

# The Epistle of the Báb to Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí from Konár-Takhteh:<sup>1</sup> A Study of the Epistle Addressed to His Greatest Uncle

Mohammad Norozi

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## Introduction and background:

Before we approach the sacred and luminous Epistle revealed by the Báb to His uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, it is befitting that we recount the circumstances which preceded its bestowal. For only when the stage of history is thus illumined may the hearts of the readers discern the majesty of that brief but weighty Epistle, and grasp the import of the conditions amidst which it was revealed. What follows is drawn, in its substance, from the pages of *‘Ahd-i-A‘lá* (pp. 126–131).

When the Báb returned from His pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, He tarried for a time in Búshihr, arriving there on 14 May 1845 (Denis MacEoin, *Sources for the Early Bábí Doctrine and History*, p. 48). In that seaport town, amid the stirrings of a Faith newly inaugurated, He revealed several Tablets, addressed to divers souls who had arisen in fidelity to His summons. Among these sacred Writings was a Tablet entrusted to Mullá Šādiq-i-Khurásání,<sup>2</sup> wherein two weighty charges were laid upon him.

**The first:** that at the hour of the call to prayer, after the recitation of the testimony of faith, he should proclaim before all men: “*Ashhadu anna ‘Alíyan Qabl Nabíl, al-Báb, Baqíyatulláh*”—“I bear witness that ‘Alí before Muḥammad<sup>3</sup> is the Gate of the Remnant of God.”

**The second:** that he should transfer his gatherings of discourse to the mosque adjacent to the Blessed House in Shíráz, and there, after the call to prayer and the recitation of the verse of the Name, read aloud the Book of God—the *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*<sup>4</sup>—and herald to the people of Shíráz the dawn of the Promised Day.

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<sup>1</sup> Konár-Takhteh, a small town in Kāzerūn County, Fárs, lay on the Búshihr – Shíráz overland route and functioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a customary station (manzil) for travelers and couriers—one of the principal stages where caravans could rest and provision before the ascent toward Kāzerūn and the plateau. It is listed among the “principal stations” on that road, and the locality is associated with caravanserai infrastructure in the route corridor.

<sup>2</sup> Mullá Šādiq-i-Khurásání (Mullā Šādiq; b. Mashhad, c. 1800; d. Hamadán, 1291 AH / 1874 CE), later surnamed *Ismu’lláhu’l-Asdaq* (“the Name of God, the Most Truthful”) by Bahá’u’lláh, was an early Bábí whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá subsequently designated a Hand of the Cause. A distinguished Shaykhí cleric and disciple of Siyyid Kázim, he embraced the new Revelation, boldly proclaimed its message, and endured severe persecution for his faith.

<sup>3</sup> “‘Alí before Muḥammad” refers to the Báb’s given name, ‘Alí-Muḥammad.

<sup>4</sup> The *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*—the Báb’s first major work, revealed shortly after His Declaration in 1844—comprises a verse-by-verse commentary on the Súrih of Joseph. Cast in the form of Qur’ānic revelation, it consists of 111 surihs, each introduced by mysterious disconnected letters, and proclaims in unmistakable terms His prophetic mission. Designated by Bahá’u’lláh as the “first, greatest, and mightiest of all books” revealed by the Báb, it occupies a position of unparalleled authority within the Bábí Dispensation.

When Mullá Šādiq received this Tablet, borne to him by Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí Quddús, and became aware of the trust reposed in him, he hastened to discharge his sacred duty. Ascending the pulpit, before the assembled congregation, he fearlessly proclaimed the advent of Him Who is the Lord of the Age, the Promised Qá’im, and summoned his disciples to assemble, on the morrow, at the Masjid-i-Kúcheh-yi-Shamshīrgar-há,<sup>5</sup> there to witness the declaration of the Cause of God and to invite others to partake of that bounty.

