

Súriy-i-Mulúk / Súrih of the Kings

Bahá'u'lláh

Original English



Súriy-i-Mulúk / Súrih of the Kings

He is the Almighty!

This is a Tablet from this Servant, who is called Ḥusayn in the kingdom of names, to the concourse of the kings of the earth. Haply they may approach it in a spirit of open-mindedness, discover from its message the mysteries of divine providence, and be of those that comprehend its meaning, and perchance they may forsake all they possess, turn towards the retreats of holiness, and draw nigh unto God, the All-Glorious, the Incomparable.

O kings of the earth! Give ear unto the Voice of God, calling from this sublime, this fruit-laden Tree, that hath sprung out of the Crimson Hill, upon the holy Plain, intoning the words: "There is none other God but He, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise." This is a Spot which hath been sanctified by God for those who approach it, a Spot wherein His Voice may be heard from the celestial Tree of Holiness. Fear God, O concourse of kings, and suffer not yourselves to be deprived of this most sublime grace. Fling away, then, the things ye possess, and take fast hold on the Handle of God, the Exalted, the Great. Set your hearts towards the Face of God, and abandon that which your desires have bidden you to follow, and be not of those who perish.

Relate unto them, O Servant, the story of 'Alí,¹ when He came unto them with truth, bearing His glorious and weighty Book, and holding in His hands a testimony and proof from God, and holy and blessed tokens from Him. Ye, however, O kings, have failed to heed the Remembrance of God in His days and to be guided by the lights which arose and shone forth above the horizon of a resplendent Heaven. Ye examined not His Cause when so to do would have been better for you than all that the sun shineth upon, could ye but perceive it. Ye remained careless until the divines of Persia — those cruel ones — pronounced judgement against Him, and unjustly slew Him. His spirit ascended unto God, and the eyes of the inmates of Paradise and the angels that are nigh unto Him wept sore by reason of this cruelty. Beware that ye be not careless

¹ The Báb.



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

henceforth as ye have been careless aforetime. Return, then, unto God, your Maker, and be not of the heedless.

Say: The Sun of vicegerency hath dawned, the Point of knowledge and wisdom hath been made plain, and the Testimony of God, the Almighty, the All-Wise, hath been made manifest. Say: The Moon of eternity hath risen in the midmost heaven, and its light hath illumined the dwellers of the realms above. My face hath come forth from the veils, and shed its radiance upon all that is in heaven and on earth; and yet, ye turned not towards Him, notwithstanding that ye were created for Him, O concourse of kings! Follow, therefore, that which I speak unto you, and hearken unto it with your hearts, and be not of such as have turned aside. For your glory consisteth not in your sovereignty, but rather in your nearness unto God and your observance of His command as sent down in His holy and preserved Tablets. Should any one of you rule over the whole earth, and over all that lieth within it and upon it, its seas, its lands, its mountains, and its plains, and yet be not remembered by God, all these would profit him not, could ye but know it.

Know ye that a servant's glory resideth in his nearness unto God, and that, unless he draweth nigh unto Him, naught else can ever profit him, even should he hold sway over the entire creation. Say: The breeze of God hath wafted over you from the retreats of Paradise, but ye have neglected it and chosen to persist in your waywardness. Guidance hath been given unto you from God, but ye have failed to follow it and preferred to reject its truth. The Lamp of God hath been lit within the niche of His Cause, but ye have neglected to seek the radiance of its glory and to draw nigh unto its light. And still ye slumber upon the couch of heedlessness!

Arise, then, and make steadfast your feet, and make ye amends for that which hath escaped you, and set then yourselves towards His holy Court, on the shore of His mighty Ocean, so that the pearls of knowledge and wisdom, which God hath stored up within the shell of His radiant heart, may be revealed unto you. Such is the counsel that shall profit you most; make of it your provision, that ye may be of those who are guided aright. Beware lest ye hinder the breeze of God from blowing over your hearts, the breeze through which the hearts of such as have turned unto Him can be quickened. Harken unto the clear admonitions that We have revealed for you in this Tablet, that God, in turn, may hearken unto you, and may open before your faces the portals of His mercy. He, verily, is the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Lay not aside the fear of God, O kings of the earth, and beware that ye transgress not the bounds which the Almighty hath fixed. Observe the injunctions laid upon you in His Book, and take good heed not to overstep their limits. Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to anyone, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.

Compose your differences and reduce your armaments, that the burden of your expenditures may be lightened, and that your minds and hearts may be tranquillized. Heal the dissensions that divide you, and ye will no longer be in need of any armaments except what the protection of your cities and territories demandeth. Fear ye God, and take heed not to outstrip the bounds of moderation and be numbered among the extravagant.

We have learned that ye are increasing your outlay every year, and are laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is more than they can bear, and is a grievous injustice. Decide ye justly between men, O kings, and be ye the emblems of justice amongst them. This, if ye judge fairly, is the thing that behoveth you, and beseemeth your station.

Beware not to deal unjustly with anyone that appealeth to you and entereth beneath your shadow. Walk ye in the fear of God, and be ye of them that lead a godly life. Rest not on your power, your armies, and treasures. Put your whole trust and confidence in God, Who hath created you, and seek ye His help in all your affairs. Succour cometh from Him alone. He succoureth whom He willeth with the hosts of the heavens and of the earth.

Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous. Ye will most certainly be called upon to answer for His trust on the day when the Balance of Justice shall be set, the day when unto everyone shall be rendered his due, when the doings of all men, be they rich or poor, shall be weighed.

If ye pay no heed unto the counsels which, in peerless and unequivocal language, We have revealed in this Tablet, Divine chastisement shall assail you from every direction, and the sentence of His justice shall be pronounced against you. On that day ye shall have no power to resist Him, and shall recognize your own impotence. Have mercy on yourselves and on those beneath you, and judge ye between them according to the precepts prescribed by God in His most holy and exalted Tablet, a Tablet wherein He hath assigned to each and every thing its settled measure, in which He hath given, with distinctness, an explanation of all things, and which is in itself a monition unto them that believe in Him.

Examine Our Cause, inquire into the things that have befallen Us, and decide justly between Us and Our enemies, and be ye of them that act equitably towards their neighbour. If ye stay not the hand of the oppressor, if ye fail to safeguard the rights of the downtrodden, what right have ye then to vaunt yourselves among men? What is it of which ye can rightly boast? Is it on your food and your drink that ye pride yourselves, on the riches ye lay up in your treasuries, on the diversity and the cost of the ornaments with which ye deck yourselves? If true glory were to consist in the possession of such

perishable things, then the earth on which ye walk must needs vaunt itself over you, because it supplieth you, and bestoweth upon you, these very things, by the decree of the Almighty. In its bowels are contained, according to what God hath ordained, all that ye possess. From it, as a sign of His mercy, ye derive your riches. Behold then your state, the thing in which ye glory! Would that ye could perceive it!

Nay, by Him Who holdeth in His grasp the kingdom of the entire creation! Nowhere doth your true and abiding glory reside except in your firm adherence unto the precepts of God, your wholehearted observance of His laws, your resolution to see that they do not remain unenforced, and to pursue steadfastly the right course.

O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus, the Spirit of God, "I go away, and come again unto you"?² Wherefore, then, did ye fail, when He did come again unto you in the clouds of heaven, to draw nigh unto Him, that ye might behold His face, and be of them that attained His Presence? In another passage He saith: "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."³ And yet behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies. Ye welcomed Him not, neither did ye seek His Presence, that ye might hear the verses of God from His own mouth, and partake of the manifold wisdom of the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise. Ye have, by reason of your failure, hindered the breath of God from being wafted over you, and have withheld from your souls the sweetness of its fragrance. Ye continue roving with delight in the valley of your corrupt desires. By God! Ye, and all ye possess, shall pass away. Ye shall, most certainly, return to God, and shall be called to account for your doings in the presence of Him Who shall gather together the entire creation.

