

Súriy-i-Haykal / Súrih of the Temple

Bahá'u'lláh

Original English



Súriy-i-Haykal / Súrih of the Temple

This is the Súrih of the Temple which God hath ordained to be the Mirror of His Names between the heavens and the earth, and the Sign of His Remembrance amidst the peoples of the world.

He is the Most Wondrous, the All-Glorious!

Glorified is He Who sendeth down His verses to those who comprehend. Glorified is He Who speaketh forth from the Kingdom of His Revelation, and Who remaineth unknown to all save His honoured servants. Glorified is He Who quickeneth whomsoever He willeth by virtue of His word “Be,” and it is! Glorified is He Who causeth whomsoever He willeth to ascend unto the heaven of grace, and sendeth down therefrom whatsoever He desireth according to a prescribed measure.

Blessed is He Who doeth as He willeth by a word of His command. He, verily, is the True One, the Knower of things unseen. Blessed is He Who inspireth whomsoever He willeth with whatsoever He desireth, through His irresistible and inscrutable command. Blessed is He Who aideth whomsoever He desireth with the hosts of the unseen. His might is, in truth, equal to His purpose, and He, verily, is the All-Glorious, the Self-Subsisting. Blessed is He Who exalteth



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

whomsoever He willeth by the power of His sovereign might, and confirmeth whomsoever He chooseth in accordance with His good pleasure; well is it with them that understand!

Blessed is He Who, in a well-guarded Tablet, hath prescribed a fixed measure unto all things. Blessed is He Who hath revealed unto His Servant that which shall illumine the hearts and minds of men. Blessed is He Who hath sent down upon His Servant such tribulations as have melted the hearts of them that dwell within the Tabernacle of eternity and the souls of those who have drawn nigh unto their Lord. Blessed is He Who hath showered upon His Servant, from the clouds of His decree, the darts of affliction, and Who beholdeth Me enduring them with patience and fortitude. Blessed is He Who hath ordained for His Servant that which He hath destined for no other soul. He, verily, is the One, the Incomparable, the Self-Subsisting.

Blessed is He Who hath caused to rain down upon His Servant from the clouds of enmity, and at the hands of the people of denial, the shafts of tribulation and trial; and yet seeth Our heart filled with gratitude. Blessed is He Who hath laid upon the shoulders of His Servant the burden of the heavens and of the earth — a burden for which We yield Him every praise, though none may grasp this save them that are endued with understanding. Glorified is He Who hath surrendered the embodiment of His Beauty to the clutches of the envious and the wicked — a fate unto which We are fully resigned, though none may perceive this save those who are endued with insight. Glorified is He Who hath left Ḥusayn¹ to make His dwelling amidst the hosts of His enemies, and exposed His body with every breath to the spears of hatred and anger; yet do We yield Him thanks for all that He hath destined to befall His Servant Who repairth unto Him in His affliction and grief.

While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden — the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord — suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God's honoured servants.

¹ Bahá'u'lláh's given name was Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí.

Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if ye be of them that perceive. This is He Whose Presence is the ardent desire of the denizens of the Realm of eternity, and of them that dwell within the Tabernacle of glory, and yet from His Beauty do ye turn aside.

O people of the Bayán!² If ye aid Him not, God will assuredly assist Him with the powers of earth and heaven, and sustain Him with the hosts of the unseen through His command “Be”, and it is! The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting. He shall purify them from the defilement of idle fancies and corrupt desires, shall lift them up to the heights of holiness, and shall cause them to manifest the signs of His sovereignty and might upon earth. Thus hath it been ordained by God, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.

O people of the Bayán! Would ye deny Him Whose presence is the very object of your creation, while ye rejoice idly upon your couches? Would ye laugh to scorn and contend with Him, a single hair of Whose head excelleth, in the sight of God, all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth? O people of the Bayán! Produce, then, that which ye possess, that I may know by what proof ye believed aforesaid in the Manifestations of His Cause, and by what reason ye now wax so disdainful!

I swear by Him Who hath fashioned Me from the light of His own Beauty! None have I ever seen that surpasseth you in heedlessness or exceedeth you in ignorance. Ye seek to prove your faith in God through such holy Tablets as ye possess, yet when the verses of God were revealed and His Lamp was lighted, ye disbelieved in Him Whose very Pen hath fixed the destinies of all things in the Preserved Tablet. Ye recite the sacred verses and yet repudiate Him Who is their Source and Revealer. Thus hath God blinded your eyes in requital for your deeds, would ye but understand. Day and night ye transcribe the verses of God, and yet ye remain shut out, as by a veil, from Him Who hath revealed them.

² The followers of the Báb, Whose greatest doctrinal work was the Bayán.

In this Day the Concourse on high beholdeth you in your evil doings and shunneth your company, and yet ye perceive it not. They ask of one another: "What words do these fools utter, and in what valley are they wont to graze? Do they deny that whereunto their very souls testify, and shut their eyes to that which they plainly behold?" I swear by God, O people! They that inhabit the Cities of the Names of God are bewildered at your actions, while ye roam, aimless and unconscious, in a parched and barren land.

O Pen of the Most High! Harken unto the Call of Thy Lord, raised from the Divine Lote-Tree in the holy and luminous Spot, that the sweet accents of Thy Lord, the All-Merciful, may fill Thy soul with joy and fervour, and that the breezes that waft from My name, the Ever-Forgiving, may dispel Thy cares and sorrows. Raise up, then, from this Temple, the temples of the Oneness of God, that they may tell out, in the kingdom of creation, the tidings of their Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, and be of them that are illumined by His light.

We, verily, have ordained this Temple to be the source of all existence in the new creation, that all may know of a certainty My power to accomplish that which I have purposed through My word "Be," and it is! Beneath the shadow of every letter of this Temple We shall raise up a people whose number none can reckon save God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Erelong shall God bring forth from His Temple such souls as will remain unswayed by the insinuations of the rebellious, and who will quaff at all times of the cup that is life indeed. These, truly, are of the blissful.

These are servants who abide beneath the shelter of the tender mercy of their Lord, and who remain undeterred by those who seek to obstruct their path. Upon their faces may be seen the brightness of the light of the All-Merciful, and from their hearts may be heard the remembrance of Mine all-glorious and inaccessible Name. Were they to unloose their tongues to extol their Lord, the denizens of earth and heaven would join in their anthems of praise — yet how few are they who hear! And were they to glorify their Lord, all created things would join in their hymns of glory. Thus hath God exalted them above the rest of His creation, and yet the people remain unaware!

These are they who circle round the Cause of God even as the shadow doth revolve around the sun. Open, then, your eyes, O people of the Bayán, that haply ye may behold them! It is by virtue of their movement that all things are set in motion, and by reason of their stillness all things are brought to rest, would that ye might be assured thereof! Through them the believers in the Divine Unity have turned towards Him Who is the Object of the adoration of the entire creation, and by them the hearts of the righteous have found rest and composure, could ye but know it! Through them the earth hath been established, the clouds have rained down their bounty, and the bread of knowledge hath descended from the heaven of grace, could ye but perceive it!

These souls are the protectors of the Cause of God on earth, who shall preserve its beauty from the obscuring dust of idle fancies and vain imaginings. In the path of their Lord, they shall not fear for their lives; rather will they sacrifice their all in their eagerness to behold the face of their Well-Beloved when once He hath appeared in this Name, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Most Holy.

O Living Temple! Arise by the power of Thy Self in such wise that all created things will be moved to arise with Thee. Aid, then, Thy Lord through such ascendancy and might as We have bestowed upon Thee. Take heed lest Thou falter on that Day when all created things are filled with dismay; rather be Thou the revealer of My name, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Assist Thy Lord to the utmost of Thine ability, and pay no heed to the peoples of the world, for that which their mouths utter is like unto the droning of a gnat in an endless valley. Quaff the water of life in My name, the All-Merciful, and proffer unto the near ones amongst the inmates of this lofty station that which shall cause them to become detached from all names and enter beneath this blessed and all-encompassing shadow.