Faithful to this charge, Mullá ‘Alí Akbar Ardastání and Quddús mounted the minaret of the mosque and, at the appointed hour, lifted their voices. After the age-old testimony to the Prophet and the Imám—“*Ashhadu anna Muḥammadan Rasúlu’lláh, wa ashhadu anna ‘Alíyyan Walíyyu’lláh*”—“I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, and I bear witness that ‘Alí is the Vicegerent of God.”—they gave utterance to that newly revealed verse, the third testimony ordained by the Báb: “*Ashhadu anna ‘Alíyan Qabl Nabíl, al-Báb, Baqíyatulláh*.”—“I bear witness that ‘Alí before Muḥammad is the Gate of the Remnant of God.” In that instant the foundations of tradition trembled, and a new call rang out across the city of Shíráz.

From the pulpit, Mullá Šādiq recited the inspired verses of the *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*, expounding passages from that mighty Book, and lifting before the eyes of men the Name and station of the Báb. The flame of his testimony enkindled hearts, but it stirred to wrath the clerics of Shíráz. For three days the call of God was thus sounded, until the ‘ulamā, alarmed and resentful, inflamed the anger of Ḥusayn Khán, the governor of Fárs. They clamored for vengeance; they demanded that Mullá Šādiq and his companions be silenced, and that the Báb Himself be seized and brought to Shíráz in chains.

Summoned before the governor, Mullá Šādiq, together with Quddús and Mullá ‘Alí Akbar, stood in the presence of tyrant. Consumed with rage, Ḥusayn Khán taunted him with the words of the *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*: “Does it not address the kings of the earth, bidding them turn away from their dominion, and adhere to the Truth? Are we, the sovereign, and his governors, to be cast down from our thrones at the word of this youth?”

Undaunted, Mullá Šādiq replied with calm certitude: “If the claim of the Author of these words be established by divine proofs, then all He utters is verity, and every soul must bow before it in obedience.” His words, uttered with unwavering conviction, were a thunderbolt to the tyrant’s heart. In a fury, Ḥusayn Khán ordered that a thousand lashes be laid upon him. The blows descended, yet his spirit soared beyond their cruelty, his serene countenance a witness to the invincible power of faith.

The following day, the instruments of degradation were turned upon him and his companion: their beards were ignominiously set aflame, their noses pierced and bound, and they were paraded through the streets and bazaars of Shíráz, a spectacle

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<sup>5</sup> A mosque in Shíráz, Iran, situated on Shamshīrgar-ha (شمشیرگراها) Street, meaning “sword-makers” and historically known for its association with early Bábí activities.

contrived to humiliate, yet in truth revealing the glory of steadfastness and the impotence of oppression. Driven at last from the city, they departed bearing upon their bodies the marks of persecution, yet upon their souls the seal of victory.

On the eve of Tuesday, the nineteenth of Jumádí al-Thání, 1261 A.H. (25 June 1845), the Báb departed from Búshíhr, setting forth for Shíráz.<sup>6</sup> Along the way, when He reached Borázjān,<sup>7</sup> tidings were borne to Him of the grievous outrages inflicted upon Mullá Şādiq and his steadfast companions, of the tumult and uproar that had convulsed the populace, of the baseless calumnies so wantonly heaped upon His sacred Name, and of the anguish and alarm that had overtaken His kindred. With ineffable calm He received these reports, His countenance betraying no disquiet, as though the storms unleashed by men were but passing shadows before the radiance of His Cause.

At Dálkí,<sup>8</sup> sixteen kilometers beyond Borázjān, He encountered a detachment of mounted men, dispatched with orders to seize Him on His journey from Búshíhr. With a serenity that confounded their purpose, He advanced to meet them and disclosed His identity. So majestic was His composure, so luminous the tranquility that emanated from His presence, that they, bewildered at so extraordinary a disclosure, refrained—by motives inscrutable save to God—from laying hands upon Him, and permitted Him to continue His course. For at the outset, they had dismissed as unthinkable the frank avowal of One Who, with such meekness and fearlessness, would deliver Himself into the clutch of a tyrannical governor and a populace thirsting for His blood. That He, unmoved by the savage treatment already meted out to His companions, should so unreservedly place Himself at the mercy of His foes seemed to them the very height of impossibility. Yet as He proceeded from Dálkí towards Konár-Takhteh, the candor of His utterance, the certitude of His tone, and the radiance of His countenance awakened stirrings of doubt within their hearts, and they began to surmise that perchance the words of that Youth might indeed be true.