Again, heard ye not that which hath been recorded in the Gospel concerning those "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"⁴ that is, those who have been made manifest through the power of God? Wherefore it becometh evident that one may well be manifested in the world of creation who is truly of God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. How is it then that when word reached you of Our Cause, ye failed to inquire from Our own lips, that ye might distinguish truth from falsehood, discover Our aim and purpose, and learn of the afflictions which We have suffered at the hands of an evil and wayward generation?

² John 14:28.

³ John 16:13.

⁴ John 1:13.

O Minister of the King of Paris!⁵ Hast thou forgotten the pronouncement recorded in the Gospel according to John concerning the Word and those who are its Manifestations? And hast thou ignored the counsels of the Spirit⁶ concerning the Manifestations of the Word, and been numbered with the heedless? If not, wherefore then didst thou conspire with the Minister of Persia⁷ to inflict upon Us that which hath caused the hearts of men of insight and understanding to melt, the tears of the denizens of the Realm of eternity to flow, and the souls of them who are nigh unto God to mourn? And all this thou didst commit without seeking to examine Our Cause or to discern its truth. For is it not thy clear duty to investigate this Cause, to inform thyself of the things that have befallen Us, to judge with equity, and to cleave unto justice?

Thy days shall pass away, thy ministry shall come to an end, and thy possessions shall vanish and be no more. Then, in the presence of the almighty King, thou shalt be called to answer for that which thy hands have wrought. How many the ministers who came before thee into this world, men who exceeded thee in power, excelled thee in station, and surpassed thee in wealth, and yet returned to dust, leaving upon the face of the earth neither name nor trace, and are now plunged in grievous remorse. Amongst them were those who failed in their duty towards God, followed their own desires, and trod the path of lust and wickedness. And amongst them were those who observed that which hath been prescribed in the verses of God, judged with fairness by the divine guidance that overshadowed them, and entered beneath the shelter of the mercy of their Lord.

I admonish thee, and those who are like thee, to deal not with anyone as ye have dealt with Us. Beware lest ye follow in the footsteps of the Evil One and walk in the ways of the unjust. Take from this world only to the measure of your needs, and forgo that which exceedeth them. Observe equity in all your judgements, and transgress not the bounds of justice, nor be of them that stray from its path.

Twenty years have passed, O kings, during which We have, each day, tasted the agony of a fresh tribulation. No one of them that were before Us hath endured the things We have endured. Would that ye could perceive it! They that rose up against Us have put us to death, have shed our blood, have plundered our property, and violated our honour. Though aware of most of our afflictions, ye, nevertheless, have failed to stay the hand of the aggressor. For is it not your clear duty to restrain the tyranny of the oppressor, and to deal equitably with your subjects, that your high sense of justice may be fully demonstrated to all mankind?

⁵ The French Ambassador in Constantinople.

⁶ Jesus.

⁷ The Persian Ambassador in Constantinople.

God hath committed into your hands the reins of the government of the people, that ye may rule with justice over them, safeguard the rights of the downtrodden, and punish the wrongdoers. If ye neglect the duty prescribed unto you by God in His Book, your names shall be numbered with those of the unjust in His sight. Grievous, indeed, will be your error. Cleave ye to that which your imaginations have devised, and cast behind your backs the commandments of God, the Most Exalted, the Inaccessible, the All-Compelling, the Almighty? Cast away the things ye possess, and cling to that which God hath bidden you observe. Seek ye His grace, for he that seeketh it treadeth His straight Path.

Consider the state in which We are, and behold ye the ills and troubles that have tried Us. Neglect Us not, though it be for a moment, and judge ye between Us and Our enemies with equity. This will, surely, be a manifest advantage unto you. Thus do We relate to you Our tale, and recount the things that have befallen Us, that ye might take off Our ills and ease Our burden. Let him who will, relieve Us from Our trouble; and as to him that willeth not, My Lord is assuredly the best of helpers.

Warn and acquaint the people, O Servant, with the things We have sent down unto Thee, and let the fear of no one dismay Thee, and be Thou not of them that waver. The day is approaching when God will have exalted His Cause and magnified His testimony in the eyes of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. Place, in all circumstances, Thy whole trust in Thy Lord, and fix Thy gaze upon Him, and turn away from all them that repudiate His truth. Let God, Thy Lord, be Thy sufficing succourer and helper. We have pledged Ourselves to secure Thy triumph upon earth and to exalt Our Cause above all men, though no king be found who would turn his face towards Thee.

Call Thou to remembrance Thine arrival in the City, how the Ministers of the Sulṭán thought Thee to be unacquainted with their laws and regulations, and believed Thee to be one of the ignorant. Say: Yea, by My Lord! I am ignorant of all things except what God hath, through His bountiful favour, been pleased to teach Me. To this We assuredly testify, and unhesitatingly confess it.

Say: If the laws and regulations to which ye cleave be of your own making, We will, in no wise, follow them. Thus have I been instructed by Him Who is the All-Wise, the All-Informed. Such hath been My way in the past, and such will it remain in the future, through the power of God and His might. This, indeed, is the true and right way. If they be ordained by God, bring forth, then, your proofs, if ye be of them that speak the truth. Say: We have written down in a Book which leaveth not unrecorded the work of any man, however insignificant, all that they have imputed to Thee, and all that they have done unto Thee.

Say: It behoveth you, O Ministers of State, to keep the precepts of God, and to forsake your own laws and regulations, and to be of them who are guided aright. Better is this for you than all ye possess, did ye but know it. If ye transgress the commandment of God, not one jot or one tittle of all your works shall be acceptable in His sight. Ye shall, ere long, discover the consequences of that which ye shall have done in this vain life, and shall be repaid for them. This, verily, is the truth, the undoubted truth.

How great the number of those who, in bygone ages, have committed the things ye have committed, and who, though superior to you in rank, have, in the end, returned unto dust, and been consigned to their inevitable doom! Would that ye might ponder the Cause of God in your hearts! Ye shall follow in their wake, and shall be made to enter a habitation wherein none shall be found to befriend or help you. Ye shall, of a truth, be asked of your doings, shall be called to account for your failure in duty with regard to the Cause of God, and for having disdainfully rejected His loved ones who, with manifest sincerity, have come unto you.

It is ye who have taken counsel together regarding them, ye that have preferred to follow the promptings of your own desires, and forsaken the commandment of God, the Help in Peril, the Almighty.

Say: What! Cleave ye to your own devices, and cast behind your backs the precepts of God? Ye, indeed, have wronged your own selves and others. Would that ye could perceive it! Say: If your rules and principles be founded on justice, why is it, then, that ye follow those which accord with your corrupt inclinations and reject such as conflict with your desires? By what right claim ye, then, to judge fairly between men? Are your rules and principles such as to justify your persecution of Him Who, at your bidding, hath presented Himself before you, your rejection of Him, and your infliction on Him every day of grievous injury? Hath He ever, though it be for one short moment, disobeyed you? All the inhabitants of 'Iráq, and beyond them every discerning observer, will bear witness to the truth of My words.

Be fair in your judgement, O ye Ministers of State! What is it that We have committed that could justify Our banishment? What is the offence that hath warranted Our expulsion? It is We Who have sought you, and yet, behold how ye refused to receive Us! By God! This is a sore injustice that ye have perpetrated — an injustice with which no earthly injustice can measure. To this the Almighty is Himself a witness.

Have I at any time transgressed your laws, or disobeyed any of your ministers in 'Iráq? Inquire of them, that ye may act with discernment towards Us and be numbered with those who are well-informed. Hath anyone ever brought before them a plaint against Us? Hath anyone amongst them ever heard from Us a word contrary to that which God hath revealed in His Book? Bring forth, then, your evidence, that We may approve your actions and acknowledge your claims!

