. Worship none but God, the king, the exalted, the mighty. Thus has the decree been revealed in all the tablets from the powerful, the Omnipotent.

We heard that some of our opponents desired to come into the presence of this youth. Say: Come, and do not delay! We have appointed as the meeting-place the house of God, which was erected by one of the emperors, and was called "Selim" in the kingdom of names, if you but knew. We have selected as the days for the meeting Sunday and Monday. God was a witness to what I say . . . He is the one intended by your lord, the knowing, the wise.

Notes

Source: `Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq-Khavari, ed. *Ma'idih-i Asmani*, 9 vols. (Tehran: MMA, 1973), 4: 277-281.

(1) Mirza Yayha Subh-i Azal

(2) Note: The prologue is written in the third person, in the voice of Mirza Aqa Jan Kashi, Khadimu'llah, Baha'u'llah's scribe. However, Bahá'í tradition has been to account this as a literary device, and to see the entire Tablet as having been written by Baha'u'llah.

(3) Adrianople

(4) Baha'u'llah.

(5) Another translation of some of this passage can be found in Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1970), pp. 168-169.

(6) The printed text gives *tablaghu*, to reach, which does not seem to me to make much sense. The manuscript of Qazvini's 1867 letter gives *tatla`u*, to "stretch the neck forward." This latter is very possible. However, since the miracle of Moses' staff, being referred to here was to swallow the magician's serpents, and since the shape of *tabla`u*, to swallow, is the same as that of the other two words given by copyists, I feel certain that it is the best reading here.

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