Prompted by caution, Muḥammad Khán, the officer in charge, dispatched, in humility and courtesy, a letter<sup>9</sup> to the Báb, entrusting it to four mounted men under the

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<sup>6</sup> Precise records of the Báb's journey from Búshíhr to Shíráz are not extant; however, it is known that He traveled from Búshíhr to Konár-Takhteh over five days, from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of Jumádí al-Thání, 1261 A.H. (25–30 June 1845), covering approximately 120 km along the following route: Búshíhr–Borázjān, 72 km; Borázjān–Dálkí, 24 km; Dálkí–Konár-Takhteh, 24 km. Continuing to Shíráz, He traversed an additional 150 km through Komárj–Kázerún, 24 km; Kázerún–Dasht-i Arjan, 42 km; Dasht-i Arjan–House of Zaynán, 30 km; Konár-Takhteh–Komárj, 24 km; and House of Zaynán–Shíráz, 30 km, likely arriving in early Rajab 1261 A.H. (6–7 July 1845). Travel at this pace—approximately 24 km per day—is entirely feasible in 1845 Qajar Iran, whether on foot or muleback (stations and distances adapted from *Ahd-i A'lá*, p. 154).

<sup>7</sup> Borázjān—today a town and county in Búshíhr Province but historically part of Fárs—served in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a small, yet strategically significant, caravan station on the royal route between Búshíhr and Shíráz. Travelers and messengers routinely stopped there to rest, exchange horses, and await companions—a function that fits the Báb's reference as a “station” (*manzil*) along his journey. It lay along an ancient overland artery linking the Persian Gulf hinterlands with the Fárs plateau, attested since Sasanian times.

<sup>8</sup> Dálkí, a station (*manzil*) along the historic route from Búshíhr to Shíráz, is situated approximately 24 km from Konár-Takhteh towards Shíráz. This route was commonly traversed by travelers and pilgrims in 1845. Dálkí served as a customary resting place, facilitating the movement between these two significant locations.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad Khán addressed the Báb as follows: “*O Best of Protectors! This humble petition is laid before the noble presence of Thy Eminence, the scion of the Prophetic lineage, that quintessence of the noble, that honoured Point of Adoration, Áqá Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad (i.e., the Báb) the honoured Master, upon whom be the abundance of God's grace. May the sheltering shadow of Thy loving-kindness ever rest upon the head of this lowly supplicant, by the Lord of all mankind. After humbly acknowledging my servitude, it is represented: Firstly, that I had ardently yearned to*

leadership of Aṣḡān Khān, while he himself turned back with five others to Búshihr. With reverence and awe, Aṣḡān Khān and his companions presented the letter to the Báb at Konár-Takhteh. At that same hour there arrived the messenger, bearing letters from Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí, the maternal uncle of the Báb, and other members of His family in Búshihr, addressed to Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad.<sup>10</sup> This courier recounted in full the grievous happenings in Shíráz, acquainting the Báb with the nature of the disturbances, the falsehoods so maliciously circulated, and the designs of His enemies.

From Konár-Takhteh, in the midst of such trials, the Báb, undisturbed and serene, took up His pen and, on the twenty-fourth of Jumádí al-Thání, 1261 A.H. (30 June 1845), revealed this luminous Epistle addressed to His beloved uncle, Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí. In it He recounted the events that had transpired, informed him of His perfect awareness of the calumnies raised against Him, and, with a confidence born of divine assurance, affirmed the unfailing protection of God amidst the storms of opposition and the tempests of falsehood. That blessed Epistle, luminous with the radiance of certitude, stands as a testimony to the majesty of His Cause and the inviolable calm with which He met the onslaught of His foes.