Had ye wished to deal with Us in accordance with your principles and standards, it would have behoved you to respect and honour Us for complying with your commands and following that which ye have pleased to ordain. Likewise, it would have beseemed you to repay the debts which We incurred in 'Irâq in the execution of your wishes. Ye should have given ear then unto Us, heard the account of Our woes, and judged with equity, as ye would judge your own selves. Ye should not have wished for Us that which ye have not wished for yourselves, but rather chosen to act with generosity. By God! Ye dealt with Us neither in accordance with your own principles and standards, nor with those of any man living, but in accordance with the promptings of your evil and wayward passions, O ye concourse of the froward and the arrogant!

O Bird of Holiness! Soar in the heaven of communion with Me, and acquaint the people with that which We disclosed unto Thee in the billowing oceans of immortality beyond the mount of glory. Let the fear of no one dismay Thee, and put Thy trust in God, the Almighty, the Beneficent. We, verily, shall protect Thee from those who, without a clear token from God or an enlightening Book, have grievously wronged Thee.

Say: God is My witness, O concourse of the negligent! We came not unto you to spread disorder in your lands or to sow dissension amongst your peoples. Nay rather, We came in obedience to the command of the sovereign, and in order to exalt your authority, to instruct you in the ways of Our wisdom, and to remind you of that which ye had forgotten — even as He saith in truth: “Warn them, for, in truth, Thy warning will profit the believers.”⁸ But ye hearkened not unto the sweet melodies of the Spirit, and gave ear unwittingly unto Our enemies, they who follow the promptings of their corrupt inclinations, whose deeds the Evil One hath made fair-seeming in their own eyes, and whose tongues utter calumnies against Us. Heard ye not that which hath been revealed in His all-glorious and unerring Book: “If a wicked man come to you with news, clear it up at once”?⁹ Wherefore have ye then cast the command of God behind your backs, and followed in the footsteps of them that are bent on mischief?

We have heard that one of these calumniators hath alleged that this Servant practised usury whilst residing in 'Irâq, and was engaged in amassing riches for Himself. Say: How can ye judge a matter whereof ye have no knowledge? How can ye hurl calumnies against the servants of God, and entertain such evil suspicions? And how could this accusation be true, when God hath forbidden this practice unto His servants in that most holy and well-guarded Book revealed unto Muḥammad, the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets, a Book which He hath ordained to be His abiding testimony, and His guidance and monition unto all mankind? This is but one of the matters in which We have opposed the divines of Persia, inasmuch as We have, according to the

⁸ Qur'ân 51:55.

⁹ Qur'ân 49:6.

text of the Book, forbidden unto all men the practice of usury. God Himself beareth witness to the truth of My words. "Yet I hold not myself clear, for the soul is prone to evil."¹⁰ We intend only to impart unto you the truth, that ye might be informed thereof and be of them that lead a godly life. Beware lest ye give ear to the words of those from whom the foul smell of malice and envy can be discerned; pay no heed to them, and stand ye for righteousness.

Know ye that the world and its vanities and its embellishments shall pass away. Nothing will endure except God's Kingdom which pertaineth to none but Him, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious, the Almighty. The days of your life shall roll away, and all the things with which ye are occupied and of which ye boast yourselves shall perish, and ye shall, most certainly, be summoned by a company of His angels to appear at the spot where the limbs of the entire creation shall be made to tremble, and the flesh of every oppressor to creep. Ye shall be asked of the things your hands have wrought in this, your vain life, and shall be repaid for your doings. This is the day that shall inevitably come upon you, the hour that none can put back. To this the Tongue of Him that speaketh the truth and is the Knower of all things hath testified.

Fear God, ye inhabitants of the City, and sow not the seeds of dissension amongst men. Walk not in the paths of the Evil One. Walk ye, during the few remaining days of your life, in the ways of the one true God. Your days shall pass away as have the days of them who were before you. To dust shall ye return, even as your fathers of old did return.

Know ye that I am afraid of none except God. In none but Him have I placed My trust; to none will I cleave but Him, and wish for naught except the thing He hath wished for Me. This, indeed, is My heart's desire, did ye but know it. I have offered up My soul and My body as a sacrifice for God, the Lord of all worlds. Whoso hath known God shall know none but Him, and he that feareth God shall be afraid of no one except Him, though the powers of the whole earth rise up and be arrayed against him. I speak naught except at His bidding, and follow naught, through the power of God and His might, except His truth. He, verily, shall recompense the truthful.

Narrate, O Servant, the things Thou didst behold at the time of Thine arrival in the City, that Thy testimony may endure amongst men, and serve as a warning unto them that believe. We found, upon Our arrival in the City, its governors and elders as children gathered about and disporting themselves with clay. We perceived no one sufficiently mature to acquire from Us the truths which God hath taught Us, nor ripe for Our wondrous words of wisdom. Our inner eye wept sore over them, and over their transgressions and their total disregard of the thing for which they were created. This is what We observed in that city, and which We have chosen to note down in Our Book, that it may serve as a warning unto them, and unto the rest of mankind.

¹⁰ Qur'án 12:53.

Say: If ye be seekers after this life and the vanities thereof, ye should have sought them while ye were still enclosed in your mothers' wombs, for at that time ye were continually approaching them, could ye but perceive it. Ye have, on the other hand, ever since ye were born and attained maturity, been all the while receding from the world and drawing closer to dust. Why, then, exhibit such greed in amassing the treasures of the earth, when your days are numbered and your chance is well-nigh lost? Will ye not, then, O heedless ones, shake off your slumber?

Incline your ears to the counsels which this Servant giveth you for the sake of God. He, verily, asketh no recompense from you and is resigned to what God hath ordained for Him, and is entirely submissive to God's Will.

The days of your life are far spent, O people, and your end is fast approaching. Put away, therefore, the things ye have devised and to which ye cleave, and take firm hold on the precepts of God, that haply ye may attain that which He hath purposed for you, and be of them that pursue a right course. Delight not yourselves in the things of the world and its vain ornaments, neither set your hopes on them. Let your reliance be on the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. He will, ere long, bring to naught all the things ye possess. Let Him be your fear, and forget not His covenant with you, and be not of them that are shut out as by a veil from Him.

Beware that ye swell not with pride before God, and disdainfully reject His loved ones. Defer ye humbly to the faithful, they that have believed in God and in His signs, whose hearts witness to His unity, whose tongues proclaim His oneness, and who speak not except by His leave. Thus do We exhort you with justice, and warn you with truth, that perchance ye may be awakened.

Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things ye would not desire for yourselves. This is My best counsel unto you, did ye but observe it.

Respect ye the divines and learned amongst you, they whose conduct accords with their professions, who transgress not the bounds which God hath fixed, whose judgements are in conformity with His behests as revealed in His Book. Know ye that they are the lamps of guidance unto them that are in the heavens and on the earth. They who disregard and neglect the divines and learned that live amongst them — these have truly changed the favour with which God hath favoured them.

Say: Wait ye till God will have changed His favour unto you. Nothing whatsoever escapeth Him. He knoweth the secrets both of the heavens and of the earth. His knowledge embraceth all things. Rejoice not in what ye have done, or will do in the future, nor delight in the tribulation with which ye have afflicted Us, for ye are unable by such means as these to exalt your stations, were ye to examine your works with acute

discernment. Neither will ye be capable of detracting from the loftiness of Our state. Nay, God will add unto the recompense with which He shall reward Us, for having sustained with persevering patience the tribulations We have suffered. He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.

Know ye that trials and tribulations have, from time immemorial, been the lot of the chosen Ones of God and His beloved, and such of His servants as are detached from all else but Him, they whom neither merchandise nor traffic beguile from the remembrance of the Almighty, they that speak not till He hath spoken, and act according to His commandment. Such is God's method carried into effect of old, and such will it remain in the future. Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befalleth them, and who tread the path of resignation.

