

Letters of THE GREATEST HOLY LEAF

Bahiyih Kkanum

Translated from Persian



The letter that you wrote in your burning grief, on the passing of the world's Beloved, the Orb of the Covenant—wrote with weeping eyes and a heart afire, has come. Once again, it brings back the full force of this calamity, and renews our mourning. This was the most ruinous of disasters, the most dreaded of ordeals, the most hurtful of misfortunes. It was an earthquake that shook the pillars of the world; it caused a tumult and an uproar among the dwellers of earth and heaven. This terrible separation came upon us as an inescapable trial and a dismal decree. It destroyed all hopes of happiness, and all joy perished. By this departure, the sparkling stars were dimmed, and the heavens of mystic meaning split apart. It set the skies on fire, it scorched the seven spheres. From this departure, sorrow enveloped all mankind, it brought pain and tears to all the peoples of the earth. The lightning bolt of it consumed the world and struck the hearts of its inhabitants, so that they put on sackcloth and poured ashes on their heads. This disaster, coming all unawares, made the morning dark, and turned bright noon to night. From our breasts rose burning sighs, and from our eyes streamed our life blood. Even the Concourse on High moaned and lamented, and their clamour rose to the highest Heaven, and the weeping denizens of the pavilions of glory, striking at their faces, raised their plaintive cries. Mourning, shedding tears, their garments rent, their heads uncovered, their feet bare, the Maids of Heaven hastened out of their lofty, immaculate chambers, and groaned and cried out.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, may our lives be sacrificed for His sacred dust, that peerless Beloved of the world, from the day that Bahá'u'lláh ascended until the hour of His own spotless soul's departure to the kingdom of light and the realm beyond, had neither a quiet night's rest nor a peaceful day, for thirty years. At all times His heart wept and sorrowed, and in the dark of the night from His anguished breast rose burning sighs, sorely wounded as He was by the arrows of the opposers and the rebellious. Then at first light, He would lift up His wondrous, melodious voice and commune with the dwellers in the high mansions of Heaven.

He would face the storms of tribulation with a heart full of fervour and love; He would breast the waves of calamities and oncoming ordeals with overflowing joy. With the balm of His loving-kindness, He would remedy unhealing wounds, and the medicine of His unending grace was a cure for mortal ills. Through His tenderness and care the sorrowful found comfort, and through His Words the despairing received the blissful consolation of their incomparable Lord. He would hearten the despised and the rejected with outpourings of grace.

In the pathway of Bahá'u'lláh, He made His holy breast a shield to bear adversities, made His beauteous face a target for the blows that rained upon Him from all sides. He, the Wronged One of the world, was compassed about by rebel hosts; the armies of treachery assailed Him from every direction. The disaffected were not remiss in their cruelty and aggression; never once did that arrogant crew fail to spread a calumny or to show their opposition and their malice. At every



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moment, they inflicted wounds upon Him, injured Him, brought fresh grief to His heart. Their sole aim was to bring down the structure of the Holy Faith and to destroy its very base and foundation. They did all in their power to split the Bahá'í community, and in their strivings to shatter the union of the believers, they neglected nothing. They joined hands with every enemy of the Faith, became boon companions of all who betrayed it. There was no mischief, no plot, no slander, no aspersion, that they would not allow themselves, no individual so vile that they would not cleave to him.

And thus, with all His own ordeals and cares, and banished from His home, He Whom the world wronged devoted Himself to counselling and nurturing the people with the utmost loving-kindness, divinely admonishing them, leading and guiding them at all times to complete and utter steadfastness in the Cause of God.

From one direction He would ward off the assaults of the nations, from another He would hold back the people of hatred from tormenting the believers. Now He would scatter the waverers' clouds of doubt, again He would demonstrate the truth of the clear and manifest Verses, and at all times and seasons He would guard the Cause of God with His very life, and protect its Law.

His fundamental purpose in enduring that continual toil and pain, and bearing those calamities, was to safeguard the divine and all-embracing Word, to shelter the tree of unity, to educate persons of capacity, to refine those who were pure in heart, and to transform the hearts of the receptive, to expound the mysteries of God and illumine the minds of the spiritual.

All praise be to Bahá'u'lláh! The meaning of those bounties became apparent and the splendour of those bestowals was made manifest: that conclusive Text, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was given us, and what had been hidden at the beginning was made known at the end. His infinite grace became clearly manifest, and with His own mighty pen He made a perfect Covenant, naming Shoghi Effendi the Chosen Branch and Guardian of the Faith. Thus, by God's bounty, what had been a concealed mystery and a well-guarded secret, was at last made plain.

This greatest of bestowals came as a lightning-flash of glory to the righteous, but to those evil ones who broke the Covenant, it was the thunderbolt of God's avenging wrath.

Notes:

20 Muharram 1341 A.H. (12 September 1922 A.D.)