

Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! The tongues of all created things testify to Thy sovereignty and Thine omnipotence, and proclaim mine own poverty and my wretchedness when face to face with the revelations of Thy wealth. Look, then, O my God, upon this sinner whose gaze hath, at all times, been fixed upon the source of Thy forgiveness, and whose eyes have been bent upon the horizon of Thy grace and Thy gifts.

Ever since the day Thou didst create me at Thy bidding, O my God, and didst arouse me through the gentle winds of Thy tender mercies, I have refused to turn to any one except Thee, and have, through the power of Thy sovereignty and Thy might, arisen to face Thine enemies, and have summoned all mankind unto the shores of the ocean of Thy oneness and the heaven of Thine all-glorious unity. I have sought, all my days, not to guard myself from the mischief of the rebellious among Thy creatures, but rather to exalt Thy name amidst Thy people. I have, thereby, suffered what none of Thy creatures hath suffered.

How many the days, O my God, which I have spent in utter loneliness with the transgressors amongst Thy servants, and how many the nights, O my Best-Beloved, during which I lay a captive in the hands of the wayward amidst Thy creatures! In the midst of my troubles and tribulations I have continued to celebrate Thy praise before all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth, and have not ceased to extol Thy wondrous glory in the kingdoms of Thy Revelation and of Thy creation, though all that I have been capable of showing forth hath fallen short of the greatness and the majesty of Thy oneness, and is unworthy of Thine exaltation and of Thine omnipotence.

I swear by Thy glory, O Thou Who art the one alone Beloved! I find myself to be only nothing before the habitation of Thy great glory. Every time I attempt to extol any one of Thy virtues, my heart restraineth me, for naught but Thee is able to soar into the atmosphere of the kingdom of Thy nearness, or reach up to the heaven of Thy presence.

Thy might beareth me witness! I am well aware that were I to bow myself before a handful of dust, from now until the end that hath no end, in acknowledgment of its relationship to Thy name, the Fashioner, I would still find myself far removed

from that dust, and incapable of approaching it, and would discover that such an adoration can in no wise befit it, nor transcend the limitations to which I myself have been subjected. And were I to arise to serve one of Thy servants, and to wait at his door so long as Thine own kingdom endureth and Thine omnipotence will last, as a sign of my acknowledgment of the tie that bindeth him to Thy name, the Creator, I would, likewise,—and to this Thy glory beareth me witness—have to confess my complete failure to do him adequate service, and my deprivation of what can truly befit his station. And this for the reason that I recognize in them naught else except the bond that bindeth them to Thy names and Thine attributes. How can, then, such a man succeed in befittingly extolling the One through a motion of Whose finger all the names and their kingdom were called into being, and all the attributes and their dominion were created, and Who, through yet another motion of that same finger, hath united the letters B and E (Be) and knit them together, manifesting thereby what the highest thoughts of Thy chosen ones who enjoy near access to Thee are unable to grasp, and what the profoundest wisdom of those of Thy loved ones that are wholly devoted to Thee are powerless to fathom.

I swear by Thy glory, O Beloved of my soul! I am bewildered when I contemplate the tokens of Thy handiwork, and the evidences of Thy might, and find myself completely unable to unravel the mystery of the least of Thy signs, how much more to apprehend Thine own Self. I beseech Thee, therefore, O my God, by Thy Name through which Thou hast caused all such as love Thee to soar in the atmosphere of Thy will, and hast guided all them that yearn after Thee into the Paradise of Thy nearness and Thy presence, to waft from the heaven of Thy loving-kindness the fragrance of certainty upon the needy among Thy loved ones, in these days when the tempests of trials have compassed them on every side, and so grievously assailed them that the souls of men have been troubled and the foundations of all beings have trembled at what hath been sent down unto them from the heaven of Thine irrevocable Purpose. They were so shaken that the lamp of their love for Thee and of their remembrance of Thee was ready to be extinguished in the recess of their hearts. Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, in truth, art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

Thou givest ear, O my God and my Master, to the sighing of them that are dear to Thee, and hearest from all sides their cry, by reason of what hath befallen them at the hands of those whose hearts have been deprived of the sweet savors of Thy love. There is none either to befriend or to succor them, nor can anything deter their enemies from harming them. Unrestrained, they do what they wish, and deal with them as they please.

Give, therefore, O my Lord, the wonders of Thine aid to Thy loved ones, who have sought no helper except Thee, and have turned to none save Thyself, and whose eyes have expectantly awaited to behold the wonders of Thy favors and Thy gifts. Have pity, then, upon them, O my God, through the incomparable tokens of Thy mercy, and shelter them within the stronghold of Thy protection and Thy loving-kindness. Thou art the One, O my Lord, Who from everlasting hath been the Refuge of the fearful, and the Haven of the needy. Withhold not, I beseech Thee, from these feeble creatures the matchless tokens of Thy bounteousness and generosity, and leave them not to the mercy of them whose essence hath been solely created of the fire of Thy wrath and of Thine anger, and who have never discovered the fragrance of compassion and equity, and who have been so deluded by the deceitfulness of the world that they have denied Thy proof, and joined partners with Thee, and repudiated Thy signs, and shed the blood of those who are dear to Thee, and have been trusted by Thee. I swear by Thy might, O my Beloved! They have committed what no man before them hath committed, and have thereby deserved Thy wrath and the scourge of Thine anger. Lay hold on them by the power of Thy sovereignty, and set over them such as will have no mercy upon them, unless they return unto Thee, and enter beneath the shadow of Thy loving-kindness, and are forgiven by Thee. Thou hast from everlasting been supreme over all things, and wilt unto everlasting remain the same. Thou, truly, art the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Equitable, the All-Wise.

