

Húr-i-Ujáb

Bahá'u'lláh



Days of Remembrance

Selections from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh for Bahá'í Holy Days

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Preface

The observance of holy days occupies a central place in every religion. Through their commemoration, the calendar year becomes the stage on which the signal events associated with the life and ministry of the divine Manifestations of God are annually remembered and honoured. This remembrance has both a personal dimension, providing a time for reflection on the significance of these events, and a social dimension, helping to deepen the identity and foster the cohesion of the community.

The coming of each Manifestation of God brings renewal and revitalization: “old things are passed away” and “all things are become new”. By His authority, former laws are abrogated and the manners and customs of the previous Dispensation are reformed. Through the creative power of Divine Revelation, fresh life is instilled into hearts and souls:

Reflect thou, how, in one hand, He hath, by His mighty grasp, turned the earth of knowledge and understanding, previously unfolded, into a mere handful, and, on the other, spread out a new and highly exalted earth in the hearts of men, thus causing the freshest and loveliest blossoms, and the mightiest and loftiest trees to spring forth from the illumined bosom of man.

This re-creation and revitalization of all things is reflected in the introduction of a new calendar and the designation of new holy days which recast the rhythms of communal life.

The Bahá'í calendar, known as the Badí' calendar, was introduced by the Báb and subsequently confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, Who fixed its commencement at the year of the Báb's declaration, 1844 (A.H. 1260). As the Bahá'í Era was inaugurated by twin Founders, the Bahá'í Holy Days include events pertaining to the birth, declaration, and passing of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the principal repository of the laws of His Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh designates the two “Most Great Festivals”: Ridván, “the King of Festivals”, commemorating the declaration of His prophetic mission during a period of twelve days, three of which are observed as Holy Days, and the Declaration of the Báb, the event that initiates the Bahá'í Era. Also named as festivals in that same Book are Naw-Rúz and the anniversaries of the Birth of the Báb and of



TABLET

Bahá'u'lláh. The anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb was commemorated as a Holy Day during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá added the observance of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.

The present volume offers forty-five selections from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh revealed specifically for, or otherwise relating to, these nine Holy Days. The selections represent different revelatory modes, each reflecting facets of the greatness, the preciousness, and the peerless nature of this Day in which all the promises and prophecies of the past have been fulfilled—this sacred Day “whereon God hath made His own Self known and revealed it unto all who are in the heavens and on earth”. Some of the Tablets and excerpts presented in the volume are addressed to the body of Bahá'u'lláh's followers and are expressed in a celebratory and uplifting tone, occasionally with repeated refrains, while others were revealed to individual believers, sometimes with a mention of the specific circumstances of their revelation or the names of the recipients. Many are among His best-known works and have long been familiar to readers of His Writings in the original languages.

Eight of the selections were previously translated by Shoghi Effendi and published in *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh* and *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. A table listing these and other passages translated by Shoghi Effendi can be found at the end of the book. The remainder of the selections are, for the most part, published here for the first time in English. The current translations endeavour to afford a glimpse of the poetic tone of these celebrated Texts, even though they can never convey their full beauty.

It is hoped that this volume will uplift the hearts and souls of the followers of the Blessed Beauty throughout the world and will enrich the gatherings they hold in commemoration of those days that stand apart from all other days through their association with Him and His Herald.

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Naw-Rúz

– 1 –

He is the Almighty.

Praised be Thou, O my God, that Thou hast ordained Naw-Rúz as a festival unto those who have observed the Fast for love of Thee and abstained from all that is abhorrent unto Thee. Grant, O my Lord, that the fire of Thy love and the heat produced by the Fast enjoined by Thee may inflame them in Thy Cause, and make them to be occupied with Thy praise and with remembrance of Thee.

Since Thou hast adorned them, O my Lord, with the ornament of the Fast prescribed by Thee, do Thou adorn them also with the ornament of Thine acceptance, through Thy grace and bountiful favour. For the doings of men are all dependent upon Thy good-pleasure, and are conditioned by Thy behest. Shouldst Thou regard him who hath broken the Fast as one who hath observed it, such a man would be reckoned among them who from eternity had been keeping the Fast. And shouldst Thou decree that he who hath observed the Fast hath broken it,

that person would be numbered with such as have caused the Robe of Thy Revelation to be stained with dust, and been far removed from the crystal waters of this living Fountain.

Thou art He through Whom the ensign "Praiseworthy art Thou in Thy works" hath been lifted up, and the standard "Obeyed art Thou in Thy behest" hath been unfurled. Make known this Thy station, O my God, unto Thy servants, that they may be made aware that the excellence of all things is dependent upon Thy bidding and Thy word, and the virtue of every act is conditioned by Thy leave and the good-pleasure of Thy will, and may recognize that the reins of men's doings are within the grasp of Thine acceptance and Thy commandment. Make this known unto them, that nothing whatsoever may shut them out from Thy Beauty, in these days whereon the Christ exclaimeth: "All dominion is Thine, O Thou the Begetter of the Spirit (Jesus)!" and Thy Friend (Muḥammad) crieth out: "Glory be to Thee, O Thou the Best-Beloved, for that Thou hast uncovered Thy Beauty, and written down for Thy chosen ones what will cause them to attain unto the seat of the revelation of Thy Most Great Name, through which all the peoples have lamented except such as have detached themselves from all else except Thee, and set themselves towards Him Who is the Revealer of Thyself and the Manifestation of Thine attributes."

He Who is Thy Branch and all Thy company, O my Lord, have broken this day their fast, after having observed it within the precincts of Thy court, and in their eagerness to please Thee. Do Thou ordain for Him, and for them, and for all such as have entered Thy presence in those days all the good Thou didst destine in Thy Book. Supply them, then, with that which will profit them, in both this life and the life beyond.

Thou, in truth, art the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

– 2 –

I am the Most Holy, the Most Great, the Most Glorious.

Praise be to Thee, O my God, that Thou hast ordained this day as a festival unto the favoured among Thy servants and the sincere among Thy loved ones. Thou hast called this day by that Name whereby all created things have been subdued and the breezes of Thy Revelation have been wafted between earth and heaven, a Name through which all that hath been recorded in Thy Holy Books and Sacred Scriptures hath been made manifest, and which Thy Messengers and Thy Chosen Ones have foretold, that all men might be made ready to behold Thee, to turn towards the ocean of Thy reunion, to stand before the seat of Thy throne, and to hear Thy wondrous call from the Dayspring of Thine invisible Self and the Dawning-Place of Thine Essence.

I yield Thee praise, O Lord my God, that Thou hast fulfilled Thy testimony, completed Thy favour, established upon the throne of Divine Revelation Him Who proclaimed Thy oneness and Thy unity, and summoned all humanity to appear before Him. Amongst the people are those who have turned towards Him, attained His presence, and quaffed the choice wine of His Revelation. I beseech Thee by Thy sovereign might which hath dominion over all things, and by Thy bounty which embraceth the entire creation, to enable Thy loved ones to sever themselves from all except Thee and to fix their gaze upon the horizon of Thy grace. Assist them, then, to arise to

serve Thee, that they may evince whatsoever Thou hast desired in Thy realm and may unfurl the banners of Thy victory in Thy land. Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Sovereign Protector, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

I yield Thee praise, O Lord my God, that Thou hast made this prison to be a throne for Thy kingdom, a heaven for Thy heavens, a dayspring for Thy daysprings, a dawning-place for Thy dawns, a source for the outpourings of Thy bounty, and a spirit of life unto the bodies of Thy creatures. I entreat Thee to aid Thy chosen ones to act in accordance with Thy good-pleasure. Sanctify them, then, O my God, from whatsoever may soil the hem of their garments in Thy days. Thou seest, O Lord, in certain lands, that which runneth counter to Thy pleasure, and Thou beholdest those who claim to love Thee committing the very deeds that Thine enemies have committed. Purify them, O Lord, with the living waters wherewith Thou hast purified the well-favoured amongst Thy people and the sincere amongst Thy servants. Purge them, moreover, from whatsoever may tarnish the fair name of Thy Cause in Thy lands or veil the people of Thy cities from Thy recognition.

I implore Thee, O Lord, by Thy Name that transcendeth all other names, to guard them from following the path of self and passion, that all may unite around that which Thou hast commanded in Thy Book. Make them, then, to be hands of Thy Cause, that through them Thy verses may be spread abroad throughout Thine earth and the emblems of Thy holiness may be manifested amidst Thy people. Potent art Thou to do as Thou pleasest. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

– 3 –

He is the Most Holy, the Most Mighty, the Most Exalted.

Praise be unto Thee, O Thou Who art the Lord of the world and the Ruler of the nations! I testify that Thou hast from eternity been sanctified above the mention of all created things and exalted beyond the loftiest descriptions of Thy creatures. Whensoever Thy devoted servants sought to ascend unto the station of Thy recognition, the hosts of Thy knowledge barred their way; and whensoever Thy near ones desired to gain admittance to the heaven of Thy nearness, the overpowering majesty of Thine utterance kept them back. We bear witness that the loftiest of the divine names are but servants at Thy door, and that their most glorious manifestations bow down before Thy countenance and are humbled in Thy presence. Thou art, in truth, He Who can neither be described in letters, nor evoked by words, nor even contained within the hidden meanings they conceal. For these are all circumscribed by the inherent limitations of speech which characterize all the utterances of the peoples of the world.

Exalted, immeasurably exalted, art Thou above the mention of every soul and the understanding of every heart! Exalted, immeasurably exalted, art Thou above the description of anyone save Thyself and beyond every conception of Thy creatures! Were Thine own Manifestations to soar upon the wings of the seen and the unseen, yet would they fail to attain unto the first effulgence shining from the horizon of Thy most exalted Countenance and the dawning-place of Thy most sublime Revelation. And were the Exponents of Thy Lordship enabled to ascend for as long as the kingdoms of earth and heaven endure, yet would they be forever powerless to draw nigh unto the Day-Star of Thy beauty.

Blessed be the one who comprehendeth Thine enduring reality and the evanescence of all else but Thee, and who acknowledgeth Thy sovereign authority and the powerlessness of all save Thyself. And as the evanescence of all things is established before the surging ocean of Thy remembrance, O King of all names, it likewise becometh evident that their every mention and description falleth short of Thy might and grandeur and ill beseemeth Thy loftiness and power. And yet in spite of this, O my God, Thou hast, out of the wonders of Thy grace and munificence and as a token of Thy bounty and Thy favour, enjoined upon all to make mention of Thee and to praise Thee, and hast accepted their glorification of Thee out of Thy grace and generosity. Wherefore doth Thine own Self call on Thy Self and Thy very Essence invoke Thine Essence on behalf of Thy lovers who have borne every hardship in Thy path and every adversity out of love for Thee and contentment with Thy good-pleasure, in this blessed day which Thou hast made to be a festival for the inmates of Thy kingdom and for those who have kept the Fast by Thy command and obeyed Thy resistless decree.

Exalted be this blessed and glorious day which Thou hast designated by that beloved Name which is both hidden and manifest, and which, when it shone forth above the horizon of eternity, the Divine Lote-Tree called out, saying: "By God! The Lord of creation hath come, Whom no name can describe." Whereupon Paradise was set astir and proclaimed with joy and fervour: "O concourse of the world! He hath come, round Whom circle the Daysprings of the All-Merciful, the Manifestations of the All-Praised, and the Dawning-Places of inspiration." And all things cried aloud: "This is that Tablet with which the kingdom of creation hath been adorned and through which the gate leading unto the Divine Presence hath been flung open unto all who are in heaven and on earth." Happy the one who hath forsaken every desire and hath drawn nigh unto the One Whose reality no word or utterance can convey.

By God! This is the Day whereon from the murmur of the waters can be heard: "No God is there but Him, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting", and from the whispering of whose breezes can be heard: "No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved", and from the rustling of whose trees can be heard: "No God is there but Him, the Most Powerful, the Ever-Giving, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving", and beyond them, from the Tongue of Grandeur can be heard: "This is the Day of the appearance of Him Who is manifest yet hidden, Who is visible yet concealed. Hasten unto Him, O ye who are the daysprings of the divine names, and draw nigh unto Him, O ye who dwell in the kingdom of creation, with hearts that have been purified from superstitions and vain imaginings and sanctified from the idle talk of men!"