What follows is a provisional English rendering, translated with utmost reverence and care, of this luminous Epistle, originally revealed in Persian. The text of the original is published in *‘Ahd-i-A‘lá*, pp. 131–132.

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*attain the honor of drawing nigh unto Thy presence and of kissing Thy blessed hand, but circumstances did not permit that I be admitted to Thy service. I entreat Thy forgiveness in this matter, and implore the honor of Thy prayers. Secondly, according to the command of the august and exalted lords—the noblemen, masters of bounty, and holders of authority (i.e., Ḥusayn Khán)—I had been charged to remain in attendance upon Thee in Shíráz, that I might conduct that honoured Personage (i.e., the Báb) into the august presence (i.e., Ḥusayn Khán). Praise be to God that this affair came to pass in a manner most seemly and felicitous. Through the benediction of Thy exalted forefather, it so transpired that I was spared the shame of appearing negligent in His service. At this time, through the tidings imparted by that honoured point of adoration (i.e., Ḥusayn Khán) Himself, it hath been made known that the courtly attendants of the government, who remain in Thy service, are engaged in rendering service unto Thee until the arrival at the destined abode. It was incumbent that this be laid before Thy exalted presence. May this not be deemed presumptuous. Should there be any opportunity of service, I stand ready, and humbly entreat Thy prayers. Peace be upon Thee, and the Mercy of God, and His blessings. The seal: “His servant, the hopeful one, Muḥammad (...?), 1845.” (The original letter, written by Muhammad Khán in Persian, is preserved in *‘Ahd-i A‘lá*, pp. 148-149, and is provisionally translated by the author of this paper.)*

<sup>10</sup> Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad, the elder brother of Ḥájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí and uncle of the Báb, was designated by Him with the honorific title of “the Greater Uncle.”

## The Báb Reveals;

### “He is

*O My point of adoration — it is submitted that on the night of Wednesday, the nineteenth,<sup>11</sup> departure was made from the port of Búshihr in the company of Akbar, who was bound for his native land.*

*At the station of Borázjān, a most grievous report<sup>12</sup> was heard, until arrival was made at the station of Konár-Takhteh.*

*The messenger<sup>13</sup> arrived, and four of the honoured horsemen<sup>14</sup> likewise presented themselves before Us. Glorified be the Almighty God for this momentous occurrence!*

*The matter hath been falsely presented unto the excellency, the personage invested with command.<sup>15</sup>*

*During the time I sojourned in Shíráz, who among the people hath ever heard the Lowly One<sup>16</sup> make any claim in respect of any matter?*

*Likewise, upon the ship bound for the Way to Mecca, a company of pilgrims from Shíráz was present; let all be made present, should any among them bear testimony thereto.*

*The statements of the honoured ones are sheer calumny; by God, it is indeed the truth. May the Almighty God Himself adjudicate.*

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<sup>11</sup> The Báb departed from Shíráz for Búshihr on 19 Jumádá al-Thání 1261 A.H. (25 June 1845). The exact year is confirmed by the Báb Himself, who explicitly records the date of the revelation of this Epistle to His uncle at its conclusion.

<sup>12</sup> By the phrase “a most grievous report,” the Báb is alluding to the news of the brutal maltreatment inflicted upon Mullá Šādiq-i-Muqaddas-i-Khurásání (also known as Ismu’lláhu’l-Asdaq) and his companions in Shíráz. These early believers were subjected to torture at the hands of the populace, incited and abetted by Ḥusayn Khān Ājudān-bāshī, the governor of Fárs. For accounts of this episode, see Nabíl-i-A’ẓam, *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil’s Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá’í Revelation*, trans. and ed. Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1932), pp. 146–152.