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Look Thou upon this wronged one, who hath been sorely afflicted by the oppressors among Thy creatures and the infidels among Thine enemies, though he himself hath refused to breathe a single breath but by Thy leave and at Thy bidding. I lay asleep on my couch, O my God, when lo, the gentle winds of Thy grace and Thy loving-kindness passed over me, and wakened me through the power of Thy sovereignty and Thy gifts, and bade me

arise before Thy servants, and speak forth Thy praise, and glorify Thy word. Thereupon most of Thy people reviled me. I swear by Thy glory, O my God! I never thought that they would show forth such deeds, aware as I am that Thou hast Thyself announced this Revelation unto them in the Scrolls of Thy commandment and the Tablets of Thy decree, and hast covenanted with them concerning this youth in every word sent down by Thee unto Thy creatures and Thy people.

I am bewildered, therefore, O my God, and know not how to act toward them. Every time I hold my peace, and cease to extol Thy wondrous virtues, Thy Spirit impelleth me to cry out before all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth; and every time I am still, the breaths wafted from the right hand of Thy will and purpose pass over me, and stir me up, and I find myself to be as a leaf which lieth at the mercy of the winds of Thy decree, and is carried away whithersoever Thou dost permit or command it. Every man of insight who considereth what hath been revealed by me, will be persuaded that Thy Cause is not in my hands, but in Thy hands, and will recognize that the reins of power are held not in my grasp but in Thy grasp, and are subject to Thy sovereign might. And yet, Thou seest, O my God, how the inhabitants of Thy realm have arrayed themselves against me, and inflict upon me every moment of my life what causeth the realities of Thy chosen ones and trusted ones to tremble.

I entreat Thee, therefore, O my God, by Thy Name through which Thou hast guided Thy lovers to the living waters of Thy grace and Thy favors, and attracted them that long for Thee to the Paradise of Thy nearness and Thy presence, to open the eyes of Thy people that they may recognize in this Revelation the manifestation of Thy transcendent unity, and the dawning of the lights of Thy countenance and Thy beauty. Cleanse them, then, O my God, from all idle fancies and vain imaginations, that they may inhale the fragrances of sanctity from the robe of Thy Revelation and Thy commandment, that haply they may cease to inflict upon me what will deprive their souls of the fragrances of the manifold tokens of Thy mercy, that are wafted in the days of Him Who is the Manifestation of Thyself, and the Dayspring of Thy Cause, and that they may not perpetrate what will call down Thy wrath and anger.

Thou well knowest, O my God, that I was regarded as one of the people of the Bayán, and consorted with them with love and fellowship, and summoned them to Thee in the daytime and in the night season, through the wonders of Thy Revelation and Thine inspiration, and sustained at their hands what the inmates of the cities of Thine invention are powerless to recount. I swear by Thy might, O my Beloved! Every morning I waken to find that I am made a target for the darts of their envy, and every night, when I lie down to rest, I discover that I have fallen a victim to the spears of their hate. Though Thou hast made known unto me the secrets of their hearts, and hast set me above them, I have refused to uncover their deeds, and have dealt patiently with them, mindful of the time which Thou hast fixed. And when Thy promise came to pass, and the set time was fulfilled, Thou didst lift, to an imperceptible degree, the veil of concealment, and lo, all the inmates of the kingdoms of Thy Revelation and of Thy creation shook and trembled, except those who were created by Thee, through the fire of Thy love, and the breath of Thine eagerness, and the water of Thy loving-kindness, and the clay of Thy grace. These are they who are glorified by the Concourse on high and the denizens of the Cities of eternity.

I give praise to Thee, therefore, O my God, that Thou hast preserved them that have acknowledged Thy unity, and hast destroyed them that have joined partners with Thee, and hast divided the one from the other through yet another word that hath proceeded out of the mouth of Thy will, and flowed down from the pen of Thy purpose. Thereby have Thy servants, who were created through the word of Thy commandment, and were begotten by Thy will, caviled at me, and so fiercely opposed me that they repudiated Thee, and have rejected Thy signs, and have risen up against Thee.

Thy glory beareth me witness, O my Beloved! My pen is powerless to describe what their hands have wrought against Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy Cause, and the Dayspring of Thy Revelation, and the Dawning-Place of Thine inspiration. For all this I give praise to Thee. I swear by Thy glory, O my God! My heart yearneth after the things ordained by Thee in the heaven of Thy decree and the kingdom of Thine appointment. For whatsoever befalleth me in Thy path is the beloved of my soul and the goal of my desire. This, verily, is to be ascribed to naught except Thy power and Thy might.

I am the one, O my God, who, through the love I bear to Thee, hath been able to dispense with all who are in heaven and on earth. Armed with this love, I am afraid of no one, though all the peoples of the world unite to hurt me. Oh, that my blood could, this very moment, be shed on the face of the earth before Thee, and Thou wouldst behold me in the condition in which Thou didst behold such of Thy servants as have drawn nigh unto Thee, and those of Thy righteous creatures as have been chosen by Thee!

I give Thee thanks, O my God, that Thou hast decided through the power of Thy decree, and wilt continue to decide through Thine irrevocable appointment and purpose. I entreat Thee, O my Beloved, by Thy Name through which Thou didst lift up the ensigns of Thy Cause, and shed the splendors of the light of Thy countenance, to send down upon me and upon such of Thy servants as are wholly devoted to Thee all the good Thou hast ordained in Thy Tablets. Establish us, then, upon the seats of truth in Thy presence, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all things!

Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Merciful.