Immeasurably exalted is the state of Thy loved ones who have clung to the cord of Thy command, held fast to the hem of Thine ordinances, uttered that which hath been permitted unto them in Thy Tablets, transgressed not the bounds ordained in Thy Book, and spoken out in Thy lands with wisdom as decreed in the scrolls of Thy bounty and the epistles of Thy grace. O Lord! Assist them to arise for the triumph of Thy Cause through what Thou hast expounded unto them with Thy most exalted Pen and what Thou hast instructed them in certain of Thy Tablets. O Lord! Leave them not to themselves, but keep them safe through Thy sovereignty and power and assist them through Thy might and bounty.

O Lord! They are Thy servants and bondsmen who have believed in Thee and have drawn nigh unto the heaven of Thy bounty. Suffer them not to be deprived of the tokens of Thy tender mercies in Thy days; neither do thou withhold from them the fragrance of the roses of Thy

wisdom. Guide them then, O my God, to the ocean of Thy good-pleasure, that in Thy Name they may immerse themselves therein, and that they may not be saddened by that which their own minds have conceived, nor grieved by all that they have witnessed in Thy path. Verily Thou art the All-Powerful One Whose might every powerful one hath recognized, Whose sovereignty every possessor of majesty hath acknowledged, before the waves of the ocean of Whose knowledge every learned one confesseth his ignorance, and before the evidences of Whose power every soul endued with strength admitteth his helplessness.

Thou art the One, O my God, to Whom every name is abashed to be related, and in Whose presence all things shrink for shame from being mentioned. From eternity Thou hast dwelt in those transcendent heights that are exalted above all mention and description. How great are Thy sovereignty and Thy power and how mighty Thy grandeur!—this, though all things acknowledge that Thou art entirely sanctified from, and immeasurably exalted above, all but Thine own Self. Thou has subdued the entire world through a single Word that hath been related to the kingdom of Thine utterance and from which the fragrance of the robe of Thy Command hath been wafted.

O Lord of all being and Educator of all things visible and invisible! Grant us ears that are pure, hearts that are sanctified, and eyes that see, so that we may discover the sweetness of Thine enthralling utterance, may fix our gaze upon Thy supreme horizon, and may come to know whatever hath been sent down through Thy bounty, O Thou Who art the King of Names! Kindle then the fire of Thy love in Thy lands, that the hearts of Thy creatures may be set ablaze thereby, that they may turn towards Thee, may recognize Thy unity and acknowledge Thy oneness. O Lord of all names! Rend asunder before their faces the veils of glory, and make known unto them the excellence of this Day which hath been adorned with Thy Name and illumined with the light of Thy Countenance. Thou, verily, art He Whom the good works of the people can never exalt nor their evil deeds deter, Whom the ascendancy of the rulers cannot humble nor the power of the mighty vanquish. Thou doest through Thy sovereignty whatsoever Thou willest. No God is there but Thee, the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Send down, then, upon Thy loved ones, O my God, from the heaven of Thy bounty that which will cause them to fix their gaze upon Thee and to act in accordance with Thy will and behest. Ordain for them, then, what will profit them and preserve them, what will draw them nigh and set them free. Verily Thou art their Lord, their Creator, and their Helper. No God is there but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

I beseech Thee, moreover, O my God, to unite the hearts of Thy loved ones and to join them together in harmony and fellowship in Thy Cause, that naught may appear from them that would ill beseem them in Thy days. Thou, verily, art the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most High, the Most Great. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!

– 4 –

He is the Ever-Living, the Ever-Abiding, the Self-Subsisting.

God testifieth to the unity of His Godhood and to the singleness of His own Being. On the throne of eternity, from the inaccessible heights of His station, His tongue proclaimeth that there is

none other God but Him. He Himself, independently of all else, hath ever been a witness unto His own oneness, the revealer of His own nature, the glorifier of His own essence. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the Beauteous.

He is supreme over His servants, and standeth over His creatures. In His hand is the source of authority and truth. He maketh men alive by His signs, and causeth them to die through His wrath. He shall not be asked of His doings, and His might is equal unto all things. He is the Potent, the All-Subduing. He holdeth within His grasp the empire of all things, and on His right hand is fixed the Kingdom of His Revelation. His power, verily, embraceth the whole of creation. Victory and overlordship are His; all might and dominion are His; all glory and greatness are His. He, of a truth, is the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful, the Unconditioned.

Praise be to Thee, to Whom the tongues of all created things have, from eternity, called, and yet failed to attain the heaven of Thine eternal holiness and grandeur. The eyes of all beings have been opened to behold the beauty of Thy radiant countenance, yet none hath succeeded in gazing on the brightness of the light of Thy face. The hands of them that are nigh unto Thee have, ever since the foundation of Thy glorious sovereignty and the establishment of Thy holy dominion, been raised suppliantly towards Thee, yet no one hath been able to touch the hem of the robe that clotheth Thy Divine and sovereign Essence. And yet none can deny that Thou hast ever been, through the wonders of Thy generosity and bounty, supreme over all things, art powerful to do all things, and art nearer unto all things than they are unto themselves.

Far be it, then, from Thy glory that anyone should gaze on Thy wondrous beauty with any eye save Thine own eye, or hear the melodies proclaiming Thine almighty sovereignty with any ear except Thine own ear. Too high art Thou exalted for the eye of any creature to behold Thy beauty, or for the understanding of any heart to scale the heights of Thine immeasurable knowledge. For should the birds of the hearts of them that are nigh unto Thee be ever enabled to soar as long as Thine own overpowering sovereignty can endure, or to ascend as long as the empire of Thy Divine holiness can last, they shall, in no wise, be able to transcend the limitations which a contingent world hath imposed upon them, nor pass beyond its confines. How, then, can he whose very creation is restricted by such limitations, attain unto Him Who is the Lord of the Kingdom of all created things, or ascend into the heaven of Him Who ruleth the realms of loftiness and grandeur?

Glorified, immeasurably glorified art Thou, my Best-Beloved! Inasmuch as Thou hast ordained that the utmost limit to which they who lift their hearts to Thee can rise is the confession of their powerlessness to enter the realms of Thy holy and transcendent unity, and that the highest station which they who aspire to know Thee can reach is the acknowledgement of their impotence to attain the retreats of Thy sublime knowledge, I, therefore, beseech Thee, by this very powerlessness which is beloved of Thee, and which Thou hast decreed as the goal of them that have reached and attained Thy court, and by the splendours of Thy countenance that have encompassed all things, and by the energies of Thy Will whereby the entire creation hath been generated, not to deprive them that have set their hopes in Thee of the wonders of Thy mercy, nor to withhold from such as have sought Thee the treasures of Thy grace. Ignite, then, within their hearts the torch of Thy love, that its flame may consume all else except their wondrous remembrance of Thee, and that no trace may be left in those hearts except the gem-like evidences of Thy most holy sovereignty, so that from the land wherein they dwell no voice may

be heard except the voice that extolleth Thy mercifulness and might, that on the earth on which they walk no light may shine except the light of Thy beauty, and that within every soul naught may be discovered except the revelation of Thy countenance and the tokens of Thy glory, that haply Thy servants may show forth only that which shall please Thee and shall conform wholly unto Thy most potent will.

Glory be to Thee, O my God! The power of Thy might beareth me witness! I can have no doubt that should the holy breaths of Thy loving-kindness and the breeze of Thy bountiful favour cease, for less than the twinkling of an eye, to breathe over all created things, the entire creation would perish, and all that are in heaven and on earth would be reduced to utter nothingness. Magnified, therefore, be the marvellous evidences of Thy transcendent power! Magnified be the potency of Thine exalted might! Magnified be the majesty of Thine all-encompassing greatness, and the energizing influence of Thy will! Such is Thy greatness that wert Thou to concentrate the eyes of all men in the eye of one of Thy servants, and to compress all their hearts within his heart, and wert Thou to enable him to behold within himself all the things Thou hast created through Thy power and fashioned through Thy might, and were he to ponder, throughout eternity, over the realms of Thy creation and the range of Thy handiwork, he would unfailingly discover that there is no created thing but is overshadowed by Thine all-conquering power, and is vitalized through Thine all-embracing sovereignty.

Behold me, then, O my God, fallen prostrate upon the dust before Thee, confessing my powerlessness and Thine omnipotence, my poverty and Thy wealth, mine evanescence and Thine eternity, mine utter abasement and Thine infinite glory. I recognize that there is none other God but Thee, that Thou hast no peer nor partner, none to equal or rival Thee. In Thine unapproachable loftiness Thou hast, from eternity, been exalted above the praise of any one but Thee, and shalt continue for ever, in Thy transcendent singleness and glory, to be sanctified from the glorification of any one except Thine own Self.

I swear by Thy might, O my Beloved! To make mention of any created thing beseemeth not Thy most exalted Self, and to bestow any praise upon any one of Thy creatures would be wholly unworthy of Thy great glory. Nay, such a mention would be but blasphemy uttered within the court of Thy holiness, and such praise would amount to no less than a transgression in the face of the evidences of Thy Divine sovereignty. For the mere mention of any one of Thy creatures would in itself imply an assertion of their existence before the court of Thy singleness and unity. Such an assertion would be naught but open blasphemy, an act of impiety, the essence of profanity and a wanton crime.

Wherefore, I bear witness with my soul, my spirit, my entire being, that should They Who are the Daysprings of Thy most holy unity and the Manifestations of Thy transcendent oneness be able to soar so long as Thine own sovereignty endureth and Thine all-compelling authority can last, they will fail in the end to attain unto even the precincts of the court wherein Thou didst reveal the effulgence of but one of Thy most mighty Names. Glorified, glorified be, therefore, Thy wondrous majesty. Glorified, glorified be Thine unattainable loftiness. Glorified, glorified be the pre-eminence of Thy kingship and the sublimity of Thine authority and power.

The highest faculties which the learned have possessed, and whatsoever truths they, in their search after the gems of Thy knowledge, have discovered; the brightest realities with which the

wise have been endowed, and whatever secrets they, in their attempts to fathom the mysteries of Thy wisdom, have unravelled, have all been created through the generative power of the Spirit that was breathed into the Pen which Thy hands have fashioned. How, then, can the thing which Thy Pen hath created be capable of comprehending those treasures of Thy Faith with which, as decreed by Thee, that Pen hath been invested? How can it ever know of the Fingers that grasp Thy Pen, and of Thy merciful favours with which it hath been endowed? How can it, already unable to reach this station, be made aware of the existence of Thy Hand that controlleth the Fingers of Thy might? How can it attain unto the comprehension of the nature of Thy Will that animateth the movement of Thy Hand?

Glorified, glorified be Thou, O my God! How can I ever hope to ascend into the heaven of Thy most holy will, or gain admittance into the tabernacle of Thy Divine knowledge, knowing as I do that the minds of the wise and learned are impotent to fathom the secrets of Thy handiwork—a handiwork which is itself but a creation of Thy will?

Praise be to Thee, O Lord, my God, my Master, my Possessor, my King. Now that I have confessed unto Thee my powerlessness and the powerlessness of all created things, and have acknowledged my poverty and the poverty of the entire creation, I call unto Thee with my tongue and the tongues of all that are in heaven and on earth, and beseech Thee with my heart and the hearts of all that have entered beneath the shadow of Thy names and Thine attributes, not to shut us from the doors of Thy loving-kindness and grace, nor to suffer the breeze of Thy bountiful care and favour to cease from being wafted over our souls, nor to permit that our hearts be occupied with any one except Thee, or our minds to be busied with any remembrance save remembrance of Thy Self.

By the glory of Thy might, O my God! Wert Thou to set me king over Thy realms, and to establish me upon the throne of Thy sovereignty, and to deliver, through Thy power, the reins of the entire creation into my hands, and wert Thou to cause me, though it be for less than a moment, to be occupied with these things and be oblivious of the wondrous memories associated with Thy most mighty, most perfect, and most exalted Name, my soul would still remain unsatisfied, and the pangs of my heart unstilled. Nay, I would, in that very state, recognize myself as the poorest of the poor, and the most wretched of wretches.