That which hath befallen Us hath been witnessed before. Ours is not the first goblet dashed to the ground in the lands of Islám, nor is this the first time that such schemers have intrigued against the beloved of the Lord. The tribulations We have sustained are like unto the trials endured aforetime by Imám Ḥusayn. For he was approached by messengers from malicious and evil-hearted plotters, inviting him to come forth from the city; yet when he came unto them, accompanied by his kindred, they rose up against him with all their might, until at last they slew him, slaughtered his sons and his brothers, and took captive the remainder of his family. So did it come to pass in an earlier age, and God, verily, is a witness unto My words. Of his lineage there survived none, whether young or old, save his son 'Alí al-Awsat, known as Zaynu'l-'Ábidín.

Behold then, O heedless ones, how brightly the fire of the love of God blazed aforetime in the heart of Ḥusayn, if ye be of them that ponder! So intense grew its flame that fervour and longing at last seized the reins of patience from his grasp, and the love of Him Who is the All-Compelling so enraptured his heart that he surrendered his soul, his spirit, his substance, and his all in the path of God, the Lord of the worlds. By God! Sweeter was this in his sight than the empire of earth and heaven. For the true lover desireth naught save reunion with his beloved and the seeker hath no goal but to attain unto the object of his quest. Their hearts long for reunion even as the body yearneth for the spirit, nay greater indeed is their longing, could ye but perceive it!

Say: That same fire now blazeth in Mine own breast, and My wish is that this Ḥusayn may lay down His life in like manner, in the hope of attaining unto so august and sublime a station, that station wherein the servant dieth to himself and liveth in God, the Almighty, the Exalted, the Great. Were I to disclose unto you the mysteries which God hath enshrined therein, ye would, of a truth, offer up your lives in His path, renounce your riches, and forsake all that ye possess, that ye might attain this transcendent and all-glorious station. God, however, hath veiled your hearts and

obscured your eyes, lest ye should apprehend His mysteries and be made aware of their meaning.

Say: The sincere soul longeth for nearness to God even as the suckling babe yearneth for its mother's breast, nay more ardent is his longing, could ye but know it! Again, his longing is even as the panting of one sore athirst after the living waters of grace, or the yearning of the sinner for forgiveness and mercy. Thus do We expound unto you the mysteries of the Cause, and impart unto you what shall render you independent of all that hath so far occupied you, that perchance ye may enter the Court of Holiness within this exalted Paradise. I swear by God! Whoso entereth therein shall never abandon its precincts, and whoso gazeth thereon shall never turn away therefrom, even should the swords of infidels and deniers rain blows upon him. Thus have We related unto you that which befell Husayn, and We beseech God that He may destine for Us that which He had decreed for him. He, verily, is the Most Generous, the All-Bountiful.

By the righteousness of God! Through his deed the fragrances of holiness were wafted over all things, the proof of God was perfected, and His testimony made manifest to all men. And after him God raised up a people who avenged his death, who slew his enemies, and who wept over him at dawn and at eventide. Say: God hath pledged in His Book to lay hold upon every oppressor for his tyranny, and to uproot the stirrers of mischief. Know ye that such holy deeds exert, in themselves, a great influence upon the world of being — an influence which is, however, inscrutable to all save those whose eyes have been opened by God, whose hearts He hath freed from obscuring veils, and whose souls He hath guided aright.

The day is approaching when God will have raised up a people who will call to remembrance Our days, who will tell the tale of Our trials, who will demand the restitution of Our rights from them that, without a tittle of evidence, have treated Us with manifest injustice. God, assuredly, dominateth the lives of them that wronged Us, and is well aware of their doings. He will, most certainly, lay hold on them for their sins. He, verily, is the fiercest of avengers.

Thus have We recounted unto you the tales of the one true God, and sent down unto you the things He had preordained, that haply ye may ask forgiveness of Him, may return unto Him, may truly repent, may realize your misdeeds, may shake off your slumber, may be roused from your heedlessness, may atone for the things that have escaped you, and be of them that do good. Let him who will, acknowledge the truth of My words; and as to him that willeth not, let him turn aside. My sole duty is to remind you of your failure in duty towards the Cause of God, if perchance ye may be of them that heed My warning. Wherefore, hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses. The greatness of His mercy surpasseth the fury of

His wrath, and His grace encompasseth all who have been called into being and been clothed with the robe of life, be they of the past or of the future.

O concourse of Ministers of State! Do ye believe in your hearts that We have come to divest you of your earthly possessions and vanities? Nay, by the One in Whose hand is My soul! Our intention hath been to make clear that We oppose not the commands of the sovereign, nor are We to be numbered with the rebellious. Know ye of a certainty that all the treasures of the earth, all the gold, the silver, and the rare and precious gems they contain, are, in the sight of God, of His chosen ones and His loved ones, as worthless as a handful of clay. For ere long all that is on earth shall perish, and the kingdom will remain unto God, the All-Powerful, the Incomparable. That which perisheth can never profit Us, nor can it profit you, were ye but to reflect.

By the righteousness of God! I speak not falsely, and utter naught save that which God hath bidden Me. To this bear witness the very words of this Tablet, if ye but reflect upon its contents. Follow not the promptings of your own desires, nor the whisperings of the Evil One in your souls. Follow rather the Cause of God, both in your outward and your inner lives, and be not of the heedless. Better is this for you than all that ye have laid up in your houses, and all that ye have sought by day and night.

The world will pass away, and so will all the things whereat your hearts rejoice, or wherein ye pride yourselves before men. Cleanse the mirrors of your hearts from the dross of the world and all that is therein, that they may reflect the resplendent light of God. This, indeed, shall enable you to dispense with all save God, and to attain unto the good pleasure of your Lord, the Most Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We, verily, have unfolded before your eyes that which shall profit you both in this world and in the realm of faith, and which will lead you to the path of salvation. Would that ye might turn thereunto!

Hearken, O King,¹¹ to the speech of Him that speaketh the truth, Him that doth not ask thee to recompense Him with the things God hath chosen to bestow upon thee, Him Who unerringly treadeth the straight Path. He it is Who summoneth thee unto God, thy Lord, Who showeth thee the right course, the way that leadeth to true felicity, that haply thou mayest be of them with whom it shall be well.

Beware, O King, that thou gather not around thee such ministers as follow the desires of a corrupt inclination, as have cast behind their backs that which hath been committed into their hands and manifestly betrayed their trust. Be bounteous to others as God hath been bounteous to thee, and abandon not the interests of thy people to the mercy of such ministers as these. Lay not aside the fear of God, and be thou of them that act uprightly. Gather around thee those ministers from whom thou

¹¹ Sulṭān 'Abdu'l-'Azíz.

canst perceive the fragrance of faith and of justice, and take thou counsel with them, and choose whatever is best in thy sight, and be of them that act generously.

Know thou for a certainty that whoso disbelieveth in God is neither trustworthy nor truthful. This, indeed, is the truth, the undoubted truth. He that acteth treacherously towards God will, also, act treacherously towards his king. Nothing whatever can deter such a man from evil, nothing can hinder him from betraying his neighbour, nothing can induce him to walk uprightly.

Take heed that thou resign not the reins of the affairs of thy state into the hands of others, and repose not thy confidence in ministers unworthy of thy trust, and be not of them that live in heedlessness. Shun them whose hearts are turned away from thee, and place not thy confidence in them, and entrust them not with thine affairs and the affairs of such as profess thy faith. Beware that thou allow not the wolf to become the shepherd of God's flock, and surrender not the fate of His loved ones to the mercy of the malicious. Expect not that they who violate the ordinances of God will be trustworthy or sincere in the faith they profess. Avoid them, and preserve strict guard over thyself, lest their devices and mischief hurt thee. Turn away from them, and fix thy gaze upon God, thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. He that giveth up himself wholly to God, God shall, assuredly, be with him; and he that placeth his complete trust in God, God shall, verily, protect him from whatsoever may harm him, and shield him from the wickedness of every evil plotter.

