

From the Letter Bá' to the Letter Há'

Bahá'u'lláh

Original English



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In the name of our Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most High!

I addressed unto thee aforetime an Epistle in the lucid Arabian tongue, and I now reveal for thee this Tablet in wondrous Persian prose, that thou mayest hear, in the glorious accents of the Nightingale of 'Iráq, the sweet melodies of the nearness of the heavenly Paradise that had, ere this, been intoned in the language of Hġjáz.¹ Perchance thou mayest become pure spirit; attain, without taking a single step, the loftiest stations of mystic ascent; and explore, without leaving thine outward habitation, the furthestmost reaches of the worlds of inner significance.

Thereupon wouldst thou, with a divine rapture, experience true spiritual attraction, lay down thy life in the path of the Friend, and sacrifice thy soul in the wilderness of His love. This indeed is the meaning of stillness in flight and flight in stillness, of fluidity in solidity and solidity in fluidity.

To continue: It is clear that the wayfarers in the wilderness of search and longing, of attainment and reunion, have numerous degrees and countless stations. Some, after spiritual struggle and physical toil, ascend from the lower reaches of “no God is there” to the lofty bowers of “but God”,²

¹ The recipient of this Tablet was Mírzá Hádí Qazvíní.

² Allusions to the Muslim profession of faith.



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flee from the shadow of negation to abide in the limitless realm of affirmation, and abandon the privation of a transient existence for the bountiful assemblage of reunion. This is the uttermost limit of the realm of effort and striving.

Others, without receiving the least intimation of “no God is there”, pass beyond the highest horizon of “but God”; without even tasting a dewdrop of the degrees of self-surrender ascend unto the kingdom of life everlasting; and without partaking from the wellspring of utter abnegation quaff the wine of the Ancient of Days. These souls, as they traverse the stages of wayfaring and ascend unto the stations of reunion, walk a different path and occupy a different rank.

Still others, without having perused a single letter of the kingdom of names or acquired the faintest intimation from the realm of attributes, which pertaineth to this world, dawn above the invisible horizon of eternity and return again thereunto. A hundred thousand seas of glory surge in their luminous hearts, and yet to outward seeming their lips are parched; a myriad rivers of holiness stream within their breasts, and yet no trace thereof is to be seen; the books of God’s consummate wisdom are recorded upon the tablets of their hearts, and yet they breathe not a word thereof in the world of appearances. They dwell in the Egypt of certitude and journey in the lands of resignation. They are intoxicated with the beauty, and entranced by the glory, of Him Who is the All-Glorious. Heart to heart they whisper hidden secrets; soul to soul they unfold abstruse matters. The mysteries of the Divine Essence glow upon their brows, and the lights of Divine Unity shine from their peerless faces. They clothe themselves in the robe of concealment and cast their sleeves over both this world and the world to come. Without wings they soar, without feet they walk, without hands they grasp and hold. They speak an unknown tongue and observe an unseen grammar, of which all the world’s inhabitants know not a single letter, save those whom thy Lord hath willed. Unto each hath a share been vouchsafed in His Book, and they shall all attain unto that which hath been destined for them.

It is clear and evident that, in this Dispensation wherein the banner of utterance hath been raised aloft and the candle of discernment hath been lit, there is no Lord but the Exalted One.³ He it is Who is one in His essence and one in His attributes, single in the kingdom of

³ The Báb.



names and peerless in the realm of actions. It is by virtue of His blessed name that the seas of Divine Unity have been made to surge; it is through the power of His resistless command that the immutable decrees of destiny have been enforced; it is through the potency of His sovereign might that the dictates of fate have been fixed. Who hath the power to soar in that exalted atmosphere or to cherish another beloved than Him? We all abide beneath His shadow and seek our portion from the ocean of His grace. However far the gnat may fly, it can never traverse the length and breadth of heaven, and however high the sparrow may soar, it can never attain the tree of immortality.

But since all do not possess the same degree of spiritual understanding, certain statements will inevitably be made, and there shall arise, as a consequence, as many differing opinions as there are human minds, and as many divergent beliefs as there are created things. This is certain and settled, and can in no wise be averted. Now, it is clear that some are virtuous, others are sinful, and still others are rebellious. One must call the people to love and faithfulness, to zeal and contentment, that the sinful may be admonished and the ranks of the virtuous may swell. Nor is it possible that there be no sinners: So long as the name “the Ever-Forgiving” shineth resplendent above the horizon of existence, there will be sinners in the world of creation, for the latter cannot appear without the former and the former cannot exist without the latter.

Our aim is that thou shouldst urge all the believers to show forth kindness and mercy and to overlook certain shortcomings among them, that differences may be dispelled; true harmony be established; and the censure and reproach, the hatred and dissension, seen among the peoples of former times may not arise anew. Perchance they may be educated and, in the latter Resurrection,⁴ inflict not upon that cherished Spirit and Essence of existence, that exalted and subtle Reality, the least of that which the Point of the Bayán was made to suffer.

Moreover, a reply to thine enquiries was sent aforetime. It is evident that whatever question is asked will be answered through the ocean of eternal grace, but such questions also add to the burden of duties imposed upon the servants. That which hath been recorded at God’s behest in the Persian Bayán is indeed sufficient unto all, and none will be held to account for what it hath not commanded. Consider how numerous were those in the early days of the Revelation who

⁴ An allusion to Bahá’u’lláh’s approaching declaration.



obeyed, without the slightest deviation, every least one of its injunctions and yet reaped no benefit therefrom. The beginning of religion is love for God and for His Chosen Ones, and its end is to manifest that love to His servants.

I swear by God! Whoso faileth to obey the commandments of God can in no wise be numbered among His loved ones, for among the conditions of His love is to follow His commandments and observe His prohibitions. But since these are the days of concealment, and the Sun of eternity remaineth hidden beneath the horizon of being, one must gather together everyone with love and protect them. The time for the completion of the commandments and the perfection of deeds will assuredly come.