

The *Khutba al-Jidda* (The Literary Sermon at Jeddah) of the Báb

Text and Translation from INBA vol. 91:60–73

with reference to other selected sources

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The Arabic text

As yet there is no assured critical edition of the *Khutba al-Jidda*. Original manuscripts are uncommon and difficult to obtain. Three such manuscript texts of the *Khutba al-Jidda* are currently known to exist: 1) INBA 5006C, pp. 332–3; 2) INBA 3036C, pp. 494–6; and 3) the manuscript behind INBA 91, pp. 60–73. The Arabic text of the *Khutba al-Jidda* translated below is based on the latter largely legible Arabic manuscript currently in private hands (photocopy in my possession). It was this manuscript containing the full text of the *Khutba al-Jidda* that was photocopied in the mid-1970s and included in the privately published (in bound photocopied form) Manuscript Collection of the Iran National Bahá'í Archives (INBA), volume 91, pp. 60–73. A typed electronic version was sent to the present writer more than a decade ago from the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. The Arabic text of the *Khutba al-Jidda* set out below occasionally incorporates good corrective readings found in a number of printed citations (based on undisclosed manuscripts) of the *Khutba al-Jidda* contained in a few modern Bahá'í publications, including (see bibliography for details):

- *Taqwīm-i Tārīkh-i Amr* (1970), an annotated Bábí–Bahá'í chronology with a very brief citation (p. 24) from the *Khutba al-Jidda* by the late 'Abd al-Hamid Ishraq Khavari (d. 1971).
- *Muhádīrāt* (Khavari 1987, see vol. 2, pp. 729–31).
- *Hadrat-i Nuqtáyi úlá* of Muhammad 'Ali- Faydi (pp. 142–5).
- *Ahd-i A'lá* of Abu'l-Qasim Afnán (pp. 86–7).

The several significant variant citations of the *Khutba al-Jidda* printed in 'Abu'l-Qasim Afnán's *Ahd-i A'lá* and a few other printed Bahá'í books cannot be fully dealt with here. Though the text behind the INBA 91 manuscript and (the mostly brief) printed citations of the *Khutba al-Jidda* have obvious copyists' errors and occasional textual difficulties, it remains possible to generate a reasonably sound semi-critical text with a fairly small percentage of uncertain readings. It is clear that quite a few of the variant readings in the aforementioned sources result from copyist lapses and/or varied attempts to read a difficult, unpointed original manuscript(s). Other errors seem to have resulted from a failure to recognize the Quranic basis of certain Arabic phrases in the *Khutba al-Jidda* or to correctly pick up on the vocabulary and style of the Báb. The unavailability of most of the extant manuscripts has prevented anything like a fully critical edition being set forth or translated. I am confident, however, that both the text and the still admittedly speculative and inadequate translation set out below are not too far from being reliable.¹

The *Khutba al-Jidda* (The Literary Sermon at Jeddah) of the Báb²

I

Verse 1

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praised be to God! who raised up the Celestial Throne (*al-'arsh*) upon the watery expanse (*al-má'*) and the atmosphere (*al-hawá'*) above the surface (*wajh*) of the watery expanse (*al-má'*). And he separated between these two through the word 'benefits' (*alá'*). Then he divided the firmaments from the sphere of the theophanic cloud (*'álam al-'amá'*). Betwixt these twain a division (*hifzan*) suggestive of the (Arabic) letter '*ha'*' (*al-há'*). And from this atmosphere (*al-hawá'*) there emerged the sinaitic tree (*shajarat al-si-ná'*), its subtle graciousness overshadowing the ocean of laudation (*bahr al-thaná'*) nigh the watchtower of the light of radiant glory (*li-matla' núr al-bahá'*) above the crimson thrones (*sará'ir al-hamrá'*). This that all might hearken through the dawning-place of the snow-white script (*khatt al-baydá'*) at the black horizon (*'ufq al-sawdá'*) unto the call of the crimson leaves (*waraqát al-hamrá'*) upon the green tree (*al-shajarat al-khudrá'*), [saying] 'God, there is no God except him, the Lord of the celestial throne (*al-'arsh*) and of the heavenly realm (*al-samá'*)'.

II

Verses 1–8

The divine theophany and the tripartite reality of the Báb

So be assured of that divine artistry (*sana'*) which is expressive of his wisdom (*hikmat*), the fullness of the divine handiwork evident in all things (*kull shay'*).

This to the end that every tongue might assuredly acknowledge the purpose of his power (*qudrat*) actualized through the theophanic manifestation (*zuhūr*) of his self-revelation (*tajiliyyat*) within the blessed tree upon Mount Sinai (*nūr al-síná*) disclosing thereby but a token of the crimson pillar (*rukn al-hamrá*), 'God, no God is there save him'. And he caused to be made manifest through his power what is evident in the essential realities of all existing things (*dhawát al-mawju-dát*) at the midmost heart of preexistence (*min buhbúhiyyat al-qidam*) according to the deep gnosis of that essential reality (*ma'rifat al-dhát*) which is expressive of the divine Essence by virtue of the essential detachedness [from the divine Essence] of the divine names and attributes (*'an al-asmá' wa'l-sifát*).³ This to the end that the realities of the inmost hearts might diligently persevere with their coming to realize the intention of the providential purpose of the divine Will (*ni'at al-mashiyyat*) expressed by virtue of the logos-word of creative genesis, 'God, there is no God save him' (*lá iláha illá huwa*).

