

Wondrous Book: Tablet study outline

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Name of Tablet in Arabic or Persian:

Kitáb-i-Badí

Translation into English:

"The Wondrous (or "Unique") Book." This book has not been translated into English, but a short paragraph appeared in *_The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh_*, 124

Significance of Name:

Not known. But we do know that it must have been wondrous in its effect for at least some of its readers: Hájí Mírzá Haydar-Alí, the famous early Bahá'í teacher, wrote of his trials in learning to accept the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Then, presumably referring at least in part to the Kitáb-i-Badí, he says, "two holy Tablets from the Blessed Beauty...arrived in honour of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin and Áqá Muhammad-Alí-i-Tambaku-Furush from Isfahan. These Tablets captivated me and I became enamoured of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh..." (quoted in Taherzadeh, *_The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh_*, 75) (Aqa Muhammad-'Alí was from Isfahan — see *_Memoirs of the Faithful_*, 23)

Tablet was revealed in:

Written mainly in Persian, but it contains many passages in Arabic.

Name of Recipient:

Mírzá Mihdí-i-Gilani (A Bábí of "perfidy and hypocrisy" — Taherzadeh vol II 370)

Reason for Revelation of the Tablet:

Bahá'u'lláh revealed this Tablet in response to about 36 objections to and criticisms of the Faith Mírzá Mihdí made to his friend Áqá Muhammad-Alí-i-Tambaku-Furush, a companion of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople. Mírzá Mihdí had written a discourteous letter, probably with the help of Siyyid Muhammad, to this faithful Bahá'í in an attempt to weaken his faith. Áqá Muhammad-Alí showed the letter to Bahá'u'lláh, Who revealed the Kitáb-i-Badí in response to the many charges, written to defend His new Faith and mission.

Questions asked that are answered in Tablet (if known):

There were about 36 original objections to which Bahá'u'lláh was responding, some of which He also quoted in His response; I don't know if any were actual questions.

Date of Revelation:

Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Tablet in two-hour sessions on three consecutive days, sometime between mid-1867 and mid-1868. (see *_A Basic Bahá'í Chronology_*, 78)

Place of Revelation:

Adrianople

Role of Amaneuensis or Secretary:

Like those Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh written to appear as though they were the words of His secretary Mírzá Áqá Jan, this Tablet was written in the words of Áqá Muhammad-Alí but was in reality revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Other Tablets revealed at about the same time:

Lawh-i-Sultán, First Tablet to Napoleon III, Súriy-i-Mulúk, Lawh-i-Salmán, Súriy-i-Ghusn, Súriy-i-Ra'ís, and others.

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

Style: Tablets with the tone of command and authority.

Subject:

1. Writings dealing with interpretation of the Old Scriptures, religious beliefs and doctrines of the past.
2. Tablets dealing with subjects of government and world order, and those addressed to the kings.
3. Tablets exhorting men to education, goodly character and divine virtues.

Genre: Essay or book revealed as a letter to an individual.

Voice of Tablet: [?]

Bahá'u'lláh, speaking in the apparent words of Áqá Muhammad-Alí.

Outline Contents of Tablet:

Bahá'u'lláh gives the reader remarkable insights into the prophecies of the Báb concerning 'Him whom God will make manifest'. It is, in fact, the major part of this book.

He clearly demonstrates that the advent of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh was the ultimate aim of the Báb and makes it clear that the purpose of the Báb in revealing himself was none other than to prepare His followers for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

This book is the key to many of the mysteries which are to be found in the Revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

It gives an account of some of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings as well as some aspects of the history of His Cause.

Bahá'u'lláh refutes the objections and accusations of Mírzá Mihdí with such convincing proofs that the reader becomes utterly overwhelmed by the irrefutable power of His reasoning.

Bahá'u'lláh at times uses very strong language in condemning the actions of Mírzá Mihdí and his master Siyyid Muhammad.

He states that no man has the vision or the authority to condemn another soul.

Bahá'u'lláh condemns the center of rebellion, Mírzá Yahyá and stigmatizes him as:

The idol of the Bábí community

States that all his accomplishments were in the field of deceit and lies

Discloses the extent of his shallowness and ignorance

Declares that his words contained the essence of falsehood

Refers to the fact that with the help of Siyyid Muhammad he had disseminated

some of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings among the believers in his own name
Explains that He did not expel Mírzá Yahyá from his presence until he
publicly rose up against the Cause of God
Denounces him for his malicious and slanderous letters"

A considerable part of this work relates to the circumstances of the rebellion
of Mírzá Yahyá and Siyyid Muhammad.

Bahá'u'lláh states that no other prophet of God would appear before a
thousand years had passed.

Bahá'u'lláh recounts many outstanding events which took place during His
sojourn in Baghdad and Adrianople.

He describes the devotion and self-sacrifice of some of His followers, and
dwells on the sufferings which were inflicted on Him by the hand of Mírzá
Yahyá.

Mírzá Yahyá's most flagrant crime was the repugnant violation of the honor
of the Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh extols the virtues and exalted station of Fatimih-Bagum the
mother of the Báb, and His wife Khadijih Bagum, designates them as the Most
Virtuous among Women and enjoins His loved ones to venerate and honor them.

