

## Tablet on understanding the cause of opposition to the Manifestations of God

(*Lawḥ-i 'irfān-i 'illat-i i'rāḍ*)

by Bahā'u'llāh

Translated by Keven Brown

Notes on the Persian text: Sen McGlinn

Italics text, below, represents Arabic phrases in the Persian text that are not quotations.

<p>بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ این مظلوم اراده نموده لوجه الله بر شما القا نماید آنچه را که سبب بقای ابدی و ذکرِ سرمدیست * شگّی نبوده و نیست که مقصود از آفرینش معرفت حقّ جلّ جلاله بوده * حال باید خالصاً لوجه المقصود انسان تفکر نماید که سبب اقبال نفوس بمشارق وحی و مطالع الهام در قرون و أعصار چه بوده و علّت اعراض چه * اگر بعرفان اینمقام فائز شوی بکلّ خیر فائزی و از امواج بحر عرفان حقّ جلّ جلاله محروم نمائی * ما سوی الحقّ را معدوم مشاهده کنی و مفقود بینی * انسان چون بمقام بلوغ فائز شد باید تفحص نماید و متوگّلاً علی الله و مقدّساً عن الحبّ و البغض در امریکه عباد بآن متمسّکند تفکر کند و بسمع و بصر خود بشنود و ببیند چه اگر ببصر غیر ملاحظه نماید از مشاهده تجلّیات أنوار نیر عرفان الهی ص ۲۷۷ محروم ماند * احزاب مختلفه در عالم موجود و هر حزبی خود را حقّ دانسته و میدانند بقوله تعالی (کلّ حزب بما لدهم فرحون) در خاتم انبیاء روح ما سواه فذاه تفکر نمائید چون آن نیر حقیقی باراده الهی از افق حجاز اشراق نمود احزاب اعراض نمودند و بر سفک دم اطهرش قیام کردند * وارد شد بر انحضرت آنچه که عیون ملاً اعلی گریست و افنده مخلصین و مقربین محترق گشت * باید در</p>	<p>In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! This Wronged One wishes to impart to you, wholly for the sake of God, that which is the cause of eternal life and everlasting remembrance. There can be no doubt that the purpose of creation is the recognition of God, exalted be His glory. It is necessary for humankind, in order to achieve this purpose, to reflect sincerely on that which has been the cause of souls turning toward the Dawning Places of revelation and the Daysprings of inspiration during the ages and centuries and what has been the reason for turning away. If you attain to the understanding (<i>'irfān</i>) of this theme, you will have attained to all good and not be deprived of the waves of the ocean of the recognition of God. You will behold all besides God as non-existent and nothing. When an individual reaches the stage of maturity, he should investigate things and, trusting in God and free from both love and hate, reflect on that to which the people adhere. With his own ears and eyes he should listen and see, because if he sees through the vision of another, he will never be able to witness the lights of the Luminary of divine knowledge. [277] Different parties exist in the world, and each considers itself to possess the truth, as indicated by the words “Each party rejoices in what it possesses.”<sup>1</sup> Consider the Seal of the Prophets (may all besides him be his sacrifice). When, through the will of God, that Light of reality dawned above the horizon of the Hijāz, various factions opposed him and rose up to shed his most pure blood. There then befell him what caused the eyes of the Concourse on High to weep and the hearts of the sincere and the</p>
---	--

سبب و علت و اعتراض تفکر نمود \* حقّ جلّ جلاله میفرماید ﴿ما یأتیهم من رسول الا کانوا به یستهزؤن﴾ و شکی نبوده و نیست که اگر مظاهر و اوامر الهی و مصادر احکام ربّانی موافق و مطابق آنچه در دست قومست از اشارات ظهور و اخبار و نصوص ظاهر میگشتند احدی اعراض نمینمود بلکه کلّ فائز میشدند بآنچه که از برای او از عدم بوجود آمده‌اند و از نیستی بحت بات بطراز هستی مزین گشته‌اند لذا بر هر نفسی لازم است که بعدل و انصاف در امر الله ملاحظه