O Living Temple! Through Thee have We gathered together all created things, whether in the heavens or on the earth, and called them to account for that which We had covenanted with them before the foundation of the world. And lo, but for a few radiant faces and eloquent tongues, We found most of the people dumbfounded, their eyes staring up in fear. From the former We brought forth the creation of all that hath been and all that shall be. These are they whose countenances God hath graciously turned away from the face of the unbelievers, and whom He hath sheltered beneath the shadow of the Tree of His own Being; they upon whose

hearts He hath bestowed the gift of peace and tranquillity, and whom He hath strengthened and assisted through the hosts of the seen and the unseen.

O Eyes of this Temple! Look not upon the heavens and that which they contain, nor upon the earth and them that dwell thereon, for We have created you to behold Our own Beauty: See it now before you! Withhold not your gaze therefrom, and deprive not yourselves of the Beauty of your Lord, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Erelong shall We bring into being through you keen and penetrating eyes that will contemplate the manifold signs of their Creator and turn away from all that is perceived by the people of the world. Through you shall We bestow the power of vision upon whomsoever We desire, and lay hold upon those who have deprived themselves of this gracious bounty. These, verily, have drunk from the cup of delusion, though they perceive it not.

O Ears of this Temple! Purge yourselves from all idle clamour and hearken unto the voice of your Lord. He, verily, revealeth unto you, from the Throne of glory, that there is none other God save Me, the All-Glorious, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Erelong shall We bring into being through you pure and undefiled ears which will heed the Word of God and that which hath appeared from the Dayspring of the Utterance of your Lord, the All-Merciful. They shall assuredly perceive the sweet accents of Divine Revelation that proceed from these most blessed and hallowed precincts.

O Tongue of this Temple! We, verily, have created thee through Our name, the All-Merciful, have taught thee whatsoever had remained concealed in the Bayán, and have bestowed upon thee the power of utterance, that thou mayest make mention of Mine exalted Self amidst My creatures. Proclaim, then, this wondrous and mighty Remembrance, and fear not the manifestations of the Evil One. Thou wert called into being for this very purpose by virtue of My transcendent and all-compelling command. Through thee have We unloosed the Tongue of Utterance to expound all that hath been, and We shall again, by My sovereign power, unloose it to speak of that which is yet to come. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee eloquent tongues that will praise and extol Me amongst the Concourse on high and amidst the peoples of the world. Thus have the verses of God been revealed, and thus hath it been decreed by the Lord of all names and attributes. Thy Lord, verily, is the True One, the Knower of things unseen.

Nothing whatsoever shall prevent these tongues from magnifying their Creator. Through them, all created things shall arise to glorify the Lord of names and to bear witness that there is none other God save Me, the All-Powerful, the Most-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Nor shall those who make mention of Me speak aught unless they be inspired by this Tongue from its lofty station. Few, however, are they who understand! No tongue is there that speaketh not the praises of its Lord and maketh not mention of His Name. Amongst the people, however, are those who understand and utter praises, and those who utter praises, yet understand not.

O Maid of inner meanings! Step out of the chamber of utterance by the leave of God, the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Reveal, then, thyself adorned with the raiment of the celestial Realm, and proffer with thy ruby fingers the wine of the heavenly Dominion, that haply the denizens of this world may perceive the light that shone forth from the Kingdom of God when the Daystar of eternity appeared above the horizon of glory. Perchance they may arise before the dwellers of earth and heaven to extol and magnify this Youth Who hath established Himself in the midmost heart of Paradise upon the throne of His name, the All-Sufficing Helper — He from Whose countenance shineth the brightness of the All-Merciful, from Whose gaze appear the glances of the All-Glorious, and in Whose ways are revealed the tokens and evidences of God, the omnipotent Protector, the Almighty, the All-Loving.

Grieve not if none be found to accept the crimson wine proffered by Thy snow-white hand and to seize it in the name of Thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most High — He Who hath appeared again in His name, the Most Glorious. Leave this people unto themselves, and repair unto the Tabernacle of majesty and glory, wherein Thou shalt encounter a people whose faces shine as brightly as the sun in its noontide splendour, and who praise and extol their Lord in this Name that hath arisen, in the plenitude of might and power, to assume the throne of independent sovereignty. From their lips Thou shalt hear naught but the strains of My glorification and praise; unto this Thy Lord beareth Me witness. The existence of these people, however, hath remained concealed from the eyes of all who, from everlasting, have been created through the Word of God. Thus have We made plain Our meaning and set forth Our verses, that perchance men may reflect upon the signs and tokens of their Lord.

These are they who, in truth, were not enjoined to prostrate themselves before Adam.³ They have never turned away from the countenance of Thy Lord, and partake at every moment of the gifts and delights of holiness. Thus hath the Pen of the All-Merciful set forth the secrets of all things, be they of the past or of the future. Would that the world might understand! Erelong shall God make manifest this people upon the earth, and through them shall exalt His name, diffuse His signs, uphold His words, and proclaim His verses, in spite of those that have repudiated His truth, gainsaid His sovereignty, and cavilled at His signs.

O Beauty of the All-Glorious! Shouldst Thou chance upon this people and enter their presence, recount unto them that which this Youth hath related unto Thee concerning Himself and the things that have befallen Him, that they may come to know what hath been inscribed upon the Preserved Tablet. Acquaint them with the tidings of this Youth, and with the trials and tribulations He hath suffered, that they may become mindful of Mine afflictions, and be of them that understand. Recount, then, unto them how We singled out for Our favour one of Our brothers,⁴ how We imparted unto him a dewdrop from the fathomless ocean of knowledge, clothed him with the garment of one of Our Names, and exalted him to such a station that all were moved to extol him, and how We so protected him from the harm of the malevolent as to disarm even the mightiest amongst them.

We arose before the peoples of earth and heaven at a time when all had determined to slay us. While dwelling in their midst, We continually made mention of the Lord, celebrated His praise, and stood firm in His Cause, until at last the Word of God was vindicated amongst His creatures, His signs were spread abroad, His power exalted, and His sovereignty revealed in its full splendour. To this bear witness all His honoured servants. Yet when My brother beheld the rising fame of the Cause, he became filled with arrogance and pride. Thereupon he emerged from behind the veil of concealment, rose up against Me, disputed My verses, denied My testimony, and repudiated My signs. Nor would his hunger be appeased unless he were to devour My flesh and drink My blood. To this testify such of God's servants as have accompanied Him in His exile, and they that enjoy near access unto Him.

³ cf. Qur'án 2:30–34; 38:71–75.

⁴ Mírzá Yahyá.

To this end he conferred with one of My servants⁵ and sought to win him over to his own designs; whereupon the Lord despatched unto Mine assistance the hosts of the seen and the unseen, protected Me by the power of truth, and sent down upon Me that which thwarted his purpose. Thus were foiled the plots of those who disbelieve in the verses of the All-Merciful. They, truly, are a rejected people. When news spread of that which the promptings of self had impelled My brother to attempt, and Our companions in exile learned of his nefarious design, the voice of their indignation and grief was lifted up and threatened to spread throughout the city. We forbade, however, such recriminations, and enjoined upon them patience, that they might be of those that endure steadfastly.

By God, besides Whom is none other God! We withstood all these trials with forbearance, and enjoined upon God's servants to show forth patience and fortitude. Removing Ourselves from their midst, We took up residence in another house, that perchance the flame of envy might be quenched in Our brother's breast, and that he might be guided aright. We neither opposed him, nor saw him again thereafter, but remained in Our home, placing Our hopes in the bounty of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. When, however, he realized that his deed had been exposed, he seized the pen of calumny and wrote unto the servants of God, attributing what he had himself committed unto Mine own peerless and wronged Beauty. His purpose was none other than to inspire mischief amongst God's servants, and to instil hatred into the hearts of those who had believed in God, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.