And he did subsequently stipulate, on account of the realization of the foreordained scheme (*al-muqaddar*), the knowledge of the ocean of the divine foreordination (*al-muqaddar*) through the surging waves of triplicity (*tamtám al-tathlith*) expressive of the multiplicity of the waves upon the oceanic expanse of the crucifix (*abhár al-salib*). This did cause the Christians to unhesitatingly perceive the upright letter 'alif' (*alif al-qá'im*) positioned betwixt two streams (*al-nahrayn*) on account of his [the Báb's] likeness being even as twofold images (*al-mithlayn*) in the form characterized by dual [alphabetical] counterparts (*shakl fi'l-ukhtayn*). And this was such that they might assuredly come to realization respecting the dawning-place of the breezes of the sinaitic morn [the Báb] which are expressive of the [truth of the] multiplicity of the waves in the watery expanse (*al-má*). Persons would thus assuredly come to glorify God, the Lord of the cosmic ocean, despite the issue of the multiple waves of the brackish abyss (*al-lujjat al-ujáj*) which lie beyond the snow-white logos-word (*kalimát al-baydá*), situated within the hollow depth of the seventh sea (*qa'r yamm al-sábi*) which emerges from the green ocean. God, no God is there except him.

III

Verses 1-4

Renewed creation, the covenant and the eschatological theophany

Then came to pass, subsequent to the decree of the divine destiny (*hukm al-qadar*), the sea of the divine foreordination (*al-qidá*) through the 'letter' [locus] of the creative genesis (*bi'l-harf al-badá*). This such that the inmost hearts of all existing things might of a certainty be made to sparkle brilliantly through the watery expanse (*al-má*) which sprinkles forth from this fiercely billowing, yet brackish sea (*al-bahr al-mawwáj al-ujáj*). This indeed that all existing microcosmic entities of the world of creation (*kull dharrát al-khalq*) might rise ascendant nigh the glorious transfiguration of that crimson light (*'ind tajallí nūr al-hamrá*) which is expressive of the justice of God and his wisdom. Wherefore shall there assuredly be a speaking forth

through proximity to the glorious transfiguration of the snow-white light; a primordial declaration (*kalimát al-dharr*) distinct from that of the microcosmic entities (*al-dharr*), namely, 'God, no God is there save him. So glorified be God, the Creator, the Wondrous, the Separate, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, the Preexistent.'

IV

Verses 1-4

The folly of the Ishráqí philosophers, followers of Shiháb al-Dín Suhrawardí (d. 587 AH/1191 CE)

It was the case that the Ishráqí sages (*hukamá' al-tashríq*) described the depth of the fourfold [world of nature] (*al-tarbí'*) subsequent to the divine foreordination (*al-qidá*) of [the authority of] the divine Will (*al-mashiyya*) through the decree of the threefold reality (*hukm al-tathlith*) and its counterpart [= the Báb]. They [the Ishráqí sages] thus speculated regarding the principle of materiality (*al-turáb*) which [they regarded] as something other than what God destined for hellfire (*al-nár*). They supposed that the realities of the divine attributes (*haqá'iq al-sifát*) are other than the knowledge [sanctioned] in the Book (*al-kitáb*). And they [further vainly] supposed that they are ones well-situated on the path of God and persons who have attained a great restraint. And upon this rock-strewn [Ishráqí] path and tortuous road these [Ishráqí] sages (*hukamá'*) went astray, being ones fit for hellfire according to the dictates of fate (*hukm al-qadr*) and according to an extent predestined.

So they [the Ishráqí philosophers] ultimately attained a position contrary to the decree of God (*hukm Alláh*) in the realm of things veiled away (*ard al-mustatir*). They taught that they stood upright in the shadow of the sun and the moon. Nay, on the contrary! for thy Lord testifies to the fact that they are indeed wayward and are to be numbered among such dubious sophists (*al-mushubbahín*) as are reckoned among the untruthful.

V

Verses 1-10

Sound theology and waywardness of the followers of Mullá Sadrá (d. 1050 AH/1640 CE)

Say: God, the Lord of Creation is the supreme Creator (*abda'*) of everything (*fi kull shay'*), one beyond anthropomorphism (*hadd al-tashbiyya*) and utterly abstracted from fragmentation (*al-taqtí'*), perchance some soul might calumniate in the presence of the countenance of God (*tilqa' wajh Alláh*) through an [inappropriate] expression of union [with him] (*al-wasl*). He hath ever been one known on account of [his] justice (*bi'l-'adl*) as is evident in the loci of the Cause (*mawáqí' al-amr*) on the level of the divine bounty (*al-fadl*). This although the sight of the Sadriyyín [followers of Mullá Sadrá, d. 1050 AH/1640 CE] hath been blinded to the gnosis of

the Lord (*ma'rifat al-rabb*). They scattered abroad the scriptural tablets (*al-alwáh*) that were sent down in the Qur'an and failed to progress with the assistance of the custodians of the truth (*ahl al-haqq*). They [acquired naught but] what they had themselves written in their tablets (*alwáh*) such as the [Kitáb al-] Mashá'ir ('[Book of] Metaphysical Penetrations') and its like, involving an augmentation of intricacies (*daqá'iq zakwán*),⁴ issues complex (*ajrad*) and impenetrable (*khushn*).

