

Baha'u'llah's Disclosure of His Station

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"The onrushing force of the Holy Spirit produced, at the time of revelation, awe-inspiring physical effects on Bahá'u'lláh. An ordinary human being becomes overwhelmed when he receives news of exceptional import: how much more, then, would the human temple of the Manifestation of God be affected when it becomes the channel through which the Holy Spirit of God flows to mankind. No one except His amanuensis was allowed to be present at the time of revelation, but occasionally some the believers were permitted to remain for a short time. Those who received this privilege witnessed a special glory and radiance which emanated from Him. So dazzling was His transfiguration that they found themselves unable to gaze on His face."⁽¹⁾ For many, to merely be in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, was enough to recognize His station as the Prophet of God for this Day. To others, they abhorred even the possibility of having proofs shown to them, for fear of their power being taken away. To have had the opportunity to witness the outpouring of God's verses was often a bounty too glorious to withstand. Bahá'u'lláh spent His lifetime being a vessel to God's latest Revelation and even longer disclosing that station to the world.

While in Tehran in the Siyah-Chal, the Most Great Prison, God disclosed His mission to Bahá'u'lláh. His first Tablet was revealed in the form of a poem in Persian. *Rashh-i-Ama*, which denotes blessings pouring down from the rank of the Unknowable Essence, was a beautiful poem in which Bahá'u'lláh revealed His station through allusive and mystical language. In this way the early believers were protected from persecution and the unbelievers would simply view these writings for their beauty. Many of His earlier writings were conveyed in this way for the protection of the, then, Babis.

The rapidity with which Bahá'u'lláh was able to reveal divinely inspired verses, the voluminous quantity of the Tablets, the ease with which they flowed, their profound meaning, and their ability to quicken and transform souls, all attributed to the truth of His mission.

Bahá'u'lláh often referred to Himself as God in many of His tablets, in terms of His own attributes, rather than His essence. In the *Hidden Words* He states, "O My Friends! ... Prefer not your will to Mine, never desire that which I have not desired for you, and approach Me not with lifeless hearts, defiled with worldly desires and cravings."⁽²⁾ One can see how Bahá'u'lláh and God can be referred to interchangeably as "Me" in this quote. The physical aspects of "approaching", as well as the necessity of the individual to cleanse his soul, convey the dual aspects of human nature. The numerous references to "I" and "Me" in this form and Bahá'u'lláh's ease, in terms of relating to Himself in

this manner, further to proclaim His station.

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Even though many of Bahá'u'lláh's writings were revealed before His formal declaration in the Ridvan Garden, we can see how He was subtly telling the Babis of His station. He went so far as to even admonish them and gave them means by which they could further their own spiritual journeys. In the Madinat-u'r-Rida, or City of Radiant Acquiescence, He refers to Himself in these terms, "In truth, in this tablet the dove warbles the songs of everlasting life and speaks to you from the kingdoms of the spirit. Herein is guidance and a reminder to the believers. Thus does God single out for His compassion whomever He pleases, and reveals to you from the heaven of glory mighty and wondrous fruits." In His instructions He tells us that "radiant acquiescence has infinite stages. We shall instruct you in them by means of the words God makes to flow from my pen. This shall enable you to dispense with all that the ancients and moderns possess."⁽³⁾ We can see by these examples that Bahá'u'lláh took His directions from God, and that by turning to Bahá'u'lláh and following His counsels, we are treading in the path of the righteous.

On the Eve of His declaration the Kitab-i-Iqan, or Book of Certitude, was revealed in just two days and two nights. The Bab foretold that the Promised One would complete the unfinished text of the Persian Bayan. This Book was in answer to specific questions by the maternal uncle of the Bab, Haji Mirza Siyyid Muhammad, who was yet to become a believer of his nephew's station. First He let it be known that "No man shall attain the shores of the ocean of true understanding except he be detached from all that is in heaven and on earth..."⁽⁴⁾ He then went on to explain that sufferings were heaped upon all of the Prophets, that man blindly follows their clergy - rejecting the Manifestations, and that man looks for a literal fulfillment to prophecies. He further explains that our recognition of the Manifestations is not dependent upon knowledge and offers the qualities of a true seeker. Only after a thorough investigation of the station of the Bab does Bahá'u'lláh bring any reference to Himself. "By God! This Bird of Heaven, now dwelling upon the dust, can, besides these melodies, utter a myriad songs, and is able, apart from these utterances, to unfold innumerable mysteries....Let the future disclose the hour when the Brides of inner meaning, will, as decreed by the Will of God, hasten forth, unveiled, out of their mystic mansions, and manifest themselves in the ancient realm of being."⁽⁵⁾