By the One in Whose hand is My soul! We were dismayed by his deceitfulness — nay, bewildered were all things visible and invisible. Nor did he find respite from what he harboured in his bosom until he had committed that which no pen dare describe, and by which he disgraced the dignity of My station and profaned the sanctity of God, the Almighty, the All-

⁵ Ustád Muḥammad-'Alí-i-Salmání. For an account of the events referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in this and following paragraphs, see

God Passes By,

Chapter X, paragraph beginning "On another occasion this same Mírzá Yahyá..." to paragraph ending "...the enormities of which he had been guilty."

Glorious, the All-Praised. Were God to turn all the oceans of the earth into ink and all created things into pens, they would not suffice Me to exhaust the record of his wrongdoings. Thus do We recount that which befell Us, that haply ye may be of them that understand.

O Pen of Eternity! Grieve not at the things that have befallen Thee, for ere long shall God raise up a people who will see with their own eyes and will recall Thy tribulations. Withhold Thy pen from the mention of Thine enemies, and bestir it in the praise of the Eternal King. Renounce all created things, and quaff the sealed wine of My remembrance. Beware lest Thou become occupied with the mention of those from whom naught save the noisome savours of enmity can be perceived, those who are so enslaved by their lust for leadership that they would not hesitate to destroy themselves in their desire to emblazon their fame and perpetuate their names. God hath recorded such souls in the Preserved Tablet as mere worshippers of names. Recount then that which Thou hast purposed for this Temple, that its signs and tokens may be made manifest upon earth, and that the brightness of this Light may illumine the horizons of the world and cleanse the earth from the defilement of those who have disbelieved in God. Thus have We set down the verses of God and made plain the matter unto those who understand.

O Living Temple! Stretch forth Thy hand over all who are in heaven and on earth, and seize within the grasp of Thy Will the reins of command. We have, verily, placed in Thy right hand the empire of all things. Do as Thou wilt, and fear not the ignorant. Reach out to the Tablet that hath dawned above the horizon of the pen of Thy Lord, and take hold of it with such strength that, through Thee, the hands of all who inhabit the earth may be enabled to lay fast hold upon it. This, in truth, is that which becometh Thee, if Thou be of those who understand. Through the upraising of Thy hand to the heaven of My grace, the hands of all created things shall be lifted up to their Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Gracious. Erelong shall We raise up, through the aid of Thy hand, other hands endued with power, with strength and might, and shall establish through them Our dominion over all that dwell in the realms of revelation and creation. Thus will the servants of God recognize the truth that there is none other God beside Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. With these hands, moreover, We shall both bestow and withhold, though none can understand this save those who see with the eye of the spirit.

Say: O people! Can ye ever hope to escape the sovereign power of your Lord? By the righteousness of God! No refuge will ye find in this day, and no one to protect you, save those upon whom God hath bestowed the favour of His mercy. He, verily, is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate. Say: O people! Forsake all that ye possess, and enter beneath the shadow of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Better is this for you than all your works of the past and of the future. Fear ye God, and deprive not yourselves of the sweet savours of the days of the Lord of all names and attributes. Take heed lest ye alter or pervert the text of the Word of God. Walk ye in the fear of God, and be numbered with the righteous.

Say: O people! This is the Hand of God, which hath ever been above your own hands, could ye but understand. Within its grasp We have ordained all the good of the heavens and the earth, such that no good shall be made manifest but that it proceedeth therefrom. Thus have We made it the source and treasury of all good both aforetime and hereafter. Say: The rivers of divine wisdom and utterance which flowed through the Tablets of God are joined to this Most Great Ocean, could ye but perceive it, and whatever hath been set forth in His Books hath attained its final consummation in this most exalted Word — a Word shining above the horizon of the Will of the All-Glorious in this Revelation which hath filled with delight all things seen and unseen.

Erelong shall God draw forth, out of the bosom of power, the hands of ascendancy and might, and shall raise up a people who will arise to win victory for this Youth and who will purge mankind from the defilement of the outcast and the ungodly. These hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the Self-Subsistent, the Mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth. They will enter the cities and will inspire with fear the hearts of all their inhabitants. Such are the evidences of the might of God; how fearful, how vehement is His might, and how justly doth He wield it! He, verily, ruleth and transcendeth all who are in the heavens and on the earth, and revealeth what He desireth according to a prescribed measure.

Should any one of them be called upon to confront all the hosts of creation, he would assuredly prevail through the ascendancy of My Will. This, verily, is a proof of My power, though My creatures comprehend it not. This, verily, is a sign of My sovereignty, though My subjects

understand it not. This, verily, is a token of My command, though My servants perceive it not. This, verily, is an evidence of Mine ascendancy, though none amongst the people is truly thankful for it, save those whose eyes God hath illumined with the light of His knowledge, whose hearts He hath made the repository of His Revelation, and upon whose shoulders He hath placed the weight of His Cause. These shall inhale the fragrances of the All-Merciful from the garment of His Name, and shall rejoice at all times in the signs and verses of their Lord. As for those who disbelieve in God, and join partners with Him, they shall indeed incur His wrath, shall be cast into the Fire, and shall be made to dwell, fearful and dismayed, in its depths. Thus do We expound Our verses, and make plain the truth with clear proofs, that perchance the people may reflect upon the signs of their Lord.

O Living Temple! We have, in very truth, appointed Thee to be the sign of My majesty amidst all that hath been and all that shall be, and have ordained Thee to be the emblem of My Cause betwixt the heavens and the earth, through My word “Be,” and it is!

O First Letter of this Temple, betokening the Essence of Divinity!⁶ We have made thee the treasury of My Will and the repository of My Purpose unto all who are in the kingdoms of

⁶ The word

Haykal

(Temple) is composed in Arabic of the four letters

Há'

,

Yá'

,

Káf

and

revelation and creation. This is but a token of the grace of Him Who is the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

O Second Letter of this Temple, betokening My name, the Almighty! We have made thee the manifestation of Our sovereignty and the dayspring of Our Names. Potent am I to fulfil that which My tongue speaketh.

Lám

(HYKL). Its first letter is taken to symbolize the word

Huvíyyah

(Essence of Divinity); its second letter the word

Qadír

(Almighty), of which

Yá'

is the third letter; its third letter the word

Karím

(All-Bountiful); and its fourth letter the word

Faḍl

(Grace), of which

Lám

is the third letter.

O Third Letter of this Temple, betokening My name, the All-Bountiful! We have made thee the dawning-place of Our bounty amidst Our creatures and the fountainhead of Our generosity amidst Our people. Powerful am I in My dominion. Nothing whatsoever of all that hath been created in the heavens or on the earth can escape My knowledge, and I am the True One, the Knower of things unseen.

O Pen! Send down out of the clouds of Thy generosity that which shall enrich all created things, and withhold not Thy favours from the world of being. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful in the heaven of Thine eternity, and the Lord of infinite grace unto all who inhabit the kingdom of names. Look not upon the people and the things they possess; look rather upon the wonders of Thy gifts and favours. Gather then Thy servants beneath Thy shade that shadoweth all mankind. Stretch forth the hand of bounty over all creation, and the fingers of bestowal over all existence. This, verily, is that which beseemeth Thee, though the people understand it not. Whosoever turneth his face towards Thee doeth so by Thy grace, and as to him who turneth away, Thy Lord, in truth, is independent of all created things. Unto this bear witness His true and devoted servants.

Erelong shall God raise up, through Thee, those with hands of indomitable strength and arms of invincible might, who will come forth from behind the veils, will render the All-Merciful victorious amongst the peoples of the world, and will raise so mighty a cry as to cause all hearts to tremble with fear. Thus hath it been decreed in a Written Tablet. Such shall be the ascendancy which these souls will evince that consternation and dismay will seize all the dwellers of the earth.