List the principal themes of the Tablet...

Shoghi Effendi summarizes the theme of the Kitáb-i-Badí simply as saying that
it was written in His defense (_God Passes By_, 172). One student offers the
following outline of themes:

The major part of the book is devoted to the exalted theme of 'Him whom God
shall make manifest.'

This book is to be regarded as a key to many of the mysteries which are to be
found in the Revelations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. It gives an account of
Bahá'u'lláh's teachings as well as some aspects of the history of His Cause.
That the advent of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh was the ultimate aim of the
Báb and that the Báb's purpose for revealing Himself was none other than to
prepare His followers for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'u'lláh affirms His statement that no other manifestation of God would
appear before a thousand years had passed.

Bahá'u'lláh condemns Mírzá Yahyá and refutes his claims to be the
appointed successor of the Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh condemns the actions of Mírzá Mihdí and his master, Siyyid
Muhammad in various terms.

Bahá'u'lláh invites Mírzá Mihdí to attain his presence and witness the
rapidity with which the Words of God are revealed in this day.

Bahá'u'lláh extols the virtues of Fatimih Bagum the mother of the Báb and
his wife Khadijih-Bagum and designates them as The Most Virtuous among Women.

Another student adds two more points:

Bahá'u'lláh refutes Mírzá Yahyá's claim to be the appointed successor of
the Báb, and He makes it clear that the only thing which the Báb promised His
followers was the advent of the Revelation of 'He Whom God shall make manifest'

Bahá'u'lláh clarifies the position of the 'Mirrors' (Mírzá Yahyá used to use this title assigned to him so as to impress the followers of the Báb). Bahá'u'lláh states that the 'Mirrors' radiance depended upon their turning to the source of light, 'He Whom God shall make manifest' (Bahá'u'lláh)

Tablet's relationship to other tablets:

The most obvious point of comparison between this and another Tablet is the Kitáb-i-Íqán. Shoghi Effendi, in fact, even says that the Kitáb-i-Badí "corresponds" to the Íqán (_God Passes By_, 172). The Kitáb-i-Badí is similar to the Íqán in its themes of apology and defense, as well as in its great length. It differs in that (1) it is twice as long; (2) it was written, not to one of faithful who asked sincere questions (the uncle of the Báb), but to an enemy who insulted Bahá'u'lláh (Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Gilani, who had outwardly accepted the Báb but attacked and maligned Bahá'u'lláh; (3) it the Íqán defends the Mission of the Báb, while the Kitáb-i-Badí defends the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh; (4) the Báb's uncle was convinced by the Tablet addressed to him and accepted the Faith wholeheartedly, whereas Mírzá Mihdí remained unfaithful.

As well, one student compiled an interesting set of notes of parallels with other Tablets:

The theme of the rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá, opposition, treachery and wickedness:

Madinatu'r-Ridá- Admonishment of people for rejecting their Creator.

Bahá'u'lláh calls on the people of the Bayán to enter His Ark.

Lawh-i-Fitnih - Bahá'u'lláh references the rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá and tests associated with the Day of God.

Lawh-i-Ayyub - Bahá'u'lláh refers to the rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá.

Súriy-i-Asháb - He warns the Bábí community that this is not the day of questioning, for he who has been hidden is now come and rebukes them for having failed to witness His glory and omnipotence.

Tablet of Ahmad (Persian) Bahá'u'lláh admonishes the Bábí's who are trying "to prevent the deathless Beauty of My sacred and glorious countenance from being unveiled to men's eyes."

Lawh-i-Bahá - Bahá'u'lláh condemns the actions of the people of the Bayán.

The theme of the Proclamation of His Mission and revealing of his exalted station: A. Rashh-i-'Amá - The unveiling of His station.

Sahífiy-i-Shattiyyih - Theme of acceptance of the Manifestation of God.

Súriy-i-Qadir - He calls the peoples of the world to turn their hearts toward the effulgent rays of His revelation, be illumined by them, and to witness the manifestation of this name within themselves.

Lawh-i-Huriyyih - Bahá'u'lláh reveals His unique station. E. Tablet of the Holy Mariner - He discloses the greatness of His station and affirms that He is incomparable in the entire creation and is its omnipotent ruler.

Lawh-i-Hawdaj - The greatness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Mathnavi-i-Mubarak - Bahá'u'lláh speaks to the Greatness of His Cause.

Súriy-i-Asháb - He refers to Himself and His Revelation in many ways.

Tablet of Ahmad (Arabic) - Bahá'u'lláh is unmistakably declaring himself to be "Him whom God shall make manifest."

Biography or bio note:

Áqá Muhammad-Alí, the recipient of the original attacking letter, was honored with a chapter in Abdu'l-Bahá's *Memiors of the Faithful*, 23-25. He is also mentioned in Salmáni's *My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh*, but I couldn't find where. He is briefly mentioned in Taherzadeh's *Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* vol. 1, p. 287, vol. 2, p. 18, 69, 200, 373-373, 406, and Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Bahá'ulláh*, 75. Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Gilani, the recipient of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet, is discussed in *Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* vol. 2, 370, 381.

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