

SÚTIY-I-QALAM (SÚRIH OF THE PEN)

This is the Súrih of the Pen, which hath been sent down from the heaven of eternity unto them that have fixed their gaze upon His Throne.

In the name of God, the Most Wondrous, the Most Glorious!

O Pen of the Most High! Bear thou witness, in thine own self, that verily He is God and that there is none other God but Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Bear thou witness, then, by thine own essence, that verily I am God and that there is none other God but Him, that all have been created at My behest and that all abide by My command. Bear thou witness, moreover, by thine inmost being, that this is the Beauty of God which hath dawned above the horizon of the Unseen, a Beauty that hath ever been, and shall ever remain, unknown to all save Himself. He, verily, is the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Through but one of His effulgences the Day-Stars of majesty and grandeur have shone forth, the hearts of the denizens of the everlasting realm and the sanctified realities that lay hid beneath the mystic veil have been called into being, and the secrets of all that was and shall be have been laid bare.

O Pen! Let nothing dismay thee, for unto thee have We vouchsafed the inviolable protection of Our sovereign might and power, and into thee have We breathed a spirit, one breath of which would, if wafted upon the bodies of all existence, cause them to arise from their couches, unloose their tongues, speak forth, and bear witness in their inmost being that there is none other God but Me, the Powerful, the Glorious, the Exalted, the Mighty, the Peerless, the All-Subduing, the Self-Subsisting.

O Pen of Command! Be assured in thyself, and reveal then unto all beings a measure of that which God bestowed upon thee ere the creation of words and letters and the fashioning of all things, and ere the establishment of the kingdom of names and attributes and the revelation of His mighty and guarded Tablet. Say: This is a Power unsurpassed from all eternity to all eternity, could ye but know it, O concourse of the Spirit, and this is a Beauty unrivalled from the beginning that hath no beginning, could ye but perceive it. Say: Whoso conceiveth the least

design to confront this Pen, to presume partnership with it, to gain intimate access unto it, or to fully grasp that which emanateth from it, be assured that the Evil One doth whisper within his breast. Thus hath the Divine Command been issued, could ye but understand. Say: By God! None hath ever been, nor shall ever be, able to rival Me amidst all creation. Thus hath it been inscribed by the Pen of divine revelation, could ye but comprehend it. Say: A single letter of Mine utterance hath, verily, brought forth the entire universe, the realities of all things, and worlds which none can fathom save God, the Almighty, the Most Manifest.

O Pen! Give ear unto that which the unbelievers have imputed to thee. Say: O assemblage of malice! Perish in your hatred, in your envy and your unbelief! By Him Who is the Eternal Truth! This is that Pen through a mere intimation of whose will the souls of the Concourse on high, and the realities of the denizens of the everlasting realm, and the essences of human hearts and minds, were all fashioned. This is that Pen through but a movement of which the sun of might and grandeur, and the moon of loftiness and sanctity, and the stars of grace and favour, were called into existence. This is that Pen through which were created the all-highest Paradise and all that abide therein, and the celestial garden and all that pertaineth thereto, could ye but comprehend. Say: Through but a single stroke have been manifested the knowledge of all that was and shall be, and the creation of all things past and future. Open then your eyes that ye may bear witness to this truth.

O Pen! Content thyself with that which thou hast so far intimated to the world of thy sovereignty and power, for the hearts of the envious are well-nigh bursting. Veil, then, thy Cause, and reveal no more than this, for thy words would rend asunder the heavens of ancient glory, and cleave in twain the earth of holiness itself, and cause the inmates of the realm of grandeur to swoon away. Be patient in thy heart, for the people of the world are incapable of beholding thy sovereignty or perceiving thy manifold signs, how much less of recognizing Him Who hath created and fashioned thee through but a single word of His utterance! Exalted is thy Lord above all that thou hast revealed in the past or wilt manifest in the future. Exalted is He above all that His sincere and well-favoured servants have comprehended or will ever comprehend. Content thyself, then, with that which thou hast thus far revealed. I swear by the One True God! Should all that are in the heavens and on earth and whatsoever lieth between them—whether trees, fruits, leaves, twigs, branches, rivers, oceans, or mountains—encounter a single word of thy pronouncement, they would assuredly speak forth that which the Burning Bush, springing from the soil of divine revelation, spoke unto Moses in that holy and blessed Vale.