Beware lest ye shed the blood of anyone. Unsheathe the sword of your tongue from the scabbard of utterance, for therewith ye can conquer the citadels of men's hearts. We have abolished the law to wage holy war against each other. God's mercy, hath, verily, encompassed all created things, if ye do but understand. Aid ye your Lord, the God of Mercy, with the sword of understanding. Keener indeed is it, and more finely tempered, than the sword of utterance, were ye but to reflect upon the words of your Lord. Thus have the hosts of Divine Revelation been sent down by God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, and thus have the armies of divine inspiration been made manifest from the Source of command, as bidden by God, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved.

Say: The measure of all created things hath been appointed in this concealed and manifest Temple, wherein lie enshrined the knowledge of the heavens and the earth, and of all things past and future. The finger of God's handiwork hath inscribed upon this Tablet that which the wisest and most learned of men are powerless to fathom, and hath created therein temples inscrutable to all save His own Self, could ye but apprehend this truth. Blessed be the one who readeth it, who pondereth its contents, and who is numbered with them that comprehend!

Say: Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and in My self but His Self, and in My movement but His Movement, and in My acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised. There hath not been in My soul but the Truth, and in Myself naught could be seen but God.

Beware lest ye speak of duality in regard to My Self, for all the atoms of the earth proclaim that there is none other God but Him, the One, the Single, the Mighty, the Loving. From the beginning that hath no beginning I have proclaimed, from the realm of eternity, that I am God, none other God is there save Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting; and unto the end that hath no end I shall proclaim, amidst the kingdom of names, that I am God, none other God is there beside Me, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Say: Lordship is My Name, whereof I have created manifestations in the world of being, while We Ourselves remain sanctified above them, would ye but ponder this truth. And Godhead is My Name, whereof We have created exponents whose power shall encompass the people of the earth and make them true worshippers of God, could ye but recognize it. Thus should ye regard all Our Names, if ye be endued with insight.

O Fourth Letter of this Temple, betokening the attribute of Grace! We have made thee the manifestation of grace betwixt earth and heaven. From thee have We generated all grace in the contingent world, and unto thee shall We cause it to return. And from thee shall We manifest it again, through a word of Our command. Potent am I to accomplish whatsoever I desire through My word "Be," and it is! Every grace that appeareth in the world of being hath originated from thee, and unto thee shall it return. This, verily, is what hath been ordained in a Tablet which We have preserved behind the veil of glory and concealed from mortal eyes. Well is it with them that deprive themselves not of this manifest and unfailing grace.

Say: In this day, the fertilizing winds of the grace of God have passed over all things. Every creature hath been endowed with all the potentialities it can carry. And yet the peoples of the world have denied this grace! Every tree hath been endowed with the choicest fruits, every ocean enriched with the most luminous gems. Man, himself, hath been invested with the gifts of understanding and knowledge. The whole creation hath been made the recipient of the revelation of the All-Merciful, and the earth the repository of things inscrutable to all except God, the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. The time is approaching when every created thing will have cast its burden. Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen! Thus have We created the whole earth anew in this day, yet most of the people have failed to perceive it. Say: The grace of God can never be adequately understood; how much less can His own Self, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, be comprehended!

O Temple of the Cause! Grieve not if Thou findest none ready to receive Thy gifts. Thou wast created for My sake; occupy Thyself therefore with My praise amidst My servants. This is that which hath been ordained for Thee in the Preserved Tablet. Having found upon the earth many a soiled hand, We sanctified the hem of Thy garment from the profanity of their touch and placed it beyond the reach of the ungodly. Be patient in the Cause of Thy Lord, for erelong shall He raise up souls endowed with sanctified hearts and illumined eyes who shall flee from every quarter unto Thine all-encompassing and boundless grace.

O Temple of God! No sooner had the hosts of Divine Revelation been sent down by the Lord of all names and attributes bearing the banners of His signs, than the exponents of doubt and fancy were put to flight. They disbelieved in the clear tokens of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, and rose up against Him in enmity and opposition. Amongst them were those who claimed: "These are not clear verses from God, nor do they proceed from an innate and untaught nature." Thus do the unbelievers seek to remedy the sickness of their hearts, utterly heedless that they thus render themselves accursed of all who dwell in heaven and on earth.

Say: The Holy Spirit Itself hath been generated through the agency of a single letter revealed by this Most Great Spirit, if ye be of them that comprehend. And that innate and untaught nature in its essence is called into being by the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious, the Best-

Beloved. Say: This nature prideth itself in its relation to Our transcendent Truth, whilst We, for Our part, glory neither in it nor in aught else, for all beside Myself hath been created through the potency of My word, could ye but understand.

Say: We have revealed Our verses in nine different modes. Each one of them bespeaketh the sovereignty of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. A single one of them sufficeth for a proof unto all who are in the heavens and on the earth; yet the people, for the most part, persist in their heedlessness. Should it be Our wish, We would reveal them in countless other modes.

Say: O people! Fear ye God, and allow not your tongues to utter, in their deceitfulness, that which displeaseth Him. Stand abashed before the One Who, as ye well know, hath created you out of a drop of water.⁷ Say: We have created all that are in heaven and on earth in the nature made by God. Whosoever turneth unto this blessed Countenance shall manifest the potentialities of that inborn nature, and whosoever remaineth veiled therefrom shall be deprived of this invisible and all-encompassing grace. Verily, there is naught from which Our favour hath been withheld, inasmuch as We have dealt equitably in the fashioning of each and all, and by a word of Our mouth presented unto them the trust of Our love. They that have accepted it are indeed safe and secure, and are numbered among those who are immune from the terrors of this Day. Those, however, who have rejected it have, in truth, disbelieved in God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Thus do We distinguish between the people and pronounce judgement upon them. We, of a certainty, have the power to discern.

Say: The Word of God can never be confounded with the words of His creatures. It is, in truth, the King of words, even as He is Himself the sovereign Lord of all, and His Cause transcendeth all that was and all that shall be. Enter, O people, the City of Certitude wherein the throne of your Lord, the All-Merciful, hath been established. Thus biddeth you the Pen of the All-Glorious, as a token of His unfailing grace. Haply ye may not make His Revelation a cause of dissension amongst you.

Among the infidels are those who have repudiated His Self and risen up against His Cause, and who claim that these divine verses are contrived. Such also were the objections of the deniers of

⁷ cf. Qur'án 21:30; 24:45; 25:54.

old, who now implore deliverance from the Fire. Say: Woe betide you for the idle words that proceed from your mouths! If these verses be indeed contrived, then by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it, if ye be men of understanding! Whensoever We revealed Our clear verses unto such men, they rejected them, and whensoever they beheld that which the combined forces of the earth are powerless to produce, they pronounced it sorcery.

What aileth this people that they speak of that which they understand not? They raise the same objections as did the followers of the Qur'án when their Lord came unto them with His Cause. They, verily, are a rejected people. They hindered others from appearing before Him Who is the Ancient Beauty, and from sharing the bread of His loved ones. "Approach them not," one was even heard to say, "for they cast a spell upon the people and lead them astray from the path of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting." By the righteousness of the one true God! He who is incapable of speaking in Our presence hath uttered such words as none among the former generations hath ever spoken, and hath committed such acts as none of the unbelievers of bygone ages hath ever committed.

The very words and deeds of these men bear eloquent testimony to the truth of My words, if ye be of them that judge with fairness. Whosoever attributeth the verses of God to sorcery hath not believed in any of His Messengers, hath lived and laboured in vain, and is accounted of those who speak that of which they have no knowledge. Say: O servant! Fear God, thy Creator and thy Fashioner, and transgress not against Him, but judge with fairness and act with justice. Those whom the Lord hath endued with knowledge shall find, in the very objections raised by the unbelievers, conclusive proofs to invalidate their claims and vindicate the truth of this manifest Light. Say: Would ye repeat that which the unbelievers uttered when a Message came unto them from their Lord? Woe betide you, O assemblage of foolish ones, and blighted be your works!