Magnified be Thy name, O my God! Now that Thou hast caused me to apprehend this truth, I beseech Thee by Thy Name which no scroll can bear, which no heart can imagine and no tongue can utter—a Name which will remain concealed so long as Thine own Essence is hidden, and will be glorified so long as Thine own Being is extolled—to unfurl, ere the present year draw to a close, the ensigns of Thine undisputed ascendancy and triumph, that the whole creation may be enriched by Thy wealth, and may be exalted through the ennobling influence of Thy transcendent sovereignty, and that all may arise and promote Thy Cause.

Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Highest, the All-Glorious, the All-Subduing, the All-Possessing.

– 5 –

He is the Sovereign King, the Holy of Holies.

Praise be unto Thee, O Lord my God! This is that Day among Thy Days and that Hour among Thy blessed Hours which Thou hast reserved for Thine own Self, related to Thine own Being, and exalted in station, that Thy Name may endure and Thy sovereignty be made manifest. Thou hast made this Day to be the source of all days, inasmuch as Thou hast showered upon it the revelations of the Throne of Thy majesty and the signs of Thy transcendent favour. Thou hast created it anew, at this time, in the most excellent form in this ancient Temple, so that on this Day, and by its grace, all the dwellers of earth and heaven might be raised again to life and, unbeknownst to and unapprehended by all, be called upon to render account regarding Thy Self. Perchance Thy sacred and celestial blessings and Thy divine and glorious bestowals might be completed therein, that they may testify to the creation of all things on the Day of Thy presence and to the appearance of Thy days and the dawning of the Sun of Thy beauty.

Even as mention was made of this signal honour and supreme bounty, of the ecstasy of yearning for Thee, the ascendancy of Thine all-conquering love, and the transports of Thy holy rapture, I heard the call of one of Thy servants who hath believed in Thee and in Thy signs, who hath renounced all things, turned towards the Countenance of Thy beauty, and hastened through every region unto the habitation of Thy repose. He hath at last reached Thy door and stood before the light of Thine everlasting holiness that hath shone forth above the horizon of Thy oneness and the dayspring of Thine eternity, longing to ascend unto the heights of Thy presence and reunion and to abide upon the seat of Thy nearness within Thy sacred Precinct. Cause, then, O my God, the dove of yearning to soar within his heart, and the seas of Thy love to surge within his inmost being, and the matchless tokens of Thy remembrance to flow from his tongue, and the gems of Thy praise to issue from his spirit. Draw him ever nearer, O my Lord, that he may be enabled to safeguard within the inmost recesses of his heart this most brilliant light and hidden treasure, and that he may thus dwell with Thy Servant in Thy most exalted horizon and all-glorious realm.

Thou, verily, abidest even now in Thine everlasting habitation, and beholdest this crimson spirit, and hearest this most sweet melody in the midmost heart of the Divine Essence, the centre of the Realm of mysteries. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou wilt. Thou, verily, art the Exalted, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Self-Subsisting.

...

Ridván

– 6 –

In the name of Him Who hath cast His splendour over the entire creation!

The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day-star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the names of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry.

Methinks that thou hast halted and movest not upon My Tablet. Could the brightness of the Divine Countenance have bewildered thee, or the idle talk of the froward filled thee with grief and paralysed thy movement? Take heed lest anything deter thee from extolling the greatness of this Day—the Day whereon the Finger of majesty and power hath opened the seal of the Wine of Reunion, and called all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. Preferrest thou to tarry when the breeze announcing the Day of God hath already breathed over thee, or art thou of them that are shut out as by a veil from Him?

No veil whatever have I allowed, O Lord of all names and Creator of the heavens, to shut me from the recognition of the glories of Thy Day—the Day which is the lamp of guidance unto the whole world, and the sign of the Ancient of Days unto all them that dwell therein. My silence is by reason of the veils that have blinded Thy creatures' eyes to Thee, and my muteness is because of the impediments that have hindered Thy people from recognizing Thy truth. Thou knowest what is in me, but I know not what is in Thee. Thou art the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. By Thy name that excelleth all other names! If Thy overruling and all-compelling behest should ever reach me, it would empower me to revive the souls of all men, through Thy most exalted Word, which I have heard uttered by Thy Tongue of power in Thy Kingdom of glory. It would enable me to announce the revelation of Thy effulgent countenance wherethrough that which lay hidden from the eyes of men hath been manifested in Thy name, the Perspicuous, the sovereign Protector, the Self-Subsisting.

Canst thou discover any one but Me, O Pen, in this Day? What hath become of the creation and the manifestations thereof? What of the names and their kingdom? Whither are gone all created things, whether seen or unseen? What of the hidden secrets of the universe and its revelations? Lo, the entire creation hath passed away! Nothing remaineth except My Face, the Ever-Abiding, the Resplendent, the All-Glorious.

This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendours of the Light that shineth from the face of Thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have, then, called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days.

This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: "Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the footstool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne." The realm of glory exclaimeth: "Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His Name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future." This is the Day whereon every sweet smelling thing hath derived its fragrance from the smell of My garment—a garment that hath shed its perfume upon the whole of creation. This is the Day whereon the rushing waters of everlasting life have gushed out of the Will of the All-Merciful. Haste ye, with your hearts and souls, and quaff your fill, O Concourse of the realms above!

Say: He it is Who is the Manifestation of Him Who is the Unknowable, the Invisible of the Invisibles, could ye but perceive it. He it is Who hath laid bare before you the hidden and treasured Gem, were ye to seek it. He it is Who is the one Beloved of all things, whether of the past or of the future. Would that ye might set your hearts and hopes upon Him!

We have heard the voice of thy pleading, O Pen, and excuse thy silence. What is it that hath so sorely bewildered thee?

The inebriation of Thy presence, O Well-Beloved of all worlds, hath seized and possessed me.

Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridván and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise. We have chosen thee to be Our most mighty Trumpet, whose blast is to signalize the resurrection of all mankind.

Say: This is the Paradise on whose foliage the wine of utterance hath imprinted the testimony: "He that was hidden from the eyes of men is revealed, girded with sovereignty and power!" This is the Paradise the rustling of whose leaves proclaimeth: "O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting, had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come." From the whispering breeze that wafteth amidst its branches there cometh the cry: "He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is made manifest. The Kingdom is God's," while from its streaming waters can be heard the murmur: "All eyes are gladdened, for He Whom none hath beheld, Whose secret no one hath discovered, hath lifted the veil of glory, and uncovered the countenance of Beauty."

Within this Paradise, and from the heights of its loftiest chambers, the Maids of Heaven have cried out and shouted: "Rejoice, ye dwellers of the realms above, for the fingers of Him Who is the Ancient of Days are ringing, in the name of the All-Glorious, the Most Great Bell, in the midmost heart of the heavens. The hands of bounty have borne round the cup of everlasting life. Approach, and quaff your fill. Drink with healthy relish, O ye that are the very incarnations of longing, ye who are the embodiments of vehement desire!"

This is the Day whereon He Who is the Revealer of the names of God hath stepped out of the Tabernacle of glory, and proclaimed unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth: "Put away the cups of Paradise and all the life-giving waters they contain, for lo, the people of Bahá have entered the blissful abode of the Divine Presence, and quaffed the wine of reunion, from the chalice of the beauty of their Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High."

Forget the world of creation, O Pen, and turn thou towards the face of thy Lord, the Lord of all names. Adorn, then, the world with the ornament of the favours of thy Lord, the King of everlasting days. For We perceive the fragrance of the Day whereon He Who is the Desire of all nations hath shed upon the kingdoms of the unseen and of the seen the splendour of the light of His most excellent names, and enveloped them with the radiance of the luminaries of His most gracious favours—favours which none can reckon except Him, Who is the omnipotent Protector of the entire creation.

Look not upon the creatures of God except with the eye of kindliness and of mercy, for Our loving providence hath pervaded all created things, and Our grace encompassed the earth and the heavens. This is the Day whereon the true servants of God partake of the life-giving waters of reunion, the Day whereon those that are nigh unto Him are able to drink of the soft-flowing river of immortality, and they who believe in His unity, the wine of His Presence, through their

recognition of Him Who is the Highest and Last End of all, in Whom the Tongue of Majesty and Glory voiceth the call: "The Kingdom is Mine. I, Myself, am, of Mine own right, its Ruler."

Attract the hearts of men, through the call of Him, the one alone Beloved. Say: This is the Voice of God, if ye do but hearken. This is the Dayspring of the Revelation of God, did ye but know it. This is the Dawning-Place of the Cause of God, were ye to recognize it. This is the Source of the commandment of God, did ye but judge it fairly. This is the manifest and hidden Secret; would that ye might perceive it. O peoples of the world! Cast away, in My name that transcendeth all other names, the things ye possess, and immerse yourselves in this Ocean in whose depths lay hidden the pearls of wisdom and of utterance, an ocean that surgeth in My name, the All-Merciful. Thus instructeth you He with Whom is the Mother Book.

The Best-Beloved is come. In His right hand is the sealed Wine of His name. Happy is the man that turneth unto Him, and drinketh his fill, and exclaimeth: "Praise be to Thee, O Revealer of the signs of God!" By the righteousness of the Almighty! Every hidden thing hath been manifested through the power of truth. All the favours of God have been sent down, as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men. Every single cup hath been borne round by the hand of the Well-Beloved. Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.

Blessed are they that have soared on the wings of detachment and attained the station which, as ordained by God, overshadoweth the entire creation, whom neither the vain imaginations of the learned, nor the multitude of the hosts of the earth have succeeded in deflecting from His Cause. Who is there among you, O people, who will renounce the world, and draw nigh unto God, the Lord of all names? Where is he to be found who, through the power of My name that transcendeth all created things, will cast away the things that men possess, and cling, with all his might, to the things which God, the Knower of the unseen and of the seen, hath bidden him observe? Thus hath His bounty been sent down unto men, His testimony fulfilled, and His proof shone forth above the Horizon of mercy. Rich is the prize that shall be won by him who hath believed and exclaimed: "Lauded art Thou, O Beloved of all worlds! Magnified be Thy name, O Thou the Desire of every understanding heart!"

Rejoice with exceeding gladness, O people of Bahá, as ye call to remembrance the Day of supreme felicity, the Day whereon the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath spoken, as He departed from His House, proceeding to the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His name, the All-Merciful. God is Our witness. Were We to reveal the hidden secrets of that Day, all they that dwell on earth and in the heavens would swoon away and die, except such as will be preserved by God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Such is the inebriating effect of the words of God upon Him Who is the Revealer of His undoubted proofs, that His Pen can move no longer. With these words He concludeth His Tablet: No God is there but Me, the Most Exalted, the Most Powerful, the Most Excellent, the All-Knowing.

– 7 –

He it is Who is established upon this luminous Throne.

Proclaim unto the celestial Concourse, O Pen of effulgent glory, that lo, the veil of concealment hath been rent asunder and the Beauty of the Lord hath been revealed from this Scene of transcendent glory with such radiance as to cause the luminaries of His command to shine above the dayspring of His almighty Name. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath dawned above a horizon of surpassing grace!

This is a festival wherein all things have been adorned with the vesture of the names of God, and wherein His bounty hath compassed all things from first to last. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath shone above a dayspring of resplendent holiness!

Summon, then, the maids of eternity to hasten forth from their crimson chambers in their celestial grace, and to appear betwixt earth and heaven with the most glorious adorning. Grant them leave, then, to pass round to the inhabitants of the world, high and low alike, that cup of life which hath been drawn from the heavenly stream of mercy. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared above the horizon of holiness with wondrous rapture!

Bid then the heavenly youths, who have been fashioned from the splendours of the All-Praised, to issue forth from their heavenly abode, decked in the attire of the All-Merciful, and to proffer with ruby fingers the chalice of immortality to the inmates of the highest Paradise among the companions of Bahá, that they may be drawn nigh unto the Splendour of the Lord of Grandeur—this shining and resplendent Beauty. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared above a dayspring of exalted glory!

By God! This is the festival wherein the beauty of the Unknowable Essence hath appeared unveiled and arrayed with such sovereignty as to lay low the necks of them that have repudiated His truth. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared with supreme dominion!

This is a festival wherein all things have been absolved by virtue of the appearance of Him Who is the Ancient King from behind the veil of names. Wherefore, rejoice in your hearts, O peoples of the world, for the breezes of forgiveness have been wafted over the entire creation and the spirit of life hath been breathed into the world. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared above a dayspring of resplendent holiness!

