

Tablet of Splendors: Tablet study outline

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Name of Tablet in Arabic or Persian:

Lawh-i-Ishráqát

Translation into English:

Tablet of Splendors

Significance of Name:

Ishráqát (sing. ishraq) in English translates to "effulgences," "radiant lights," or "splendors," so presumably the title refers to the splendors of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Tablet was revealed in:

The tablet begins in Arabic and then reverts to Persian

Name of Recipient:

Jalil-i-Khu'i, a coppersmith and a well-known believer from Adhirbayjan who broke the covenant after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh

Reason for Revelation of the Tablet:

Bahá'u'lláh answers a number of questions Jalil-i-Khu'i asked of Him. As well, if Bahá'u'lláh foresaw Khu'i's defection, then perhaps He was attempting to bolster his commitment to the Covenant.

Questions asked that are answered in Tablet:

Other than the subject of infallibility, Taherzadeh doesn't list the exact questions asked. However, based on the content of the Tablet, one can compile a list of possible questions and/or issues on which Khu'i might have asked for clarification. These could include:

Does God have a peer? Can He be comprehended?

What is the significance and the role of the Báb, and what is His Most Great Announcement?

What is the choice given the people of the world?

What is the Most Great Infallibility?

What prayer is revealed for when one feels enraptured by the verses and bounty of God?

Has the day of judgment come?

What are heaven and hell?

What is revealed about the fear of God?

About dissension and conflict?

About trustworthiness?

How should we regard the people of the world?

What is the importance of religion? What is meant by the

phrase "light of religion"?

Whose responsibility is the establishment of the Lesser Peace?

What is the importance of obedience? Consultation and compassion? Reward and punishment?

Of praiseworthy deeds; upright character? What is their relationship to fear of God?

What guidance is provided to governments?

Who chooses the world language? What is its purpose?

Who is responsible for the education of children?

What is the role of the House of Justice?

Regarding interest on loans?

What are some barriers to recognizing the Manifestation of God?

What signs and prophecies given in previous Dispensations have been fulfilled by the coming of Bahá'u'lláh?

How should positions be filled in government and situations of trust?

(compiled from student outlines)

Date of Revelation:

The exact date of this Tablet is not known. However, independent researchers and the House of Justice have concluded that it was likely revealed around 1885. Further notes and calculations on this can be found at <http://bahai-library.com/uhj/Ishráqát.html>

Place of Revelation:

This Tablet was revealed while at Bahji, outside of Akká

Role of Amanuensis or Secretary:

not stated

Other Tablets revealed at about the same time:

Some Tablets revealed around this time include: Bishárát (Glad-Tidings); Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (1891); Ishráqát (Splendors); Kalimát-i-Firdawsiyyih (Words of Paradise); Kitáb'i'Ahd (the Book of the Covenant) (1892); Lawh-i-Aqdas (The Most Holy Tablet); Lawh-i-Ard-i-Ba (Tablet of the Land of Ba) (1879); Lawh-i-Burhán (Tablet of the Proof); Lawh-i-Dunyá (Tablet of the World); Lawh-i-Karmel (Tablet of Carmel) (1891); Lawh-i-Maqsúd (Tablet of Maqsúd); Lawh-i-Siyyid Mihdíy-i-DaHájí; Súriy-i-Vafa (Tablet to Vafa); Tablet of Trustworthiness (circa 1879); Tablet revealed in the house in the Garden of Ridván; Tablet to The Times of London (1891); Tajallíyát (Effulgences) (1885-86); Tarazat (Ornaments)

Style, subject, and genre of the Tablet: [?]

I. Tone of Tablet

1. Tablets with the tone of command and authority.

II. Subject Covered by Tablet

2. Writings in which laws and ordinances have been enjoined

for this age and laws of the past abrogated.

4. Tablets concerning matters of government and world order, and those addressed to the kings.

6. Tablets exhorting men to education, goodly character and divine virtues.

7. Tablets dealing with social teachings.

III. Literary Genre of Tablet:

1. Letter to an individual.

Voice of Tablet: [?]

Bahá'u'lláh

Outline Contents of Tablet:

1. Call to the people of the Bayán to accept the new Manifestation foretold by the Báb.

2. An elucidation of the principle of infallibility.

3. A presentation of a theme of the Kitáb-i-Íqán — the response of the majority of humankind to the Manifestation and His Revelation.

Throughout the tablet the blessings of recognition of the Manifestation as juxtaposed with the barriers that prevent humankind from attaining those blessings.

4. A discussion of various prophecies of previous Dispensations that are fulfilled by the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

5. A discussion of personal virtues and behaviors enjoined on humankind by the Manifestation — chiefly justice and trustworthiness. A prayer for increased strength, detachment, and steadfastness.

6. A listing of the nine Ishraqs (splendors):

a) Those in power must have a profound regard for religion,

for it is the means of all human prosperity and progress.

b) The Lesser Peace is necessary to humankind's tranquillity

and advancement.

c) Everyone must obey God's commandments.

d) For fear of God, humankind must exhibit upright character and perform deeds of service.

e) Governments must rule with justice and equity.

