

لا اله الا الله



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يا كاسر كل اصنام

O Breaker of All Idols

Mirzā Husayn ‘Alī Nurī Bahā’u’llāh’s
Tablet of O Creator of all creation
(*Lawh Yā Mubdi’ Kull-i-Badī’*)

Or

The Second Tablet of Creation
(*Lawh-i-Badī’ II*)¹

Translated with critical introduction and notes by
Wahid Azal ©

The following work was first identified in print by the late William McElwee Miller in his *Baha’i Faith: It’s History and Teachings* (Pasadena: 1974) and entitled the *Tablet of O Creator of all creation (Lawh ya mubdi` kull-i-badi`)*². A copy of it was made available to Miller by the late Jalal Azal and is currently amongst his collection of papers deposited at the Princeton University Library special collections³. Photo-scans of two original exemplars - one in the hand of Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Nuri Baha’u’llah (d. 1892) himself and the other in the hand of his son and second-named successor, Mirza

¹ The editor is grateful to Mr. Wahid Ashna and the Bayani community of Iran for making this very important document available to me.

² See p.428, #49 under List of Documents in **Appendix 2**. Also see note (5) p. 108 where Miller states, “...Baha at first tried to explain the words *ghiyath* (1511) and *mustaghath* (2001) in some way that would not conflict with his claims. However, near the end of his life in his *Tablet O Creator of All Creation*, Baha revoked his earlier interpretation and stated that “He who was in the Bayan ‘He-Who-Will-Appear’ [that is, He-Whom-God-Will-Make-Manifest] shall in truth come in the *Mustaghath* which manifest power.” He did not explain how it happened that he (Baha’u’llah) had come before the *Mustaghath*.”

³ Ibid., *Azal’s Notes*, pp. 256, 257, 1021-1023.

Muhammad ‘Ali (d. 1930) - was recently acquired by the Iranian Bayani community from descendents of the latter, who have titled it “*Lawh-i-Badi’*.” This is not, however, the *Lawh-i-Badi’* of the 1866-68 period, which Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Nuri had specifically addressed to one of the loyalist Bayanis in Edirne. It is, rather, a different work altogether, so I have taken the liberty of qualifying it as the *Second Tablet of Creation (Lawh-i-Badi’ II)*. As of February 2005 originals of this document have been for the first time made publicly available on the internet, together with an accompanying Persian and partial English translation. All are on the website **bayanic.com**⁴. See the three appendices to this translation below for the two exemplar copies which originate from that site. This present translation is therefore the first full translation.

The two manuscript exemplars contain no colophon or date, but concurring with Miller and the Iranian Bayani community, it appears to be one of Husayn ‘Ali Nuri’s epistles in his later years and possibly of the period shortly before his death. While there is no internal evidence specifically dating it -- and consensus does not necessarily prove its lateness -- barring the work being transcribed again at a later time (which is probable), that its second exemplar is in the hand of Mirza Muhammad ‘Ali would place it in, at least, the 1880s, if not shortly after, since it appears he was functioning as his father’s amanuensis and secretary in that period, not before. Note also that this second exemplar is in a version of the *Khatt-i-Badi’* (new script) which Mirza Muhammad ‘Ali is said to have invented (or, rather, modified, as it is merely an amended version of the traditional *shikastih* style). However there is no doubt that the first exemplar is in the hand of Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Nuri himself, as the handwriting clearly attests that it is.

Like much of the corpus of Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Nuri’s post-Edirne period tablets, the *Tablet of O Creator of All Creation* is a short work. Consisting of a single page, its style is rather obtuse, repeating a typically recondite and arrogant sounding self-devotional doxology and refrain to his own theophanic claims that is a trademark of virtually all his work in that period. The shortness and paucity of content in Husayn ‘Ali Nuri’s later tablets is to be compared with the final works of the Bab, such as, for example, the *Book of the Five Grades (Kitab Panj Sh’an)* or the *Book of Recompense (Kitab al-Jaza’)*, or even those of his rival younger half brother and legitimate successor to the Bab, Subh-i-Azal (d. 1912), which sometimes often run into several hundred pages, discussing multiple topics, while also providing uniquely interesting and far more powerful doxological refrains than his. This is a major difference between the Bab and Azal with Husayn ‘Ali Baha’. Whereas the corpus of both the Bab and his successor’s writings clearly demonstrate a qualitative difference between correspondences and a major doctrinal piece, the majority of Husayn ‘Ali’s tablets are actually correspondences couched in terms of a doctrinal work, and with meager content at that.

