

JANUARY NINTH TABLET

Baha'u'llah

January 9, 1889 A.D

7th Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306 A.H.

Praise be to God that whatever is essential for the believers in this Revelation to be told has been revealed. Their duties have been clearly defined, and the deeds they are expected to perform have been plainly set forth in Our Book. Now is the time for them to arise and fulfill their duty. Let them translate into deeds the exhortations We have given them. Let them beware lest the love they bear God, a love that glows so brightly in their hearts, cause them to transgress the bounds of moderation, and to overstep the limits We have set for them. In regard to this matter, We wrote thus, while in Iraq, to Haji Mirza Musay-i-Qumi: 'Such is to be the restraint you should exercise that if you be made to quaff from the well-springs of faith and certitude all the rivers of knowledge, your lips must never be allowed to betray, to either friend or stranger, the wonder of the draught of which you have partaken. Though your heart be aflame with His love, take heed lest any eye discover your inner agitation, and though your soul be surging like an ocean, suffer not the serenity of your countenance to be disturbed, nor the manner of your behaviour to reveal the intensity of your emotions.'

God knows that at no time did We attempt to conceal Ourselves or hide the Cause which We have been bidden to proclaim. Though not wearing the garb of the people of learning, We have again and again faced and reasoned with men of great scholarship in both Nur and Mazindaran, and have succeeded in persuading them of the truth of this Revelation. We never flinched in Our determination; We never hesitated to accept the challenge from whatever direction it came. To whomsoever We spoke in those days, We found him receptive to our Call and ready to identify himself with its precepts. But for the shameful behaviour of the people of Bayan, who sullied by their deeds the work We had accomplished, Nur and Mazindaran would have been entirely won to this Cause and would have been accounted by this time among its leading strongholds.

At a time when the forces of Prince Mihdi-Quli Mirza had besieged the fort of Tabarsi, We resolved to depart from Nur and lend Our assistance to its heroic defenders. We had intended to send Abdu'l-Vahhab, one of Our companions, in advance of Us, and to request him to announce Our approach to the besieged. Though encompassed by the forces of the enemy, We had decided to throw in Our lot with those steadfast companions, and to risk the dangers with which they were confronted. This, however, was not to be. The hand of Omnipotence spared Us from their fate and preserved Us for the work We were destined to accomplish. In pursuance of God's inscrutable wisdom, the intention We had formed was, before Our arrival at the fort, communicated by certain inhabitants of Nur to Mirza Taqi, the governor of Amul, who sent his men to intercept Us. While We were resting and taking Our tea, We found Ourselves suddenly surrounded by a number of horsemen, who seized Our belongings and captured Our steeds. We were given, in exchange for Our own horse, a poorly saddled animal which We found it extremely uncomfortable to ride. The rest of Our companions were conducted, handcuffed, to Amul. Mirza Taqi succeeded, in spite of the tumult Our arrival had raised,

and in the face of the opposition of the ulamas, in releasing Us from their grasp and in conducting Us to his own house. He extended to Us the warmest hospitality. Occasionally he yielded to the pressure which the ulamas were continuously bringing to bear upon him, and felt himself powerless to defeat their attempts to harm Us. We were still in his house when the Sardar, who had joined the army in Mazindaran, returned to Amul. No sooner was he informed of the indignities We had suffered than he rebuked Mirza Taqi for the weakness he had shown in protecting Us from Our enemies. 'Of what importance,' he indignantly demanded, 'are the denunciations of this ignorant people? Why is it that you have allowed yourself to be swayed by their clamour? You should have been satisfied with preventing the party from reaching their destination and, instead of detaining them in this house, you should have arranged for their safe and immediate return to Tihiran.'

Whilst in Sari, We were again exposed to the insults of the people. Though the notables of that town were, for the most part, Our friends and had on several occasions met Us in Tihiran, no sooner had the townspeople recognized Us, as We walked with Quddus in the streets, than they began to hurl their invectives at Us. The cry 'Bábí! Bábí!' greeted Us wherever We went. We were unable to escape their bitter denunciations.

In Tihiran We were twice imprisoned as a result of Our having risen to defend the cause of the innocent against a ruthless oppressor. The first confinement to which We were subjected followed the slaying of Mulla Taqiy-i-Qazvini, and was occasioned by the assistance We were moved to extend to those upon whom a severe punishment had been undeservedly inflicted. Our second imprisonment, infinitely more severe, was precipitated by the attempt which irresponsible followers of the Faith made on the life of the Shah. That event led to Our banishment to Baghdad. Soon after Our arrival, We betook Ourselves to the mountains of Kurdistan, where We led for a time a life of complete solitude. We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain which lay at some three days' distance from the nearest human habitation. The comforts of life were completely lacking. We remained entirely isolated from Our fellow men until a certain Shaykh Isma'il discovered Our abode and brought Us the food We needed.

Upon Our return to Baghdad, We found, to Our great astonishment, that the Cause of the Báb had been sorely neglected, that its influence had waned, that its very name had almost sunk into oblivion. We arose to revive His Cause and to save it from decay and corruption. At the time when ear and perplexity had taken fast hold of Our companions, We reasserted, with fearlessness and determination, its essential verities, and summoned all those who had become lukewarm to espouse with enthusiasm the Faith they had so grievously neglected. We sent forth Our appeal to the peoples of the world, and invited them to fix their gaze upon the light of His Revelation.

After Our departure from Adrianople, a discussion arose among the government officials in Constantinople as to whether We and Our companions should not be thrown into the sea. The report of such a discussion reached Persia, and gave rise to a rumour that We had actually suffered that fate. In Khurasan particularly, Our friends were greatly perturbed. Mirza Ahmad-i-Azghandi, as soon as he was informed of this news, was

reported to have asserted that under no circumstances could he credit such a rumour. 'The Revelation of the Báb,' he said, 'must, if this be true, be regarded as utterly devoid of foundation.' The news of Our safe arrival in the prison-city of 'Akká rejoiced the hearts of Our friends, deepened the admiration of the believers of Khurasan for the faith of Mirza Ahmad, and increased their confidence in him.

From Our Most Great Prison We were moved to address to the several rulers and crowned heads of the world Epistles in which We summoned them to arise and embrace the Cause of God. To the Shah of Persia We sent Our messenger Badi', into whose hands We entrusted the Tablet. It was he who raised it aloft before the eyes of the multitude and, with uplifted voice, appealed to his sovereign to heed the words that Tablet contained. The rest of the Epistles likewise reached their destination. To the Tablet We addressed to the Emperor of France, an answer was received from his minister, the original of which is now in the possession of the Most Great Branch. To him We addressed these words: 'Bid the high priest, O Monarch of France, to cease ringing his bells, for, lo! the Most Great Bell, which the hands of the will of the Lord thy God are ringing, is made manifest in the person of His chosen One.' The Epistle We addressed to the Czar of Russia, alone failed to reach its destination. Other Tablets, however, have reached him, and that Epistle will eventually be delivered into his hands.

Be thankful to God for having enabled you to recognize His Cause. Whoever has received this blessing must, prior to his acceptance, have performed some deed, which, though he himself was unaware of its character, was ordained by God as a means whereby he has been guided to find and embrace the Truth. As to those who have remained deprived of such a blessing, their acts alone have hindered them from recognizing the truth of this Revelation. We cherish the hope that you, who have attained to this light, will exert your utmost to banish the darkness of superstition and unbelief from the midst of the people. May your deeds proclaim your faith and enable you to lead the erring into the paths of eternal salvation. The memory of this night [January 9th] will never be forgotten. May it never be effaced by the passage of time, and may its mention linger forever on the lips of men.