Wert thou to incline thine ear unto My speech and observe My counsel, God would exalt thee to so eminent a position that the designs of no man on the whole earth can ever touch or hurt thee. Observe, O King, with thine inmost heart and with thy whole being, the precepts of God, and walk not in the paths of the oppressor. Seize thou, and hold firmly within the grasp of thy might, the reins of the affairs of thy people, and examine in person whatever pertaineth unto them. Let nothing escape thee, for therein lieth the highest good.

Render thanks unto God for having chosen thee out of the whole world, and made thee king over them that profess thy faith. It well beseemeth thee to appreciate the wondrous favours with which God hath favoured thee, and to magnify continually His name. Thou canst best praise Him if thou lovest His loved ones, and dost safeguard and protect His servants from the mischief of the treacherous, that none may any longer oppress them. Thou shouldst, moreover, arise to enforce the law of God amongst them, that thou mayest be of those who are firmly established in His law.

Shouldst thou cause rivers of justice to spread their waters amongst thy subjects, God would surely aid thee with the hosts of the unseen and of the seen, and would strengthen thee in thine affairs. No God is there but Him. All creation and its empire are His. Unto Him return the works of the faithful.

Place not thy reliance on thy treasures. Put thy whole confidence in the grace of God, thy Lord. Let Him be thy trust in whatever thou doest, and be of them that have submitted themselves to His Will. Let Him be thy helper and enrich thyself with His treasures, for with Him are the treasures of the heavens and of the earth. He bestoweth them upon whom He will, and from whom He will He withholdeth them. There is none other God but Him, the All-Possessing, the All-Praised. All are but paupers at the door of His mercy; all are helpless before the revelation of His sovereignty, and beseech His favours.

Overstep not the bounds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee. Bestow upon them according to their needs, and not to the extent that will enable them to lay up riches for themselves, to deck their persons, to embellish their homes, to acquire the things that are of no benefit unto them, and to be numbered with the extravagant. Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. This is but manifest justice.

Allow not the abject to rule over and dominate them who are noble and worthy of honour, and suffer not the high-minded to be at the mercy of the contemptible and worthless, for this is what We observed upon Our arrival in the City, and to it We bear witness. We found among its inhabitants some who were possessed of an affluent fortune and lived in the midst of excessive riches, while others were in dire want and abject poverty. This ill beseemeth thy sovereignty, and is unworthy of thy rank.

Let My counsel be acceptable to thee, and strive thou to rule with equity among men, that God may exalt thy name and spread abroad the fame of thy justice in all the world. Beware lest thou aggrandize thy ministers at the expense of thy subjects. Fear the sighs of the poor and of the upright in heart who, at every break of day, bewail their plight, and be unto them a benignant sovereign. They, verily, are thy treasures on earth. It behoveth thee, therefore, to safeguard thy treasures from the assaults of them who wish to rob thee. Inquire into their affairs, and ascertain, every year, nay every month, their condition, and be not of them that are careless of their duty.

Set before thine eyes God's unerring Balance and, as one standing in His Presence, weigh in that Balance thine actions every day, every moment of thy life. Bring thyself to account ere thou art summoned to a reckoning, on the Day when no man shall have strength to stand for fear of God, the Day when the hearts of the heedless ones shall be made to tremble.

It behoveth every king to be as bountiful as the sun, which fostereth the growth of all beings, and giveth to each its due, whose benefits are not inherent in itself, but are ordained by Him Who is the Most Powerful, the Almighty. The King should be as generous, as liberal in his mercy as the clouds, the outpourings of whose bounty are

showered upon every land, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing.

Have a care not to entrust thine affairs of state entirely into another's hands. None can discharge thy functions better than thine own self. Thus do We make clear unto thee Our words of wisdom, and send down upon thee that which can enable thee to pass over from the left hand of oppression to the right hand of justice, and approach the resplendent ocean of His favours. Such is the path which the kings that were before thee have trodden, they that acted equitably towards their subjects, and walked in the ways of undeviating justice.

Thou art God's shadow on earth. Strive, therefore, to act in such a manner as befitteth so eminent, so august a station. If thou dost depart from following the things We have caused to descend upon thee and taught thee, thou wilt, assuredly, be derogating from that great and priceless honour. Return, then, and cleave wholly unto God, and cleanse thine heart from the world and all its vanities, and suffer not the love of any stranger to enter and dwell therein. Not until thou dost purify thine heart from every trace of such love can the brightness of the light of God shed its radiance upon it, for to none hath God given more than one heart. This, verily, hath been decreed and written down in His ancient Book. And as the human heart, as fashioned by God, is one and undivided, it behoveth thee to take heed that its affections be, also, one and undivided. Cleave thou, therefore, with the whole affection of thine heart, unto His love, and withdraw it from the love of anyone besides Him, that He may aid thee to immerse thyself in the ocean of His unity, and enable thee to become a true upholder of His oneness. God is My witness. My sole purpose in revealing to thee these words is to sanctify thee from the transitory things of the earth, and aid thee to enter the realm of everlasting glory, that thou mayest, by the leave of God, be of them that abide and rule therein.

Hast thou heard, O King, what We have suffered at the hands of thy ministers and how We have been treated by them, or art thou of the negligent? If indeed thou hast heard and known, wherefore didst thou not forbid thy ministers to commit such deeds? How didst thou desire for Him Who hath complied with thy command, and been obedient to thy behest, that which no king would desire for any of his subjects? And if thou knowest not, this indeed is a more grievous error, wert thou of the God-fearing. Wherefore shall I recount to thee that which We have suffered at the hands of these oppressors.

Know, then, that We came unto thy city at thine own behest, and entered therein with conspicuous honour. They expelled Us, however, from thy city with an abasement with which no abasement on earth can compare, if thou be of them that are well-informed. They made Us journey until We reached the place¹² which none entereth except such

¹² Adrianople.

as have rebelled against the authority of the sovereign, and as are numbered with the transgressors. All this, notwithstanding that We had never disobeyed thee, though it be for a single moment, for when We heard thy bidding We observed it and submitted to thy will. In dealing with Us, however, thy ministers neither honoured the standards of God and His commandments, nor heeded that which hath been revealed to the Prophets and Messengers. They showed Us no mercy and committed against Us that which no one among the faithful hath ever wrought against his fellow, nor any believer inflicted upon an infidel. God knoweth and is a witness unto the truth of Our words.

When they expelled Us from thy city, they placed Us in such conveyances as the people use to carry baggage and the like. Such was the treatment We received at their hands, shouldst thou wish to know the truth. Thus were We sent away, and thus were We brought to the city which they regard as the abode of rebels. Upon our arrival, We could find no house in which to dwell, and perforce resided in a place where none would enter save the most indigent stranger. There We lodged for a time, after which, suffering increasingly from the confined space, We sought and rented houses which by reason of the extreme cold had been vacated by their occupants. Thus in the depth of winter we were constrained to make our abode in houses wherein none dwell except in the heat of summer. Neither My family, nor those who accompanied Me, had the necessary raiment to protect them from the cold in that freezing weather.

Would that thy ministers had dealt with Us according to the principles they uphold amongst themselves! For, by God, they dealt with Us neither in accordance with the commandments of God, nor with the practices they uphold, nor with the standards current amongst men, nor even with the manner in which the destitute of the earth receive a wayfarer. Such is the account of what We suffered at their hands, and which We have related unto thee in a language of truthfulness and sincerity.