ص ۲۷۸

نماید و تفکر کند \* علمای امامیه بر آنند که حضرت قائم موعود بعد از ظهور در بیت الله بکلمه نطق میفرمایند که نقبا از آن کلمه اعراض مینمایند و فرار اختیار میکنند \* اینکلمه ایست که آنحزب بآن مقرّر و معترفند \* حال در غفلت بعضی تفکر نمایند باعراض نقبا که بعد از ائمه باعتقاد خود ایشان اشرف عبادند قائلند و تصدیق مینمایند و در خود گمان نمیکنند که شاید این اعراض من غیر حقّ باشد \* باری ندای مظلوم و آنچه ذکر نموده بسمع انصاف بشنوید \* یظهر لک الحقّ و صراطه المستقیم \* در یک آن تفکر مینمایند که شاید آنچه ظاهر شده حق باشد و این اعراض و اعتراضات از غفلت و جهل واقع شده باشد \* از حق میطلبیم شما را تأیید فرماید تا بیصر عدل و انصاف مشاهده کنید و تقرّس نمائید \* اّنه یقول الحقّ و یهدی السبیل و هو العزیز الجمیل \* حضرت عیسی ابن مریم علیه سلام الله و عنایته بآیات و اضحات و بیّنات باهرات ظاهر شد و مقصودش نجات خلق بوده \*

ص ۲۷۹

هر منصفی شاهد و هر خبیری گواهدست

near ones to burn with grief.

It is necessary to think about the cause and reason for this opposition. God, exalted be His glory, states: "No messenger comes to them but they have mocked and derided him."<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that if the Exponents of divine commands and the Sources of heavenly laws appeared in a way that agreed with, and conformed to, the references, traditions and texts current among the people concerning the Manifestation, not a single soul would oppose them. Rather, all would attain to that for which they stepped from non-existence into the realm of being.

Therefore, each soul should ponder and reflect with equity and fairness on the Cause of God. [278]

The Shi'ah divines believe that when the promised Qā'im appears in the House of God [Mekka], he will utter a word that will cause even his chosen disciples to turn away from him and flee. This is a statement that the Shi'as admit to and acknowledge. Now, reflect on the heedlessness of certain ones. They assert and attest to the opposition of the chosen disciples, who, according to their own doctrines, are the noblest people after the Imāms, yet it does not occur to them that their own opposition might be equally unworthy and incorrect.<sup>3</sup>

In short, hear the call of this Wronged One and listen to his words with the ear of fairness. *The truth will be made manifest to you and His straight path.* Would that they might consider for a moment that perhaps that which has become manifest [in this day] is the truth, and that this opposition and these denunciations may have arisen from ignorance and heedlessness!

We beseech God to aid you to see with the eye of justice and ponder with fairness. *He speaks the truth and leads the way. He is the Mighty, the Beneficent.*

Jesus, the son of Mary (upon him be the peace of God and his loving-kindness), appeared with clear signs and indisputable evidences, and his purpose was the salvation of humankind. [279]

Every just person will bear witness and every informed one will testify that that holy Being did not seek or desire anything for himself. His sole intention was to guide those who had gone astray to the straight path of God. Yet there befell that most sacred Beauty what caused the dwellers of paradise

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān 36:30.

<sup>3</sup> See note at the end of the translation.

آنحضرت از برای خود چیزی نطلبیده و  
 نخواست و مقصودش هدایت گمراهان بصراط  
 مستقیم الهی بوده \* لکن وارد شد بر آنجمال  
 اقدس آنچه که اهل فردوس نوحه نمودند و  
 بقسمی بر آنحضرت امر صعب شد که حق جلّ  
 جلاله باراده عالیله بسماء چهارم صعودش داد  
 \* آیا سبب آنچه ظاهر شد چه بوده \* لَعْمَرُ اللّٰه  
 اعراض علماء \* چه که حنّان و قیافا که از  
 فرّیسیین بوده‌اند یعنی علمای توراّه مع علمای  
 اصنام انکار نمودند و بسبّ و لعن مشغول  
 گشتند \* و همچنین در حضرت کلیم و سائر  
 انبیاء ملاحظه فرمائید شاید آنچه در این ورقه  
 ذکر شده شما را بعرفان مذکور فائز فرماید و  
 بکمال همّت بر خدمت امر قیام نمائی قیامیکه  
 از سطوت ظالمین مضطرب نشود و از  
 اعراض علماء تغییر نیابد بشنو ندای این  
 مظلوم را و از شمال و هم بیمین یقین توجّه نما  
 و از مغرب ظنّ و گمان بمشرق ایقان اقبال کن  
 \* این مظلوم از اوّل آیام ما بین آیدای اعداء  
 مبتلا البتّه

