O army of God! A letter signed jointly by all of you hath been received.

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نسخه اصل فارسی

— 35 —

O army of God! A letter signed jointly by all of you hath been received. It was most eloquent and full of flavor, and reading it was a delight.

Ye had written of the fasting month. Fortunate are ye to have obeyed the commandment of God, and kept this fast during the holy season. For this material fast is an outer token of the spiritual fast; it is a symbol of self-restraint, the withholding of oneself from all appetites of the self, taking on the characteristics of the spirit, being carried away by the breathings of heaven and catching fire from the love of God.

Your letter also betokened your unity and the closeness of your hearts. It is my hope that the west, through the boundless grace that God is pouring down in this new era, will become the east, the dawning-point of the Sun of Truth, and western believers the daysprings of light, and manifestors of the signs of God; that they will be guarded from the doubts of the heedless and will stay firm and unmovable in the Covenant and Testament; that they will toil by day and by night until they awaken those who sleep, and make mindful those who are unaware, and bring in the outcast to be intimates of the inner circle, and bestow upon the destitute their portion of eternal grace. Let them be heralds of the Kingdom, and call out to the denizens of this nether world, and summon them to enter the realm on high.

O army of God! Today, in this world, every people is wandering astray in its own desert, moving here and there according to the dictates of its fancies and whims, pursuing its own particular caprice. Amongst all the teeming masses of the earth, only this community of the Most Great Name is free and clear of human schemes and hath no selfish purpose to promote. Alone amongst them all, this people hath arisen with aims purified of self, following the Teachings of God, most eagerly toiling and striving toward a single goal: to turn this nether dust into high heaven, to make of this world a mirror for the Kingdom, to change this world into a different world, and cause all humankind to adopt the ways of righteousness and a new manner of life.

O army of God! Through the protection and help vouchsafed by the Blessed Beauty — may my life be a sacrifice to His loved ones — ye must conduct yourselves in such a manner that ye may stand out distinguished and brilliant as the sun among other souls. Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a center of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, so that the people of that city may cry out and say: “This man is unquestionably a Bahá’í,

for his manners, his behavior, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá'ís." Not until ye attain this station can ye be said to have been faithful to the Covenant and Testament of God. For He hath, through irrefutable Texts, entered into a binding Covenant with us all, requiring us to act in accordance with His sacred instructions and counsels.

O army of God! The time hath come for the effects and perfections of the Most Great Name to be made manifest in this excellent age, so as to establish, beyond any doubt, that this era is the era of Bahá'u'lláh, and this age is distinguished above all other ages.

O army of God! Whensoever ye behold a person whose entire attention is directed toward the Cause of God; whose only aim is this, to make the Word of God to take effect; who, day and night, with pure intent, is rendering service to the Cause; from whose behavior not the slightest trace of egotism or private motives is discerned — who, rather, wandereth distracted in the wilderness of the love of God, and drinketh only from the cup of the knowledge of God, and is utterly engrossed in spreading the sweet savors of God, and is enamored of the holy verses of the Kingdom of God — know ye for a certainty that this individual will be supported and reinforced by heaven; that like unto the morning star, he will forever gleam brightly out of the skies of eternal grace. But if he show the slightest taint of selfish desires and self love, his efforts will lead to nothing and he will be destroyed and left hopeless at the last.

O army of God! Praise be to God, Bahá'u'lláh hath lifted the chains from off the necks of humankind, and hath set man free from all that trammeled him, and told him: Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch; be ye compassionate and kind to all the human race. Deal ye with strangers the same as with friends, cherish ye others just as ye would your own. See foes as friends; see demons as angels; give to the tyrant the same great love ye show the loyal and true, and even as gazelles from the scented cities of Ḵhatá and Ḵhutan [^1]offer up sweet musk to the ravening wolf. Be ye a refuge to the fearful; bring ye rest and peace to the disturbed; make ye a provision for the destitute; be a treasury of riches for the poor; be a healing medicine for those who suffer pain; be ye doctor and nurse to the ailing; promote ye friendship, and honor, and conciliation, and devotion to God, in this world of nonexistence. {id="ca" type="par" language="en"} [1]: Cities in China celebrated for their musk-producing animals

O army of God! Make ye a mighty effort: perchance ye can flood this earth with light, that this mud hut, the world, may become the Abhá Paradise. The dark hath taken over, and the brute traits prevail. This world of man is now an arena for wild beasts, a field where the ignorant, the heedless, seize their chance. The souls of men are ravening wolves and animals with blinded eyes, they are either deadly poison or useless weeds — all except for a very few who indeed do nurture altruistic aims and plans for the well-being of their fellow men: but ye must in this matter — that is, the serving of humankind — lay down your very lives, and as ye yield yourselves, rejoice.

