

O ye who have turned your faces toward the Exalted Beauty!

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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O ye who have turned your faces toward the Exalted Beauty! By night, by day, at morningtide and sunset, when darkness draweth on, and at early light I remember, and ever have remembered, in the realms of my mind and heart, the loved ones of the Lord. I beg of Him to bestow His confirmations upon those loved ones, dwellers in that pure and holy land, and to grant them successful outcomes in all things: that in their character, their behavior, their words, their way of life, in all they are and do, He will make them to achieve distinction among men; that He will gather them into the world community, their hearts filled with ecstasy and fervor and yearning love, with knowledge and certitude, with steadfastness and unity, their faces beauteous and bright.

O ye beloved of the Lord! This day is the day of union, the day of the ingathering of all mankind. “Verily God loveth those who, as though they were a solid wall, do battle for His Cause in serried lines!”^[1] Note that He saith “in serried lines” — meaning crowded and pressed together, one locked to the next, each supporting his fellows. To do battle, as stated in the sacred verse, doth not, in this greatest of all dispensations, mean to go forth with sword and spear, with lance and piercing arrow — but rather weaponed with pure intent, with righteous motives, with counsels helpful and effective, with godly attributes, with deeds pleasing to the Almighty, with the qualities of heaven. It signifieth education for all mankind, guidance for all men, the spreading far and wide of the sweet savors of the spirit, the promulgation of God’s proofs, the setting forth of arguments conclusive and divine, the doing of charitable deeds. {id="19s" type="par" language="en"} [1]: Qur’án 61:4.

Whensoever holy souls, drawing on the powers of heaven, shall arise with such qualities of the spirit, and march in unison, rank on rank, every one of those souls will be even as one thousand, and the surging waves of that mighty ocean will be even as the battalions of the Concourse on high. What a blessing that will be — when all shall come together, even as once separate torrents, rivers and streams, running brooks and single



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drops, when collected together in one place will form a mighty sea. And to such a degree will the inherent unity of all prevail, that the traditions, rules, customs and distinctions in the fanciful life of these populations will be effaced and vanish away like isolated drops, once the great sea of oneness doth leap and surge and roll.

I swear by the Ancient Beauty, that at such a time overwhelming grace will so encircle all, and the sea of grandeur will so overflow its shores, that the narrowest strip of water will grow wide as an endless sea, and every merest drop will be even as the shoreless deep.

O ye loved ones of God! Struggle and strive to reach that high station, and to make a splendor so to shine across these realms of earth that the rays of it will be reflected back from a dawning-point on the horizon of eternity. This is the very foundation of the Cause of God. This is the very pith of the Law of God. This is the mighty structure raised up by the Manifestations of God. This is why the orb of God's world dawneth. This is why the Lord establisheth Himself on the throne of His human body.

O ye loved ones of God! See how the Exalted One^[^1] may the souls of all on earth be a ransom for Him — for this high purpose made His blessed heart the target for affliction's spears; and because the real intent of the Ancient Beauty — for Him may the souls of the Concourse on high be offered up — was to win this same supernal goal, the Exalted One bared His holy breast for a target to a myriad bullets fired by the people of malice and hate, and with utter meekness died the martyr's death. On the dust of this pathway the holy blood of thousands upon thousands of sacred souls gushed out, and many a time the blessed body of a loyal lover of God was hanged to the gallows tree. {id="19w" type="par" language="en"} [1]: The Báb

The Abhá Beauty Himself — may the spirit of all existence be offered up for His loved ones — bore all manner of ordeals, and willingly accepted for Himself intense afflictions. No torment was there left that His sacred form was not subjected to, no suffering that did not descend upon Him. How many a night, when He was chained, did He go sleepless because of the weight of His iron collar; how many a day the burning pain of the stocks and fetters gave Him no moment's peace. From Niyávarán to Ṭihrán they made Him run — He, that embodied spirit, He Who had been accustomed to repose against cushions of ornamented silk — chained, shoeless, His head bared; and down under the earth, in the thick darkness of that narrow dungeon, they shut Him up with murderers, rebels and thieves. Ever and again they assailed Him with a new torment, and all were certain that from one moment to the next He would suffer a martyr's death. After some time they banished Him from His native land, and sent Him to countries alien and far away. During many a year in 'Iráq, no moment passed but the arrow of a new anguish struck His holy heart; with every breath a sword came down upon that sacred body, and He could hope for no moment of security and rest. From every side His enemies mounted their attack with unrelenting hate; and singly and

alone He withstood them all. After all these tribulations, these body blows, they flung Him out of 'Iráq in the continent of Asia, to the continent of Europe, and in that place of bitter exile, of wretched hardships, to the wrongs that were heaped upon Him by the people of the Qur'án were now added the virulent persecutions, the powerful attacks, the plottings, the slanders, the continual hostilities, the hate and malice, of the people of the Bayán. My pen is powerless to tell it all; but ye have surely been informed of it. Then, after twenty-four years in this, the Most Great Prison, in agony and sore affliction, His days drew to a close.

To sum it up, the Ancient Beauty was ever, during His sojourn in this transitory world, either a captive bound with chains, or living under a sword, or subjected to extreme suffering and torment, or held in the Most Great Prison. Because of His physical weakness, brought on by His afflictions, His blessed body was worn away to a breath; it was light as a cobweb from long grieving. And His reason for shouldering this heavy load and enduring all this anguish, which was even as an ocean that hurleth its waves to high heaven — His reason for putting on the heavy iron chains and for becoming the very embodiment of utter resignation and meekness, was to lead every soul on earth to concord, to fellow feeling, to oneness; to make known amongst all peoples the sign of the singleness of God, so that at last the primal oneness deposited at the heart of all created things would bear its destined fruit, and the splendor of "No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy,"^[1] would cast abroad its rays. {id="19y" type="par" language="en"} [1]: Qur'án 67:3.

Now is the time, O ye beloved of the Lord, for ardent endeavor. Struggle ye, and strive. And since the Ancient Beauty was exposed by day and night on the field of martyrdom, let us in our turn labor hard, and hear and ponder the counsels of God; let us fling away our lives, and renounce our brief and numbered days. Let us turn our eyes away from empty fantasies of this world's divergent forms, and serve instead this preeminent purpose, this grand design. Let us not, because of our own imaginings, cut down this tree that the hand of heavenly grace hath planted; let us not, with the dark clouds of our illusions, our selfish interests, blot out the glory that streameth from the Abhá Realm. Let us not be as barriers that wall out the rolling ocean of Almighty God. Let us not prevent the pure, sweet scents from the garden of the All-Glorious Beauty from blowing far and wide. Let us not, on this day of reunion, shut out the vernal downpour of blessings from on high. Let us not consent that the splendors of the Sun of Truth should ever fade and disappear. These are the admonitions of God, as set forth in His Holy Books, His Scriptures, His Tablets that tell out His counselings to the sincere.

The glory rest upon you, and God's mercy, and God's blessings.