<sup>13</sup> “The messenger” was an individual traveling from Shíráz to Búshihr, entrusted with letters from Hájí Mírzá Siyyid ‘Alí—the Báb’s maternal uncle, later designated the Greatest Uncle—and other members of His family, addressed to Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muḥammad, the Greater Uncle, residing in Búshihr. On the way, he encountered the Báb and conveyed to Him, with exactitude, the events that had recently transpired in Shíráz. See ‘Ahd-i A’lá, p. 131.

<sup>14</sup> These four horsemen were government emissaries; however, out of respect, the Báb refers to them as the “honored” (Ḥazārat) horsemen.

<sup>15</sup> A reference to Ḥusayn Khān Ājudān Bāshī, the Ājudān Bāshī (Chief Aide-de-Camp) of the Governor of Fárs. In this official capacity, he oversaw the dispatch of state agents and the coordination of military and administrative duties. His position placed him at the center of both civil and military affairs in Fárs, granting him authority over the movement of officials and correspondence, and marking him as a key figure in the events recounted in the Báb’s Epistle to His uncle.

<sup>16</sup> The Báb.

*The intent: all these statements are falsehood. The Lowly One asserts no claim regarding any matter. God willing, upon arrival in thy august presence,<sup>17</sup> the matter shall be presented in due order.*

*And the matters to which reference has been made in the Book, Glory be to God, are all falsehood. In the law of the Shari'ah,<sup>18</sup> according to the edicts of all the ulamá, written materials possess no validity; how much less the Claimant who denies.<sup>19</sup>*

*In brief, God willing, upon arrival, it is hoped, by the grace of His Exalted Might, that the falsehoods of the people may be made manifest.*

*The honored, six horsemen, proceeded to Búshihir; four remained in Our company. A note also reached from their superior<sup>20</sup>, from the station of Dálkí; it lies within.*

*Thus far, they have comported themselves with the utmost affection and courtesy; what is destined thereafter shall also come to pass. By no means shouldst thou be distressed, for all has been mere calumny; I shall lay the matter before thee in thy august presence upon My arrival.*

*Yet, let the hour of arrival be made known. Convey My salutations also to the most exalted points of adoration, who have borne this exertion.*

*Dated Monday, the twenty-fourth of Jumádá al-Thání, 1261 AH [30 June 1845 CE]"*

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<sup>17</sup>A reference to Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, surnamed by the Báb as "the Greatest Uncle."

<sup>18</sup>In this context, *Shari'ah* refers to the revealed law of Islam.

<sup>19</sup>The purpose of the Báb in these utterances is the solemn repudiation of the distortions so grievously propagated by certain of the ulamá (learned divines), who, turning aside from the luminous meaning of the sacred verses of the *Qayyūm al-Asmā'*, perverted their import to serve the whims of their own understanding. These hallowed passages, resplendent with the light of divine truth, appear in Sūrah al-Mulk, verses 22, 25, 29, and 31, and in Sūrah al-Ra'd, verse 24; they are further confirmed in one of His Tablets addressed directly to these scholars. In these writings, He exhorted Muḥammad Shāh, his Vizier Hájí Mírzá Āqásí, and the ulamá at large to shun the denial of the Divine Cause and the seductions of the ephemeral world, and to cleave instead to that which endureth. Yet the ulamá, interpreting all in a contrary sense, conveyed their misrepresentations to the Shah, and by proclaiming them from the pulpits, enkindled the hearts of the people with the false belief that the Báb sought rebellion against the State and the overthrow of the Faith of Islām. See *'Ahd-i A'lá*, p. 154.

<sup>20</sup>"A note reached from their superior" refers to the letter presented to the Báb by Aslān Khān, one of the four mounted emissaries who encountered Him at the station of Konár-Takhteh. This letter had been composed by Muḥammad Khān, the commander in charge, at the station of Dálkí, with the utmost humility and deference, and was addressed directly to the Báb, conveying both respect and the formal intent of the sender.