O Pen! Give ear unto the wondrous account of that which God hath graciously bestowed upon thee. Detach thyself, then, from all thou dost possess, and announce unto the people the joyful tidings of the appearance of the Most Exalted Word in this mighty Revelation, that haply they may recognize their Creator and renounce all else but Him. Call then upon the Concourse on high to rejoice, saying: O ye exponents of grandeur sheltered beneath the tabernacle of majesty! O ye denizens of the dominion of power abiding beneath the canopy of glory! O ye dwellers of

the kingdom of the seen and the unseen situate in the furthestmost precincts beyond the ocean of eternity! O ye manifestations of the divine names in the highest heaven! Let your hearts rejoice in this Most Great Festival wherein God Himself proffereth this most pure chalice unto such as stand before Him with beseeming lowliness and humility. Adorn, then, your souls with the silken vesture of certitude and your bodies with the broidered robe of the All-Merciful, for lo, a light hath dawned forth and shone resplendent from the horizon of My brow, before whose revelation all that are in the heavens and on earth have bowed down in adoration, could ye but perceive it.

Say: I swear by the one true God that there hath never appeared in all creation another like unto Him. Whoso asserteth otherwise hath gainsaid the testimony of God and is accounted among the faithless in His mighty and well-guarded Tablet. Say: This is the Light through which the inhabitants of the celestial world and their inner realities have been brought forth, and through which the embodiments of the heavenly realm and their inmost essences have been raised up. This is the Light through which God hath created worlds that have neither beginning nor end, worlds whereof none hath the slightest intimation save those whom their Lord hath willed. Thus do We disclose unto you the hidden mysteries, that haply ye may ponder the signs of God. Say: This, verily, is the Light before whose effulgence every head hath bowed down in lowliness, and before whose manifestation the hearts of the well-favoured of God, and the souls of His holy ones, and the inmost realities of His true worshippers, and beyond them His honoured servants, have prostrated themselves in adoration.

O inmates of the holy sanctuary! I swear by God! He in very truth is the Sanctuary of God amongst you and His sacred Precinct in your midst, the holy Site of the Spirit before your eyes and the Station of both inner and outer peace and security. Take heed lest ye deprive yourselves of the Sanctuary of His knowledge. Hasten unto Him and tarry not. This is that Sanctuary round which circle the Manifestations of the Divine Being and the Embodiments of His eternal Reality, and whose court God hath hallowed beyond the reach of the outcast and the ungodly. This, verily, is that Sanctuary the blessing of whose service is sought by the Maids of Heaven, and them that dwell in the depths of the Most Great Ocean, and them that abide in the habitation of holiness and the realm of reunion—and yet the people, for the most part, comprehend not.

O denizens of earth and heaven! Abandon your couches and undertake the Most Great Pilgrimage for the sake of this pure and refulgent Beauty. Should God witness your inability to do so, He will exempt you therefrom and command you instead to approach Him with heart and soul. And they alone shall attain this who behold all that is in the heavens and on the earth as a day wherein none was deemed worthy of mention.¹ These are they to whom their Lord will give to drink, from His own hands, of the sealed wine of holiness. Verily, whoso turneth his face towards this most blessed and luminous Spot, round him shall circle resplendent suns whose effulgence knoweth neither beginning nor end, and above the horizon of his heart there shall

¹ Cf. Qur'án 76:1.

dawn that Sun of suns before Whose light the orbs of worldly names are wrapped in darkness, if ye be of them that understand.