All this befell Me, though I had come unto them at their own behest and did not oppose their authority, which deriveth from thine own. Thus did We accept and observe their bidding. They, however, appear to have forgotten that which God hath commanded. He saith, and His Word is the truth: "Act with humility towards the believers."¹³ Methinks that their only concern was their own comfort and repose, and that their ears were deaf to the sighs of the poor and the cries of the oppressed. They seem to imagine that they have been created from pure light, while others have been fashioned out of dust. How wretched are their imaginings! We have all been created from a sorry germ.¹⁴

I swear by God, O King! It is not My wish to make My plaint to thee against them that persecute Me. I only plead My grief and My sorrow to God, Who hath created Me and

¹³ Qur'án 15:88.

¹⁴ cf. Qur'án 77:20; 32:8.

them, Who well knoweth our state and Who watcheth over all things. My wish is to warn them of the consequences of their actions, if perchance they might desist from treating others as they have treated Me, and be of them that heed My warning.

The tribulations that have touched Us, the destitution from which We suffer, the various troubles with which We are encompassed, shall all pass away, as shall pass away the pleasures in which they delight and the affluence they enjoy. This is the truth which no man on earth can reject. The days in which We have been compelled to dwell in the dust will soon be ended, as will the days in which they occupied the seats of honour. God shall, assuredly, judge with truth between Us and them, and He, verily, is the best of judges.

We render thanks unto God for whatsoever hath befallen Us, and We patiently endure the things He hath ordained in the past or will ordain in the future. In Him have I placed My trust; and into His hands have I committed My Cause. He will, certainly, repay all them that endure with patience and put their confidence in Him. His is the creation and its empire. He exalteth whom He will, and whom He will He doth abase. He shall not be asked of His doings. He, verily, is the All-Glorious, the Almighty.

Let thine ear be attentive, O King, to the words We have addressed to thee. Let the oppressor desist from his tyranny, and cut off the perpetrators of injustice from among them that profess thy faith. By the righteousness of God! The tribulations We have sustained are such that any pen that recounteth them cannot but be overwhelmed with anguish. No one of them that truly believe and uphold the unity of God can bear the burden of their recital. So great have been Our sufferings that even the eyes of Our enemies have wept over Us, and beyond them those of every discerning person. And to all these trials have We been subjected, in spite of Our action in approaching thee, and in bidding the people to enter beneath thy shadow, that thou mightest be a stronghold unto them that believe in and uphold the unity of God.

Have I, O King, ever disobeyed thee? Have I, at any time, transgressed any of thy laws? Can any of thy ministers that represented thee in 'Iráq produce any proof that can establish My disloyalty to thee? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds! Not for one short moment did We rebel against thee, or against any of thy ministers. Never, God willing, shall We revolt against thee, though We be exposed to trials more severe than any We suffered in the past.

In the daytime and in the night season, at even and at morn, We pray to God on thy behalf, that He may graciously aid thee to be obedient unto Him and to observe His commandment, that He may shield thee from the hosts of the evil ones. Do, therefore, as it pleaseth thee, and treat Us as befitteth thy station and beseemeth thy sovereignty. Be not forgetful of the law of God in whatever thou desirest to achieve, now or in the days to come. Say: Praise be to God, the Lord of all worlds!

Dost thou imagine, O Minister of the Sháh in the City, that I hold within My grasp the ultimate destiny of the Cause of God? Thinkest thou that My imprisonment, or the shame I have been made to suffer, or even My death and utter annihilation, can deflect its course? Wretched is what thou hast imagined in thine heart! Thou art indeed of them that walk after the vain imaginings which their hearts devise. No God is there but Him. Powerful is He to manifest His Cause, and to exalt His testimony, and to establish whatsoever is His Will, and to elevate it to so eminent a position that neither thine own hands, nor the hands of them that have turned away from Him, can ever touch or harm it.

Dost thou believe thou hast the power to frustrate His Will, to hinder Him from executing His judgement, or to deter Him from exercising His sovereignty? Pretendest thou that aught in the heavens or in the earth can resist His Faith? Nay, by Him Who is the Eternal Truth! Nothing whatsoever in the whole of creation can thwart His Purpose. Cast away, therefore, the mere conceit thou dost follow, for mere conceit can never take the place of truth. Be thou of them that have truly repented and returned to God, the God Who hath created thee, Who hath nourished thee, and made thee a minister among them that profess thy faith.

Know thou, moreover, that He it is Who hath, by His own behest, created all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. How can, then, the thing that hath been created at His bidding prevail against Him? High is God exalted above what ye imagine about Him, ye people of malice! If this Cause be of God, no man can prevail against it; and if it be not of God, the divines amongst you, and they that follow their corrupt desires and such as have rebelled against Him will surely suffice to overpower it.

Hast thou not heard what a man of the family of Pharaoh, a believer, hath said of old, and which God recounted unto His Apostle, Whom He hath chosen above all human beings, and entrusted with His Message, and made the source of His mercy unto all them that dwell on earth? He said, and He, verily, speaketh the truth: "Will ye slay a man because he saith my Lord is God, when he hath already come to you with proofs of his mission? And if he be a liar, on him will be his lie, but if he be a man of truth, part at least of what he threateneth will fall upon you."¹⁵ This is what God hath revealed unto His Well-Beloved One, in His unerring Book.

And yet, ye have failed to incline your ears unto His bidding, have disregarded His law, have rejected His counsel as recorded in His Book, and have been of them that have strayed far from Him. How many those who, every year, and every month, have because of you been put to death! How manifold the injustices ye have perpetrated — injustices the like of which the eye of creation hath not seen, which no chronicler hath ever recorded! How numerous the babes and sucklings who were made orphans, and the fathers who lost their sons, because of your cruelty, O ye unjust doers! How oft hath

¹⁵ Qur'án 40:28.

a sister pined away and mourned over her brother, and how oft hath a wife lamented after her husband and sole sustainer!

Your iniquity waxed greater and greater until ye slew Him Who had never taken His eyes away from the face of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.¹⁶ Would that ye had put Him to death after the manner men are wont to put one another to death! Ye slew Him, however, in such circumstances as no man hath ever witnessed. The heavens wept sore over Him, and the souls of them who are nigh unto God cried out for His affliction. Was He not a Scion of your Prophet's ancient House? Had not His fame as a direct descendant of the Apostle been spread abroad amongst you? Why, then, did ye inflict upon Him what no man, however far ye may look back, hath inflicted upon another? By God! The eye of creation hath never beheld your like. Ye slay Him Who is a Scion of your Prophet's House, and rejoice and make merry while seated on your seats of honour! Ye utter your imprecations against them who were before you, and who have perpetrated what ye have perpetrated, and remain yourselves all the time unaware of your enormities!

Be fair in your judgement. Did they whom ye curse, upon whom ye invoke evil, act differently from yourselves? Have they not slain the descendant of their Prophet¹⁷ as ye have slain the descendant of your own? Is not your conduct similar to their conduct? Wherefore, then, claim ye to be different from them, O ye sowers of dissension amongst men?

And when ye took away His life, one of His followers arose to avenge His death. He was unknown of men, and the design he had conceived was unnoticed by anyone. Eventually he committed what had been preordained. It behoveth you, therefore, to attach blame to no one except to yourselves, for the things ye have committed, if ye but judge fairly. Who is there on the whole earth who hath done what ye have done? None, by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds!

All the rulers and kings of the earth honour and revere the descendants of their Prophets and holy men, could ye but perceive it. Ye, on the other hand, are responsible for such acts as no man hath, at any time, performed. Your misdeeds have caused every understanding heart to be consumed with grief. And yet, ye have remained sunk in your heedlessness, and failed to realize the wickedness of your actions.