Yet glorified be God! It is as if they fail to register the [clear] guidance of the Qur'an (*hukm al-Qur'án*) and proved unable to comprehend the dictates of the custodians of clear exposition (*ahl al-tibyán*). They make judgements respecting the gnosis (*ma'rifat*) of their Lord that are even as a judgement regarding the [existence of] water in trees (*al-má' fi'l-ashjár*)! So exalted be God above what is a calumny respecting the beneficent power of his Word (*al-muhsin fi kalámihi*) and with respect to his not encompassing every minutiae within the knowledge of God! They even strike a similitude about the divine Essence (*al-dhát*) [to the effect that] there is a negation of the All-Glorious [Godhead] (*kánafy al-abhá*) within the 'waves' (*al-amwáj*) [of the ocean of existence] or [an analogy] of 'water' (*al-má'*) subsumed nigh the alluring effect of 'ice' (*ta'áyn al-thalj*) on account of their similarity. God and the angels observe these philosophers (*al-hukamá'*) who have anthropomorphized themselves as signs of the Creator (*áyát al-khalq*) in the gnosis of the divine Essence (*bíma'rifat al-dhát*). And they [furthermore] subsume within themselves the [authority of] the Imams for they make decrees contrary to the decree of God in the Qur'an.

VI

Verses 1–18

The twin exponents of Shi'i Islamic wisdom, Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsá'i (d. 1241 AH/1826 CE) and Sayyid Kázim Rashtí (d. 1259 AH/1843 CE)

Verses 1–12

Since they were unaware of the decree issued by the people of clear exposition (*ahl al-bayán*) many of the [Shi'i] ulama (divines) imitated them [the Mullá Sadrá philosophers] in their pursuit of good deeds (*bi'l-ihsán*). This until the day dawned forth in splendour (*diyá'*) and the 'sun' and the 'moon' shed illumination on account of the verdict of recreation (*hukm al-inshá'*). [It was then that] These twain [= Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kázim] expounded for thee [the truth respecting] the [Shi'i] family of God (*Ál Alláh*) established in the gnosis of the regeneration (*ma'rifat al-ibdá'*) and discoursing at the very pinnacle of abstraction (*sadd al-inqitá'*), [in ways] all but beyond impenetrability (*qata' al-imtiná'*)!

And these twain [Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kázim] acquired the persona of their [the Shi'i family of God's] gnosis (*haykal al-ma'rifatihá*) as accords with whatsoever God had willed respecting their twofold reality (*haqq*). And these twain [Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kázim] did write with their two hands something of the import of the Qur'an [in the form of] scriptural tablets (*alwáh*), such as the tablet

setting forth the *fawá'id* (observations) (*lawh fi'l-fawá'id*) and the *lawámi'* (brilliances) among their writings (*lawámi' áthárihi*). This such that the inmost hearts of the people might be established through the deep observations implicit in their verses (*min fawá'id al-áyátihi*) and the radiance of the realities of the brilliances implicit in their writings (*min lawá'mi' áthárihi*).

And persons did follow these two in line with the dictates of destiny (*hukm al-qadr*), the people of innermost mystery (*ahl al-mustansir*) who thereby returned unto their pristine, God-bestowed human condition (*fitrat Alláh*) as stipulated in the Qur'an, on the level of that which is foreordained (*fi sha'n al-muqaddar*). So all such persons acquired for themselves their [foreordained] destiny (*nasib*) as accords with the decree implicit in the Book.

And these latter-day persons (*al-ákhirín*) did bear the calumny (*bi'l-iftirá'*) surrounding these twain [Shaykh Ahmad and Sayyid Kázim] as accords with that destiny which was other than something encompassed by the knowledge that concerns what is preordained ('*ilm al-wádi'*). This was after the likeness of such as did slacken, bereft of knowledge, before the chosen ones of God (*awliyá' Alláh*). They failed to [pay due attention to] a manifest book (*kitáb mubín*) such that the letter 'kaf' in the locus of the [real] cause (*al-káf fi mahall al-amr*) returned unto the sphere of his decree (*mintaqat hukm*) and the cycle of cycles (*dawr al-adwár*) [was initiated] with the onset of the day of God (*liyawm Alláh*) in a manner revolutionary (*fi sha'n badi'*).

This when the lights (*al-anwár*) did configure according to a transcendent mystery (*sirr maní'*) for these lights (*al-anwár*) dawned forth through the knowledge of the realm of the divine cloud (*min 'ilm al-'amá'*). Then [also] did the sinatic tree (*shajarat al-siná'*) cry out in the ocean of laudation (*bahr al-thaná'*) when there was made manifest the word of glorification (*kalimát al-tasbih*) in the crimson land (*ard al-hamrá'*).