Beware lest ye transgress the bounds of courtesy and commit that which your minds and your hearts abhor. This is that whereunto ye were bidden by the Pen of God, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared above a horizon of wondrous grace!

This is a festival wherein the Beauty of the Lord of Grandeur hath been exalted above all things, and wherein He, unveiled and unconcealed, hath proclaimed His will and purpose unto all that are in heaven and on earth. And this is but a token of His grace that hath pervaded the entire creation. Therein was the Temple of Bahá seated upon the throne of eternity, and the splendours of His countenance dawned above the horizon of creation with the light of wondrous glory. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared above a horizon of wondrous grace!

O ye that abide beneath the tabernacle of grandeur! O ye that dwell within the pavilion of inviolable sanctity! O ye that are sheltered under the canopy of loftiness and glory! Lift up your voices and sing in the most melodious of tones in your most exalted chambers, for in this Dispensation the veiled Beauty hath been revealed, and the Day-Star of the Unseen hath risen above the horizon of ancient glory. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath appeared with a splendid adorning!

O company of the Concourse on high, and O denizens of the immortal city! Hasten ye to pay homage, for the Shrine of grandeur hath appeared within this Tabernacle round which all former shrines revolve; and circle about and draw nigh unto the Lord of all men in these days, the like of which the eyes of the former generations have never beheld. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath dawned above the horizon of God, the Most Gracious, the All-Bountiful!

Drink deep, O ye dwellers of earth and heaven, from the chalice of eternal life that the hand of Bahá proffereth in this most lofty and exalted Paradise. By God! Whoso partaketh but a drop thereof shall neither suffer the vicissitudes of time nor fall prey to the wiles of the Evil One, but the Lord shall send him forth in every Dispensation adorned with a hallowed and wondrous beauty. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath been made manifest from the seat of the Lord of all wisdom!

Sanctify your souls from the world, O people, and hasten unto the Divine Lote-Tree in this furthestmost sanctuary, that ye may hearken unto the voice of your Lord, the All-Merciful, calling from this Paradise which hath been created at the behest of God, the All-Praised, and before whose portals the inmates of the pavilion of sanctity bow down in adoration. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath shone forth above the horizon of majesty and grandeur!

Take heed, O people, lest ye deprive yourselves of the breezes of these days wherein the fragrance of the divine Robe is being wafted at every moment from the presence of this glorious and radiant Youth. All hail then to this, the Festival of the Lord, that hath shone from the dayspring of His name, the Most High!

– 8 –

He is the Most Holy, the Most Glorious.

Praise be to Thee, O my God, that the dawn of Thy Riḍván Festival hath broken, and that therein one who had sought Thy presence hath attained his goal, O Thou our Lord, the Most Merciful! How numerous are Thy loved ones, O my God, who traversed the sands of Syria in their longing to gaze on Thy beauty but who were prevented from attaining the court of Thy transcendent oneness by reason of the misdeeds of Thy foes, who have disbelieved in Thee and gainsaid Thy sovereignty.

O Lord! Look upon the oppressors of Thy people with the eye of Thine avenging wrath. By Thy might! Their iniquity hath reached such heights as none can reckon save Thyself, Who knowest all things. Thy loved ones acquiesced to captivity and confinement in this prison, and yet their enemies were still not satisfied, so intense was their hatred for the Manifestation of Thy Cause.

Blessed be the man of insight who seeth in all that hath befallen him in Thy path naught save that which shall exalt his station and magnify Thy Cause, O Thou the Lord of the worlds!

By Thy glory! Were all the peoples of the earth to join together to harm a single one of the people of Bahá, they would find themselves powerless, for all that they see as harming Thy chosen ones is as light unto them and as fire unto Thine enemies. Were it not for the confinement, in the Most Great Prison, of Him Who is the Exponent of Thy transcendent sovereignty, how would Thy Cause have been promulgated, Thy sovereignty manifested, Thy might proclaimed, and the truth of Thy signs established? Would that I Myself had borne all the tribulations of the world, out of love for Thee and for Thy creatures!

O Lord! Open Thou the eyes of Thy servants, that they may behold Thee at all times seated upon the throne of Thy grandeur and supreme over all who are in heaven and on earth. Potent art Thou to do what Thou willest. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

– 9 –

On the first day that the Ancient Beauty ascended His Most Great Throne in the garden named Ridván, the Tongue of Glory gave utterance to three blessed words. First, that in this Revelation the law of the sword hath been annulled. Second, that ere the expiration of one thousand years whosoever advanceth a prophetic claim is false. By “year” a full year is intended, and no exegesis or interpretation is permitted in this matter. And third, that at that very hour God, exalted be His Glory, shed the full splendour of all His names upon all creation.

The following verse was revealed subsequently, but He indicated that it should occupy the same station as the other three: that when the name of anyone, whether living or dead, is mentioned in His presence, that soul hath verily attained to the mention of the pre-existent King. Blessed are they that attain thereto!

– 10 –

The day-star of words, dawning above the horizon of the utterance of Him Who is the Lord of all names and attributes, hath, at this most blessed of hours, shone forth in all truth with the splendours of the light of God. The spirit of understanding, flowing from the Pen of the All-Glorious, hath, by virtue of His grace, been conferred upon all created things. The mystery of all mysteries, emerging from behind the veils of concealment, hath, in very truth, been revealed to the righteous, as bidden by God, the Almighty, the Unconstrained.

God, the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most Great, addresseth the holy Beings created through the Primal Word that proceeded from His mouth, and beyond them the Concourse on high, and beyond them those whom He hath sanctified above the comprehension of all who are on earth and in heaven and whom He hath raised up through His hidden and inscrutable Will, saying: “Rejoice in your very souls, for the most auspicious time hath come; and the Hour hath struck round which revolve all the other hours foretold in the Tablets of God, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Merciful; and the hidden Morn hath broken forth, in this treasured Name, from the dayspring of divinity, shedding its radiance upon all that hath been and all that shall be.” Blessed be the Lord of all bounty, the source of this supernal grace!

The promised Day of God is come! He Who is the Manifestation of the Adored One hath been established upon the throne of His name, the All-Loving, and the sun of His bounty hath cast its rays upon the seeing and seen alike. Wherefore renounce ye, O denizens of the realms of limitation, that which ye possess, adorn your temples with His glorious vesture, and behold with untainted vision Him Who is the luminous Beauty of God seated upon the throne of glory in His transcendent, His almighty and all-subduing sovereignty. All praise be to the Best-Beloved, Who hath revealed His hidden beauty with such manifest authority!

All days have attained their consummation in this most august of days, and all hours in this noblest of hours, and the Unseen hath willed to confer every grace upon the inmates of earth and heaven, to establish, before all who are in the kingdoms of revelation and creation, the Manifestation of God and His loftiness, and the sovereignty of God and His grandeur, that His favour might be made complete unto His servants and His bounty fulfilled unto His creation. And yet, when once He appeared, the eyes of all who had awaited Him were dazzled, save for those whom His might had protected and from whose sight He had lifted all worldly veils. Blessed, then, be He Who hath been made manifest through the power of truth in this wondrous, this shining vesture!

And when the appointed hour of His Revelation struck on this promised Day, the veils of destiny were rent asunder and the divine decree was fulfilled with the departure of the Luminary of the heaven of eternity from the city of Baghdád. This came to pass by reason of what the hands of the malicious had wrought against this Light—a Light that hath outshone every other in its sacred and wondrous splendour. Blessed, then, be He Who hath sent down these twin Revelations through His most great, His most mighty sovereignty!

At the advent of this Manifestation the realities of all created things were filled with joy, and all seized the cup of ecstasy with the hands of longing and rapture and drank thereof the choicest wine for love of this Beauty—a Beauty that hath appeared through the power of truth, arrayed with the ornament of God, the Sovereign, the Just, the All-Wise. Blessed, then, be He Who, through this Revelation, hath attracted the hearts of the well-favoured of the Lord!

Say: This is the Day for which the Pen of the Most High hath ordained no peer, and whose like the denizens of the Concourse on high and the realities of the Prophets and Messengers of God have never attained. Blessed, then, be He Who hath made manifest this hallowed and sacred, this mighty and wondrous Day!

This is the Day whereon the pillars of the Throne trembled in their yearning for God to establish Himself thereon, the Day whereon the foundations of the most lofty Seat were stirred into motion. Blessed, then, be God, the Source of this rapture that hath seized the entire creation!

This is the Day whereon the Sun of Beauty dawned above the horizon of the countenance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great, and the clouds of bounty rained down, and the trees of Paradise yielded such fruits as God hath apportioned to them that turn unto Him with radiant hearts in this Dispensation. Blessed, then, be God, Who hath ordained this surpassing grace!

This is the Day whereon the spirits departed from their bodies in their eagerness to behold the unveiled countenance of the Ancient Beauty. Blessed, then, be the One Who hath manifested this mighty Day!

This is the Day whereon the Most Great Spirit was embodied in the most comely of forms, and, proceeding from the Realm on high, approached the Scene of transcendent glory with such radiance as to delight the Maid of Heaven, until she paused, suspended in the air before Our presence, with such an adorning as to seize with longing the hearts of the Messengers of God. Blessed, then, be God, Who hath created this noble angel!

Thereupon the inmates of Paradise, and beyond them the inhabitants of the retreats of holiness and the realms of communion, and beyond them they that dwell within the habitations of heaven and they that abide beneath the tabernacle of concealment, stepped forth one and all from their lofty mansions, and, conversing in hushed tones, apprised one another of that which had come to pass upon the earth. It was as though the Ancient King had revealed Himself unto Himself, and then, with undisputed sovereignty, unto His servants and His creatures in the realm of creation. Blessed, then, be God, Who bringeth forth whatsoever He pleaseth through the potency of His all-compelling command!

Then the Most Great Spirit raised a call that resounded through the entire creation, saying: "Solaced be your eyes, O ye inhabitants of earth and heaven, O ye manifestations of the divine names and attributes, and O ye who are immersed beneath the oceans of grandeur that lie beyond the worlds of intimation and allusion! This is the Day whereon God Himself, the Most Exalted, the Most High, through His own sacred and glorious Self, beareth round unto every soul, high and low alike, the cup of nearness and reunion." Blessed, then, be God, Who hath revealed Himself in all His manifold grace on this greatest of all days!

This is the Day whereon the most grievous veil was torn asunder and the Scene of transcendent purity was made manifest; the Day whereon the face of God smiled with the joy of reunion, and the gates of His presence were flung open to the embodiments of His beauty and majesty and to them that had pierced the veils of glory through the power born of God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise; the Day whereon all things visible and invisible cried out: "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!"

Whereupon the Most Great Spirit was summoned to silence, and the rapture of God seized the inhabitants of the cities of eternity, the inmates of the crimson chambers, and the dwellers of the kingdom of names. One and all they descended from their habitations until they stood betwixt earth and heaven, with utmost humility and submissiveness, before His Countenance. Blessed, then, be God, Who hath made manifest this resistless, this all-glorious and transcendent Cause!

Then were their voices lifted up in praise and exultation on this glorious Day, a Day whose radiance deriveth not from the sun and its rays but from the effulgent light of the Countenance of God, the King, the Exalted, the All-Bountiful. Blessed, then, be He Who hath caused it to appear through the power of truth and Who hath resurrected therein the souls of all humankind!

And then another herald called out from the Scene of transcendent glory: "By God! This is the Day whereon the veils of contention were torn asunder, and the breezes of unity were wafted, and the Lord of creation appeared, invested with manifest sovereignty and riding upon the clouds of grandeur on this, His promised Day." Blessed, then, be God, Who hath descended in truth from the heaven of sublime holiness!

This is the Day whereon fire and water were joined together as one, and the veils were removed from the face of all mysteries, inasmuch as the Beauty of the Unconstrained came forth arrayed in the raiment of His own Self, the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the Incomparable. All glory be to this Day whose advent hath cheered the eyes of the well-favoured of God!

When that joy born of God had taken hold of all else besides Him, the Most Great Spirit called out once more, proclaiming: "O ye dwellers of the kingdoms of earth and heaven! O ye denizens of the realms of revelation and creation! Blessed are your ears, for they have hearkened unto the verses of nearness and reunion. Hear now the tidings of remoteness and separation, for the Luminary of the world hath purposed to depart from the land of 'Irâq, in accordance with the firm covenant that hath been set forth in the Scriptures of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."