Ye have persisted in your waywardness until ye rose up against Us, though We had committed nothing to justify your enmity. Fear ye not God Who hath created you, and fashioned you, and caused you to attain your strength, and joined you with them that

¹⁶ The Báb.

¹⁷ Imám Ḥusayn.

have resigned themselves to Him?¹⁸ How long will ye persist in your waywardness? How long will ye refuse to reflect? How long ere ye shake off your slumber and are roused from your heedlessness? How long will ye remain unaware of the truth?

Ponder in thine heart. Did ye, notwithstanding your behaviour and the things your hands have wrought, succeed in quenching the fire of God or in putting out the light of His Revelation — a light that hath enveloped with its brightness them that are immersed in the billowing oceans of immortality, and hath attracted the souls of such as truly believe in and uphold His unity? Know ye not that the Hand of God is over your hands, that His Decree transcendeth all your devices, that He is supreme over His servants, that He is equal to His Purpose, that He doth what He wisheth, that He shall not be asked of whatever He willeth, that He ordaineth what He pleaseth, that He is the Most Powerful, the Almighty? If ye believe this to be the truth, wherefore, then, will ye not cease from troubling and be at peace with yourselves?

Ye perpetrate every day a fresh injustice, and treat Me as ye treated Me in times past, though I never attempted to meddle with your affairs. At no time have I opposed you, neither have I rebelled against your laws. Behold how ye have, at the last, made Me a prisoner in this far-off land! Know for a certainty, however, that whatever your hands or the hands of the infidels have wrought will never, as they never did of old, change the Cause of God or alter His ways.

Give heed to My warning, ye people of Persia! If I be slain at your hands, God will assuredly raise up one who will fill the seat made vacant through My death, for such is God's method carried into effect of old, and no change can ye find in God's method of dealing. Seek ye to put out God's light that shineth upon His earth? Averse is God from what ye desire. He shall perfect His light, albeit ye abhor it in the secret of your hearts.

Pause for but a little while and reflect, O Minister, and be fair in thy judgement. What is it that We have committed that could justify thee in having slandered Us unto the King's Ministers, in following thy desires, in perverting the truth, and in uttering thy calumnies against Us? We have never met each other except when We met thee in thy father's house, in the days when the martyrdom of Imám Ḥusayn was being commemorated. On those occasions no one could have had the chance of making known to others his views and beliefs in conversation or in discourse. Thou wilt bear witness to the truth of My words, if thou be of the truthful. I have frequented no other gatherings in which thou couldst have learned My mind or in which any other could have done so. How, then, didst thou pronounce thy verdict against Me, when thou hadst not heard My testimony from Mine own lips? Hast thou not heard what God, exalted be His glory, hath said: "Say not to everyone who meeteth you with a greeting, 'Thou art not a believer.'"¹⁹ "Thrust not away those who cry to their Lord at morn and

¹⁸ The Muslims.

even, craving to behold His face.”²⁰ Thou hast indeed forsaken what the Book of God hath prescribed, and yet thou deemest thyself to be a believer!

Despite what thou hast done I entertain — and to this God is My witness — no ill will against thee, nor against anyone, though from thee and others We receive such hurt as no believer in the unity of God can sustain. My cause is in the hand of none except God, and My trust is in no one else but Him. Erelong shall your days pass away, as shall pass away the days of those who now, with flagrant pride, vaunt themselves over their neighbour. Soon shall ye be gathered together in the presence of God, and shall be asked of your doings, and shall be repaid for what your hands have wrought, and wretched is the abode of the wicked doers!

By God! Wert thou to realize what thou hast done, thou wouldst surely weep sore over thyself, and wouldst flee for refuge to God, and wouldst pine away and mourn all the days of thy life, till God will have forgiven thee, for He, verily, is the Most Generous, the All-Bountiful. Thou wilt, however, persist, till the hour of thy death, in thy heedlessness, inasmuch as thou hast, with all thine heart, thy soul and inmost being, busied thyself with the vanities of the world. Thou shalt, after thy departure, discover what We have revealed unto thee, and shalt find all thy doings recorded in the Book wherein the works of all them that dwell on earth, be they greater or less than the weight of an atom, are noted down. Heed, therefore, My counsel, and hearken thou, with the hearing of thine heart, unto My speech, and be not careless of My words, nor be of them that reject My truth. Glory not in the things that have been given thee. Set before thine eyes what hath been revealed in the Book of God, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious: “And when they had forgotten their warnings, We set open to them the gates of all things,” even as We did set open to thee and to thy like the gates of this earth and the ornaments thereof. Wait thou, therefore, for what hath been promised in the latter part of this holy verse,²¹ for this is a promise from Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise — a promise that will not prove untrue.

I know not the path ye have chosen and which ye tread, O congregation of My ill-wishers! We summon you to God, We remind you of His Day, We announce unto you tidings of your reunion with Him, We draw you nigh unto His court, and send down upon you tokens of His wondrous wisdom, and yet lo, behold how ye reject Us, how ye condemn Us, through the things which your lying mouths have uttered, as an infidel, how ye devise your devices against Us! And when We manifest unto you what God hath, through His bountiful favour, bestowed upon Us, ye say, “It is but plain magic.” The same words were spoken by the generations that were before you and were what

¹⁹ Qur’án 4:94.

²⁰ Qur’án 6:52.

²¹ Qur’án 6:44.

ye are, did ye but perceive it. Ye have thereby deprived yourselves of the bounty of God and of His grace, and shall never obtain them till the day when God will have judged between Us and you, and He, verily, is the best of judges.

Certain ones among you have said: "He it is Who hath laid claim to be God." By God! This is a gross calumny. I am but a servant of God Who hath believed in Him and in His signs, and in His Prophets and in His angels. My tongue, and My heart, and My inner and My outer being testify that there is no God but Him, that all others have been created by His behest, and been fashioned through the operation of His Will. There is none other God but Him, the Creator, the Raiser from the dead, the Quickener, the Slayer. I am He that telleth abroad the favours with which God hath, through His bounty, favoured Me. If this be My transgression, then I am truly the first of the transgressors. I and My kindred are at your mercy. Do ye as ye please, and be not of them that hesitate, that I might return to God My Lord, and reach the place where I can no longer behold your faces. This, indeed, is My dearest wish, My most ardent desire. Of My state God is, verily, sufficiently informed, observant.

Imagine thyself to be under the eye of God, O Minister! If thou seest Him not, He, in truth, clearly seeth thee. Observe, and judge fairly Our Cause. What is it that We have committed that could have induced thee to rise up against Us, and to slander Us to the people, if thou be of them who are just? We departed out of Ṭihṛán, at the bidding of the King,²² and, by his leave, transferred Our residence to 'Iráq. If I had transgressed against him, why, then, did he release Me? And if I were innocent of guilt, wherefore did ye afflict Us with such tribulation as none among them that profess your faith hath suffered? Hath any of Mine acts, after Mine arrival in 'Iráq, been such as to subvert the authority of the government? Who is it that can be said to have detected anything reprehensible in Our behaviour? Enquire for thyself of its people, that thou mayest be of them who have discerned the truth.

For eleven years We dwelt in that land, until the Minister representing thy government arrived,²³ whose name Our pen is loth to mention, who was given to wine, who followed his lusts, and committed wickedness, and was corrupt and corrupted 'Iráq. To this will bear witness most of the inhabitants of Bagħdád, wert thou to inquire of them, and be of such as seek the truth. He it was who wrongfully seized the substance of his fellowmen, who forsook all the commandments of God, and perpetrated whatever God had forbidden. Eventually, he, following his desires, rose up against Us, and walked in the ways of the unjust. He accused Us, in his letter to thee, and thou didst believe him and followed in his way, without seeking any proof or trustworthy evidence from him. Thou didst ask for no explanation, nor didst thou attempt either to investigate or ascertain the matter, that the truth might be distinguished from falsehood in thy sight, and that

²² Náṣiri'd-Dín Şháh.