Verses 13–18

Wherefore, O people of the inmost heart (*ahl al-fú'ád*), did the tree of creative potency (*shajarat al-sáni'*) dawn forth with the ascendant, deeply secreted mysteries (*al-mustansirrát taláyi'*) along with the brilliant sun and the irrefutable name (*al-ism al-qáti'*), this light (*al-núr*) which beareth the letter 'há' (*harf al-há'*) in the land of the inmost heart (*ard al-fú'ád*). There emerged from the boundary of the letter 'waw' (*hadd al-waw*) through the pen flowing with ink (*qalam al-midád*), the *Dhikr-Alláh* (Remembrance of God) who was in receipt of revealed verses in the language of God (*lisán Alláh*), one crying out with proofs to the end that all humanity might know the locale of their [destined] drinking-place (*hadd al-mashrab*) and the decree respecting this snow-white watery expanse (*al-má' al-baydá'*). And this to the end that all tainted with the sin of the most depraved utterance (*kalimát al-suflá*) might bear whatsoever hath been decreed [for them] in a tablet which expresses something even more contemptible (*lawh aw adná'*).

Thus was it that God did send down the verses of the sinaitic mount (*áyát al-túr*) from the most transcendent abode (*mustaqarr al-'alá*) to the end that all might be cognisant of his Cause (*al-amr*) and expound its branches (*mufári'*), that all might

hear and appreciate the words of Paradise (*kalimát al-quds*) in the Tablet of Holiness (*Lawh al-Quds*) and the verses which descend from [the realm of] the dusky zones of the divine cloud (*mukfahirrát al-'amá'*) in the very shadow of Paradise.

This that all the luminaries (*al-anwár*) might bestow life through the water of life (*má' al-hayawán*) which cometh from the crashing crests of the surging waves that are of the watery expanse of camphor (*má' al-káfír*) as accords with the decree of the Book. This took place that he might unveil all mysteries through the crimson watery expanse (*má' al-hamrá'*) from this snow-white ocean (*al-bahr al-baydá'*), the watery expanse that is purified on account of the decree of God through the word of the Book.

VII

Verses 1–15

The pilgrimage journey and the Islamic pilgrimage of the Báb

Verses 1–4

So unto God be the praise, the grandeur and the laudation for there are none that encompass his knowledge save whomsoever⁵ he wills. He, verily, [of whom it is rightly said that] no God is there except him. God, no God is there except him, the Living, the Elevated. God, no God is there except him, the Independent, the Bountiful.

The word of His servant [= the Báb] was transported (cf. Q 17:1) from the land of his birth (Shiraz) in the year 1260 of the sacred Hijra reckoning, on the sixth day of the third decad⁶ [= the 26th] of the month preceding the month which is the sacred month of God (*al-shahr Alláh al-harám*) in which he sent down the Qur'an [= 26th Sha'bán which precedes the month of Ramadán = 10 September 1844] for thereon he enabled him [the Báb] to attain unto the shore of the ocean (*jazírat al-bahr*) [= Bushíhr] on the day which is the sixth of the sacred month, the month of Ramadán⁷ [= 19 September 1844] on which he instituted that destiny (*al-qadr*) as accords with the decree of God (*hukm Alláh*) enacted on that night (*layla*) which is better than 1000 months apart therefrom (cf. the *laylat al-qadr* in Q 97:1ff.).

Verses 5–8

So he indeed raised him [= the Báb] up through his bounty upon an oppressive ship (*fulk al-musakhir*) [sailing] upon the water on the day which was the ninth day of the second decad [= 19th] of the sacred month, the month of God on which he instituted fasting (*al-siyám*) [= 19th Ramadán = 2 October 1844]. And he [the Báb] attained unto the mother of cities [= Mecca] (*umm al-qurá*), the sacred house of God (*bayt Alláh al-harám*) on the first day of the sacred month of the month of God [= 1st Dhu'l-Hijjah = 12 December 1844] which is the month wherein he instituted the decree of pilgrimage (*al-hajj*) for the people of Islam and completed it with hastening to and fro between Safá and Marwa and what he decreed regarding circumambulation and rising

up. And he also decreed [the completion of the events with] the ceremonial sacrifices (*manásik*) consonant with the 'umra (the sacred visitation) and the *hajj* (pilgrimage) on the third day of the second decad [= the 13th] of the selfsame sacred month which precedes the month of God [= the 13th Dhu'l-Hijjah = 24 December 1844].⁸

Then he enabled him to advance unto the land of his beloved one (*habíb*) [= Medina], Muhammad, the Messenger of God (*rasu-l Alláh*), may the blessings of God be upon him and his family, the seal of the prophets (*khátam al-nabiyyín*), from the onset of this day which is the seventh day of the year 1261 of the sacred Hijra calendar, on the sacred month [= 7th Muharram = 16 January 1845], the month of God whereon was killed [the one who embodied] the glorification of God [*tasbîh* = *subhán-Alláh*], 'glorified be God' and the hallowing testimony [*tahlíl* = *lá iláh ilá Alláh*], 'there is no God but God', through the killing of [the embodiment of] the very word of the magnification of God [*kalimát al-takbîr* = *Alláh akbar*, 'God is greatest'] and of the laudation of God [*tamhîd* = *al-hamd lilláh*, 'praise be God'], namely, the forefather ('*abî*) of the servant of God ('*Abd-Alláh*) [= the Bab], the [third Imam] Husayn [martyred 'Áshúrá' = the 10th Muharram 61AH/680 CE], upon him be peace!