ص ۲۸۰

بعضی از بلائی و آورده را اصغا نموده‌اید \*  
 بعنایت حق جلّ جلاله امام وجوه خلق از علماء  
 و امراء من غیر ستر و حجاب آنچه سبب  
 نجات و راحت کل بود القا نمودیم \* هیچ امری  
 از امور و هیچ شیئی از اشیاء منع ننمود و حایل  
 نگشت \* و حال هم در سجن اعظم لوجه الله  
 ذکر نمودیم آنچه را که از برای منصفین  
 کتابیست مبین \* انظر ثم اذکر ما انزلہ الرحمن  
 فی الفرقان بقوله تعالی ﴿ ذرّهم فی حوضهم  
 یلعبون ﴾ امید آنکه از فضل الهی باین کلمه  
 فائز شوی و بآن عمل نمائی \* از ما سوی الله  
 یعنی اموری که سبب منع و علّت احتجابست  
 بگذری و بآنچه سبب بلوغ و وصول است

to wail. His plight became so grievous that God, exalted be His glory, by His transcendent will, caused him to ascend to the fourth heaven.

What could have caused such a thing to happen? By the life of God! The opposition came from the divines, for Annas and Caiaphas, who were Pharisees—that is, doctors of the Torah—together with the priests of the idolaters, rejected him and heaped abuse and curses on him. In like manner, consider the fate of Moses and the other prophets.

Perhaps that which has been recounted in this tablet will help you to attain the understanding (*irfān*) that was mentioned, and you will arise with the utmost endeavor to serve the Cause of God, in such a manner that the ascendancy of the oppressors will not disturb you, nor will the opposition of the learned change you from your path.

Hear the call of this Wronged One, and turn from the left hand of idle fancy to the right hand of certainty, and from the sunset of doubt and misgiving to the sunrise of assurance.

You have, no doubt, heard of some of the afflictions this Wronged One has suffered at the hands of his enemies since the early days of his life. [280] Through the grace of God, exalted be His glory, we have proclaimed openly to all people, including the religious leaders and kings, that which is the cause of the salvation and tranquility of all humankind, and we have permitted nothing to deter or hinder us. Now, also, in the Most Great Prison, for the sake of God, we set forth for the fair-minded a clear book.

Consider and call to mind what the All-Merciful sent down in the Qur'ān (exalted be His utterance): “Leave them to entertain themselves with their caviling.”<sup>4</sup> We hope that by the grace of God you will apprehend the wisdom of these words and act accordingly. Set aside all besides God—that is, those things that are the cause of deprivation and ignorance—and hold fast to whatever is the cause of maturity and development.

This Cause is mighty and its aim is great. This is the day whereof He says: “O my son! God will bring everything to light though it is but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, hidden under a rock, or in the

heavens or in the earth, for God is perceptive and informed of all.”<sup>5</sup> This is the day wherein whatever is concealed in the hearts and souls will be revealed and made manifest.

Consider those who have willingly given their lives and property in the path [281] of the love of the Self-Subsisting, the Most Exalted. *He will guide you to His straight path and His great announcement.* Consider Noah, Hūd and Ṣāliḥ (may God’s blessings rest upon them)—what was the purpose of those Dawning Places of His Cause, and what transpired afterwards?

This servant is not one of the learned, and he did not attend school. Outwardly, he was born into the house of one of the ministers of the state, to whom he is related. *Authority is in the hands of God, your Lord, the Lord of the throne on high and earth below, the Lord of this world and the world to come. “None can resist His decree or repel His judgment. He does what He desires and ordains what He pleases.” He is the Mighty, the Powerful.*

Hear the call of this Wronged One. Purify your heart with the water of detachment, adorn your head with the crown of justice, and array your temple with the robe of virtue, then say:

O my God! O my God! I testify to your oneness and your singleness, and I acknowledge the truth of what your prophets and your messengers have spoken, and what has been sent down in your books, your scriptures, your scrolls, and your tablets.

