

Prayer - Lawh-i-Maryam (Tablet to Maryam)

Bahá'u'lláh

Translated



LAWH-I-MARYAM

(TABLET TO MARYAM)

Sorrowful is He at My sorrows.

O Maryam! The wrongs which I suffer have blotted out the wrongs suffered by My First Name from the Tablet of creation. The clouds of divine decree have at every moment rained down upon this manifest Beauty the showers of tribulation. My banishment from My homeland was for the sake of none but the Beloved; My exile was in no other path save that of His good-pleasure. In the midst of heaven-sent trials I glowed bright as a candle, and in the face of divinely ordained afflictions I stood as firm as a mountain. In manifesting the outpourings of His grace I was even as a bounteous cloud, and in laying hold on the foes of the peerless King I was even as a burning flame.

The clear tokens of My power roused the envy of My foes, and the compelling evidences of My wisdom stirred the hatred of the malevolent: Not a single night did I repose in peace; not a single morn did I awake in tranquillity. I swear by the beauty of God that Ḥusayn shed tears of anguish at the wrongs I suffered and Abraham cast Himself into the flames for the sake of the afflictions I sustained. Wert thou to gaze with discernment, thou wouldst behold the Eye of Grandeur weeping sore beneath the tabernacle of sanctity, and the Essence of Majesty lamenting within the realms of loftiness. Unto this beareth witness the Tongue of truth and glory.

O Maryam! From the land of Ṭá, after countless afflictions, We reached 'Iráq, at the bidding of the Tyrant of Persia, where, after the fetters of Our foes, We were afflicted with the perfidy of Our friends. God knoweth what befell Me thereafter! At length, abandoning My home and all that was therein, and renouncing My life and all that pertained thereunto, I retired alone and companionless. I roamed the wilderness of resignation, travelling in such wise that in My exile every eye wept sore over Me, and all created things shed tears of blood because of My anguish. The birds of the air were My companions and the beasts of the field My associates. In such wise did I, even as the



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flash of the spirit, pass over this fleeting world. For two years or rather less, I shunned all else but God, and closed Mine eyes to all except Him, that haply the fire of hatred may die down and the heat of jealousy abate.

O Maryam! To divulge the heavenly secrets would be unbefitting, and to disclose the celestial mysteries would be unseemly. By “secrets” is meant naught other than the treasures enshrined within Mine own Being. By the righteousness of God! I have borne what no man, be he of the past or of the future, hath borne or will bear.

During this period of retirement none, whether among My brothers or any other soul, sought to investigate the matter, let alone to grasp its significance, though its import surpasseth the creation of earth and heaven. And yet, I swear by God, every breath drawn in the course of My journey was better than the service of both worlds, and my very retreat was the mightiest testimony and the most perfect and conclusive evidence. Yea, true vision is needed, if one is to behold the Scene of transcendent glory, inasmuch as the blind one is deprived of beholding his own countenance, much less the Countenance of eternal holiness. How can a mere shadow comprehend the One Who casteth it? How can a handful of clay grasp the subtle reality of the heart?

At last the divine decree prompted certain spiritual souls to remember this Canaanite Youth. Armed with a number of petitions, they searched in every place and enquired from every person, until they found in a mountain cave a trace of this traceless One. He, verily, guideth all things unto the Straight Path. I swear by the Day-Star of eternal truth that the arrival of these souls so astonished and amazed this poor and exiled Soul that My pen is powerless to describe it. Perchance a steel-sharp pen will emerge from the realm of eternity, rend the veils asunder, and reveal these secrets with perfect truth and absolute sincerity; or haply an eloquent tongue will speak and bring forth the pearls of the spirit from the shell of silence. And this indeed would not be hard of accomplishment for God. In brief, the hand of Him Who is the Unconstrained broke the seal of the mysteries—this, however, none can perceive save them that are endued with true understanding, nay rather, them that have severed themselves from all things.

So it was that the Luminary of the world returned to 'Iráq, where We found no more than a handful of souls, faint and dispirited, nay utterly lost and dead. The Cause of God had ceased to be on any one's lips, nor was any heart receptive to its message. This lowly Servant arose then with such vigour to protect and promote the Cause of God that methinks a new resurrection was ushered in. The glory of the Cause became manifest in every town and its fair name exalted in every city, to such an extent that all the rulers treated it with tolerance and benevolence.