Verses 9–15

So unto God belongs the destiny and the grandeur for he protected him [the Báb] in the sacred sanctuary (Mecca–Medina region) for 27 days between the two stupendous months [= from 7th Muharram until 4th Safar = 27 days]. And unto him be the glory and the grandeur at the onset of the departure (from Medina) on the fourth day of the last month after the sacred month of God [= Safar after Muharram = 4th Safar = 12 February 1845] from amongst his chosen ones (*awliyá'*) [in Mecca–Medina] [proceeding] unto the rest of the created realm (*kull al-khalq*) through the fulfilment of the stipulation of the sacrificial killing after dawn time (*kalimát al-qat' ba'd al-fajr*), in line with the knowledge of the family of God (*ma'rifat Ál Alláh*) (may the peace of God be upon them), with the completion [of pilgrimage through] the hindering [of Satan] (*muhtahá al-man'*). And to him [God] belongeth the glory and the beauty.⁹

From the day of the departure (from Mecca–Medina) until the day of the arrival in the land of Jeddah, may the blessings of God be upon its indescribable and innumerable inhabitants, there transpired 12 days on the road [4th Safar + 12 = 16th Safar = 24 February]. This after the manner of the decree of departure (*al-nuzúl*) from the glorious sanctuary [Mecca] (*haram al-jalíl*) unto the fount of Salsabíl ('*ayn al-salsabíl*) [= Zamzam]. Then there came about the decree of the book (*hukm al-kitáb*) regarding halting in the land of Eve (*bi'l-wuqúf fi ard al-hawá'*) [= Jeddah] for a period amounting to three days [16th + 3 = 19th Safar = 27 February 1845].

So glorified be God and praised be to God who gave permission unto his servant on the fourth day of the third decad¹⁰ [= the 24th] of the month which follows the sacred month [= 24th Safar after Muharram = 4 March 1845] for the embarkation upon the ship of oppression (*al-fulk al-musakhir*), upon the water, upon an ark (*safínat*) on which he commenced the journey on the day of his departure unto the sacred house of God [in Shiraz] (*bayt Alláh al-harám*).

VIII

Verses 1–23

Divine foreordainment and the episode of the theft

Verses 1–7

So unto God be that praise which is scintillating (*sha'sha'aniyya an*), glittering (*mutaláma' an*) and sanctifying (*mutaqaddas an*) by virtue of the very sanctity of God himself (*bítaqdis Alláh*) and of his bounty which passeth beyond all created things. And unto him be the praise and the grandeur like that lauded by his people, a praise which giveth bounty unto all things like unto the bounty of God (*fadl Alláh*) vouchsafed unto his own logos-self (*línafsihi*). He, verily, [of whom it is rightly said that] no God is there except him. There is nothing like unto him for he is one elevated and mighty.

So glorified be God, the One, the Self-Subsisting, the Unique, the One Served, who cried out through his remembrance on the day of the embarkation marked by a laudation of his logos-self and a remembrance of the pathway of his journey in visitation unto his house (*ziyarat baytihi*) and unto the manifestations of his power, Muhammad and his family, [who constitute] the treasury of the divine grandeur (*ma'dan al-'azimat*) a quintessence of his Cause (*muntahá amrihi*) and of his bounty. This for the instruction of every soul towards an awareness of the days of his journey as accords with the decree of foreordained destiny (*hukm al-qadr*) and its mystery. This in order that every possessor of spirit [may be aware that] the days of his journey are consonant with the decree of the divine throne and of the celestial chair (*hukm al-'arsh wa kursi*), as well as the motion of the spheres (*al-aflák*) within the concourse of the divine names and attributes. This such that all might enter the sacred house of God (*bayt Alláh al-harám*) through the mighty verses revealed within these snow-white scriptural tablets (*al-alwáh al-baydá*), that they might assuredly fall prostrate in the mosque just as they did aforetime and thereby wreak an utter destruction (*llyutabbirú*) upon that which is upstanding (*ma' alaw tatbi-r an*) [see Q 17:7b].

Verses 8–13

So glorified be he who made decree respecting the path of his [pilgrimage] journey just as he had decreed for all of the gates (*al-abwáb*) of the past. And he saw in the path of God all of the suffering caused by the people of infidelity and blasphemy for such is the practice of God. Relative to the past I did not find any change in the practice of God [see Q 48:23] nor any modification respecting the condition of anything.

And there was not found any change relative to the decree of God even respecting a single letter until there occurred the theft of the thief in the land of the two shrines (*al-haramayn*) [the region of Mecca and Medina] at the [third] halting place (*fí manzal al-thálith*) [thus removing] all that God wrote along the path. This [theft] took place on the first night of [the second decad] [= the 11th] in

[the year] 1261 [AH] of the second month after the month of the *hajj* [pilgrimage = *Dhu-'l-Hijja*, thus the 11th Safar [1261 AH] = 19 February 1845] for such was [in accordance with] the decree issued from primordial times (*sunnat al-awwalín*). And I did not find any change relative to any aspect of the way of God (*lísha'n Alláh*) regarding anything decreed by God.