O Ancient Beauty! Turn aside from the unbelievers and that which they possess, and waft over all created things the sweet savours of the remembrance of Thy Beloved, the Exalted, the Great. This remembrance quickeneth the world of being and reneweth the temples of all created things. Say: He, verily, hath established Himself upon the Throne of might and glory. Whosoever desireth to gaze upon His countenance, lo, behold Him standing before thee! Blessed be the

Lord Who hath revealed Himself in this shining and luminous Beauty. Whosoever desireth to hearken unto His melodies, lo, hear them rising from His resplendent and wondrous lips! And unto whosoever desireth to be illumined by the splendours of His light, say: Seek the court of His presence, for God hath verily granted you leave to approach it, as a token of His grace unto all mankind.

Say: O people! We shall put to you a question in all truthfulness, taking God for a witness between you and Us. He, verily, is the Defender of the righteous. Appear, then, before His Throne of glory and make reply with justice and fair-mindedness. Is it God Who is potent to achieve His purpose, or is it ye who enjoy such authority? Is it He Who is truly unconstrained, as ye imply when ye say that He doeth what He pleaseth and shall not be asked of His doings, or is it ye who wield such power, and who merely make such assertions out of blind imitation, as did your forebears at the appearance of every other Messenger of God?

If He be truly unconstrained, behold then how He hath sent down the Manifestation of His Cause with verses which naught in the heavens or on the earth can withstand! Such hath been the manner of their revelation that they have neither peer nor likeness in the world of being, as ye yourselves beheld and heard when once the Daystar of the world shone forth above the horizon of 'Irâq with manifest dominion. All things attain their consummation in the divine verses, and these indeed are the verses of God, the Sovereign Lord, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious, the Almighty. Beyond this, He hath been made manifest as the Bearer of a Cause whose sovereign might is acknowledged by all created things, and this none can deny save the sinners and the ungodly.

Say: O people! Is it your wish to conceal the beauty of the Sun behind the veils of your own selfish desires, or to prevent the Spirit from raising its melodies within this sanctified and luminous breast? Fear ye God, and contend not with Him Who representeth the Godhead. Dispute not with the One at Whose bidding the letter "B" was created and joined with its mighty foundation.⁸ Believe in the Messengers of God and His sovereign might, and in the Self of God and His majesty. Follow not those who have repudiated what they had once believed,

⁸ That is, the letter "E". In all such instances in the Writings where the letters "B" and "E" are mentioned, the Arabic letters are

and who have sought for themselves a station after their own fancy; these, truly, are of the ungodly. Bear ye witness unto that whereunto God Himself hath borne witness, that the company of His favoured ones may be illumined by the words that issue from your lips. Say: We, verily, believe in that which was revealed unto the Apostles of old, in that which hath been revealed, by the power of truth, unto 'Alí⁹ and in that which is now being revealed from His Throne of glory. Thus doth your Lord instruct you, as a sign of His favour and as a token of His grace that encompasseth all the worlds.

O Feet of this Temple! We, verily, have wrought you of iron. Stand firm with such constancy in the Cause of your Lord as to cause the feet of every severed soul to be strengthened in the path of God, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Beware lest the storms of enmity and hatred, or the blasts of the workers of iniquity, cause you to stumble. Be immovable in the Faith of God, and waver not. We, verily, have called you forth by virtue of that Name which is the source of all steadfastness, and by the grace of each one of Our most excellent Names as revealed unto all who are in heaven and on earth. Erelong shall We bring into being through you other feet, firm and steadfast, which shall walk unwaveringly in Our path, even should they be assailed by hosts as formidable as the combined forces of the former and latter generations. In truth, We hold all grace in the hollow of Our hand, and bestow it as We please upon Our favoured servants. Time and again have We vouchsafed unto you Our favours, that ye may offer such thanks unto your

Káf

and

Nún,

the two consonants of the Arabic word

Kun,

which is the imperative meaning "Be".

⁹ The Báb, Whose given name was 'Alí-Muḥammad.

Lord as to cause the tongues of all created things to speak forth in praise of Me, the All-Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

O Living Temple! Arise to serve this Cause through a might and a power born of Us. Disclose, then, unto the servants of God all that the Spirit of God, the sovereign Lord, the Incomparable, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise, hath imparted unto Thee. Say: O people! Will ye turn away from Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and choose instead him whom We have created out of a mere handful of clay? To do so is to inflict a grievous injustice upon yourselves, if ye be of them that reflect upon the verses of your Lord. Say: O people! Cleanse your hearts and your eyes, that ye may recognize your Maker in this holy and luminous attire. Say: The celestial Youth hath ascended the Throne of glory, made manifest His independent sovereignty, and now voiceth, in the most sweet and wondrous accents, this call betwixt earth and heaven: "O peoples of the earth! Wherefore have ye disbelieved in your Lord, the All-Merciful, and turned aside from Him Who is the Beauty of the All-Glorious? By the righteousness of God! This is His Hidden Secret, Who hath risen from the dayspring of creation; and this is His cherished Beauty, Who hath shone forth above the horizon of this exalted Station, invested with the sovereignty of God, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious, the All-Subduing, the Almighty."

O Temple of Holiness! We, verily, have cleansed Thy breast from the whisperings of the people and sanctified it from earthly allusions, that the light of My beauty may appear therein and be reflected in the mirrors of all the worlds. Thus have We singled Thee out above all that hath been created in the heavens and the earth, and above all that hath been decreed in the realms of revelation and creation, and chosen Thee for Our own Self. This is but an evidence of the bounty which God hath vouchsafed unto Thee, a bounty which shall last until the Day that hath no end in this contingent world. It shall endure so long as God, the Supreme King, the Help in Peril, the Mighty, the Wise, shall endure. For the Day of God is none other but His own Self, Who hath appeared with the power of truth. This is the Day that shall not be followed by night, nor shall it be bounded by any praise, would that ye might understand!

O Breast of this Temple! We, verily, have caused all things to mirror forth thy reality, and made thee as a mirror of Our own Self. Shed, then, upon the breasts of all created beings the splendours of the light of thy Lord, that they may be freed from all allusions and limitations. Thus

hath the Daystar of wisdom shone forth above the horizon of the Pen of the Eternal King. Blessed are those who perceive it! Through thee have We created other sanctified breasts, and unto thee shall We cause them to return, as a token of Our grace unto thee and unto Our favoured servants. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee men with sanctified and illumined breasts, who will testify to naught save My beauty and show forth naught but the resplendent light of My countenance. These shall in truth be the mirrors of My Names amidst all created things.

O Temple of Holiness! We, verily, have made Thine inmost heart the treasury of all the knowledge of past and future ages, and the dawning-place of Our own knowledge which We have ordained for the dwellers of earth and heaven, that all creation may partake of the outpourings of Thy grace and may attain, through the wonders of Thy knowledge, unto the recognition of God, the Exalted, the Powerful, the Great. In truth, that knowledge which belongeth unto Mine own Essence is such as none hath ever attained or will ever grasp, nor shall any heart be capable of bearing its weight. Were We to disclose but a single word of this knowledge, the hearts of all men would be filled with consternation, the foundations of all things would crumble into ruin, and the feet of even the wisest among men would be made to slip.

Within the treasury of Our Wisdom there lieth unrevealed a knowledge, one word of which, if we chose to divulge it to mankind, would cause every human being to recognize the Manifestation of God and to acknowledge His omniscience, would enable every one to discover the secrets of all the sciences, and to attain so high a station as to find himself wholly independent of all past and future learning. Other knowledges We do as well possess, not a single letter of which We can disclose, nor do We find humanity able to hear even the barest reference to their meaning. Thus have We informed you of the knowledge of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Were We to find worthy vessels, We would deposit within them the treasures of hidden meanings and impart unto them a knowledge, one letter of which would encompass all created things.