Once Bahá'u'lláh reveals His station in the Garden of Ridvan on 12 April 1863, His Tablets openly infer to His being the "One whom God

shall make manifest" as stated by the Bab. At this time He must also carry the burden of the sufferings poured upon Him by the covenant breakers and those who oppose and disregard Him as the Manifestation of God. Mirza Yahya, the younger half brother of Bahá'u'lláh, had been named by the Bab as the nominal head of the Babi community. Thus being, he proclaimed himself the successor of the Bab and a prophet, as well. Mirza Yahya did much to attempt to harm the Cause and even tried to have Bahá'u'lláh murdered. Many of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets are in defense of false accusations, as well as further advice to His devout followers. He encourages them to be steadfast in their faith and detached from all save Him. He reminds them to purify their hearts so that the qualities and attributes of God may shine forth from them, as well: that they must go out with stainless character and live the message of God for this day with complete sacrifice, and courage in the face of martyrdom. In spite of His constant proclamation Bahá'u'lláh warns the believers initially not to divulge His

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being the Prophet of God, for fear that the spiritually weak would be unable to withstand its glory.

As Bahá'u'lláh began to let His glorious station be known, He also continually encouraged the followers, and rebuked those who opposed His Cause. In so doing He stated that nothing would redeem them save coming under the banner of His Faith. This is true of humankind in any age - to follow the Manifestation of God for that time in history. The believers must, under all circumstances, be united as one soul in many bodies. To do other than this would cause disunity, not only amongst the believers, but to the Cause of God, as well.

Bahá'u'lláh, in His infinite wisdom, revealed His station in stages to humanity. First, was His declaration in the Garden of Ridvan in 1863 to an assemblage of His family and closest companions. Over a period of the following 10 years, Bahá'u'lláh disclosed His message to the Babis, strengthening and unifying that community. With the downfall of Mirza Yahya and the unity of the Bahá'í community he embarked on a proclamation to the world through its kings and leaders. His first Tablet is the Suriy-i-Muluk, series or Tablet of Kings. In it He rebukes them for not recognizing either Himself or the Bab, and for not preventing His persecution. Interestingly too, He advises them on the attributes of one in leadership. "Lay not aside the fear of God.....Observe the injunctions laid upon you in His Book.....Tread ye the path of justice...compose your differences and reduce your armaments...and take heed not to outstrip the bounds of moderation....Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. If ye pay no heed unto the counsels...Divine chastisement shall assail you from every direction."(6) In this Tablet He further admonishes the

Sultan of Turkey, who caused Him to be confined to Adrianople and later to Akka, for leaving his affairs to unworthy ministers and warns him that those who disregard God will also disregard their king. He lovingly counsels the Sultan to put his trust in God, bring himself to account each day and be bountiful. His address continues to the ministers of the Sultan, the French Ambassador in Constantinople, the Persian Ambassador and religious leaders of that community. In so doing, He not only chastises them, but offers them advice and the opportunity to recognize Him as The Prophet of God for this Day.

"Rememberest thou not God's warning uttered in times past, that thou mayest be of them that heed His warning? It behoveth not..... to swell with pride before God, and before His loved ones, to proudly scorn them, and be filled with disdainful arrogance, Nay, rather it behoveth thee and those like thee to submit yourselves to them Who are the Manifestations of unity of God, and defer humbly to the faithful, who have forsaken their all for the sake of God."(6) These beautiful Tablets disclose Bahá'u'lláh's submissiveness to God and the majesty of His station. His willingness and ability to proclaim His knowledge to the kings and leaders of the world is further proof of His mission of The Manifestation of God.

Bahá'u'lláh makes a most profoundly challenging proclamation in the Tablet to the Shah, when He states, "Would that the world-adorning wish of His Majesty might decree that this Servant be brought face to face with the divines of the age, and produce proofs and testimonies in the presence of His Majesty the Shah!"(7) He willingly offers to prove the absolute truth of His

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Mission and sincerity of His declaration. This, of course, the Shah does not accept, and only advances His cause.

In studying the early Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh one discovers love and wisdom emanating from every word, like a beautiful fragrance wafting from a rose garden. The inability of one to not hearken immediately and cling to the hem of His robe only acknowledges how firmly the soul can, seemingly, become detached from God. The ego, ones lust for power, self will, or mental illness can bar ones view from the truth. But, when truth is proclaimed, shouted, demanded to be recognized, and still goes unrealized, a truth more powerful and lofty than the human mind could create, one knows that a deep and dark detachment between the mind and the heart exists. Bahá'u'lláh IS the King of Glory, the promised one of all ages for this day, a manifestation of God, my heart, my soul, my refuge. I cry out with pain at the indignities showered upon Him and the early believers and pray for the willingness, strength and ability to further promote the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

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