Verses 14–23

This although, O people of the concourse (*al-mala'*)! Fate itself acted in accordance with the decree about the [stolen] verses (*al-áyát*) for the thief stole outside of any clear knowledge (*'ilm mubín*) [of the divine plan]. Among them [the stolen writings] were verses expressive of the inner dimension of the foundational alphabetical script (*bátin al-satr*) which was scribed by the hand of the remembrance (*yad al-dhikr*) in crimson ink upon eleven snow-white leaves. They were gilded with liquid gold and inscribed round about in crimson script expressive of dual dimensions of the secreted mystery which is veiled up within the greatest mystery in accordance with the inner dimension of the Qur'an (*bátin al-Qur'án*). From the outset [this material was of such sacredness that] no one aforetime had even touched it [cf. Q 56:79, etc.], nor shall anyone in later times ever encompass its knowledge. Such was revealed in a scriptural tablet from heaven containing deeply secreted verses (*áyát mustasirrát*) and established expositions from God, the Lord of the heavens and of the divine throne, over all the worlds.

Wherefore indeed is it that whoso finds a portion thereof shall fail to unravel even a letter thereof in reciting its wisdom, save, that is, with the permission of he who revealed it unto him. Such is in accordance with the stipulation of the Qur'an for they are the supreme treasuries (*khazá'in al-kubrá*) in that 'the inmost heart (*al-fí'ád*) lieth not about what it [he] sees' [Q 53:11]. So do you suppose that they see this after the manner of his [visionary] seeing? For there was indeed revealed therein [the inmost heart] the wisdom of thy Lord in the 'garden of the abode' (*jannat al-ma'wá*) [Q 53:15] pertaining to that which was decreed in the divine throne (*'arsh*) or [as a result of] our [visionary] insight! And whoso lieth about our most elevated verses, we shall decree for him [on] the day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyáma*) [a place] within our nethermost, blazing hellfire of Jahím.

IX

Verses 1–25

The revealed writings of the Báb and the Episode of the Theft

Verses 1–5

Then fear ye God, O people of ecstasy (*ahl al-wijdán*)! for these [revelations] were sent down in [the manner of the disclosures] of the custodians of the Exposition (*rijál al-bayán*). And God is not restrained by the ways of all the worlds. This is indeed the book which hath differentiated in line with the decree of the inner dimen-

sion of the tablet [of destiny] (*hukm bātin al-lawh*) as revealed from one Mighty and Wise.

And there was furthermore, a [stolen] book [of the Báb] which was distinguished after the fashion of the 'throne verse' (*āyat al-kursī*) [= Q 2:255] in accordance with the decree of thy Lord, into two hundred suras, every one of which hath been allocated 12 verses among the verses of the inner dimension of the Qur'an. It is a guidance and a mercy from before us unto the people who bear witness, for this is something revealed on our part in line with wisdom.

Verses 6–7

And there was, furthermore, a [stolen] Book [of the Báb] in four hundred verses, as accords with the decree of thy Lord, within 40 well-established suras (*sūrat muhkamāt*), and [commenting upon] the [poetical] data which the spirit (*al-rūh*) sent down upon the heart of [Sayyid] al-Himyarī (*qalb al-himyarī*) [d. c. 173 AH/789 CE] [containing] deeply secreted, incomparable verses the like of even a letter of which no eye shall ever see for it was revealed from the realms of the veiled secret (*sarā'ir sirr al-muqanna'*). Thus hath it been characterized by mystery sublime (*sirr al-mujallil*) [inscribed] in the primordial script (*bi'l-satr al-awwāl*), in the threefold state (*bi'l-hall al-thālith*) as regulated through the fourfold talisman (*tilasim al-rābi'*) and revealed through us for such people as do hearken.

Verses 8–13

And there was, furthermore, a [stolen] book [of the Báb] concerning the niche (*al-mishkat*) aside from the lamp (*al-misbāh*), yet both from the lamp which is the lamp and in the lamp of the glass (*al-zujāja*) of the glass then [again] the glass within the glass which are the [four] gates (*al-abwāb*) above that which shines forth from the dawn of eternity (*subh al-azal*). At every orient-dawn (*al-mashriq*) there were indeed established therefrom radiant leaves (*waraqāt*) ignited through the blessed tree (*shajarat al-mubāraka*) neither eastern nor western, but with verses (*āyāt*) expressive of the mysteries of the divine Realm (*asrār al-lāhūt*) and expressive of the clear expositions of the Book of thy Lord about the dictates of the Kingdom (*ahkām al-mulk*) and of the empyrean heaven (*al-jabarūt*). They were sacred, radiant scriptural tablets (*alwāh*) from the sinaitic tree (*shajarat al-siná'*) upon the mount (*al-tūr*) that were revealed through the decree of radiant glory (*bahá'*). God, no God is there save him. It was indeed a book from before us, powerful and guarded. And that which was sent down therein expressed the parameters of the inner dimensions of the Qur'an, a guidance and a glad-tiding for such people as are believers. So whomsoever is ignited through the light of the decree which was revealed therein is certainly among the rightly guided.