The need for translating and further examining this epistle is necessitated by the fact that it, along with other documents, helps place the Bayani response to Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Nuri’s claims in a far more complex (and, dare I say, credible) light. While he doesn’t quite step-down from his pedestal of being the embodiment of a unique revelatory theophany (or Manifestation of God), surprisingly in it he explicitly stops short in stating that he is not in fact the Babi messianic figure, “He whom God shall make Manifest” (*manyuzhiruhu’Llah*). This is especially demonstrated in the second and third

⁴<http://www.bayanic.com/notes/ghiyath/ghiyath03.html>

sentences where he identifies the Promised One (*ma`ūd*) with the *mustaghāth* (the one invoked) of the Bayan.

The admission is quite startling as well as historically significant. Husayn ‘Ali Nuri had made his prophetic career in Edirne precisely on this very claim, *viz.* of being the *mustaghath*, which is one of the two most well-known titles (and ciphers) in the Persian Bayan specifically designating “He whom God shall make Manifest” and the date of his possible advent⁵. It seems that while he stops short in explicitly stating he is not the Babi messiah (and with such brazen, yet nevertheless implied, admission on his part the doors are swung wide open for speculation), he attempts then to have his cake and eat too in that, while he insists on his own divine status, he then maintains the contradictory position that the true Babi messiah will also be appearing in the prescribed time validating him! In light of the relevant passages of the Persian Bayan as well as the Will and Testament of the Bab⁶, and other documents addressed by the Bab to Subh-i-Azal (d. 1912), Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Nuri’s claim begins to appear weaker than usual, highlighting power politics on his part rather than veridical truth or a divine mandate as such. Moreover, one is at a loss to understand exactly how such a scheme as suggested by him would work, given the straightforward eschatology and prophetology the Bayan offers on the question; if indeed, that is, he is saying he is not the “He whom God shall make Manifest” of the Bayan as his wording strongly indicates?

It seems that Mirza Husayn ‘Ali Baha’ had not thoroughly considered the full implications of the logical and theological conundrum that making such an argument as his would create in the future for his overall theophanic claims, magnifying by several factors the holes already pointed out by his Bayani detractors from Mulla Ja’afar Niraqi

⁵ Unity 2, Gate 17 of the Persian Bayan states, for example,

اگر در عدد غیاث ظاهر گردد و کلّ داخل شوند احدی داخل در نار نمی ماند، اگر الی مستغاث رسد
کلّ داخل شوند احدی در نار نمی ماند الا آنکه کلّ مبدّل می گردند بنور او

*“If He [whom God shall make Manifest] appears in the number of **ghiyath** (1511) and all enter therein, no one shall remain in the fire. If it tarries till **mustaghath** (2001), all shall enter therein, no one shall remain in the fire, yet shall all be transformed into His Light.”*

And Unity 3, Gate 15:

عالم بظهور نیست غیر الله هر وقت شود باید کلّ تصدیق نمایند و شکر الهی بجا آورند اگر چه امید از فضل اوست تا
مستغاث برسد و از قبل کلمة الله مرتفع گردد و ائمة الدلیل آية و الوجود علی نفسه اذا لغير يعرف به و هو لا يعرف
بدونه ، سبحان الله عمّا یصفون

*“No one knoweth [the time] of the manifestation other than God. Whenever it takes place, all must bear witness to its truth and give thanks unto God, although by His grace it is hoped that He will appear till [the time of] **mustaghath** [2001] whereby the word of God may be raised high. And the proof is a sign, for His very being proves Him, whilst He cannot be known by what is beneath His [level]. Glory be to God above what they attribute to Him.”*

⁶ See my translation of this document, Bayan19 Publications (2004).

to Badieh Mirati Nuri⁷, making the very *raison d'être* of his claims in both the late Baghdad and Edirne periods sound completely disingenuous in light of the below. Baha'i apologists might offer explanations to the effect that the one spoken of in this tablet refers to the theophany to occur in the one-thousand year period after Husayn 'Ali Nuri's own, as mentioned in his *Kitab-i-Aqdas*. Unfortunately, given what Husayn 'Ali does state here (especially how he clearly waffles in contradictory fashion between his own model of a future *parousia* and that of the Bayan's), and given the very specific Bayanic terminology he uses and the even more specific original intentionality behind the meaning of those terms, the question remains far more problematical than citing his provisions in his Most Holy Book. It is therefore not surprising that the Haifan Baha'i authorities have sought to suppress this document, not circulating it for public consumption, since along with his *Kitab-i-Badi'* (*Book of Innovation*) it is a rather embarrassing work *vis-à-vis* the Baha'i hagiographical tradition.