O Lord! I am your servant and the son of your servant. I bear witness with both my inward and outward tongue that you are God. There is no God except you, the Single, the One, the Powerful, the Knowing, the Wise.

Alas! Alas! O my God! My great sins [282] and my grievous trespasses, and my heedlessness, have hindered me from turning toward the Dayspring of your signs and the Dawning Place of your evidences, and from recognising the rays of the dawning light of your Manifestation and from beholding the traces of your pen.

Alas! Alas! O my Desire and my Adored One! I know not for which of my misfortunes I should cry and lament. Should I weep for what has escaped me during the days in which the Luminary of Divine Revelation shed its radiance above the horizon of your will, or should I weep for my remoteness from the court of your nearness when the pavilion of your grandeur was raised above the highest banners through your power and your sovereignty?

تمسک جوئی \* امر عظیم است و مطلب  
بزرگ \* و یوم یومیسست که میفرماید ﴿یا بنی  
انها ان تک مثقال حبة من خردل فتکن فی  
صخرة أو فی السموات او فی الارض یأت بها  
الله ان الله لطیف خبیر﴾ امروز روزیست آنچه  
در قلوب و نفوس مستور است ظاهر و آشکار  
شود \* در نفسیکه رایگان جان و مال را در  
سبیل

ص ۲۸۱

محبّت غنیّ متعال انفاق نموده‌اند تفکر نمائید  
اّنه یتهدیک الی صراطه المستقیم و نبّنه العظیم  
\* در حضرت نوح و هود و صالح صلوات الله  
علیهم ملاحظه کن مقصود آن مشارق امر چه  
بود و چه وارد شد \*

این عبد از اهل علم نبوده و مدرسه نرفته و بر  
حسب ظاهر در بیت یکی از رجال دولت  
متولد شده و باو منسوب \* ان الامر بید الله  
ربک ربّ العرش و الثری و مالک الآخرة و  
الأولی \* لا مانع لأمره و لا دافع لحکمه یفعل  
ما یشاء و یحکم ما یرید و هو المقتدر القدر \*  
اسمع نداء المظلوم \* طهّر قلبک بماء الانقطاع  
و زین رأسک بأکلیل العدل و هیگلک برداء  
التقوی

و قل إلهی إلهی أشهد بوحدانیتک و  
فردانیتک و اعترف بما نطقت به ألسن أنبیائک  
و رسلک و ما أنزلته فی کتیبک و صحفک و  
زبرک و ألواحک \* ای ربّ أنا عبدک و ابن  
عبدک أشهد بلسان ظاهری و باطنی بأنک انت  
الله لا إله إلا أنت الفرد الواحد المقتدر العظیم  
الحکیم \* آه آه یا الهی من جریراتی العظمی

ص ۲۸۲

و خطیاتی الکبری و من غفلتی التي منعنتی  
عن التوجه إلی مشرق آیاتک و مطلع بیناتک و  
عن النظر الی تجلیات أنوار فجر ظهورک و  
مشاهدة آثار قلمک \* فآه آه یا مقصودی و

معبودي لم ادر باي مصيبة من مصائبى انوح و  
أبكى أ أنوح على مافات عني في أيام فيها  
اشرق و لاح نير الظهور من أفق سماء ارادتک  
أم أنوح و أبكى عن بعدى عن ساحة قريبك اذ  
ارتفع جباؤه مجدک على أعلى الأعلام بقدرتک  
و سلطانک \* کَلَّمَا زَادِ يَا إِلَهِي رَأْفَتَكَ فِي حَقِّي  
و صبرک في أخذی زادت غفلتی و اعراضی  
\* قد ذکر تني اذ كنت صامتاً عن ذکرک و  
أقبلت إلي بمظهر نفسک اذ كنت معرضاً عن  
التوجه إلى أنوار وجهک و ناديتني اذ كنت  
غافلاً عن اصغاء نداءک من مطلع أمرک \* و  
عزّتک قد أحاطتني الغفلة من كل الجهات بما  
اتبعت النفس و الهوى \* فآه آه ارادتي منعتني  
عن ارادتک و مشيتي حجبنتني عن مشيتک  
بحيث تمسکت بصراطی تارکاً صراطک  
المستقیم و نبأک العظيم \* ترى و تسمع يا إلهي  
ص ٢٨٣