- f) There must be a universal language that will bind all mankind together.
 - g) Education is of paramount importance.
 - h) The House of Justice is given grave responsibilities for the well-being of humankind and is to be obeyed.
 - i) The purpose of religion is to establish unity and concord among humankind.
7. Humankind must judge with fairness and equity what has been revealed and follow the teachings God has sent.

Principal themes of the Tablet:

See above, "questions answered" and "outline of contents"

Tablet's relationship to any other tablets:

1) The Tablet of Ishráqát enhances and explains in greater detail many of the teachings of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, such as the themes of The Most Great Infallibility, the observance of God's holy commandments, and the importance of praiseworthy deeds.

2) Bahá'u'lláh explicitly makes the eighth Ishraq an addendum to the Aqdas:

"This passage, now written by the Pen of Glory, is accounted as part of the Most Holy Book: The men of God's House of Justice have been charged with the affairs of the people...."

3) Sen McGlinn, in the letter posted at Baháí-library.org/uhj/Ishráqát.html, notes that "the passage regarding interest on p. 133 [of _Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh_] is apparently "copied over from the earlier tablet to Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin, leaving his name in place in the final blessing." [see item #7, below]

4) One could also note that, while the themes of the Ishráqát are touched upon in many other Tablets, this Tablet expresses them in some of the "choicest" quotations (Taherzadeh vol. 4, p. 146)

The Research Dept. of the Bahá'í World Centre, in the letter cited above, adds a few items (numbering and editing mine): "In the course of trying to determine the date of the revelation of the Tablet of Ishráqát, we gleaned the following information which may be of interest to Mr. McGlinn concerning the structure of this Tablet":

5) Included in the Tablet of Ishráqát is a quotation from a Tablet Bahá'u'lláh had earlier revealed in honour of Hájí Muhammad-Ibráhím concerning some of the Islamic prophecies about the Day of God. He explains to Jalil-i-Khu'i that These are verses We sent down previously, and We have sent them

unto thee, that thou mayest be acquainted with what their lying tongues have spoken, when God came unto them with might and sovereignty. (_Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh..._, 117-9)

6) The passage on Trustworthiness is also found in the Tablet of Tarazat and in a Tablet addressed to Hájí Mírzá Buzurg-i-Afnán (and perhaps in other Tablets as well). This is the passage in which Bahá'u'lláh states: "One day of days We repaired unto Our Green Island". (ibid. 121-2)

7) Bahá'u'lláh responds to Jalil-i-Khu'i's question concerning "interest and profit on gold and silver" by quoting from a Tablet that had been previously revealed in honour of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin. (ibid. 132-3)"

Biography or bio note of the recipient of the Tablet:

Taherzadeh gives a brief biography of Jalil-i-Khu'i in _Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh_ vol. 4, pp. 145-6:

The Tablet of Ishráqát was addressed to Jalil-i-Khu'i, a coppersmith who lived in the province of Adhirbayjan and was a well-known believer. It was revealed in answer to his questions, particularly those on the subject of supreme infallibility. He had the inestimable privilege of attaining the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and became the recipient of many bounties from Him.

But Jalil deprived himself of all the blessings which were showered on him, and perished spiritually. After the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, he violated the Covenant and joined hands with Muhammad-'Ali, the Arch-breaker of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. He was influenced by Jamál-i-Burújirdí, who was foremost among the Covenant-breakers in Persia and had the ambition of becoming the undisputed leader of the community in that country. ... About four years after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, Jamál went to Adhirbayjan, appointed Jalil as his agent in the area and urged him to meet the believers secretly and sow the seeds of Covenant-breaking among them. Jalil was further encouraged when Muhammad-'Alí despatched to Adhirbayjan a series of letters against the Centre of the Covenant.

In the meantime the Matter sent Ibn-i-Abhar, one of the Hands of the Cause, to the area to assist the believers to remain steadfast in the Covenant. Jalil failed to make appreciable headway in his subversive activities; the believers in Adhirbayjan stood firm, rallied around 'Abdu'l-Bahá and defended the Cause of God heroically from the onslaught of the unfaithful.

In AH 1315 (AD 1897-8) 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a lengthy Tablet known as the Lawh-i-Hizar Bayti (Tablet of One Thousand Verses) to Jalil. In this celebrated Tablet He showers upon him much loving-kindness, exhorts him to faithfulness in the Cause, explains in detail the authenticity of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, sets forth convincing proofs in support of

His argument and provides one of the most illuminating insights into the subject of the Covenant as a whole. ... Writing at a time of great agitation and danger in the Holy Land and wishing not to add fuel to the fire already lit by the Covenant-breakers, which threatened to engulf the community of the believers, the Master sent a trusted servant of the Cause, Mírzá Mahmud i-Zarghani, to Tabriz, the capital of Adhirbayjan, with instructions to read aloud the full contents of the Tablet to Jalil, but not to hand him a copy. Jalil heard this highly enlightening Tablet in full but, alas, the lust of leadership had blinded his eyes and stopped his ears. He later witnessed the futility of his efforts and died in ignominy.

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