At this announcement the dwellers of earth and heaven were filled with dismay. Such was their weeping and wailing that they fell prostrate upon the dust, consumed with sorrow. How strange that grievous and sore-trying separation! All things visible and invisible were bewildered by this call. Such was their plight that the letter "B" became oblivious of the letter "E", and the lovers forsook the face of their Beloved, the Almighty, the All-Praised. How woeful was that manifest and irrevocable decree!

When matters came to such a pass, the Ancient Beauty bestirred Himself, and all things were inwardly and outwardly set in motion. Then He arose, and through His arising the Most Great Resurrection was ushered in betwixt earth and heaven. Whereupon the Spirit called out once again, before His presence: "O Isráfíl! By the righteousness of God, thou wert created for this day. Wherefore, sound thy trumpet to proclaim the advent of this Manifestation, that every mouldering bone may be quickened thereby!" As bidden, the angel sounded his trumpet, causing all who dwell in heaven and on earth to swoon away. Then he sounded his trumpet anew; they arose and, fixing their gaze upon this glorious Vision, cried out: "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!"

The Ancient Beauty stepped forth, while the Kingdom of Revelation preceded Him and the Heaven of divine Inspiration followed in His wake. On His right strode the Realm of Command, and on His left marched the hosts of the well-favoured ones. All glory be to this manifest and wondrous Cause!

And when He reached the courtyard of the House, the concourse of the realm of holiness prostrated themselves at His feet, and the foundations of the House trembled in their separation from God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the Most Exalted. The inhabitants of every city cried out, and the hearts of them that circle round God were sorely shaken. How grievous that separation which caused the very pillars of the world to crumble!

Upon hearing the lamentations of the inhabitants of the realm of dust, the Beauty of the All-Beloved lingered a moment, and the Eye of majesty wept sore at their weeping. Indeed, the sighs of His loved ones caused His heart to swell with such grief that none in the heavens or on the earth could bear its weight.

He proceeded until He reached the concealing veil, and there at His feet He beheld a child that had removed itself from its mother's breast. And this infant clung to the hem of His robe so earnestly and besought Him in such piteous tones to stay, that the dust of sorrow shrouded the face of every perceiving soul and the winds of anguish blew upon the entire creation. How heavy the burden of grief that clouded the countenance of the sincere! Were it not for the protection of God, the seven heavens would at that moment have been cleft asunder, and the earth would have swallowed up all that dwell upon it, and every lofty peak would have been reduced to dust.

The Hand of Power then parted the veil of grandeur, whence the Beauty of the All-Glorious emerged with supreme sovereignty. When He Who is the Self of God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful, purposed to pass through the gate, the Most Great Spirit made its final proclamation: "By God! The Well-Beloved of the worlds hath departed from His House by reason of what the hands of the oppressors have wrought."

He then wept within Himself with such a weeping that the dwellers of earth and heaven, and those suspended in the air before Him, and those circling round the Countenance of grandeur, wept with Him. And He spoke unto them, saying: "Know ye that in such a departure on the very Day of Our Appearance there are signs and tokens for them that understand. Haply, by reason of Our departure on this most sublime and wondrous Day, the peoples of earth and heaven may emerge from behind the veils of self and passion; draw nigh unto God, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious; and become detached from whatsoever He hath created or ordained in this world. This is that which God had purposed for them as a bounty from His presence. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous." Blessed, then, be God, the source of this most manifest, this most exalted bestowal!

The King of Eternity went forth, flanked by the hosts of the seen and the unseen, with His gaze fixed upon the court of the divine decree. Before Him arose the sighs of His lovers, whilst behind Him could be heard the lamentations of them that yearn after Him. When He reached the banks of the river, He parted from His loved ones, and it was as though the very souls of those devoted servants had parted from their bodies. But He exhorted them to patience and fortitude, and summoned them to the fear of God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. And then, crossing the river, He entered the Garden of Riḍván, wherein He ascended the throne of His wondrous sovereignty. Blessed, then, be the All-Bountiful, the Source of this all-encompassing grace!

Once seated on His throne, the Ancient Beauty shed the splendour of His name, the Self-Subsisting, upon all things, so as to fulfil that which had been recorded by the Supreme Pen at the bidding of God, the Most Exalted, the Most High. Then He cast the light of His name, the All-Possessing, upon all things seen and unseen; and of His name, the Most Manifest, upon all that is mentioned and all that is concealed; and of His name, the Most Great, upon the embodiments of eternity and all other peoples; and of His name, the All-Knowing, upon the exponents of the names of God. Well is it with the one who hath turned towards that which He hath revealed

through His unfailing grace on this most august Day. How glorious was His assumption of that seat of majesty, through which the hearts of them that enjoy near access to Him were assured, and the souls of them that have recognized Him drew nigh, and the faces of them that have turned towards Him were illumined, and the spirits of them that have fixed their gaze upon Him were sanctified, and the eyes of the Concourse on high were cheered, and the tongues of all things, visible and invisible, were unloosed in praise of God, the Sovereign Lord, the Mighty, the Gracious! Sweet indeed was that heavenly fragrance through which the musk of hidden meanings was scattered throughout the worlds!

The Ancient Beauty's ascent upon His throne took place at the very moment the people arose to offer the afternoon prayer unto God, the Almighty, the Beauteous. Even in this there are signs for those who are well assured, evidences for them that discern, and allusions for such as have been endowed with insight. The Beauty of the All-Merciful tarried in the Garden of Rīḍvān for twelve days, during which the hosts of the Concourse on high, the well-favoured angels of God, and the souls of His Messengers circled day and night round the Tabernacle of grandeur and the Pavilion of inviolable sanctity, guarding and protecting the people of God from the hosts of the Evil One. Blessed, then, be God, Who manifested this incomparable, this glorious station!

During every moment of those days, the inmates of the chambers of Paradise descended from on high, bearing chalices brimming over with the living waters of revelation and cups overflowing with the choice wine of holiness, which they proffered unto the dwellers of the pavilion of glory and the inmates of the tabernacle of resplendent majesty. Blessed, then, be God for this most exalted, this all-encompassing grace!

And when the appointed time of tarrying was fulfilled and the decree of departure was received, the Beauty of the All-Merciful arose and went out from the Rīḍvān Garden riding upon the finest stallion. Blessed, then, be the All-Glorious, Who appeared in the world of creation with a sovereignty that transcendeth the heavens and the earth!

As He departed, a cry of sorrow ascended from the garden, and its trees, and leaves, and fruits, and walls, and air, and ground, and pavilion, while the dwellers of the deserts and the wilderness, and even the very dunes and the dust of the earth, rejoiced at His approach.

Thus did the Beauty of the All-Glorious establish Himself upon the lofty heights of eternity, inasmuch as His gaze was fixed upon the decree which the Finger of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious, had inscribed upon the blessed and snow-white Tablet. And thus do We relate unto you the account of the day of Our Manifestation and the circumstances of Our banishment by reason of the machinations of such seditious souls as had disbelieved in and joined partners with God, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.

– 11 –

He is the Manifest, the Hidden, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing, the Ever-Forbearing.

O Lord my God! Whensoever I attempt to unloose my tongue to extol the wondrous expressions of Thy transcendent oneness, or to open my lips to disclose the mystic gems of Thine incomparable handiwork wherewith Thou hast inspired me, I am compelled to recognize that

all things sing Thy praise and glorify Thy remembrance—a remembrance which hath so pervaded the heavens and the earth that all things proclaim, in their very being, the wondrous testimonies of Thine exalted praise and bear witness to the marvellous tokens of Thy transcendent unity. Wherefore am I ashamed, as are all who mention Thee, to approach the exalted heights of Thy remembrance, and am powerless, as are all who extol Thee, to ascend unto the lofty summits of Thy praise.

Glorified, immeasurably glorified, art Thou! So exalted are the wonders of Thy bounty unto Thy creatures that Thou hast made all things to serve as a sign unto the mindful amongst Thy servants and as an admonishment unto the heedless amidst Thy people. Thy glory beareth me witness! They that are endued with true understanding can discern naught in all creation save the wondrous tokens of Thy matchless handiwork, nor behold aught else in the world of being but the hidden gems of Thine all-glorious sovereignty.

I swear by Thy glory, O my Best-Beloved! Whensoever I raise mine eyes to the heavens and witness their loftiness, I recognize naught therein but the wondrous heights of Thy supreme power and sovereign authority. And whensoever I turn my gaze towards Thine earth and observe the potentialities wherewith it hath been endowed, I perceive naught but the peerless signs of Thine immutable nature and abiding constancy. And whensoever, O my God, I behold the sea and its waves, methinks I hear the billowing ocean of Thy wealth and power. In the sun I discern naught but the marvellous splendour of the light of Thy hallowed countenance and presence, and in the wind I sense naught save the stirring breezes of Thy nearness and reunion. In the trees I behold only the revelation of the fruits of Thy wisdom and knowledge, and in their leaves I read but the pages of the books enshrining the mysteries of all that hath been through Thy command or will be through Thy power.

Glorified, then, be Thou, O my God! I am powerless, as are all those who enjoy near access unto Thee, to reckon the least sign of Thy creation, inasmuch as Thou hast made all things to mirror forth the manifestations of Thy handiwork and the revelations of Thy sovereign rule. Such being the bounds of powerlessness and poverty that confine me and all created things, how then can any soul ever hope to approach the portals of the sanctuary of Thy knowledge or conceive the least expectation of attaining the city of Thy transcendent glory? Glorified, immeasurably glorified, art Thou! From everlasting Thou hast been sanctified above the comprehension of Thy creatures, for this comprehension is naught but the product of such idle fancies as pertain to their own selves, while Thou hast remained, in the reality of Thine own Self, exalted above them and all that they possess, and beyond the grasp of all that are in heaven and on earth. There is none other God but Thee, the Almighty, the Incomparable.

Having acknowledged, O my God, with my soul, my tongue, mine essence, and with mine inner and outer being, all my trespasses, whose like mortal eyes have never beheld nor human minds conceived, I implore Thee to pardon me and Thy loved ones for whatsoever we have failed to observe of Thy laws and ordinances. Attire us then with the robe of forgiveness, O my God, in this Day whereon Thou hast assumed the throne of Thy grace and bounty invested with the full glory of Thy names and attributes; the Day whereon the sun of Thy beauty hath dawned above the horizon of Thy grandeur, and the signs of Thy glorious sovereignty have been vouchsafed from the treasury of Thy grace; the Day whereon the sweet savours of reunion have wafted over

all who are in Thy heaven and on Thine earth, and the hidden Word hath shone forth from the repository of Thy protection and power.

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast ordained this Day to stand unequalled amongst all the days of Thy world and unrivalled amidst all that Thou hast fashioned through Thy creative power. This is that primal Day which Thou hast singled out from among all other days, and exalted over all other times, and appointed as the King of Days unto all peoples, inasmuch as Thou didst manifest on this Day the tokens of Thy transcendent power and the evidences of Thy holy unity. Thou hast caused its radiance to surpass the splendour of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and to transcend the brightness of every lofty and glorious, every shining and brilliant light. Nay, Thou hast illumined this Day, O my Best-Beloved, with the very lights of Thine own inaccessible Being and with the full glory of Thine own exalted Essence.

Magnified, then, be this Day whereon Thou hast revealed unto all things the effulgent lights of Thy glorious unity and cast upon all creation the radiance of Thy sovereign and transcendent oneness, the Day whereon Thou hast lifted the veil of concealment from the countenance of Thy beauty; burned away, through Thy gracious favour, the shrouds of idle fancy blinding the eyes of the people; and summoned all to partake of Thy nearness and reunion. Immensely glorified be this Day whereon the oceans of splendour and grace have surged and the rivers of bounty and justice have flowed, a Day whereon Thy bounty hath attained such a degree that every stammering tongue hath celebrated Thy praise, every blind eye hath beheld the lights of Thy beauty, and every deaf ear hath hearkened unto the glorious strains of the Dove of Thy oneness.

On this Day the poor have been enriched through the wonders of Thine incomparable wealth, the abased have been exalted through the manifold revelations of Thy majesty and glory, the sinful have partaken of the wine of Thy forgiveness, the sick have quaffed from the waters of Thy gracious healing, the disconsolate have taken refuge beneath the shade of the tree of Thy hope and bestowal, and the destitute have attained the shores of the sea of Thy grace and favour.