**The Epistle of the Báb to Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí from Konár-Takhteh, Transcribed from  
a Typed Copy**

هو

قبله گاهها معروض میدارد که شب چهارشنبه نوزدهم از بندر بوشهر حرکت  
نموده به اتفاق اکبر که وارد بلد وطن باشد در منزل براز جون خبر عظیمی شنیدم تا  
اینکه وارد منزل کنار تخته شده ملک قاصد وارد چهار نفر هم از حضرات سوار وارد ملاقات شد فسیحان الله العظیم من  
هذا الامر الجسیم. امر را بر سرکار عظمت مدار صاحب اختیار مشتبه فرموده اند. اوقاتی که حقیر شیراز بودم کدام نفر از  
خلق ادعای امری از حقیر شنیده. کذلک در کشتی عرض راه مکه جمعی حجاج شیرازی بودند همگی را حاضر نمایند  
هرگاه کسی اقرار بر این امر دارد. سخن حضرات مفتری، بالله  
صدق است. خداوند عالم حکم فرماید. غرض، کل این فقرات کذب است. حقیر مدعی امری نیستم. انشاء الله بعد از ورود  
در محضر حضور معدلت دستور عرض خواهم نمود. و مطالبی که اشاره به کتاب نموده اند، فسیحان الله کل کذب است  
در مذهب شریعت بفتوای کل علما خطوط اعتبار ندارد چه جای آنکه مدعی منکر شود. الحاصل انشاء الله تعالی بعد از  
ورود امیدوار بفضل حضرت عزت جل شأنه که هستم اثبات افتراهای مردم بشود. حضرات سوار شش نفر بوشهر تشریف  
برده اند. چهار نفر همراه هستند. تعلیقه ای هم از بزرگ ایشان از منزل دالکی رسید جوف است. تا حال که با کمال محبت  
سلوک نموده اند، بعد را هم هر چه مقدر است خواهد شد. بهیچ وجه اضطرابی فرموده باشید، که کل تهمت بوده. و در  
وقت حضور عرض خواهم نمود. ولی اخبار ساعت ورود را فرموده باشید قبله گاهان معظم را هم که در این زحمت افتاده

اند عرض سلام ابلاغ دارید

مورخه دوشنبه ۲۴ ج ۲

سنه ۱۲۶۱



**Letter of Muḥammad Khán, the Officer in Charge, to the Báḅ, Transcribed from a  
Typed Copy (for English translation, see footnote 9)**