O Pen! Proclaim unto the concourse of eternity, saying: O ye that rove in the arenas of immortality! O ye that abide beneath the tabernacle of grandeur! O ye gem-like realities that lie hid from the eyes of creation! Descend from your lofty retreats to celebrate and rejoice, and to quaff from the cup of everlasting life that the hand of the All-Glorious is proffering on this Day. This, in truth, is a Day the like of which hath never been witnessed in all creation, a Day whereon the Eye of Grandeur hath been cheered in the Seat of transcendent glory. O ye bearers of the throne of God! Adorn the most great throne on this Day, for the unseen Beauty hath appeared—He Whose presence the inmates of the all-highest Paradise and the dwellers of the garden of repose have thus far been powerless to attain. Say: By God! The Hidden Secret hath appeared in the plenitude of His glory and hath solaced by His beauty the eyes of all things seen and unseen, and beyond them the eyes of them that have cleansed their souls with the holy waters streaming from the ocean of the Name of their Lord, the Most Manifest.

Say: This is a Day whereon God hath made His own Self known and revealed it unto all who are in the heavens and on earth, a day whereon He hath established His sovereign ascendancy over the kingdoms of revelation and creation. How exalted, then, is this holy, this most blessed and best-beloved grace! This is a Day, moreover, whereon the Ancient Beauty hath appeared with such an adorning as to cause the veils to be rent asunder, and the mysteries to be revealed, and the fruits to spring forth, and all things to utter the praise of their Lord, the Unconstrained—a Day whereon the earth and all that it holdeth, and the heavens and all that they contain, and the mountains and all that they conceal, and the oceans and all that they treasure in their depths, have laid bare their secrets, though the people remain veiled therefrom. This is a day whereon the idols of misbelief and worldly desire have been shattered and the Ancient Beauty hath ascended His mighty throne. The Spirit of glory hath called out from the precincts of eternity, and the Most Holy Spirit from the Divine Lote-Tree, and the Spirit of command from the Tree beyond which there is no passing, and the Spirit of might from the exalted dominion, and the faithful Spirit from the right hand of the Burning Bush, saying: “Hallowed be the Lord of mercy, Who hath appeared in the world of existence invested with that which mortal eyes had never beheld!” Say: He it is Who through a movement of His finger causeth the creatures of earth and heaven to perish, Who through a word of His mouth bringeth them to life again, and Who through a mere intimation of His glance turneth all creation unto the presence of God, the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved.

Say: O concourse of monks! Abandon the churches wherein ye have glorified your Lord, for He Who ascended unto heaven hath in very truth come down again and circled round the Throne of God. I swear by the one true God! In this Day the bells are pealing out in My remembrance, the Trumpet soundeth My praise, and the Bugle proclaimeth My Name, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Deprive not yourselves of the grace of this day; hasten rather to the seat of the

Throne, forsake that which ye possess, and take fast hold of the Cord of God, Who hath arisen and manifested Himself and spoken forth for all to hear.

O inhabitants of the realms of the seen and the unseen! Sing, O sing the most joyous melodies on this Festival of God which hath appeared with the power of truth and to which the former and latter generations had never attained, could ye but know it. This is the Day whereon the Pen of God hath absolved all who are in the heavens and on earth. Thus hath His eternal command shone forth from the dayspring of His Pen, that ye may rejoice in your souls and be of those whose hearts are gladdened.

O Pen! Announce unto the Maid of Paradise:² “By God! This day is thy day. Come forth as thou willest, and array thyself as thou pleasest with the broidered robe of names and the silken vesture of immortality. Emerge then from thine eternal habitation even as the sun that dawneth from the countenance of Bahá. Descend from thy lofty heights and, standing betwixt earth and heaven, lift the veil of concealment from thy luminous face and shine forth above the horizon of creation as the black-eyed Damsel, that haply the most great veil may be torn away from the eyes of these people and they may behold the Scene of transcendent glory, the Beauty of God, the Most Holy, the Most Powerful, the Best-Beloved.”

“O Ancient Beauty! The unbelievers, verily, are lost in the stupor of idle fancy and are powerless to turn their eyes towards the most hallowed Court. Through the sovereign potency of Thine inviolable protection, Thou hast shielded me beneath the veils of light and guarded my beauty from the gaze of Thine enemies. Thine is the power to command; Thou ordainest as Thou pleasest through Thy word ‘Be’, and it is.”