Blind is the eye that faileth, on this Day, to behold Thee seated upon the throne of Thy sovereignty, or to witness Thine undisputed authority over all that Thou hast created to be the exponents of Thy names and attributes! Can any of Thy signs and tokens, O my God, be confounded with those that pertain to Thy creatures? Nay, by Thy glory! Whatsoever proceedeth from Thee and from Thy presence shineth as brightly as the noonday sun in the heaven of Thy justice, whilst all else, even though it be among the treasures of Thy creation or of the quintessence of Thy handiwork, fadeth into utter nothingness. And inasmuch as Thou hast assigned no partner unto Thyself, whatsoever is manifested from Thee hath likewise no peer or equal. And even though Thou hast shed upon all created things the effulgent lights of Thy sublime singleness, and nothing proceedeth from anything except it be manifested from Thee and be created at Thy behest, yet that which appeareth from Thine own Self excelleth and surpasseth all else in Thy heavens and on Thine earth, and thus the tokens of Thy glorious sovereignty are revealed before the eyes of men and Thy testimony is fulfilled before all creation.

Since Thy bounty hath suffused the whole universe and the lights of Thy countenance have illumined all created things, I beseech Thee by this Day, and by the hearts which Thou hast made to be the repositories of Thy knowledge and inspiration and the treasuries of Thy revelation and recognition, to grant that the signs of Thine undisputed ascendancy may shine

above the horizon of Thy command, that the showers of Thy surpassing mercy may rain from the heaven of Thy grace, and that the tokens of Thy deliverance may appear through the operation of Thy sovereign Will. Thus may Thy friends be released from the clutches of Thy foes, and Thy loved ones delivered from the hands of the wayward among Thy servants, that they may extol Thee, O Lord, with ringing voices in the supernal realms of Thy names and worship Thee with their entire beings in the kingdom of Thine attributes. And thus may Thy Name be exalted, Thy testimony established, Thy proof vindicated, Thy favour completed, Thy bounty fulfilled, Thy verses promulgated, and Thy signs expounded, in such wise that the entire world may be filled with the light of Thy countenance and all dominion may be Thine alone. No God is there but Thee, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling.

I entreat Thee, moreover, O my God, by Thy Name through which the Bird of the celestial Throne hath warbled in the Realm of the unseen the melodies of Thy transcendent unity, and the Dove of Thy Revelation hath sung forth in the Kingdom of eternity the paeans of Thy sovereign oneness, and the Holy Spirit hath magnified in wondrous tones Thine everlasting glory—I entreat Thee not to withhold from these servants the gentle breezes of the morn of Thy nearness and presence, nor to suffer them to be far removed from the sweet savours of the dawn of Thy reunion and recognition.

Grant, O my God, that this Festival may be a source of blessings for them and for all Thy loved ones. Supply them, then, with all the good Thou didst ordain in the heaven of Thy decree and purpose and in the Tablets of Thy protection and behest. Vanquish, then, O my God, in the course of this year, their enemies through the power of Thy wrath and of Thy resistless might, and ordain for them, O my God, all that I have asked of Thee and all that I have left unasked. Endue them, then, with such constancy in Thy love and in Thy Cause, that they may never break Thy Covenant nor violate Thy Testament to which they pledged themselves ere the creation of the heavens and the earth. Render them victorious through the most wondrous means that lie hid in the treasures of Thy power and the repositories of Thy might, and grant them, O my God, to attain the Hour Thou didst promise them in Thy latter Resurrection through the appearance of the Manifestation of Thine all-glorious Self—for this in truth is the very object of their existence and the existence of all things, the cause of their creation and the creation of all things. Suffer them then, O my God, to submit to Thy will under all conditions. Verily, Thou art the Lord of grace and bounty, of endless bestowal and unfettered sovereignty. And Thou art verily the Most Exalted, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

I beg Thee moreover, O my God, by all the Exponents of Thy names and all the Revealers of Thine attributes, not to number these Thy servants with those who outwardly observe the Festivals associated with the advent of Thy Manifestation, who honour and glorify these days as beseemeth their means and abilities, and yet who remain shut out as by a veil from the One Who is, through His command and decree, the Author of these observances and of all else, for thus will all their works be rendered vain, even though they perceive it not.

I implore Thee, O my God, by the appearance of Him Whom Thou hast manifested in these days through Thy Name “He Who is Invoked”, and by His beauty, and His majesty, and the afflictions He hath been made to suffer, and His divine fragrances, and His sweet accents, and His grandeur, and His might, to grant that the eyes of Thy loved ones may be freed from the veils of ignorance and blindness and from the obscuring mists of doubt and wretchedness. Perchance

they may fix their gaze upon the Tree of Thy Revelation and upon that which appeareth thereon of the wondrous leaves of Thine ancient eternity and the precious fruits of Thy holy unity, may take delight in them and in that which they contain of Thy hidden gifts and concealed knowledge, and may rid themselves thereby of attachment to aught else. This, verily, is but perfect grace and unalloyed blessing, and the very essence, origin, and ultimate abode thereof, for within the compass of Thy knowledge there is naught higher than this grace nor sweeter than this blessing. Thou, verily, art the King, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

– 12 –

Húr-i-'Ujáb

(Tablet of the Wondrous Maiden)

The hallowed Beauty shone resplendent from behind the veil. How wondrous a thing, how wondrous indeed!

And, lo, the flame of rapture caused all souls to swoon away. How wondrous is this, how wondrous indeed!

Rising up, they soared unto the blest pavilion 'neath the throne of heaven's canopy. How wondrous a mystery, how wondrous indeed!

Say: The Maiden of Eternity unveiled Her face—may her wondrous beauty be exalted indeed!—

Shedding forth from earth to heaven its resplendent rays. How wondrous a light, how wondrous indeed!

A lightning glance She cast, as piercing as a shooting star—how wondrous Her glance, how wondrous indeed!—

A glance consuming every name and every title in its flames. How wondrous a feat, how wondrous indeed!

To the dwellers of the realm of dust She turned Her gaze. How wondrous Her gaze, how wondrous indeed!

And then did all creation shake and pass away. How astounding a death, how astounding indeed!

She then let fall a raven lock, an ornament of spirit in the darkest night—how wondrous a hue, how wondrous indeed!—

From which the fragrant breezes of the spirit were perceived. How wondrous a scent, how wondrous indeed!

In Her right hand She bore the ruby wine and in Her left a portion of the finest fare. How wondrous a grace, how wondrous indeed!

With hands encrimsoned with Her ardent lovers' blood—how wondrous is this, how wondrous indeed!—

In cups and chalices She passed round the wine of life. How wondrous a draught, how wondrous indeed!

With harp and lute She sang in praise of Her Beloved. How wondrous a song, how wondrous indeed!

Whereat the hearts were melted in consuming flames. How wondrous a love, how wondrous indeed!

Of Her sustaining beauty She bestowed a boundless share—how wondrous a share, how wondrous indeed!—

Then brought Her sword of charm upon Her lovers' necks. How wondrous a blow, how wondrous indeed!

Her pearl-like teeth did flash, no sooner had She smiled. How wondrous a pearl, how wondrous indeed!

Whereat the hearts of them that know cried out and wept. How wondrous a piety, how wondrous indeed!

But they that doubt and boast of self denied Her truth. How astounding a denial, how astounding indeed!

And, hearing this, in sorrow, She repaired to Her abode. How astounding Her grief, how astounding indeed!

She returned from whence She came: How lofty were the steps She traced! How astounding a decree, how astounding indeed!

She cried a cry of anguish, as to reduce all things to naught. How astounding Her woe, how astounding indeed!

And from Her lips there streamed these words of warning and rebuke—how astounding a stream, how astounding indeed!—

“Why do ye gainsay Me, O people of the Book?” How astounding is this, how astounding indeed!

“Claim ye to be the guided and the loved ones of the Lord?” By God! How astounding a lie, how astounding indeed!

“O my friends,” She said, “We shall not come again,”—how wondrous a return, how wondrous indeed!—

“But will conceal God’s secrets in His Scriptures and His Books,” as bidden by One mighty and bounteous indeed!

"Nor shall ye find Me till the Promised One appear on Judgement Day." By My life! How astounding an abasement, how astounding indeed!

– 13 –

He is the Most Holy, the Most Glorious.

Praise be to Thee, O Thou our Lord the Most Merciful! This is one of the days of the festival Thou hast named Riḍván, a festival wherein Thou hast manifested Thy sovereignty over all who are in Thy heavens and on Thine earth, notwithstanding that the people have arisen to harm Thee and to extinguish Thy light, and wherein the Luminary of Thy oneness hath shone forth from the dayspring of Thy House upon all things visible and invisible.

I beseech Thee, O my God, by this Day and by Him Whom Thou hast made to be the Dawning-Place of Thy revelation and the Dayspring of Thine inspiration, to ordain for Thy loved ones the good of this world and of the world to come, and to number them with those whom naught can distract from Thy remembrance and praise. Strengthen, then, their hearts in such wise that the ascendancy of those who have disbelieved in Thee and in Thy signs may never dismay them.

O Lord! Illumine their eyes with the light of Thy knowledge, and their hearts with the splendour of Thy countenance. Bind, then, their souls and spirits together, that through their unity all the inhabitants of Thy dominion may become united.

Potent art Thou over all who are in the kingdoms of Thy revelation and Thy creation. Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. Praised be Thou, O Lord of the worlds!

– 14 –

In the name of God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful!

Glorified art Thou, O my God! I beseech Thee by this Day, and by Him Whom Thy sovereignty and Thy majesty and Thy might have manifested therein, and by the tears which Thine ardent lovers have shed in their remoteness and separation from Thee, and by the fire that hath consumed the hearts of them that yearn to behold Thy beauty, to send down upon us on this Day that which beseemeth Thy beauty and becometh Thy grace and Thy generosity.

O Lord! We are but poor creatures who have detached ourselves from all save Thee, set our faces towards the treasury of Thy wealth, and fled from remoteness in the hope of approaching Thee. Send down, then, upon us from the heaven of Thy Will that which will sanctify us from the world and from all that pertaineth thereunto, and attire us with the raiment Thou hast purposed for us through Thy grace and favours.

I beseech Thee moreover, O my God, by Thy Name which Thou hast made to be the treasury of Thy knowledge, the repository of Thy revelation, and the fountainhead of Thine inspiration, the Name through which Thou hast separated and united the faithful and the infidels, to clothe us in this Day with the vesture of Thy guidance and the mantle of Thy favour. Enable us, then, to champion Thy Cause, to assist Thy Faith, and to speak forth Thy Name before all who are in Thy

heaven and on Thine earth, that every land may be filled with the wonders of Thy remembrance and every face illumined with the light of Thy countenance.

O Lord! We bear witness that Thou art God and that there is none other God but Thee. We testify that Thou hast from everlasting occupied so transcendent a station as to elude the grasp of even them that have recognized Thee, and that Thou wilt abide unto everlasting in heights of glory so inaccessible that the birds of the hearts of Thy devoted servants will forever fail to soar into the atmosphere of Thy knowledge.

O Lord! All things bear witness to Thy unity, and whatsoever can be said to exist, whether visible or invisible, testifieth to Thy oneness. Thou, verily, hast sanctified Thy Self beyond the knowledge of aught save Thee, and hast exalted Thine Essence above the mention of all else. All the words and meanings that have been created in the realm of existence return, in the end, to that Word which hath flowed from the pen of Thy Command and the fingers of Thy Decree. Every great one is as naught before the evidences of Thy greatness, and every mighty one is as a thing forgotten before the revelations of Thy transcendent might.

O Lord! Thou seest Thy loved ones encircled by the workers of iniquity. I beseech Thee by that name of Thine whereby the fire of Thy wrath was kindled and the flames of Thine anger were made to blaze, to lay hold upon them that have oppressed Thy loved ones. Send down then upon us all that we have besought of the wonders of Thy grace and favour, and suffer us not to be debarred from turning towards Thee and drawing nigh unto the sanctuary of Thy transcendent oneness. Thou, verily, art that omnipotent One to Whose might all the atoms of the earth have from all eternity borne witness, and to Whose majesty all created things will ever testify. Thou, in truth, art the Lord of might and grandeur, and the Ruler of earth and heaven. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, Whose help is implored by all.