O army of God! The Exalted One, the Báb, gave up His life. The Blessed Perfection gave up a hundred lives at every breath. He bore calamities. He suffered anguish. He was imprisoned. He was chained. He was made homeless and was banished to distant lands. Finally, then, He lived out His days in the Most Great Prison. Likewise, a great multitude of the lovers of God who followed this path have tasted the honey of martyrdom and they gave up everything — life,

possessions, kindred — all they had. How many homes were reduced to rubble; how many dwellings were broken into and pillaged; how many a noble building went to the ground; how many a palace was battered into a tomb. And all this came about that humankind might be illumined, that ignorance might yield to knowledge, that men of earth might become men of heaven, that discord and dissension might be torn out by the roots, and the Kingdom of Peace become established over all the world. Strive ye now that this bounty become manifest, and this best-beloved of all hopes be realized in splendor throughout the community of man.

O army of God! Beware lest ye harm any soul, or make any heart to sorrow; lest ye wound any man with your words, be he known to you or a stranger, be he friend or foe. Pray ye for all; ask ye that all be blessed, all be forgiven. Beware, beware, lest any of you seek vengeance, even against one who is thirsting for your blood. Beware, beware, lest ye offend the feelings of another, even though he be an evildoer, and he wish you ill. Look ye not upon the creatures, turn ye to their Creator. See ye not the never-yielding people, see but the Lord of Hosts. Gaze ye not down upon the dust, gaze upward at the shining sun, which hath caused every patch of darksome earth to glow with light.

O army of God! When calamity striketh, be ye patient and composed. However afflictive your sufferings may be, stay ye undisturbed, and with perfect confidence in the abounding grace of God, brave ye the tempest of tribulations and fiery ordeals.

Last year a number of the unfaithful, both from within and from without, both known to us and strangers, took before the Sulṭán of Turkey slanderous charges against these homeless exiles, bringing against us grave accusations with no basis in fact. The Government, conformably with prudence, determined to look into these charges, and dispatched a Commission of Investigation to this city. It is obvious what an opportunity this afforded our ill-wishers, and what a storm they unleashed, all this beyond description by tongue or pen. Only one who witnessed it could know what a turmoil they created and what an earthquake of anguish was the result. And notwithstanding this, the response was to depend utterly upon God, and to remain composed, confident, long-suffering, undisturbed, to such a degree that a person knowing nothing of the situation would have thought us easy of heart and mind, perfectly happy, thriving and at peace.

Then it came about that the accusers themselves, those who had made the defamatory charges against us, joined with the members of the Commission to investigate the accusations, so that plaintiffs, witnesses and judge were all one and the same, and the conclusion was foregone. Nevertheless, to be fair, it must be stated that up to now His Majesty the Sulṭán of Turkey hath paid no heed to these false charges, this defamation, these fables and traducements, and hath acted with justice....

O Thou Provider! Thou hast breathed over the friends in the West the sweet fragrance of the Holy Spirit, and with the light of divine guidance Thou hast lit up the western sky. Thou hast made those who were once remote to draw near unto Thyself; Thou hast turned strangers into loving friends; Thou hast awakened those who slept; Thou hast made the heedless mindful.

O Thou Provider! Assist Thou these noble friends to win Thy good pleasure, and make them well-wishers of stranger and friend alike. Bring them into the world that abideth forever; grant them a portion of heavenly grace; cause them to be true Bahá'ís, sincerely of God; save them from

outward semblances, and establish them firmly in the truth. Make them signs and tokens of the Kingdom, luminous stars above the horizons of this nether life. Make them to be a comfort and a solace to humankind and servants to the peace of the world. Exhilarate them with the wine of Thy counsel, and grant that all of them may tread the path of Thy commandments.

O Thou Provider! The dearest wish of this servant of Thy Threshold is to behold the friends of east and west in close embrace; to see all the members of human society gathered with love in a single great assemblage, even as individual drops of water collected in one mighty sea; to behold them all as birds in one garden of roses, as pearls of one ocean, as leaves of one tree, as rays of one sun.

Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful, and Thou art the God of strength, the Omnipotent, the All-Seeing.