

Epistle of the Báb to Sharīf Sulaymān, the Sharīf of Mecca¹, and to the People of Mecca

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Introduction and background

On 12 December 1844 C.E., the Báb and Quddús arrived in Mecca. While in Mecca, the Báb composed this Epistle with the solemn purpose of informing the chief leader of the Muslim community—the Sharīf—of His divinely appointed mission. This momentous Epistle was entrusted to Quddús, who was charged with delivering it directly into the Sharīf's hands. However, the Sharīf, preoccupied with his own affairs, failed to recognize the significance of the Báb's message.

What follows is a provisional English translation of this sacred Epistle, revealed by the Báb during His momentous sojourn in Mecca. This translation aims to faithfully convey the profound spiritual and theological significance embodied within the original text, preserving its elevated tone and reverence while rendering its timeless message accessible to the English-speaking readers.

¹ The Sharīf of Mecca, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muʿīn ibn ʿĀwn, first assumed the emirate from 1827 to 1851. He was then exiled to Istanbul (al-Āstānā) for approximately five years, from 1851 to 1856. He resumed the emirate again in 1856 and remained in office until his passing.

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“In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Verily, this is a Book sent down by the permission of thy Lord from the presence of One Who is Exalted and Wise. And indeed, it is upon the path of God in the heavens and the earth. He revealeth the verses in a clear Arabic tongue.

Follow what is revealed unto thee from the Book of thy Lord. Verily, there is no God but He. He guideth whomsoever He willeth by His command.

And God is, indeed, a Witness over all things. This is of the tidings of the unseen. We reveal it unto thee, for thou art upon the guidance of thy Lord, and that thou mayest be among the thankful.

And the remembrance of the Name of thy Lord hath sent down unto thee a wondrous Tablet. This is the Book of thy Lord: recite it unto the believers and convey the Book of thy Lord unto the idolaters, that perchance men may believe in the signs of God.

This is the judgment of God for the people of Mecca and its dwellers: that they associate none with their Lord in His worship, and that they be rightly guided in the religion of God.

Say: O people of Mecca! Fear God and know that the Proof of your Lord hath sent down unto His servant Tablets from a preserved Book, that haply men may believe in God and in His signs, and be established upon a straight path.

Say: Whosoever believeth in God and in His signs, he verily is rightly guided; but whoso strayeth—persisting in his error—leadeth only his own soul astray. And God is indeed well-aware of all that ye do.

And whoso disbelieveth in the signs of this Book, none of his deeds shall be accepted by God, and he is indeed in manifest error. On the Day of Judgment, he shall find for himself neither protector nor intercessor.

Say: O people of Mecca! Believe in God and in His signs, and follow the judgment of the Book if it be Him Whom ye worship. He is the One besides Whom there is none other God. He created all things by His command, and unto Him shall all return.

Say: Were all men to gather together to produce the like of this Book, they could not produce the like thereof, even were they to aid one another with all their might. And sufficient is God as Witness and Helper.

Say to those who disbelieve in the signs of God: Bring forth your proof, if ye be truthful in your religion.

And if ye are unable—and never shall ye be able—then believe in the Proof of your Lord and in His signs, and perform righteous deeds. This is the path that ye may attain salvation.

Fear God, lest Satan cause thee to forget the judgment of thy Lord, for the appointed Hour of God is assuredly coming. And God is Witness over all things.

Say: O people of Mecca! This is the judgment of God in His Book—follow it, if ye truly worship Him. Indeed, thy Lord hath sent down the signs for a people who reflect.

Yet We have not found the greater part of mankind to be believers in the signs of thy Lord—rather, We have found them scoffing at the signs of God. These are the inmates of the Fire, as decreed in the Book of thy Lord. And God beareth no witness for the wrongdoers.

Verily, We have placed between thee and those who believe not in the hereafter a hidden veil. This is the judgment of God in thy Book.

Say: Whosoever willeth, let him take the path that leadeth unto God. Yet ye shall not will save as God willeth, and God is, verily, powerful over all things.

Thy Lord hath indeed expounded the signs for a people who hearken. God knoweth the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and that wherein ye differ.

Verily, thy Lord shall judge between all with justice. And never doth God wrong a soul even by so much as an atom. And sufficient is God as Reckoner for the believers.

They ask thee: “Who is He?” Say: Yea, by my Lord, He is the Truth, Who guideth you unto a path mighty and praiseworthy. Thus, have We expounded the signs in a preserved Tablet, and none remembereth save him whom thy Lord willeth.

There is no God but Him. He is potent over all things. Thus, have We sent down the signs for those among you who possess understanding, that thou mayest be on guidance and a manifest Book.