“O Maid of Bahá! Step forth from the court of eternity, but let not thy most pure gaze linger upon the faces of mortal men. I swear by the one true God! None save them that are possessed of true insight can ever hope to behold thee in this most sublime vision. Leave the kingdom of names on thy right and the dominion of attributes on thy left, and shine forth by My leave above the horizon of Mine inviolable protection, divested of all that hath been created in the realm of Revelation and shorn of all that hath appeared in the kingdom of creation, that thou mayest manifest the beauteous image of God in all regions. Intone, then, the sweetest of melodies betwixt earth and heaven, that all existence may be detached from aught save the face of thy Lord, the Most Holy, the Most Gracious, the Well-Beloved. Beam forth above the horizon of the Ridván with the beauty of the All-Merciful, and let thy fragrant locks flow upon thy bosom, that the perfume of the garment of thy most gracious Lord may be diffused throughout the world. Hide not thy luminous form from the eyes of the concourse of Revelation, and withhold not thine ethereal veil of holiness from the gaze of the people. Present thyself, then, before the Throne with thy locks flowing, thine arms bejewelled, thy countenance blushing, thy cheeks aglow, and thine eyes adorned, and take hold of the snow-white chalice in My most exalted Name. Proffer

² Here begins a dialogue between the Maid of Heaven and Bahá'u'lláh, alternating from paragraph to paragraph.

then to the denizens of the realm of eternity the crimson wine of Mine all-glorious Beauty, that haply the concourse of Revelation may sanctify their souls in this most august Festival by virtue of this pure draught, and that they may emerge from behind the veil of concealment through the power of Mine almighty and all-powerful, Mine all-subduing and self-subsisting sovereignty.”

“By God! I am the Maid of Heaven, abiding in the midmost heart of Paradise, hidden behind the veil of the All-Merciful and concealed from the eyes of men. From time immemorial I remained shrouded in the veil of sanctity beneath the Tabernacle of Grandeur. I heard a most sweet call from the right hand of the throne of my Lord, the Most Exalted, and I saw Paradise itself set in motion and all its inhabitants stirred up in their longing to attain the presence of God, the All-Glorious. Whereupon another call was raised: ‘By God! The Beloved of the worlds is come! Blessed be the one who attaineth His presence, and beholdeth His face, and giveth ear to His most holy, His most glorious and beloved utterance. The Voice of God hath enraptured the souls of the Concourse on high and the hearts of the dwellers of the everlasting realm, and the all-consuming ecstasies of love have caused them to tremble with yearning and to fix their gaze upon the court of sanctity, the station of unapproachable glory.’ Were I to speak in every tongue, I would nonetheless be powerless to describe that which I beheld in that state. And yet, in spite of this grace that hath encompassed all things, and this rapture that hath overtaken all that are immersed beneath the ocean of names, behold, I found the people of the Bayán veiled and heedless, and lying as dead in the graves of oblivion. O people of the Bayán! Reckon ye to be treading the path of the spirit even as ye have rejected this Revelation? Nay, by my Beauty, which God hath ordained as the manifestation of His own Beauty amongst all the former and latter generations!”

“O Maid of holiness! Forsake the mention of such people, for their hearts are as immovable as stones and impervious to all but the promptings of idle fancy. For they remain immature in the Cause of God and suckle the milk of ignorance at the breast of waywardness. Leave them to dwell upon the dust, and warble thou My melodies in the realm of eternity. Apprise, then, the inhabitants of Paradise of that which hath been manifested in the kingdom of creation. Thus may they become attracted by Thy sweet accents, hasten towards this hallowed and promised Beauty, and become fully apprised of this Day—a Day whereon all things have been adorned with the ornament of names, a Day whereon every poor one hath found the source of true wealth and every deprived and sinful soul hath attained forgiveness.”

O people! Seek ye in these days the grace of God and His all-embracing mercy, and beware lest ye follow in the footsteps of every veiled and heedless soul.

Thus the summons of the Pen regarding this blessed and fated account endeth, in this Tablet.