A further, but unrelated, point in this tablet is the inordinate importance that Husayn 'Ali Nuri places upon his family (*aghsan*). Without naming his two successors – Abbas Effendi (d. 1921) and Mirza Muhammad 'Ali – it seems that he imbues a *tout court* sanctity upon his whole family very reminiscent of the kind of super-sanctity the greater *Ahl al-Bayt* (Muhammad, Fatima, the Imams and all related kinsmen) enjoy in popular Shi'ite piety. He says things like those who have turned away from them are accounted as infidels and as those who have associated partners with God, while also exhorting his followers to give his kinsmen the highest respect. Noteworthy is that for all its own deeply ingrained Twelver Shi'ite resonances, the religion the Bab founded never did such a thing. Rather he passed the mantle of succession to an individual totally unrelated by kin and neither did he insist in his Will and Testament that Azal must then continue any future succession from his own lineal heritage; or, for that matter, that either his own or that of Azal's kinsman should be held in highest respect above others, or that anyone turning away from them is an infidel and associater.

Overall, the descendents of Mirza Muhammad 'Ali are to be thanked profusely for making this available for historical posterity; for, indeed, it will greatly assist in the kind of future research needed to examine the trajectory of Husayn 'Ali Nuri's claims (from Baghdad to Edirne and the Acre period up to this tablet) beyond the tendentious propaganda and myth-making churned out by Baha'i hagiographers throughout the 20th century. One of the attributes of the Godhead often invoked in Islamic theological works devoted to the science of the Godhead's attributes is the *Breaker of Idols*. I have dubbed this paper "O Breaker of Idols," both as a pun on Husayn 'Ali Nuri's own opening and also because it appears to me that by bringing this work into the general consciousness, the diffusion of it will go a long way in eventually breaking the idol (i.e. *sanam* as well as *taghūt*) by which Baha'i apologists and hagiographers have spent a century and a half contriving the myth of Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri's "*Baha'u'llah*"⁸. It is to be hoped that this translation will contribute to that process.

⁷ See *Tadhkirat'ul-Ghafilin* (Memorials of the Heedless) and *Vaqa'ih-ye Rastin-i-Takur-i-Nur* (A True History of Takur in Nur).

⁸ As stated elsewhere, the titles *Baha'* (Splendor), *Shajarah Baha'* (The Tree of Splendor) and even in some circumstances *Baha'u'llah* (Splendor of God) itself are proper titles belonging to the Seventeenth Letter of the Living Tahirih Qurrat'ul-'Ayn (d. 1852) which Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri had appropriated for himself, see Izziyeh Khanum's *Tanbih'u-Na'imin* (*Exhortation to those who Slumber*), *passim*. *Baha'ul-Imkan* (Splendor of Contingency) and *Bahiyeh* (Splendidness) are titles bestowed by the Bab

Translation

O Creator of all that hath been created!