– 15 –

Praise be to Thee, O my God, for having cast in this Day the radiance of all Thy names upon all created things, O Thou Who art the Lord of glory, majesty, and grandeur; of power, might, and blessings! This is the Day whereon He Who is the Mouthpiece of God, the All-Possessing, the Inaccessible, the Most High, hath called out from the realm of eternity, saying: "The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious!"

Lauded be Thy name, O Thou Who causest the winds to blow and the dawn to break, Who revealest the verses and unveilest the proofs! All things proclaim that Thou art God, and that there is none other God but Thee, the Sovereign, the All-Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. Magnified be Thy name, O Thou Who art the Fashioner of the heavens and the Creator of all names, Who sheddest Thy splendour upon all things through the power of Thy Most Great Name. This, verily, is the name whereby the Mystic Dove hath warbled upon the celestial bough, proclaiming: "All dominion belongeth forever unto God, our Lord, the Most Merciful!"

Glorified art Thou, O King of eternity, and Ruler of the nations, and Quickener of every mouldering bone! Praise be unto Thee, a praise that no earthly tongue can ever befittingly extol, a praise through which the outpourings of Thy mercy have rained upon all created things and the light of Thy countenance hath shone upon all who are in heaven and on earth. Praise be

unto Thee, a praise that hath unloosed the tongue of every stammerer in Thy celebration, that hath drawn every remote one nigh unto the seat of Thy mighty throne, and that hath guided every thirsty one to the living waters of Thy bounty and the soft-flowing streams of Thy favour. Praise be unto Thee, a praise through which the fragrance of the robe of Thy mercy hath been wafted upon all who are in heaven and on earth, and the sweet smell of the roses of Thy Paradise hath been diffused over the dwellers of the cities of eternity, and every name hath been made to extol Thy remembrance and glory. Praise be unto Thee, a praise that hath endued the hearts of Thy loved ones with such constancy that no earthly veil can hinder them from fixing their gaze upon the horizon of Thy bounties, nor can the ascendancy of the oppressors deter them from beholding the wondrous light of Thy countenance. Praise be unto Thee, a praise that hath blotted out from the hearts of Thy servants the mention of aught else save Thee and aided them to teach Thy Cause and to blazon Thy remembrance in every region.

I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy most excellent names and Thy most exalted attributes, and by them that have soared in the atmosphere of Thy nearness and good-pleasure and taken flight upon the wings of trust and detachment towards the Dayspring of Thy name, the All-Merciful, and by the blood that hath been shed for Thy sake, and by the sighs that have been uttered for Thy love, to accept from us on this day all our works in Thy path.

This is the Day whereon the All-Merciful shed the splendour of His effulgence upon all names. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon He Who is the Hidden and the Unseen appeared before the eyes of all creation. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon the Most Great Idol was shattered. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon the Lord of mercy revealed Himself unto all creation. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon Pharaoh was drowned and Moses beheld Him Who is the Beauty of the All-Glorious Lord. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon the false gods of idle fancy were overthrown through the power of our Lord, the Almighty, the All-Knowing. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon the billows of the Most Great Ocean were made manifest in the Scene of transcendent glory. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon all created things were summoned to the presence of their Lord, the Inaccessible, the Most High. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

This is the Day whereon all things testified to that whereunto the Tongue of Power hath testified before the Divine Lote-Tree. All glory be to that which God hath bestowed upon us!

In the name of God, Who hath cast His splendour over all creation!

O concourse of earth and heaven! Give ear to the testimony of God that proceedeth from the mouth of your Lord, the All-Glorious. He verily hath testified, in Himself and by Himself, ere the heaven of His Cause was raised up and the clouds of His Decree were gathered together, that there is none other God but Him, and that He Who hath appeared is that Most Great Name through which His ancient proof and testimony have been established before all who are in the heavens and on the earth.

Verily God hath testified, in Himself and by Himself, and in His inmost Essence, that there is none other God but Him and that He Who is come through the power of truth is the Manifestation of His most excellent names and the Dawning-Place of His most exalted attributes. Through Him the voice of the mystic Morn rang out from the horizon of eternity and the Most Great Spirit spoke forth before the Divine Lote-Tree, saying: "This, verily, is He Who hath been intended in the Cities of Names and mentioned in the Tablets revealed from the empyrean of the Will of your Lord, the Ruler of earth and heaven. He, indeed, is the most great Instrument amidst the nations, Who hath come to regenerate the whole world."

Verily God hath testified, in Himself and by Himself, and ere the creation of the world and the manifestation of His names and attributes, that there is none other God but Him, and that He Who is come upon the clouds of divine decree is the Trust of God amongst you and the Revealer of His Essence in your midst.

We verily behold, at this hour and from His realm, all the denizens of earth and heaven, and summon them to this Beauty that hath solaced the eyes of the inmates of Paradise and the dwellers of the tabernacle of holiness, them that have fixed their gaze on this Scene of resplendent glory and whom the veils of human limitations have failed to debar from beholding the countenance of God, the Almighty, the Most Wondrous. He it is Who proclaimeth within all things: "Verily, I am your Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From time immemorial I was a Treasure hidden in a station unknown to all save Mine own Self, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Cast away all that ye possess and soar on the wings of detachment into this atmosphere wherein waft the breezes of the mercy of your Lord, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous."

By My life! The Day is come which from all eternity was concealed in the treasures of the might of your Lord. Rejoice in this blessed, this glorious and sublime Day. For He verily is Mine own Appearance amongst you, and whoso maketh the slightest distinction between Him and Me hath indeed strayed far from the straight path of truth. He it is Who hath caused the Mystic Dove to warble upon the twigs of the Tree of glory, saying: "By the one true God! The Best-Beloved of the worlds is come!"

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Can anyone befittingly thank Thee for such blessings as Thou hast sent down from the heaven of Thy oneness and the firmament of Thy Will, blessings which Thou hast reserved for the people of Bahá in the realm of creation? Nay, by Thy might, O Thou the Beloved of the worlds and the sole Desire of them that have recognized Thee! Wert Thou to endow every creature of earth and heaven with a myriad tongues, even to the number of the atoms of the universe, and were they to yield Thee thanks, so long as Thy kingdom and Thy

dominion endure, for the bounties which Thou hast bestowed upon Thy loved ones in this Day—a Day whereon Thou hast revealed Thyself in Thine own Essence and inmost Being to the dwellers of earth and heaven, and in Thy Beauty to the inhabitants of the cities of eternity, and through Thy Names to them that are immersed in the billowing oceans of grandeur—yet would their thanksgiving fade into nothingness before that which Thou hast bestowed upon them through Thy grace and bounty.

I know not, O my God, which among Thy gifts to extol in this Day, a Day that Thou hast made to be the source of all Thy days and the dawning-place whence the rays of the light of Thine Essence and the splendours of the glory of Thy countenance have shone forth. Shall I praise the heavenly repast which Thou hast sent down in this Day unto the people of Bahá, whom Thou hast singled out for Thy favour amongst the dwellers of earth and heaven? This, verily, is a sustenance borne in the vessel of Thy words, from every letter of which a myriad suns of divine wisdom and utterance dawn forth and the lights of authority and exposition shine resplendent. This, verily, is a sustenance whose substance is such inner meanings as had from everlasting lain concealed within Thine inviolable treasures and hidden beneath the tabernacles of Thy glory. Or shall I, O my God, extol Thine appearance in this Day from the dawning-place of Thine Essence; or Thine establishment, before the gaze of all men, upon the throne of Thy name, the All-Bountiful; or yet Thy proclamation, through the Tongue of might and power, to all things visible and invisible? By Myself, the True One! The Hidden Secret and Treasured Mystery hath been revealed. Whosoever seeketh Me shall behold Me.

I swear by Thy glory, O Fashioner of names and Creator of earth and heaven! The tongues of Thy creatures are powerless to render thanks for the favours Thou hast bestowed upon them in this Day, a Day from which Thou hast made all Thy days to proceed. This is the Day whereon Thou hast summoned the well-favoured to the Dayspring of Thy nearness and the sincere to the Dawning-Place of the light of Thy countenance. This is the Day concerning which Thou didst covenant with every Prophet to herald unto all the advent of Him Who shall be manifested therein with Thy sovereign might and celestial power.

This is the Day whereon Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, cried out from the midmost heart of Paradise, saying: “O peoples of the earth! By God, the Beloved of the worlds and the Desire of every understanding heart is come! He, verily, is the One to Whose voice I hearkened on My Night Journey but Whose beauty I was not to behold until the days attained their consummation in this Day, a Day which is the adornment of all the days of God, the Sovereign Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised. This is the Day whereon the rule of His grace and all-pervading mercy hath been so universally established as to embrace every soul, for He hath in truth summoned each and all to His presence and hath shed upon all things the splendour of His glorious and refulgent beauty.”

This is the Day whereon the Spirit proclaimed from the midmost heart of heaven: “O concourse of creation! He Who is the sovereign Ruler of all hath been made manifest. That which pertaineth to the Kingdom of My Lord hath been fulfilled. He Who is the Beloved of My heart and the Helper of My Cause is now come. Follow Him, and be not of those that have turned aside. This is the Day whereon every veil hath been parted, and your Lord, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful, hath appeared and fulfilled through His appearance all that was promised aforetime. Hasten then to this resplendent, this most luminous Beauty!

"O priests! Tell Our servants to ring not the bells save in His name, the All-Glorious, the Most High. This is the Day whereon the sore athirst have attained the stream of everlasting life and the yearning souls have beheld the Vision of the All-Merciful. This is the Day whereon the lowly have been exalted, the poor enriched, the sick made whole, the deaf given to hear His melody, and the blind made to see. Render thanks, then, and be not of those who join partners with God. The Kingdom of God doth in truth circle round Him. It is for His sake that I adorned the cross with My body and then arose from the dead to perfect His remembrance amongst men.

"O people of the Gospel! Take heed lest ye direct your prayers towards Me after having turned away from Mine all-glorious Father, who changed, through His love, Abraham's fire into light. He Who awaiteth another when once He hath appeared is indeed in grievous error. Hasten, then, to the river of the mercy of your Lord, the All-Merciful, and beware lest ye withhold yourselves from its soft-flowing waters. We have, verily, reared you for this Day. Peruse ye the Book, that ye may apprehend the meaning of My words in My days. Verily, I revealed Myself only for the sake of His Cause, and I came amongst you solely to herald the Kingdom of God, your Lord and the Lord of the worlds. That which was hidden is now revealed, and that which was concealed is now come. Bestir yourselves to greet this Day, a Day whereon the gates of heaven have been flung open, and the clouds of eternity have rained down, and the Nightingale of His Cause hath warbled its melody upon the twigs of the Divine Lote-Tree, and the hearts of the Concourse on high have been seized with longing in the all-highest Paradise, and the Maids of Heaven have hastened forth from their celestial chambers towards His mighty Throne. Cast away all that ye possess and cleave unto that which hath been enjoined upon you by this Ancient Beauty.

"O concourse of divines! Still your pens, for the Pen of Glory hath spoken. Lay aside your books, for the Book hath appeared that compriseth all that hath been said aforetime and sufficeth all the inhabitants of the earth. Rise above the horizon of certitude in the name of your Lord, the All-Merciful, and tear asunder the veils that have come between you and the Lord of all creation.

"Thus commandeth you the Spirit, Who offered up His life that the world might be quickened and that the Desire of every heart might appear. And He, verily, hath appeared through the power of truth. Follow Him, and cling not unto that which ye possess of the proclamations of former times. For the trumpet-blast hath been sounded, and lo! the earth of idle fancy hath been cleft asunder; and the Tongue of Grandeur hath spoken from the pavilion of glory, saying: The Kingdom in this Day is God's, the All-Possessing, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Most Great! The dead have risen and the souls have been gathered together, and yet still We behold you entombed in the sepulchres of heedlessness and desire. Fear God, O people! Rise from amongst the dead and turn your faces towards the Dayspring of His grace which shineth above this resplendent horizon. I, verily, await His command, that by His leave I might descend into the world, even as I ascended from it. He, verily, hath the power to ordain whatsoever He pleaseth.

"O followers of the Gospel! Do ye seek Jerusalem, when He Who built the House of God therein by a mere indication of His will hath come? Far have ye wandered in the paths of error! Of a certainty, no deed will be accepted in this Day unless it be performed by His leave, and the invocation of no soul shall rise up unto God unless it be uttered for His love. Thus hath the decree been fulfilled and the command established by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Knowing."