O Inmost Heart of this Temple! We have made thee the dawning-place of Our knowledge and the dayspring of Our wisdom unto all who are in heaven and on earth. From thee have We caused all sciences to appear, and unto thee shall We cause them to return. And from thee shall We bring them forth a second time. Such, indeed, is Our promise, and potent are We to effect

Our purpose. Erelong shall We bring into being through thee exponents of new and wondrous sciences, of potent and effective crafts, and shall make manifest through them that which the heart of none of Our servants hath yet conceived. Thus do We bestow upon whom We will whatsoever We desire, and thus do We withdraw from whom We will what We had once bestowed. Even so do We ordain whatsoever We please through Our behest.

Say: Should We choose, at one time, to shed the radiance of Our loving providence upon the mirrors of all things, and, at another, to withhold from them the splendours of Our light, this verily lieth within Our power, and none hath the right to ask “why” or “wherefore.” For We are potent indeed to achieve Our purpose, and render no account for that which We bring to pass; and none can dispute this save those who join partners with God and doubt His Truth. Say: Nothing can withstand the power of Our might or interrupt the course of Our command. We exalt whomsoever We please unto the Realm of supernal might and glory, and, should We so desire, cause the same to sink into the lowest abyss of degradation.

O dwellers of the earth! Would ye contend that if We raise up a soul unto the Sadratu'l-Muntahá,¹⁰ it shall then cease to be subject to the power of Our sovereignty and dominion? Nay, by Mine own Self! Should it be Our wish, We would return it to the dust in less than the twinkling of an eye. Consider a tree: Behold how We plant it in a garden, and nourish it with the waters of Our loving care; and how, when it hath grown tall and mature, and brought forth verdant leaves and goodly fruits, We send forth the tempestuous gales of Our decree, and tear it up by its roots, and lay it prostrate upon the face of the earth. So hath it been Our way with all things, and so shall it be in this day. Such, in truth, are the matchless wonders of Our immutable method — a method which hath ever governed, and shall continue to govern, all things, if ye be of them that perceive. None, however, knoweth the wisdom thereof save God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

Would ye gainsay, O people, the very thing that your eyes behold? Woe unto you, O assemblage of deniers! That which alone is exempt from change is His own Self, the All-Merciful, the Most

¹⁰ “The tree beyond which there is no passing”, a reference to the station of the Manifestation of God.

Compassionate, were ye to gaze with the eye of insight, while all else beside Him can be altered by an act of His Will. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

O people! Dispute not concerning My Cause, for ye shall never fathom the manifold wisdom of your Lord, nor shall ye ever gauge the knowledge of Him Who is the All-Glorious, the All-Pervading. Whosoever layeth claim to have known His Essence is without doubt among the most ignorant of all people. Every atom in the universe would charge such a man with imposture, and to this beareth witness My tongue which speaketh naught but the truth. Magnify My Cause and promulgate My teachings and commandments, for none other course beside this shall beseem you, and no other path shall ever lead unto Him. Would that ye might heed Our counsel!

O Living Temple! We have made Thee the Dayspring of each one of Our most excellent titles, the Dawning-Place of each one of Our most august attributes, and the Fountainhead of each one of Our manifold virtues unto the denizens of earth and heaven. Thereafter have We raised Thee up in Our own image betwixt the heavens and the earth, and ordained Thee to be the sign of Our glory unto all who are in the realms of revelation and creation, that My servants may follow in Thy footsteps, and be of them who are guided aright. We have appointed Thee the Tree of grace and bounty unto the dwellers of both the heavens and the earth. Well is it with them who seek the shelter of Thy shade and who draw nigh unto Thy Self, the omnipotent Protector of the worlds.

Say: We have made each one of Our Names a wellspring from which We have caused the streams of divine wisdom and understanding to gush forth and flow in the garden of Our Cause — streams whose number none can reckon save Thy Lord, the Most Holy, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. Say: We have generated all Letters from the Point and have caused them to return unto It, and We have sent It down again in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Author of this incomparable and wondrous handiwork! Erelong shall We unfold and expound It again, in Our name, the All-Glorious. This is indeed a token of Our grace, and I, truly, am the Most Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

We have brought forth all Lights from the Orb of Our name, the True One, have caused them to return unto It, and have again made them manifest in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Lord of strength, might, and power! None can withstand the operation of My will or the exercise of My might. I am He Who hath raised up all creatures through a word of My mouth, and My power is, in truth, equal to My purpose.

Say: It is in Our power, should We wish it, to cause all created things to expire in an instant, and, with the next, to endue them again with life. The knowledge thereof, however, is with God alone, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendour, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages. This, in truth, is a matter simple of accomplishment. Such have been the evidences of My power from the beginning that hath no beginning until the end that hath no end. My creatures, however, have been oblivious of My power, have repudiated My sovereignty, and contended with Mine own Self, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Say: Of all that lieth between heaven and earth, naught can stir except by My leave, and unto My Kingdom none can ascend save at My behest. My creatures, however, have remained veiled from My might and My sovereignty, and are numbered with the heedless. Say: Naught is seen in My revelation but the Revelation of God, and in My might but His Might, could ye but know it.

Say: My creatures are even as the leaves of a tree. They proceed from the tree, and depend upon it for their existence, yet remain oblivious of their root and origin. We draw such similitudes for the sake of Our discerning servants that perchance they may transcend a mere plant-like level of existence and attain unto true maturity in this resistless and immovable Cause. Say: My creatures are even as the fish of the deep. Their life dependeth upon the water, and yet they remain unaware of that which, by the grace of an omniscient and omnipotent Lord, sustaineth their very existence. Indeed, their heedlessness is such that were they asked concerning the water and its properties, they would prove entirely ignorant. Thus do We set forth comparisons and similitudes, that perchance the people may turn unto Him Who is the Object of the adoration of the entire creation.

O people! Fear God, and disbelieve not in Him Whose grace hath surrounded all things, Whose mercy hath pervaded the contingent world, and the sovereign potency of Whose Cause hath encompassed both your inner and your outer beings, both your beginning and your end. Stand ye in awe of the Lord, and be of them that act uprightly. Beware lest ye be accounted among those who allow the verses of their Lord to pass them by unheard and unrecognized; these, truly, are of the wayward.

Say: Would ye worship him who neither heareth nor seeth, and who is of a truth the most abject and wretched of all God's servants? Wherefore have ye failed to follow the One Who hath come unto you from the Source of Divine Command bearing the tidings of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great? O people! Be not like unto those who presented themselves before Our throne, and yet failed to perceive or comprehend; these are indeed a contemptible people. We recited unto them verses that would enrapture the dwellers of the heavenly Dominion and the inmates of the Kingdom on high, and yet they departed veiled therefrom, and hearkened rather unto the voice of him who is but a servant of God and a mere creation of His Will. Thus do We impart unto you that which shall guide you towards the path of God's favoured ones.

How many those who entered within the Abode of Paradise, the Seat wherein the throne of God had been established, and stood before their Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most Great, only to inquire about the four Gates or of some Imám of the Islámic Faith!¹¹ Such was the state of these souls, if ye be of them that comprehend. It is even as ye witness in the present day: those who have disbelieved in God and joined partners with Him cling to a single one of Our Names, and are debarred from recognizing Him Who is the Creator of all Names. We testify that such men are of a truth amongst the people of the Fire. They ask the sun to expound the words of the shadow, and the True One to explain the utterances of His creatures, could ye but perceive it!

¹¹ These are examples of the types of questions put to the Báb. According to the teachings of Shí'ite Islám, leadership of the Islámic community belonged of right, after the passing of the Prophet Muḥammad, to a line of twelve successors, descendants of His daughter Fáṭimih, known as "Imáms". This line being eventually severed through the "occultation" of the last Imám, communication with the latter was for a time maintained through a succession of four intermediaries known as "Gates".