And the remembrance of the Name of thy Lord hath been sent down in the city—a Book for its people—that men may know that He is, indeed, powerful over all things.

Sufficient is the remembrance of the Name of thy Lord—this Book—as a proof. And God sufficeth the believers as a Helper.

Exalted is God, thy Lord, the Lord of the Throne, above that which they describe. And peace be upon the Messengers. And praise be to God, the Lord of all worlds.”

Epistle of the Báb to the Sharīf of Mecca and to the People of Mecca — Based on a Typed Copy

الخط الى شريف سليمان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

ان هذا كتاب قد نزلت باذن ربك من لدن على حكيم و انه لعل في السموات و الارض ينزل الآيات بلسان عربي مبين ان اتبع ما القى اليك من كتاب ربك انه لا اله الا هو يهدي من يشاء بامرته و كان الله ربك على كل شيني شهيدا ذلك من انباء الغيب نوحى لكنت على هدى ربك و لتكونن من الشاكرين و ان ذكر اسم ربك ينزل اليك لوحاً بديعاً هذا كتاب ربك اتل المؤمنين و ابليغ كتاب ربك الى المشركين لعل الناس بآيات الله يؤمنون هذا حكم الله لاهل مكة و حاضريها الا تشركوا بعبادة ربهم احدا و كانوا في دين الله لمن المهتدين قل يا اهل مكة ان اتقوا الله و اعلموا ان حجة ربكم قد نزل الى عبده الواحد من كتاب حفيظ لعل الناس يؤمنون بالله و بآياته و كانوا على صراط قويم قل من آمن بالله و آياته فقد اهتدى و من ضل قائماً يضل لنفسه و كان الله بما تعملون خبيراً و من كفر بآيات هذا الكتاب لن يقبل الله من عمله شيني و قد كان في ضلال مبين و لن يجد لنفسه في يوم الفصل من ولى و لا تصير قل يا اهل مكة آمنوا بالله و آياته و اتبعوا حكم الكتاب ان كنتم اياه تعبدون هو الذي لا اله الا هو قد خلق كل شيني بامرته و كل اليه يحشرون قل لو اجتمع الناس على أن يأتوا بمثل هذا الكتاب لن يستطيعن و لن يقدرن ولو كنا نمتهم عدل انفسهم وكفى بالله شاهداً و نصيراً قل للذين يكفرون بآيات الله هاتوا برهانكم ان كنتم في دين الله صادقين و ان لم تقدروا و لن تقدروا فآمنوا بحجة ربكم و آياته و افعلوا الخير لعل هذا الصراط لعلكم تفلحون اتقوا الله الا ينسينك الشيطان حكم ربك فان اجل الله لآت و كان الله على كل شيني شهيدا قل يا اهل مكة هذا حكم الله في كتابه فاتبعوا ان كنتم اياه تعبدون و ان ربك قد نزل الآيات لقوم يعقلون و ما وجدنا اكثر الناس مؤمنين بآيات ربك الا

و قد وجدناهم بآيات الله لمستهزئين اولئك هم اصحاب النار في كتاب ربك و ما يشهد الله للظالمين الا نفورا و انا نحن قد جعلنا بينك و بين الذين لا يؤمنون بالآخرة يك حجاباً مستورا هذا حكم الله في كتابك قل فمن شاء اتخذ الى الله سبيلاً و ما تشاؤون الا ان يشاء الله و كان الله على كل شيني قديراً و ان ربك قد فصل الآيات لقوم يسمعون و ان الله يعلم غيب السموات و الارض و ما كنتم فيه تختلفون و ان ربك يفصل بين الكل بالقسط و ما كان الله ليظلم على نفس من بعض ذرة و كفى بالله للمؤمنين حسيباً و يستلونك من هو قل اى و ربي و انه لهو

الحق يهديكم الى صراط عزيز حميد كذلك قد فصلنا الآيات في لوح حفيظ و ما يتذكر بآيات الله الا من شاء ربك انه لا اله الا هو على ما يشاء قدير و لذلك قد نزلنا الآيات لاولى الالباب منكم لتكونن على هدى و كتاب مبين و ان ذكر اسم ربك قد نزل في المدينة كتاباً على اهلها ليعلم الناس انه على كل شيني قدير و كفى بحجة ذكر اسم ربك هذا الكتاب و كفى الله للمؤمنين نصيراً و سبحان الله ربك رب العرش عما يصفون و سلام على المرسلين و الحمد لله رب العالمين

(Abū'l-Qásim Afnán, Ādh-i-A'lá, pp. 104-105)