O Maryam! The determination evinced by this Servant to withstand the onslaught of His foes from every sect and kindred so deepened their rancour that it can scarcely be depicted or imagined. Thus was it ordained by the Lord of might and power.

O Maryam! The Pen of the Ancient of Days proclaimeth: Among the foremost duties prescribed is to cleanse one's heart of all but God. Sanctify then thy heart from aught save the Friend, that thou mayest be made worthy to enter the court of communion.

O Maryam! Free thyself from the fetters of blind imitation, that thou mayest gain admittance into the blissful realm of detachment detachment. Sever thy heart from the world and all that is therein, that thou mayest attain to the sovereign rule of faith and be not debarred from the Sanctuary of the All-Merciful. Through the power of renunciation, rend asunder the veil of idle fancy and enter the hallowed retreats of certitude.

O Maryam! Though a tree be laden with a myriad leaves and fruits, a gust of autumnal wind sufficeth to obliterate them all. Remove not, then, thy gaze from the very root of the Tree of Divinity and the branch of the Lote-Tree of celestial glory. Consider the ocean, how serene it lieth, how majestically it reposes within its bed. Yet the winds of the will of the eternal Beloved cause countless ripples and innumerable swells to appear upon its surface, each wave distinct and divergent from the others. All the peoples of the world today are preoccupied with the ebb and flow of these waves, and are oblivious of the stupendous might of that Sea of seas whose every movement layeth bare the signs of Him Who is the Unconstrained.

Commune, O Maryam, with the Spirit of the All-Merciful and, shunning the company and kinship of the Evil One, seek shelter within the inviolable protection of the Lord of bounty, that haply the hand of His loving-kindness may deliver thee from the path of selfish pursuits and direct thy steps towards the realm of transcendent glory.

Abandon these fleeting shadows, O Maryam, and turn towards the Day-Star of unfading splendour. Every shadow oweth its existence and motion to the presence of the sun; for were the latter to withhold its grace for a single moment, all things would sink beneath the veil of non-existence. How sad and regrettable indeed that one should occupy oneself with the transitory things of this world and be debarred from the Dayspring of eternal holiness!

O Maryam! Appreciate the value of these days, for ere long thou shalt no longer behold the Celestial Youth in this contingent realm, but shalt perceive the signs of grief in all created things. Soon shall ye bite your fingers' ends in remorse, for ye shall fail to find this Youth, even were ye to search out the reaches of earth and heaven. Thus hath the decree been sent down from the realm of transcendent glory. Yea, ere long thou shalt behold all existence biting its fingers in bereavement over this Youth, and, search as it

may through the entirety of every earth and every heaven, yet will it fail to attain His presence.

In brief, matters have come to such a pass that this Servant hath resolved to retire alone from the midst of this wretched people. Apart from the women of the Household who must needs remain with Me, I shall admit no one else to Our company, not even the attendants of My consort. Let us see then what God hath purposed. I depart, whilst My companions are the tears I shed and Mine associates the sighs I utter; My solace is My pen and the delight of My soul is Mine own beauty; My hosts are My reliance upon God and Mine armies are My trust in Him. Thus have We imparted unto thee a measure of the mysteries of this matter, that thou mayest be of them that apprehend.

O Maryam! All the waters of the world and its rivers have flowed from the eyes of this Youth, which, even as the clouds, have rained down their tears at the wrongs He hath suffered. In short, We have ever offered up Our life and soul in the path of the Beloved, and We are thankful and content in the face of whatever may befall Us. At one time My head was raised aloft on a spear, and at another it fell into the hands of My deadly enemy. At one time I was cast into the fire, and at another I was suspended in the air. Such indeed hath been the treatment that the ungodly have meted out to Us.

O Maryam, We have called this Tablet “the choicest of lamentations” and “the vernal shower of tears”. We have dispatched it unto thee that thou mayest weep, at thy heart’s ease, and share in the agonies and afflictions of the Ancient Beauty.

1. The Báb.
2. Imám Ḥusayn.
3. Ṭíhrán.
4. Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh.
5. Joseph.
6. Cf. Qur’án 22:54.