Say: O people! The sun offereth naught save the effulgence of its own light and that which appeareth therefrom, whilst all else seek illumination from its rays. Fear God, and be not of the ignorant! Among them also were those who inquired of the darkness about the light. Say: Open thine eyes, that thou mayest behold the brightness which hath visibly enveloped the earth! This, verily, is a light which hath risen and shone forth above the horizon of the Dayspring of divine knowledge with manifest radiance. Would ye ask the Jews whether Jesus was the True One from God, or the idols if Muḥammad was an Apostle of His Lord, or inquire from the people of the Qur'án as to Him Who was the Remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great?

Say: O people! Cast away, before the splendours of this Revelation, the things that ye possess, and cleave to that which God hath bidden you observe. Such is His command unto you, and He, verily, is best able to command. By My Beauty! My purpose in revealing these words is to cause all men to draw nigh unto God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Beware lest ye deal with Me as ye dealt with My Herald. Do not object, when the verses of God are sent down unto you from the Court of My favour, saying, "these do not proceed from an innate and untaught nature", for that nature itself hath been created by My word and circleth round Me, if ye be of them that apprehend this truth. Inhale from the utterances of your Lord, the All-Merciful, the sweet smell of the garment of inner meanings, which hath been diffused throughout the entire creation and hath shed its fragrance over all created things. Happy are those who perceive it and hasten unto God with radiant hearts.

O Living Temple! We, verily, have made Thee a mirror unto the kingdom of names, that Thou mayest be, amidst all mankind, a sign of My sovereignty, a herald unto My presence, a summoner unto My beauty, and a guide unto My straight and perspicuous Path. We have exalted Thy Name among Our servants as a bounty from Our presence. I, verily, am the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. We have, moreover, adorned Thee with the ornament of Our own Self, and have imparted unto Thee Our Word, that Thou mayest ordain in this contingent world whatsoever Thou willest and accomplish whatsoever Thou pleasest. We have destined for Thee all the good of the heavens and of the earth, and decreed that none may attain unto a portion thereof unless he entereth beneath Thy shadow, as bidden by Thy Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. We have conferred upon Thee the Staff of authority and the Writ of judgement, that

Thou mayest test the wisdom of every command. We have caused the oceans of inner meaning and explanation to surge from Thy heart in remembrance of Thy Lord, the God of mercy, that Thou mayest render thanks and praise unto Him and be of those who are truly thankful. We have singled Thee out from amongst all Our creatures, and have appointed Thee as the Manifestation of Our own Self unto all who are in the heavens and on the earth.

Bring then into being, by Our leave, resplendent mirrors and exalted letters that shall testify to Thy sovereignty and dominion, bear witness to Thy might and glory, and be the manifestations of Thy Names amidst mankind. We have caused Thee again to be the Origin and the Creator of all mirrors, even as We brought them forth from Thee aforetime. And We shall cause Thee to return unto Mine own Self, even as We called Thee forth in the beginning. Thy Lord, verily, is the Unconstrained, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling. Warn, then, these mirrors, once they have been made manifest, lest they swell with pride before their Creator and Fashioner when He appeareth amongst them, or let the trappings of leadership delude and debar them from bowing in submission before God, the Almighty, the All-Beauteous.

Say: O concourse of mirrors! Ye are but a creation of My will and have come to exist by virtue of My command. Beware lest ye deny the verses of My Lord, and be of them who have wrought injustice and are numbered with the lost. Beware lest ye cling unto that which ye possess, or take pride in your fame and renown. That which behoveth you is to wholly detach yourselves from all that is in the heavens and on the earth. Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is the All-Powerful, the Almighty.

O Temple of My Cause! Say: Should I wish to transform, in a single moment, all things into mirrors of My Names, this undoubtedly is in My power, how much more in the power of My Lord, Who hath called Me into being through His all-compelling and inscrutable command. And should I choose to revolutionize the entire creation in the twinkling of an eye, this assuredly is possible unto Me, how much more unto that sovereign Purpose enshrined in the Will of God, My Lord and the Lord of all the worlds.

Say: O ye manifestations of My Names! Should ye offer up all that ye possess, nay your very lives, in the path of God, and invoke Him to the number of the grains of sand, the drops of rain, and

the waves of the sea, and yet oppose the Manifestation of His Cause at the time of His appearance, your works shall in no wise be mentioned before God. Should ye, however, neglect all righteous works and yet choose to believe in Him in these days, God perchance will put away your sins. He, verily, is the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. Thus doth the Lord inform you of His purpose, that haply ye may not wax proud before the One through Whom whatsoever hath been revealed from all eternity hath been confirmed. Happy is he who approacheth this Most Sublime Vision, and woe to them that turn aside!

How numerous those who expend all their wealth in the path of God, and whom We find, at the hour of His Revelation, to be of the rebellious and the froward! How many those who keep the fast in the daytime, only to protest against the One by Whose very command the ordinance of the fast was first established! Such men are, in truth, of the ignorant. And how many those who subsist on the coarsest bread, who take for their only seat the grass of the field, and who undergo every manner of hardship, merely to maintain their superiority in the eyes of men! Thus do We expose their deeds, that this may serve as a warning unto others. These are the ones who subject themselves to all manner of austerities before the gaze of others in the hope of perpetuating their names, whilst in reality no mention shall remain of them save in the curses and imprecations of the dwellers of earth and heaven.

Say: Would it profit you in the least if, as ye fondly imagine, your names were to endure? Nay, by the Lord of all worlds! Was the idol 'Uzzá¹² made any greater by this, that its name lived on amidst the worshippers of names? Nay, by Him Who is the Self of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Compelling! Should your names fade from every mortal mind, and yet God be well pleased with you, ye will indeed be numbered among the treasures of His name, the Most Hidden. Thus have We sent down Our verses that they may attract you unto the Source of all Lights, and acquaint you with the purpose of your Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Abstain, then, from all that hath been forbidden unto you in the Book, and eat of the lawful things which God hath provided for your sustenance. Deprive not yourselves of His goodly bestowals, for He, verily, is the Most Generous, the Lord of grace abounding. Subject not yourselves to excessive hardships, but

¹² One of a trio of Arabian goddesses whose worship was abolished by the Prophet Muḥammad.

follow the way We have made plain unto you through Our luminous verses and perspicuous proofs, and be not of the negligent.

O concourse of divines! It is not yours to boast if ye abstain from drinking wine and from similar transgressions which have been forbidden you in the Book, for should ye commit such deeds, the dignity of your station would then be tainted in the eyes of the people, your affairs would be disrupted, and your name disgraced and dishonoured. Nay, your true and abiding glory resideth in submission to the Word of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and in your inward and outward detachment from aught else besides God, the All-Compelling, the Almighty. Great is the blessedness of that divine that hath not allowed knowledge to become a veil between him and the One Who is the Object of all knowledge, and who, when the Self-Subsisting appeared, hath turned with a beaming face towards Him. He, in truth, is numbered with the learned. The inmates of Paradise seek the blessing of his breath, and his lamp sheddeth its radiance over all who are in heaven and on earth. He, verily, is numbered with the inheritors of the Prophets. He that beholdeth him hath, verily, beheld the True One, and he that turneth towards him hath, verily, turned towards God, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

O ye the dawning-places of knowledge! Beware that ye suffer not yourselves to become changed, for as ye change, most men will, likewise, change. This, verily, is an injustice unto yourselves and unto others. Unto this beareth witness every man of discernment and insight. Ye are even as a spring. If it be changed, so will the streams that branch out from it be changed. Fear God, and be numbered with the godly. In like manner, if the heart of man be corrupted, his limbs will also be corrupted. And similarly, if the root of a tree be corrupted, its branches, and its offshoots, and its leaves, and its fruits, will be corrupted. Thus have We set forth similitudes for your instruction, that perchance ye may not be debarred by the things ye possess from attaining unto that which hath been destined for you by Him Who is the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

It is indeed in Our power to take up a handful of dust and to adorn it with the vesture of Our Names. This, however, would be but a sign of Our favour, and not an indication of any merit it may have inherently possessed. Thus hath it been revealed in truth by Him Who is the Sovereign Revealer, the All-Knowing. Consider the Black Stone,¹³ which God hath made a point whereunto

¹³ A small rock situated low in the eastern corner of the Kaaba.

all men turn in adoration. Hath this bounty been conferred upon it by virtue of its innate excellence? Nay, by Mine own Self! Or doth such distinction stem from its intrinsic worth? Nay, by Mine own Being, Whose Essence even the wisest and most discerning of men have failed to grasp!