Verse 14

And there was, furthermore, a [stolen] book [of the Báb] about the dictates of the Qur'an (*hukm al-Qur'án*), about the second portion of the sura [the Sūrat al-Baqara,

Q 2] covering what God revealed therein unto its conclusion, verses which came from God including expositions of the inner dimension of the *ta'wīl* [inner sense], a revelation on our part for the people given to contemplation.

Verse 15

And there was, furthermore, a [stolen] book [of the Báb] which was set forth through mine own self whilst upon the ocean, in a *sahifa* (scroll) about *du'á'* (supplication) in 15 sections (*abwāb*) consonant with the command. It was revealed in seven dialects of literary style (*alsun al-sab'at fi'l-inshá'*) after the likeness of purified verses replete with allusions revealed by us for the people given to prostration.

Verses 16–17

Then, furthermore, was a [stolen] *sahifa* (scroll) [of the Báb] written on the path of the *hajj* (pilgrimage) something decreed by he who intended [to visit] the family of the sanctuary of God (*haram Allāh*) with justice ('*adl*') according to the mode which has not been encompassed by the heart of any human being aforetime nor sent down through the instrumentality of a servant ('*abd*') [of God]. It was in 14 assured sections all containing expository verses from God for the people of contemplation.

Verses 18–19

Then, furthermore, were [stolen] 17 mighty sermons (*khutab*) cried out from the hallmark of the judgement assured within Mount Sinai (*al-tūr al-siná'*). God, no God is there except him. They were delivered such that nobody was capable of producing the likeness of but a letter thereof even among the pure-blooded Arabs (*a'rāb al-'urabá'*), or, indeed, any soul among the most noble of eloquent ones (*al-fusahá'*).

Verse 20

Then, furthermore, among the [stolen materials] were assured letters (*kitāb muhkamāt*), 12 [of them] after the manner of the verses of the Qur'an. It was, in truth, sent down unto the Persian and Arab ulama ('*ulamá'* al-a'*jamín wa'l-'arabín*), verses of clear exposition from God unto the people given to intellectual activity.

Verse 21

Then praise be unto God who is informed of the truth of his verses and the destiny that was sent down for his gate (*al-bāb*). So by the Lord of the house (*rabb al-bayt*) whom no God is there except him. There is nothing in either the heavens or upon the earth that can evaluate [the veracity of] even a letter thereof, for it is a revelation from a manifest Imam. None can estimate the truth of these verses except him for he, verily, is one gentle and wise.

X

The final address and benediction

Verses 1–7

Wherefore, O thou concourse! The stealing of [revealed] materials from God took place within the domain of justice (*mulk al-'adl*), the land of the sanctuary of God (*haram Allāh*) [Mecca]. There was nothing about it in line with justice for it consisted of the treasures of the inhabitants of the heavens and of the earth. And God is witness to [the truth of] that which I relate, for God, in this respect, is sufficient [witness] along with whomsoever recites the decrees of the Qur'an in an informed manner. And if God thy Lord should will it he would assuredly, in very truth, bring his verses to light for he, verily, no God is there except him. And he is one hearing, knowing. So praised be unto God, Lord of the heavens and of the earth above that which they suppose. And peace be upon the Messengers and praised be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.

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Notes

1. In due course a full commentary on the *Khutba al-Jidda* with detailed textual notes will be posted onto my personal website: <http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>
2. The sub-heads below are not in the original text.
3. The manuscript reading is uncertain here (INBA 91, p. 61, line 8) where we read *min buhbúyati al-qidam*. I have translated as if this is a slight spelling error or misreading of *min buhbúhiyyat al-qidam* 'at the midmost heart of preexistence'.
4. The text and translation of *daqá'iq zakwán* as 'an augmentation of intricacies' is uncertain. *Zakwán* appears not to exist! I have translated it as if it is derived from the root Z-K-W = 'to grow, increase, augment'.
5. Read here *man* not *má*.
6. Add the missing (cf. INBA manuscript, p. 66, line 2) *al-sittín* (= sixty) in the spelling of the year, from Ishraq Khavari 1987, vol. 2, p. 729; Faydí 1987, p. 143 and Afnán 2000, p. 86.