حنيني و بکائي و ضجيجي و ذلتي و بلائي \*  
ای رب هیکل العصيان اراد امواج بحر  
غفرانک و عفوک و جوهر الغفلة بدایع  
مواهبک و الطافک \* فآه آه ضوضاء العباد  
منعتني عن اصغاء بيانک و نعاق خلقک  
حجبني عن النظر الى أفق أمرک \* و عزّتک  
أحب أن أبكى بدوام ملکک و ملکوتک فكيف  
لا أبكى أبكى بما منعت عيني عن مشاهدة  
أنوار شمس ظهورک و أذني عن اصغاء  
ذکرک و ثنائک \* و عزّتک يا إله العالم و  
سلطان الأمم أحب أن أستر وجهی تحت أطباق  
الأرض و ترابها من خجلتي و بما اكتسبت  
أيادی غفلتی \* فآه آه كنت معي و سمعت مني  
مالاً ينبغي لک و بفضلک سنرت عني و ما  
كشفت سوء حالي و أعمالی و أقوالی \* فآه آه لم  
أدر ما قدرت لي من قلمک الأعلى و ما شاءت  
مشيتک يا مالک الأسماء و فاطر السماء \* فآه  
آه أن يمنعني قضاوک المحتوم عن رحيق  
المختوم \* أسألك بنفحات وحيک و أنوار  
عرشک و بالذی به تزوع عرفت قميصک في

O my God! The more you showed compassion and  
patience toward me, the more my heedlessness and  
opposition increased. You remembered me when I failed  
to remember you, and you turned toward me with the  
Manifestation of yourself when I hesitated to turn toward  
the radiance of your face, and you called out to me when  
I was unable to hear your call issuing from the Dayspring  
of your Cause.

I swear by your glory! My negligence has  
encompassed me on all sides by reason of following my  
selfish desires. Alas! Alas! My desire has withheld me  
from your desire, and my will has veiled me from your  
will, inasmuch as I have clung to my own path while  
renouncing your straight path and your great glad tidings.

You see and hear, O my God, [283] my sighing and  
my weeping, my abasement and my affliction.

O Lord! This embodiment of iniquity yearns for the  
waves of the ocean of your forgiveness and pardon; this  
essence of negligence longs for the wonders of your gifts  
and bounties.

Alas! Alas! The tumult of the people has prevented me  
from giving ear to your utterance, and the clamour of  
your creatures has hindered me from beholding the  
horizon of your Revelation. I swear by your glory! I want  
to weep for as long as your dominion and your kingdom  
endure! How can I not weep? I weep that my eyes were  
prevented from seeing the light of the Sun of your  
Manifestation and my ears from listening to your  
glorification and praise.

I swear by your glory, O Lord of the world and  
Sovereign of the nations! I want to hide my face under  
layers of earth and dust out of shame at what my hands  
have committed in my ignorance.

Alas! Alas! You were with me and you heard from me  
things unworthy of your station, but by your grace you  
concealed it from me and you did not reveal the  
wretchedness of my state, my deeds, and my words.

Alas! Alas! I do not know what you have ordained for  
me with your most exalted pen and what your will has  
decreed, O Lord of all names and Creator of the universe!

Alas! Alas! that your irrevocable command withholds  
me from your choice sealed wine. I beseech you by the  
fragrant breezes of your revelation and the lights of your  
throne, and by he who diffused the fragrance of your robe  
in the Hijāz,

and by the light [284] of your command through which  
the heavens and the earth have been illuminated, to cause  
me under all conditions to turn toward you, detached  
from all besides you, holding fast to your cord, and  
clinging to the hem of the robe of your bounty and  
generosity. I choose for myself what you have chosen for  
me by your loving-kindness and your great bounty, O you  
in whose grasp are the reins of all things. No God is there  
but you, the Lord of the throne above and the earth

الحجاز و بنور

ص ٢٨٤

أمرک الذی به أشرقت الأرضُ و السّماءُ بأن  
تجعلني فی کلّ الاحوال مقبلاً الیک منقطعاً عن  
دونک و متمسکاً بحبلک و متشبّثاً بأذیال رداء  
جودک و کرمک و اختار لنفسی ما اخترته لی  
بعنايتک الکبری و مواهبک العظمی یا من فی  
قبضتک زمام الأشیاء لا اله الا أنت ربّ  
العرش و الثّری و مالک الآخرة و الأولى \*

below, and the Possessor of this world and the world to come.