Again, consider the Mosque of Aqṣá¹⁴ and the other places which We have made sanctuaries unto the people in every land and region. The honour and distinction they enjoy is in no wise due to their own merit, but stemmeth from their relation to Our Manifestations, Whom We have appointed as the Daysprings of Our Revelation amidst mankind, if ye be of them that understand. In this there lieth a wisdom inscrutable to all save God. Inquire, that He may graciously make plain unto you His purpose. His knowledge, verily, embraceth all things. Detach yourselves, O people, from the world and all its vanities, and heed not the call of such as have disbelieved in God and joined partners with Him. Arise above the horizon of utterance to extol and praise your Lord, the All-Merciful. This is that which God hath purposed for you; well is it with them who perceive it.

Say: O people! We have commanded you in Our Tablets to strive, at the time of the promised Revelation, to sanctify your souls from all names, and to purify them from all that hath been created in the heavens or on the earth, that therein may appear the splendours of the Sun of Truth which shineth forth above the horizon of the Will of your Lord, the Almighty, the Most Great. We have, moreover, commanded you to cleanse your hearts from every trace of the love or hate of the peoples of the world, lest aught should divert you from one course or impel you towards another. This, verily, is among the weightiest counsels I have vouchsafed unto you in the perspicuous Book, for whoso attacheth himself to either of these shall be prevented from attaining a proper understanding of Our Cause. To this beareth witness every just and discerning soul.

Ye, however, have broken the Covenant of God, forgotten His Testament, and at last turned away from Him Whose appearance hath solaced the eyes of every true believer in the Divine Unity. Lift up the veils and coverings that obscure your vision, and consider the testimonies of the Prophets and Messengers, that haply ye may recognize the Cause of God in these days

¹⁴ The mosque located in present-day Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.

when the Promised One hath come invested with a mighty sovereignty. Fear God, and debar yourselves not from Him Who is the Dayspring of His signs. This shall, in truth, but profit your own selves; as to your Lord, He, verily, can afford to dispense with all creatures. From everlasting was He alone; there was none else besides Him. He it is in Whose name the standard of Divine Unity hath been planted upon the Sinai of the visible and invisible worlds, proclaiming that there is none other God but Me, the Peerless, the Glorious, the Incomparable.

Behold, however, how those who are but a creation of His Will and Command have turned aside from Him and have taken unto themselves a lord and master beside God; these, truly, are of the wayward. The mention of the All-Merciful hath at all times been upon their lips, and yet when He was manifested unto them through the power of truth they warred against Him. Wretched indeed shall be the plight of such as have broken the Covenant of their Lord when the Luminary of the world shone forth above the horizon of the Will of God, the Most Holy, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise! It was against God that they unsheathed the swords of malice and hatred, and yet they perceive it not. Methinks they remain dead and buried in the tombs of their selfish desires, though the breeze of God hath blown over all regions. They, truly, are wrapt in a dense and grievous veil. And oft as the verses of God are rehearsed unto them, they persist in proud disdain; it is as though they were devoid of all understanding, or had never heard the Call of God, the Most Exalted, the All-Knowing.

Say: Alas for you! How can ye profess yourselves believers, when ye deny the verses of God, the Almighty, the All-Wise? Say: O people! Turn your faces unto your Lord, the All-Merciful. Beware lest ye be veiled by aught that hath been revealed in the Bayán: It was, in truth, revealed for no other purpose than to make mention of Me, the All-Powerful, the Most High, and had no other object than My Beauty. The whole world hath been filled with My testimony, if ye be of them that judge with fairness.

Had the Primal Point¹⁵ been someone else beside Me as ye claim, and had attained My presence, verily He would have never allowed Himself to be separated from Me, but rather We would have had mutual delights with each other in My Days. He, in truth, wept sore in His remoteness from Me. He preceded Me that He might summon the people unto My Kingdom, as it hath been set

¹⁵ The Báb.

forth in the Tablets, could ye but perceive it! O would that men of hearing might be found who could hear the voice of His lamentation in the Bayán bewailing that which hath befallen Me at the hands of these heedless souls, bemoaning His separation from Me and giving utterance to His longing to be united with Me, the Mighty, the Peerless. He, verily, beholdeth at this very moment His Best-Beloved amidst those who were created to attain His Day and to prostrate themselves before Him, and yet who have inflicted in their tyranny such abasement upon Him as the pen confesseth its inability to describe.

Say: O people! We, verily, summoned you, in Our former Revelation, unto this Scene of transcendent glory, this Seat of stainless sanctity, and announced unto you the advent of the Days of God. Yet, when the most great veil was rent asunder, and the Ancient Beauty came unto you in the clouds of God's decree, ye repudiated Him in Whom ye had believed aforetime. Woe betide you, O company of infidels! Fear ye God, and nullify not the truth with the things ye possess. When the luminary of divine verses dawneth upon you from the horizon of the Pen of the King of all names and attributes, fall ye prostrate upon your faces before God, the Lord of the Worlds. For to bow down in adoration at the threshold of His door is indeed better for you than the worship of both worlds, and to submit to His Revelation is more profitable unto you than whatsoever hath been created in the heavens and on the earth.

Say: O people! I admonish you wholly for the sake of God, and seek no reward from you. For My recompense shall be with God, He Who hath brought Me into being, raised Me up by the power of truth, and made Me the Source of His remembrance amidst His creatures. Hasten to behold this divine and glorious Vision, the Spot wherein God hath established His Seat. Follow not that which the Evil One whispereth in your hearts, for he, verily, doth prompt you to walk after your lusts and covetous desires, and hindereth you from treading the straight Path which this all-embracing and all-compelling Cause hath opened.

Say: The Evil One hath appeared in such wise as the eye of creation hath never beheld. He Who is the Beauty of the All-Merciful hath likewise been made manifest with an adorning the like of which hath never been witnessed in the past. The Call of the All-Merciful hath been raised, and behind it the call of Satan. Well is it with them who hearken unto the Voice of God, and turn their faces towards His throne to behold a most holy and blessed Vision. For whoso cherisheth in

his heart the love of anyone beside Me, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed, shall be unable to gain admittance into My Kingdom. To this beareth witness that which adorneth the preamble of the Book of Existence, could ye but perceive it. Say: This is the Day whereon God's most great favour hath been made manifest. The voice of all who are in the heavens above and on the earth below proclaimeth My Name, and singeth forth My praises, could ye but hear it!

O Temple of Divine Revelation! Sound the trumpet in My Name! O Temple of Divine mysteries! Raise the clarion call of Thy Lord, the Unconditioned, the Unconstrained! O Maid of Heaven! Step forth from the chambers of paradise and announce unto the people of the world: By the righteousness of God! He Who is the Best-Beloved of the worlds — He Who hath ever been the Desire of every perceiving heart, the Object of the adoration of all that are in heaven and on earth, and the Cynosure of the former and the latter generations — is now come!

Take heed lest ye hesitate in recognizing this resplendent Beauty when once He hath appeared in the plenitude of His sovereign might and majesty. He, verily, is the True One, and all else besides Him is as naught before a single one of His servants, and paleth into nothingness when brought face to face with the revelation of His splendours. Hasten, then, to attain the living waters of His grace, and be not of the negligent. As to him who hesitateth, though it be for less than a moment, God shall verily bring his works to naught and return him to the seat of wrath; wretched indeed is the abode of them that tarry!