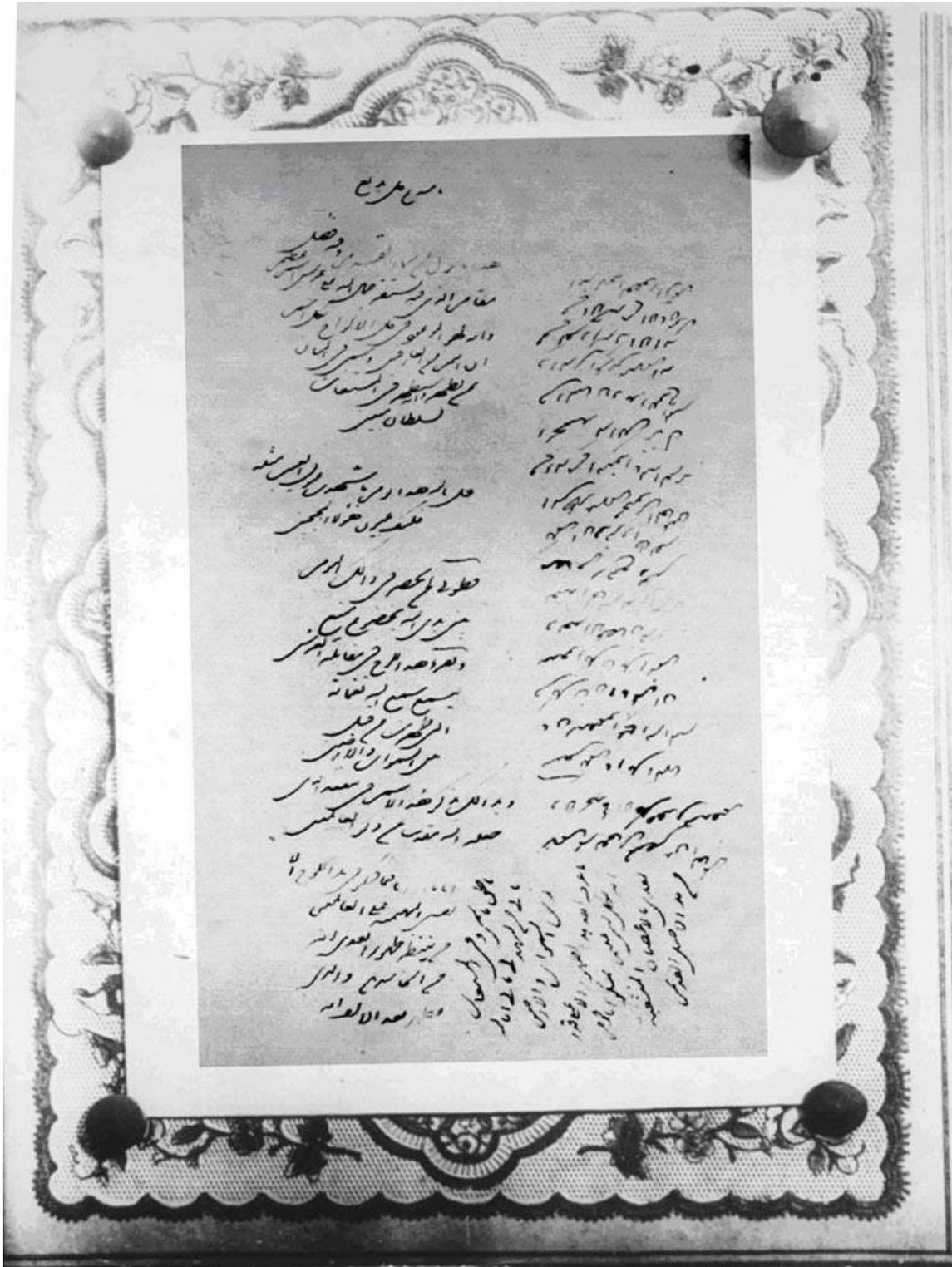
*This is that which hath been sent down from the primeval heaven and in it is established the station of excellence wherein is made apparent the beauty of God on the throne of the name of might. And verily he is the Promised One mentioned by every name in all the tablets, if ye be of those who know. In the Bayan he was named He who shall appear⁹ and he shall [indeed] be manifested in **mustaghath** with sovereign distinction. Say, by God, this is the day the like of which hath not been witnessed by the eyes of the unseen, let alone those who are of the veiled. So praised be to the one who is present on that day between my divine hands with an invulnerable submissiveness and recites this tablet in front of that throne so that God may hear his melodies which were revealed from before between the heavens and the earths; and, by this, the name hath been mentioned in the place wherein God hath made holy in all that is mentioned in the worlds. Verily in this tablet we have not desired to mention this but that it is my own self, the protector of the worlds. [And] whosoever anticipates another revelation after me, verily he is of those who have gone astray, for verily he who shall appear after one-thousand [years], indeed he will speak in my name; and he shall come in **mustaghath**, testifying in my name in that I am God, the lord of the heavens and the earths. None hath understood this revelation other than a few, for he is cognizant of all things. Hold fast after me, O people, to the branches which have branched from the ancient root. By them the fragrant scents of my*

upon Azal, see particularly the historical portion of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani's *Hasht Behesht* (8 Heavens) as well as *Qismati az Alvah-i-Khatt-i-Nuqta-ye Ula va Aqa Husayn-i-Katib* (Sections from the Tablets of the Writings of the Primal Point and Aqa Husayn the Scribe), *passim*.