### Footnote 3

Baha'u'llah says: "The Shī'ah divines believe that when the promised Qā'im appears in the House of God [Mekka], he will utter a word that will cause even his chosen disciples to turn away from him and flee. This is a statement that the Shī'īs admit to and acknowledge. Now, reflect on the heedlessness of certain ones. They assert and attest to the opposition of the chosen disciples, who, according to their own doctrines, are the noblest people after the Imāms, yet it does not occur to them that their own opposition might be equally unworthy and incorrect."

A Shī'ah and Shaykhī version of the tradition Bahā'u'llāh is referring to here can be found in Ibn Babuyah's Kitāb al-Ghayba and Aḥmad al-Aḥsā'ī's Kitāb ar-Raj'a (p.106). This says that the Qā'im will ascend the pulpit of the Kufa mosque (in Bahā'u'llāh's account, this occurs in the House of God) and bring out a book. When he reads from it, all of his 313 disciples (ashāb) will flee except for one wazīr (helper) and 12 nuqabā' (chosen disciples). Those who flee will find no refuge and eventually return to him. The English phrase "his chosen disciples", used in the translation of the tablet, translates the Arabic word nuqabā'. This translation is based on the account given in the tradition, which makes it clear that those who flee the Qā'im will be from among his own disciples. In contrast to this, a dictionary definition of nuqabā' gives the more general meaning of 'leaders', 'chiefs' or 'nobles'. If nuqabā' was translated this way, it would suggest that the people who flee the Qā'im are religious leaders and rulers -- that is, those who would be expected to oppose the Qā'im. However, in Sufi, Shī'ah and Shaykhī literature, the word nuqabā' has a specific meaning. It refers to one of several ranks, such as nujabā, abwāb and abdāl, in a spiritual hierarchy. The beings who occupy this very high spiritual rank, due to their gnosis or divine knowledge, are deputies of the Hidden Imām and 'chiefs' and 'leaders' in that sense. These nuqabā' are not known to other human beings and do not hold ecclesiastical or political power. Only upon the Qā'im's return will he, according to some ḥadīth accounts, give the nuqabā' power as actual leaders and rulers over men. Bahā'u'llāh's point in this paragraph is that, if it is possible even for the nuqabā' to wrongly reject the Qā'im -- and they are only one step below the Qā'im in spiritual rank -- then perhaps the reader could entertain the possibility that he himself is also

wrong, just like the mullās of his age, and admit that the Qā'im has appeared, though in a way that differs from popular expectations, and it is wrong to oppose him. -- Alison Marshall, based on information kindly provided by Dr Armin Eschraghi.

#### **Notes on the Persian text**

The text is intended to faithfully reproduce the text as it appears in a collection of works by Baha'u'llah published in Cairo in 1920 (Majmu'eh-ye Matbu'eh, ed. Muhye'd-Din Sabri Kurdi Sanandaji Kanimeshkani, pp. 276-284). A scan of this work is available online at <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/areprint/baha/M-R/M/matbuih/misr.htm>

This has been taken as a master text because older manuscripts are not available, and because at that time Abdu'l-Baha was closely supervising the printing of Baha'i texts in Cairo. At least in the case of his own works printed there, there are signs that he read the proofs and made corrections.

The Tablet was republished in full in India in 1985, in a compilation entitled *Darya-ye Danesh*, pp. 72 to 80. This appears to be based on the 1920 Egyptian edition. A very readable scan of this edition is available on the Bahai Reference library. <http://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/b/DD/dd-75.html> The editors have added commas and full stops, simplified the orthography, and have made minor corrections.

Extracts from this Tablet have also been published in various compilations, such as the book of daily readings *Ayat Elahi*, and the thematic compilations *Payam-e Asmani*, volume 1, and *Darya-ye Danesh*.