7. The phrase *shahr al-ramadán* 'month of Ramadan' is most probably a scribal gloss or addition as it does not occur in the Ishraq-Khavari 1987, vol. 2, p. 730 or Faydí 1987, p. 143, though it is present in Afnán 2000, p. 86.
8. '... the 'umra (the lesser pilgrimage) and the *hajj* (= pilgrimage) itself on the third day of the second decad (= the 13th) of the selfsame sacred month which precedes the month of God (= the 13th Dhu'l-Hijjah = 24 December 1844).' The Arabic word meaning 'second' (= *al-thání*) in 'second decad' [*al-*] *'ushr al-thání* is actually 'third' in the manuscript behind INBA 91, p. 66, line 12. The undoubtedly correct reading 'second decad', however, is found in Ishraq-Khavari 1987, p. 730; Faydí 1987, p. 144 (line 6) and Afnán 2000, p. 86.
9. The translation of *al-man* 'muntahá' (mss. p. 67, line 9) as 'with the completion [of pilgrimage] through the hindering [of Satan] (*muhtahá al-man*)' makes sense as indicating one of the final (*muntahá*) acts of pilgrimage through the 'warding off' or 'hindering' (*man*) of Satan with the ritual stoning of the three pillars. An alternative reading at this point of *muntahá al-miná*, meaning 'through the completion [of pilgrimage] at Miná [about four miles from Mecca] (*muntahá al-miná*)', suggests itself, and though this has no support in the manuscript (or printed text citations) I have consulted, it would make very good sense in the light of the final pilgrimage rituals (animal sacrifice) associated with Miná which is visited towards the end of the Muslim pilgrimage. These two aforementioned readings could easily result from an unpointed Arabic text in the Báb's cursive hand. Worth noting is that Bábí tradition registered in Nabíl-i Zarandí's *Dawn-Breakers* 1970, pp. 132–3 (here Miná is spelled colloquially as Muná) makes specific mention of the Báb's performing Islamic ritual sacrifice at Miná during the latter days of his pilgrimage (as the *Khutba al-Jidda* here implies).
10. Here in INBA 91, p. 68, line 1; as well as Faydí 1987, p. 145 and Ishraq Khavari 1987, p. 731, the phrase *al-'ushr al-thálith* ('the third decad') should read [*al-*] *'ushr al-thání* 'the second decad' (as in Afnán 2000, p. 86) and has been emended accordingly.

A MOST NOBLE PATTERN

Collected Essays on the Writings of the Báb,
'Alí Muhammad Shirází
(1819–1850)

edited by

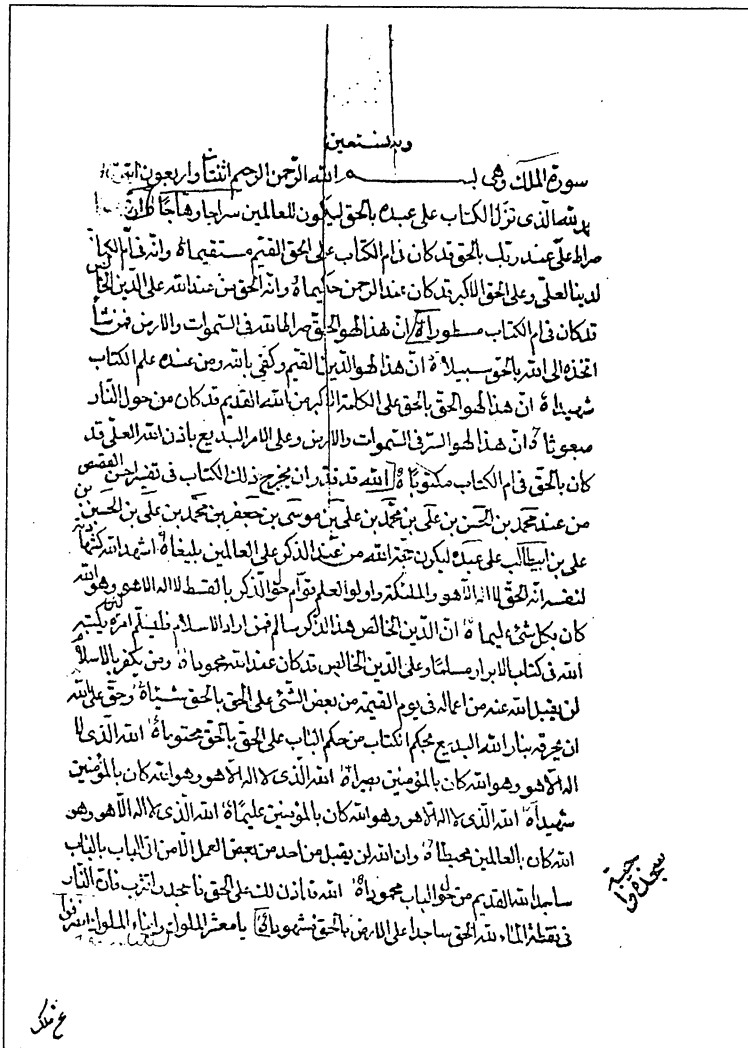
Todd Lawson

and

Omid Ghaemmaghani



George Ronald
Oxford



Photocopy of the first page of the oldest extant manuscript of the Qayyúm al-Asma' bearing the beginning of the Surat al-Mulk which was revealed to Mullá Husayn Bushrú'í on the evening of 5 Jumádá al-Awwal 1260 AH corresponding to 22 May 1844 CE, the date on which, according to the Persian Bayán, the new era is deemed to have begun. The scribe is one Muhammad ibn Karbalá'í Sháh Karam and the colophon gives the date of 28 Jumadá al-Awwal 1261 corresponding to 3 June 1845 as the date of transcription.

The vertical mark running from the top of the page to about the 11th line of the manuscript is said to be damage caused by the sword of a religious official to whom Mullá Husayn himself had presented the book on behalf of the Báb. The original is in the International Bahá'í Archives in Haifa.

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*The translations of the sacred writings included in these various essays
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His heart lies not of what it saw
(Qur'an 53:11)

*This book is dedicated to
the cause, vision and reality of peace*