

Address to a Muslim Divine

O ‘Abdu’s-Sáhib! Verily God and every created thing testify that there is none other God but Me, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved....

Thy vision is obscured by the belief that divine revelation ended with the coming of Muhammad, and unto this We have borne witness in Our first epistle. Indeed, He Who hath revealed verses unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God, hath likewise revealed verses unto ‘Alí-Muhammad. For who else but God can reveal to a man such clear and manifest verses as overpower all the learned? Since thou hast acknowledged the revelation of Muhammad, the Apostle of God, then there is no other way open before thee but to testify that whatever is revealed by the Primal Point hath also proceeded from God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Is it not true that the Qur’án hath been sent down from God and that all men are powerless before its revelation? Likewise these words have also been revealed by God, if thou dost but perceive. What is there in the Bayán which keepeth thee back from recognizing these verses as being sent forth by God, the Inaccessible, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious?

The essence of these words is this: Were We to bring thee to a reckoning, thou wouldst prove thyself empty-handed; We in truth know all things. Hadst thou uttered “yea” on hearing the Words of God, thou wouldst have been seen to have been worshipping God from the beginning that hath no beginning until the present day, never to have disobeyed Him, not even for the twinkling of an eye. Yet, neither the upright deeds thou hast wrought during all thy life, nor the exertions thou didst make to banish every thought from thy heart save that of the good-pleasure of God, none of these did in truth profit thee, not even to the extent of a grain of mustard seed, inasmuch as thou didst veil thyself from God and tarried behind at the time of His manifestation.

Verily all the divines in the land of Káf [Kúfih] shall, even as thyself, be asked by God: “Is it not strange that a Messenger should have come to you with a Book, and ye, while confessing your powerlessness, refused to follow the Faith of God which He had brought, and ye persisted in your disbelief?” Therefore unto thee shall be assigned the fire which was meant for those who turned away from God in that land, inasmuch as thou art their leader; would that thou might be of them who heed.

Hadst thou faithfully obeyed the Decree of God, all the inhabitants of thy land would have followed thee, and would have themselves entered into the celestial Paradise, content with the good-pleasure of God forevermore. However, on that day thou shalt wish that God had not created thee.

Thou hast set thyself up as one of the learned in the Faith of Islám, that thou mightest save the believers, yet thou didst cause thy followers to descend into the fire, for when the verses of God were sent forth thou didst deprive thyself therefrom and yet reckoned thyself to be of the righteous.... Nay, by the life of Him Whom God shall make manifest! Neither thou nor anyone among His servants can produce the slightest proof, while God shineth resplendent above His creatures and through the power of His behest standeth supreme over all that dwell in the kingdoms of heaven and earth and in whatever lieth between them. Verily He is potent over all created things.

Thou hath named thyself ‘Abdu’s-Sáhib [servant of the Lord]. Yet, while God hath, in very truth, made thy Lord manifest, and thou didst set thine eyes upon Him, thou didst not recognize Him, even though thou hadst been called into being by God for the purpose of attaining His presence, didst thou but truly believe in the third verse of the chapter entitled “Thunder.”

Thou contendest, “How can we recognize Him when we have heard naught but words which fall short of irrefutable proofs?” Yet since thou hast acknowledged and recognized Muhammad, the Apostle of God, through the Qur’án, how canst thou withhold recognition from Him Who sent thee the Book, despite thy calling thyself “His servant”? Verily He doth exercise undisputed authority over His revelations unto all mankind.

Wert thou to come unto Us while divine revelation is descending upon Us, haply God will change thy fire into light. Verily He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. Otherwise that which hath been revealed is decisive and final and will be faithfully upheld by all until the Day of Resurrection.... If divine revelation ceaseth, thou shouldst write a petition to Him Whom God shall make manifest, imploring that it be delivered into His presence. Therein thou must beg pardon of thy Lord, turn unto Him in repentance and be of them that are wholly devoted to Him. Perchance God will transform thy fire into light at the next Resurrection. He, of a truth, is the Protector, the Most Exalted, the Ever-Forgiving. Unto Him bow down in worship all that are in the heavens and on the earth and whatever lieth between them; and unto Him shall all return.

We enjoin thee to save thyself and all the inhabitants of that land from the fire, then to enter the peerless and exalted Paradise of His good-pleasure. Otherwise the day is approaching when thou shalt perish and enter the fire, when thou shalt have neither patron nor helper from God. We have taken compassion on thee, as a sign of Our grace, inasmuch as thou hast related thyself unto Us. Verily We are aware of all things. We are cognizant of thy righteous deeds, though they shall avail thee nothing; for the whole object of such righteousness is but recognition of God, thy Lord, and undoubted faith in the Words revealed by Him.