²³ The Persian Consul-General in Bagħdád.

thou mightest be clear in thy discernment. Find out for thyself the sort of man he was by asking those Ministers who were, at that time, in 'Iráq, as well as the Governor of the City²⁴ and its high Counsellor, that the truth may be revealed to thee, and that thou mayest be of the well-informed.

God is Our witness! We have, under no circumstances, opposed either him, or others. We observed, under all conditions, the precepts of God, and were never one of those that wrought disorders. To this he himself doth testify. His intention was to lay hold on Us, and send Us back to Persia, that he might thereby exalt his fame and reputation. Thou hast committed the same crime, and for the self-same purpose. Ye both are of equal grade in the sight of God, the sovereign Lord of all, the All-Knowing.

It is not Our purpose in addressing to thee these words to lighten the burden of Our woe, or to induce thee to intercede for Us with anyone. Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds! We have set forth the whole matter before thee, that perchance thou might realize what thou hast done, might desist from inflicting on others the hurt thou hast inflicted on Us, and might be of them that have truly repented to God, Who created thee and created all things, and might act with discernment in the future. Better is this for thee than all thou dost possess, than thy ministry whose days are numbered.

Beware lest thou be led to connive at injustice. Set thy heart firmly upon justice, and alter not the Cause of God, and be of them whose eyes are directed towards the things that have been revealed in His Book. Follow not, under any condition, the promptings of thine evil desires. Keep thou the law of God, thy Lord, the Beneficent, the Ancient of Days. Thou shalt most certainly return to dust, and shalt perish like all the things in which thou takest delight. This is what the Tongue of truth and glory hath spoken.

Rememberest thou not God's warning uttered in times past, that thou mayest be of them that heed His warning? He said, and He, verily, speaketh the truth: "From it (earth) have We created you, and unto it will We return you, and out of it will We bring you forth a second time."²⁵ This is what God ordained unto all them that dwell on earth, be they high or low. It behoveth not, therefore, him who was created from dust, who will return unto it, and will again be brought forth out of it, to swell with pride before God, and before His loved ones, to proudly scorn them, and be filled with disdainful arrogance. Nay, rather it behoveth thee and those like thee to submit yourselves to them Who are the Manifestations of the unity of God, and to defer humbly to the faithful, who have forsaken their all for the sake of God, and have detached themselves from the things which engross men's attention, and lead them astray from the path of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Thus do We send down upon you that which shall

²⁴ Baghdád.

²⁵ Qur'án 20:55.

profit you and profit them that have placed their whole trust and confidence in their Lord.

O ye divines of the City! We came to you with the truth, whilst ye were heedless of it. Methinks ye are as dead, wrapt in the coverings of your own selves. Ye sought not Our presence, when so to do would have been better for you than all your doings. Know ye that the Sun of vicegerency hath dawned in all truth, and yet ye have turned away therefrom. The Moon of guidance hath risen high in the midmost heaven, and yet ye remain veiled therefrom. The Star of divine bounty hath shone forth above the horizon of eternal holiness, and yet ye have strayed far therefrom.

Know ye, that had your leaders, to whom ye owe allegiance, and on whom ye pride yourselves, and whom ye mention by day and by night, and from whose traces ye seek guidance — had they lived in these days, they would have circled around Me, and would not have separated themselves from Me, whether at eventide or at morn. Ye, however, did not turn your faces towards My face, for even less than a moment, and waxed proud, and were careless of this Wronged One, Who hath been so afflicted by men that they dealt with Him as they pleased. Ye failed to inquire about My condition, nor did ye inform yourselves of the things which befell Me. Thereby have ye withheld from yourselves the winds of holiness, and the breezes of bounty, that blow from this luminous and perspicuous Spot.

Methinks ye have clung to outward things, and forgotten the inner things, and say that which ye do not. Ye are lovers of names, and appear to have given yourselves up to them. For this reason make ye mention of the names of your leaders. And should anyone like them, or superior unto them, come unto you, ye would flee him. Through their names ye have exalted yourselves, and have secured your positions, and live and prosper. And were your leaders to reappear, ye would not renounce your leadership, nor would ye turn in their direction, nor set your faces towards them.

We found you, as We found most men, worshipping names which they mention during the days of their life, and with which they occupy themselves. No sooner do the Bearers of these names appear, however, than they repudiate them, and turn upon their heels. Thus have We found you, and thus have We reckoned up your actions and borne witness to all your doings in this day. Know ye that God will not, in this day, accept your thoughts, nor your remembrance of Him, nor your turning towards Him, nor your devotions, nor your vigilance, unless ye be made new in the estimation of this Servant, could ye but perceive it.

By God! The Tree of vicegerency hath been planted, the Point of knowledge hath been made plain, and the sovereignty of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, hath been established. Fear ye the Lord. Follow not the promptings of your evil desires, but keep

the law of God all your days. Renew the rules of the ways ye follow, that ye may be led by the light of guidance and may hasten in the path of the True One.

O ye wise men of the City and philosophers of the world! Beware lest human learning and wisdom cause you to wax proud before God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Know ye that true wisdom is to fear God, to know Him, and to recognize His Manifestations. This wisdom, however, can be attained only by those who detach themselves from the world, and who walk in the ways of the good pleasure of their Lord. Are ye possessed of greater wisdom than the one who contrived a moon which would rise from one well and set in another, and whose light was visible at a distance of three leagues?²⁶ God, verily, blotted out every trace of his works and returned him unto dust, as ye have already heard or are now informed.

How many the sages and philosophers who equalled or surpassed him in learning and wisdom! And how vast the number of those who equalled or surpassed yourselves! Some of them believed in God, while others disbelieved and joined partners with Him. The latter were at last cast into the Fire, there to take up their abode, while the former returned unto the mercy of their Lord, therein to abide. For God doth not ask you of your sciences, but of your faith and of your conduct. Are ye greater in wisdom than the One Who brought you into being, Who fashioned the heavens and all that they contain, the earth and all that dwell upon it? Gracious God! True wisdom is His. All creation and its empire are His. He bestoweth His wisdom upon whomsoever He chooseth amongst men, and withholdeth it from whomsoever He desireth. He, in truth, is the Bestower and the Withholder, and He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the All-Wise.

O ye learned of the world! Ye failed to seek Our presence, that ye might hearken unto the sweet melodies of the Spirit and perceive that which God in His bounty hath pleased to bestow upon Me. Verily, this grace hath now escaped you, did ye but know. Had ye sought Our presence, We would have imparted unto you a knowledge that would have rendered you independent of all else. But this ye failed to do, and thus hath the decree of God been fulfilled. Now have I been forbidden to disclose it, since We stand accused of sorcery, if ye perceive Our meaning. The same words were uttered by the deniers of old, men whom death hath long since overtaken and who now dwell in the fire bewailing their plight. The deniers of this day shall likewise meet their doom. Such is the irrevocable decree of Him Who is the All-Powerful, the Self-Sufficient.

I counsel you, in the end, not to overstep the bounds of God, nor to heed the ways and habits of men, for these can neither “fatten nor appease your hunger.” Fix, rather, your gaze upon the precepts of God. Whosoever desireth, let him accept this counsel as a path leading unto his Lord, and whosoever desireth, let him return to his own idle imaginings. My Lord, verily, is independent above all who are in the heavens and on the earth, and above all that they say and do.

²⁶ Al-Muqanna' of K̲hurásán (eighth century A.D.).

I close with these words uttered by God, exalted be His glory: "Say not to everyone who meeteth you with a greeting, 'Thou art not a believer.'"²⁷

Peace be upon you, O concourse of the faithful, and praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.



²⁷ Qur'án 4:94.