

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE TRUE GOD

Praise be to the all-perceiving, the ever-abiding Lord Who, from a dewdrop out of the ocean of His grace, hath reared the firmament of existence, adorned it with the stars of knowledge, and admitted man into the lofty court of insight and understanding. This dewdrop, which is the Primal Word of God, is at times called the Water of Life, inasmuch as it quickeneth with the waters of knowledge them that have perished in the wilderness of ignorance. Again it is called the Primal Light, a light born of the Sun of divine knowledge, through whose effulgence the first stirrings of existence were made plain and manifest. Such manifestations are the expressions of the grace of Him Who is the Peerless, the All-Wise. He it is who knoweth and bestoweth all. He it is who transcendeth all that hath been said or heard. His knowledge will remain forever above the grasp of human vision and understanding and beyond the reach of human words and deeds. To the truth of this utterance existence itself and all that hath appeared therefrom bear eloquent testimony.

It is clear and evident, therefore, that the first bestowal of God is the Word, and its discoverer and recipient is the power of understanding. This Word is the foremost instructor in the school of existence and the revealer of Him Who is the Almighty. All that is seen is visible only through the light of its wisdom. All that is manifest is but a token of its knowledge. All names are but its name, and the beginning and end of all matters must needs depend upon it.

Thy letter hath reached this captive of the world in His prison. It brought joy, strengthened the ties of friendship, and renewed the memory of bygone days. Praise be to the Lord of creation Who granted us the

favour of meeting in the Arabian land,¹ wherein we visited and held converse. It is Our hope that our encounter may never be forgotten nor effaced from the heart by the passage of time, but rather that, out of the seeds thus sown, the sweet herbs of friendship may spring forth and remain forever fresh and verdant for all to behold.

As to thy question concerning the heavenly Scriptures: The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and centre your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

Incline your ears to the sweet melody of this Prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices, that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been reborn in this Day, shall never die; whoso remaineth dead, shall never live.

¹Iraq.

Thou hast written concerning languages. Both Arabic and Persian are laudable. That which is desired of a language is that it convey the intent of the speaker, and either language can serve this purpose. And since in this day the Orb of divine knowledge hath risen in the firmament of Persia, that tongue deserveth every praise.

O friend! When the Primal Word appeared amongst men in these latter days, a number of heavenly souls recognized the voice of the Beloved and bore allegiance unto it, whilst others, finding the deeds of some to be at variance with their words, remained far removed from the spreading rays of the Sun of divine knowledge.

Say: O children of dust! He Who is the Spirit of Purity saith: In this glorious Day whatsoever can purge you from defilement and ensure your peace and tranquillity, that indeed is the straight Path,² the Path that leadeth unto Me. To be purged from defilement is to be cleansed of that which is injurious to man and detracteth from his high station—among which is to take undue pleasure in one's own words and deeds, notwithstanding their unworthiness. True peace and tranquillity will only be realized when every soul will have become the well-wisher of all mankind. He Who is the All-Knowing beareth Me witness: were the peoples of the world to grasp the true significance of the words of God, they would never be deprived of their portion of the ocean of His bounty. In the firmament of truth there hath never been, nor will there ever be, a brighter star than this.

The first utterance of Him Who is the All-Wise is this: O children of dust! Turn your faces from the darkness of estrangement to the effulgent light of the daystar of unity. This is that which above all else will benefit

²From the Lawḥ-i-Maqṣúd; cf. Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1988), p. 171.

the peoples of the earth. O friend! Upon the tree of utterance there hath never been, nor shall there ever be, a fairer leaf, and beneath the ocean of knowledge no pearl more wondrous can ever be found.

O children of understanding! If the eyelid, however delicate, can deprive man's outer eye from beholding the world and all that is therein, consider then what would be wrought if the veil of covetousness were to descend upon his inner eye. Say: O people! The darkness of greed and envy becloudeth the radiance of the soul even as the clouds obstruct the light of the sun. Should anyone hearken unto this utterance with a discerning ear, he will unfurl the wings of detachment and soar effortlessly in the atmosphere of true understanding.

At a time when darkness had encompassed the world, the ocean of divine favour surged and His Light was made manifest, that the doings of men might be laid bare. This, verily, is that Light which hath been foretold in the heavenly scriptures. Should the Almighty so please, the hearts of all men will be purged and purified through His goodly utterance, and the light of unity will shed its radiance upon every soul and revive the whole earth.

O people! Words must be supported by deeds, for deeds are the true test of words. Without the former, the latter can never quench the thirst of the yearning soul, nor unlock the portals of vision before the eyes of the blind. The Lord of celestial wisdom saith: A harsh word is even as a sword thrust; a gentle word as milk. The latter leadeth the children of men unto knowledge and conferreth upon them true distinction.

The Tongue of Wisdom proclaimeth: He that hath Me not is bereft of all things. Turn ye away from all that is on earth and seek none else but Me. I am the Sun of Wisdom and the Ocean of Knowledge. I cheer the faint and revive the dead. I am the guiding Light that illumineth the way. I am

the royal Falcon on the arm of the Almighty. I unfold the drooping wings of every broken bird and start it on its flight.³

The incomparable Friend saith: The path to freedom hath been outstretched; hasten ye thereunto. The wellspring of wisdom is overflowing; quaff ye therefrom. Say: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Verily I say, whatsoever leadeth to the decline of ignorance and the increase of knowledge hath been, and will ever remain, approved in the sight of the Lord of creation. Say: O people! Walk ye neath the shadow of justice and truthfulness and seek ye shelter within the tabernacle of unity.

Say: O ye that have eyes to see! The past is the mirror of the future. Gaze ye therein and be apprised thereof; perchance ye may be aided thereby to recognize the Friend and may be not the cause of His displeasure. In this day the choicest fruit of the tree of knowledge is that which serveth the welfare of humanity and safeguardeth its interests.

Say: The tongue hath been created to bear witness to My truth; defile it not with falsehood. The heart is the treasury of My mystery; surrender it not into the hand of covetous desires. We fain would hope that in this resplendent morn, when the effulgent rays of the Sun of divine knowledge have enveloped the whole earth, we may all attain unto the good pleasure of the Friend and drink our fill from the ocean of His recognition.

O friend! As hearing ears are scarce to find, the pen hath for some time remained silent in its quarters. In truth, matters have come to such a pass

³Ibid., p. 169.

that silence hath taken precedence over utterance and hath come to be regarded as preferable. Say: O people! These words are being uttered in due measure, that the newly born may thrive and the tender shoot flourish. Milk should be given in suitable proportion, that the children of the world may attain to the station of maturity and abide in the court of oneness.

O friend! We came upon a pure soil and sowed therein the seeds of true understanding. Let it now be seen what the rays of the sun will do—whether they will cause these seeds to wither or to grow. Say: Through the ascendancy of God, the All-Knowing, the Incomparable, the Luminary of divine understanding hath, in this day, risen from behind the veil of the spirit, and the birds of every meadow are intoxicated with the wine of knowledge and exhilarated with the remembrance of the Friend. Well is it with them that discover and hasten unto Him!