یا خیر الحافظین... عریضه را به نظر شریفه جناب سلاله السادات و

النجبا

قبله گاهی آقانی میرزا علی محمد مشرف

صاحباً قبله گاهای زید فضله العالی

عرض می شود انشاء الله تعالی ظل مرحمت آن قبله گاه بر سر این داعی

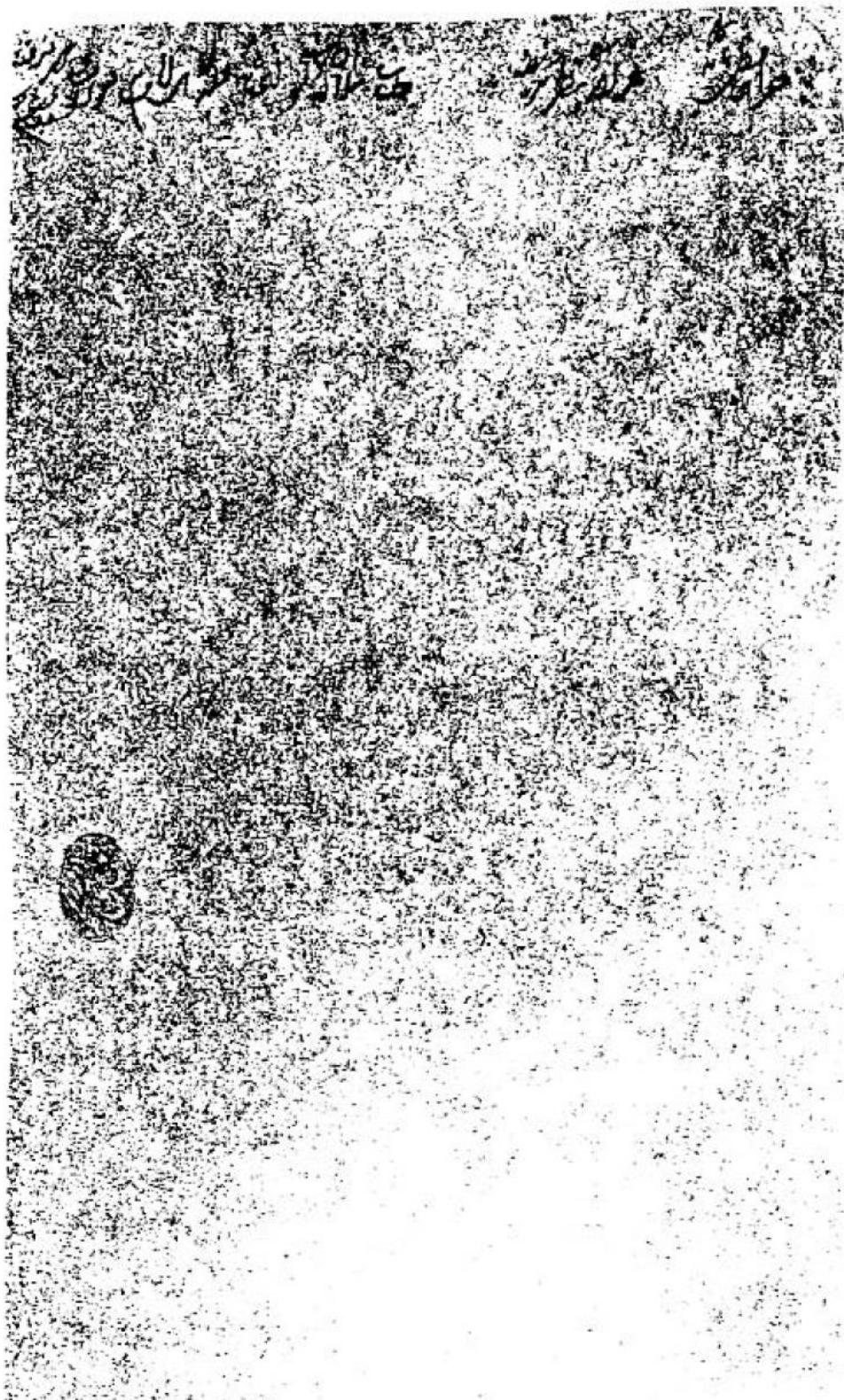
مستدام باد برب العباد

بعد از عرض عبودیت معروض می دارد که اولاً بسیار شایق ملاقات دست بوسی بودم ممکن نشد که به خدمت مشرف شوم. خواهید بخشید. ملتمس دعا به خدمت آن صاحب هستم. در ثانی حسب الحکم سرکار بندگان نواب ذیشان خداوند نعمت صاحب اختیار مأمور بودم که در خدمت شما باشم در شیراز که آن صاحب را در حضور مبارک برده باشم. الحمد لله که امر بطریق خوبی و به وضع خوشی امر گذشت. از صدقه سر جدت این طور شد که خجالت در خدمت شما واقع نشد الحال به اخبار خود آن صاحب قبله گاه حضرات غلامان سرکاری که در خدمت آن صاحب هستند که خدمت بشما نمایند. تا به منزل مقصد. واجب بود به خدمت عرض شد. زیاده بی ادبی نشد. خدمتی باشد آماده و ملتمس دعاء السلام علیکم و رحمة

الله و برکاته

سجع (مهر) عبده الراجی محمد ((۴))





'Ahd-i-A'lá, pp. 148-149