⁹ Meaning, He whom God shall make Manifest (*manyuzhiruhu'Llah*).

garment are wafted among the worlds, and [none] shall find it except [those who] turn to the straight [path]. It behoveth thee, O people of Baha', to hold steadfast in the cause of God in your days in every state and [thereby safeguard yourselves] from following every ignorant sinner. And after the branches, for the pious servant present in front of this throne, [we have made] an elevated station. It behoveth thee to account the family from amongst who the beloved of the worlds appeared with the highest respect: Of those who have believed in God, the dearly precious, the praised. Likewise was it revealed in the Bayan and in this luminous tablet. Whoever turns away from them, verily he is among the infidels and those who associated partners with God and among those who have lost, unless he turn and repent, for verily he is the forgiver, the merciful.

Appendix I: Exemplar in the hand of
Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri Baha'u'llah



Appendix II: Typed-script of Text

يا مبدع كل بديع

هذا ما نزل من سماء القدم و فيه فضل مقام لذي فيه استقر جمال الله على عرش اسم عظيم و انه الموعود في كل الالواح بكل اسم ان انتم من العارفين و سمي في البيان بمن يظهر و انه سيظهر في المستغات بسطان مبین فطوبى لمن يحضر في ذلك اليوم بين يدي الله بخضوع منيع و يقرء هذا اللوح في مقابلة العرش لسمع سمع الله نعماته التي ظهرت من قبل بين السموات والارضين و بذلك بذكر هذا الاسم في مقعد الذي جعله الله مقدساً عن ذكر العالمين انا ما اردنا فيما ذكر في هذا اللوح الا نفسى المهمينة على العالمين من ينتظر ظهوراً بعدى انه من الخاسرين و الذي يظهر بعد الالف انه ناطق باسمى و في المستغات بانى من يشهد لى بانى انا الله ربّ السموات والارضين ما عرف احد هذا الظهور الا على قدر انه بكل شئى عليم تمسكوا باقوم بعدى بالاغصان المنشعبة من هذا الاصل القديم بهم ثمر نفحات قميص بين العالم و لايجدها الا كل مقبل مستقيم ينبغى لكم يا اهل البهأ بان تستقيموا على امر الله فى كل شأن اياكم ان تتبعوا كل جاهل اثم و بعد الاغصان قدر لعبد الحاضر لدى العرش مقام رفيع و ينبغى لكم بان توقروا طائفة التي ظهر بيتهم محبوب العالمين من الذين آمنو بالله العزيز الحميد كذلك نزل فى البيان و هذا اللوح المنير والذي اعرض منهم انه ممن كفرو اشرك الا أنه من الأخسرين الا بان يتوب أنه لهو الغفور الرحيم

(3)
يا مبرع كل بيوع عرما كلف في سما، القدر وفيه تصدقتم من ربي
جما لك على عشر اعظمير وانه امولوع في كل اللوح بعد اسم انتم في
وسم في الدنيا بمن يظهر وانه سيظهر في المثلثا بساطا بين قدالة هذا
يوم ما شمرت عيون الغيب مثل فليف عيونهم حول المجيبين فطوبى لمن يحضر في ذلك
اليوم من يري الله بجنوع منبع ويقر هذا اللوح في مقابلة العرش ليسمع
فغاة التي ظهرت من قبيل اسم السموات والارضين وبذلك يترك هذا الاسم
في مقابلة الذي جعله الله مقدسا عن ذكر العالمين لانه اذا فيها ذكر هذا اللوح
الانفس المهينة على العالمين من غير ظهوره بعد انتم من العالمين والذين بعد
الالف انه ناطق باسمه في المستغاث يا امان بشير يا امان لا اله الا الله رب السموات
والارضين ما عرف هذا الظهور الا بعد قرأته بكتاب عليهم تتكوا يا قوم اعرفوا
بالاعضاء المنشعبين عند الاحل القديين بهتمت رفحات قيصير من العالم والي بحر حال
تقديس تقديس يتبع لكم يا اهدوا بها بان تقويموا على امر الله في كل شأن يا امان تقبلوا
جا حلتيس وبعد الاعضان قدر بعد كما في العرش مقام منبع وغير ذلك بان تقروا
طائفة التي ظهر من محراب العالمين من الذين آمنوا بالله العزيز حميد كذلك نزل من البيان
وهذا اللوح المبسر والذراع من منهن انتم من كبروا شرك الاله الا انتم الاخيرين الا ان توبوا
هو الغفور الرحيم