This is the Day whereon Moses lifted up His voice from the Sinai of Our name, the Almighty, saying: "O people! Verily the Day is come! This is He at Whose separation I wept sore in the desert of longing, and for Whose love I bewailed in the wilderness of ardent love. And when I purposed to enter the sanctuary of His nearness and to gaze upon His beauty, He restrained Me through the power of His sovereign might and withheld Me from the desire of My heart. Whereupon He addressed Me, saying: 'Thou shalt never behold Me!' and returned Me to the splendours of the lights of His mighty Throne. Such was the longing with which I was then consumed as I am powerless to describe and the ears of the true believers unable to hear. But lo, He hath now appeared with the power of truth and unveiled to you His beauty. At every moment He proclaimeth: 'O concourse of creation, look and ye shall behold Me!' By God, this is the Word that hath proceeded from the mouth of the Will of your Lord, the All-Merciful. It behoveth you to offer up your souls for His sake, if ye be of them that judge with fairness. Thus have I informed you, O people, of Him Whose remoteness hath lacerated My heart and Who hath made Me to quaff the cup of separation. Bear witness unto Him, and be not of the heedless. Blessed are your eyes for having beheld, and your ears for having hearkened. And woe unto them that have deprived themselves of this resplendent Vision."

This is the Day whereon the Point of the Bayán called out from the midmost heart of Paradise, saying: "O people! This is He in Whose path I laid down My life. This is He for Whose sake I revealed Myself and of Whose presence I bore unto you the most joyful tidings. Beware lest ye deny the One but for Whom the Day-Star of the Bayán would never have dawned nor would the verses of the All-Merciful have been revealed. By God! He it is Who caused the morn of inner meaning and explanation to break, and the gates of divine reunion to be opened before the faces of all the peoples of the earth. It is by His Name that the cities of names have been adorned; it is by His remembrance that the hearts of the chosen ones have been set ablaze. Beware lest ye deal with Him as ye dealt with Me. I testify that I was but a herald of His Revelation unto all who are in heaven and on earth, and that I conditioned the Bayán upon His leave and good-pleasure. I swear by God! It is for His love that I rose up amongst you and consorted with you. Were it not for Him, I would assuredly not have revealed a single word or verse. Cling ye to the hem of the robe of His mercy, and hold fast to the cord of His love. This is the Day whereon every atom proclaimeth: 'By the Possessor of all names and attributes! Verily, He Who is invoked by all that are in heaven is now come!'"

Praise be to Thee, O my God, for having adorned the preamble of the book of eternity with this most luminous Day, a Day whereon Thou didst shed the splendour of Thy most excellent names and most exalted attributes upon all created things. This, verily, is a Day whereon Thou hast ordained that each of Thy names be endowed with the potentialities of all Thy names. Blessed, then, be they that have turned towards Thee, attained Thy presence, and hearkened unto Thy call.

O Lord, my God! I beseech Thee by this Day, and by Thy most consummate Name through which the Most Great Ocean hath surged, to protect the people of Bahá from them that have disbelieved in Thy mighty signs. Make them then, O my God, to be the exponents of Thine ascendancy and Thy might, that they may arise to glorify Thee and to celebrate Thy praise amidst Thy servants, in such wise that neither the veils of the people of the earth, nor their insinuations, nor the onslaught of them that have arisen to put out Thy light, may keep them

back from Thee. O God! Deprive them not of the gentle breezes that are wafting in this Day, a Day whereon every atom proclaimeth: "Verily, Thou art God; no God is there but Thee!" O Lord, adorn them with the ornaments of constancy and certitude, and cause them to be champions of Thy Cause amidst all creation.

O my God and the God of all the worlds! O my desire and the desire of every understanding heart! I implore Thee, by Him Who hath caused the sun of Thy revelation and inspiration to dawn, to ordain for the people of this Day that which Thou hast ordained for the chosen ones amongst Thy servants. Send down then upon them such liberal effusions of Thy grace as none hath previously attained, and cause them to circle round the court of Thy nearness and the sanctuary of Thy presence. Inspire them, then, in Thy Cause with that which setteth ablaze the hearts and souls of men. Make each one of them to be as a lamp of Thy remembrance unto those servants of Thine whom self and passion have veiled from recognizing the Manifestation of Thine Essence and the Dayspring of Thy signs.

O Lord! Thou art He to Whose power and sovereignty every mighty one hath testified, and to Whose majesty and grace every great one hath borne witness. Bestow, then, upon Thy loved ones that which beseemeth this Day, a Day which Thou hast made to be a luminous ornament upon the brow of all Thy days, and which Thou hast caused to shine above the horizon of eternity. Send down then upon them, from the clouds of Thy oneness and the heaven of Thy grace, that which will enable them to dispense with aught else except Thee.

O Lord! Give them to drink, from the hands of Thy mercy, a draught from that river of everlasting life that floweth from the right hand of Thy Throne, and aid them to abide by that which Thou hast revealed in Thy perspicuous Book. Thou, verily, ordainest as Thou pleasest. No God is there but Thee, the Most Exalted, the Sovereign Protector, the All-Compelling, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.

– 17 –

In the name of God, the Almighty, the Unconstrained!

Praise be to Thee, O my God, for having gathered together Thy loved ones to celebrate Thy Most Great Festival, whereon Thou didst shed the splendour of Thy most excellent names upon all who are in heaven and on earth, the Festival whereon the Day-Star of truth hath shone resplendent above the horizon of Thy will and the Ancient King ascended the throne of Thy mercy.

This is the ninth day of Ridván, O my God, and on this day one of Thy loved ones hath, as a token of his love for Thy Beauty and in the eagerness of his devotion to Thee, invited Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy Self and the Dayspring of Thy glory to leave His room in the prison for another. There he hath spread before Thy presence such of Thy gifts as he hath been able to provide, notwithstanding that the people had plundered all his possessions and the possessions of others among Thy loved ones. O Lord, since Thou hast gathered them round Thee and aided them to attain this surpassing grace, endue them with constancy in Thy Cause and bind their hearts together in such wise that no differences may arise in their midst. Grant, then, that they

may guide all people unto this Luminary, the like of which the eye of creation hath never beheld and which standeth peerless in the realms of the seen and the unseen.

Thou well knowest, O Lord, that it hath been the desire of all that circle round Thee to receive Thee during the days of Rīḍvān. A few have been enabled, in accordance with their means, to attain this honour, while others, through its want, have been prevented therefrom. These have contented themselves with passing round in white vessels that crimson-coloured wine that is brewed from the leaves of China. I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy Word which Thou hast made to be the lodestone of the hearts and souls of men, the Word whereby Thou hast drawn Thy servants unto the heaven of Thy loving-kindness and the horizon of Thy grace and bounty, to accept from the former all that they have accomplished in Thy path and to ordain for the latter the recompense of whatsoever they had purposed to accomplish. Thou, verily, art the Lord of bounty and generosity, of grace and glory. O Lord, help certain souls among them to know their own selves and to restrain their tongues, lest they utter that which would abase their stations and bring their works to naught. Thou, verily, hast power over all things.

Thou hearest, O Lord, the lamentations of the sincere amongst Thy loved ones who were hindered from meeting Thee during these days, days which Thou hast ordained as a festival unto Thy people and as a treasure and honour unto the inhabitants of Thy realm.... Accept from them, O Lord, that which they have purposed in their love for Thee, and ordain for each and every one of them the recompense of such as have attained unto every good Thou hast in store. Thou, verily, hast power over all things.

Look Thou moreover, O my God, with the glances of the eye of Thy mercy, upon Thy loved ones who are scattered in the land of Ḥá. They have tarried there ever since they were prevented from seeking shelter beneath the shade of the Tree of Thy oneness. O Lord, deny them not the things Thou dost possess. Verily, Thou art the Ruler of the heavens and of the earth. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Praise be to Thee, O Lord of the worlds and Desire of all them that have recognized Thee!

The glory of Thy might beareth me witness, O my God! It behoveth all to lay down their lives for the sake of Thine ear that heareth the cries of Thine ardent lovers in every land and the sighs of Thy friends who suffer at the hands of Thine enemies. Verily, the voice of their lamentation hath been raised on account of their love for Thee, and their hearts are consumed with the fire of separation in Thy days. May my soul be a ransom for Thy long-suffering, O Countenance of glory, and may my spirit be a sacrifice for Thy forbearance, O Thou in Whose hand is the kingdom of earth and heaven!

I swear by Thy glory, O Beloved of them that yearn after Thee and Desire of those who cherish Thy love! Were any man of insight to press upon this holy Tablet, he would see the blood of my heart flowing from it, a blood that hath melted for the love of Thee and of those who have been hindered from beholding Thy face after having directed their steps towards Thee and having come to abide within the city or its precincts. May my entire being be offered up as a sacrifice for Thy patience, O Lord of might and power! May my soul be a ransom for Thy forbearance, O Thou the fear of Whose wrath causeth the hearts of the dwellers of the kingdom of names to tremble!

Praise be to Thee, O solace of the hearts of the people of Bahá! I testify, O my God, that none besides Thee can fathom Thine inscrutable wisdom or apprehend the truths and mysteries enshrined in all that hath proceeded from the manifold tokens of Thy power and the manifestations of Thy will. I entreat Thee moreover, O my God, to graciously enable my loved ones to show their hospitality unto Thee through their character and their conduct, that the heavenly table of Thy loving-kindness may thereby be spread before all Thy servants and that all the peoples of the world may gather round it. This, verily, is the true meaning of offering hospitality unto one's fellow men. Thy might and Thy power are, verily, equal to all things. Praise be to Thee, O Lord of the worlds, Thou Whose power embraceth the heavens and the earth!

– 18 –

In the name of God, the Most Glorious!

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! This is one of the days of Thy Ridván Festival whereon Thou didst shed the splendour of Thy name, the All-Merciful, upon all the peoples of the earth, and didst manifest Thy power and Thy sovereignty unto all created things. Thou seest, O Lord, how on this day one of Thy loved ones hath invited the Manifestation of Thine Essence from His room to another room in this prison, wherein a gathering hath been held in Thy name and adorned with the ornament of Thine own Self, in such wise that the Sun of Thy beauty hath shone forth above its horizon. Blessed be the one who hath attained thereunto, blessed the day that hath been honoured with Thy revelation, and blessed the land that hath been illumined by the light of Thy Countenance.

O Lord! Ordain for him, and for Thy servants who have been hindered from meeting Thee, the recompense decreed for such as have attained Thy presence and convened a gathering to exalt Thy name and Thy remembrance. Write down, then, for them what Thou hast written down for such as enjoy near access to Thee. Thy might, in truth, is equal to all things.

– 19 –

He is God.

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! This is one of the days of Thy Ridván Festival whereon a corner of this prison hath been decked forth for the appearance of Him Who is the Exponent of Thy beauty, granting the request of one whose ardent devotion hath prompted him to invite Thee. All praise be to Thee, inasmuch as Thou hast, as a token of Thy bounty unto them that abide beneath Thy shadow and circle round Thy being, shone forth on this day above the horizon of the prison with such splendour as to illumine the entire creation.

This is the Day whereon Thou didst unloose Thy tongue and bestow in abundance the gems of inner meaning and utterance upon the peoples of the world. Quicken, then, O Lord, through this heavenly cup, all who dwell on earth, and ordain that which will be profitable unto those among the people of Bahá who long to behold Thy face, but whom the misdeeds of Thine enemies have debarred therefrom, O King of Names and Ruler of earth and heaven. Bestow upon them, moreover, a portion of Thy manifold bounties in these days whereon every abased one hath

been exalted, every faithful soul invested with Thy grace, every chilled heart enkindled, every poor one enriched, and every seeker sent forth upon the path.

Lauded art Thou, O Lord, for having singled out Thy loved ones and chosen them from amongst Thy people, and for having turned Thy gaze towards them from this spot wherein He Who is the Embodiment of Thy Cause lieth imprisoned. O Lord, withhold not from them the things Thou dost possess, but so enrapture their hearts through the breezes of Thy Revelation that they may detach themselves from all else but Thee and set their faces towards the court of Thy grace and generosity. Potent art Thou to do what Thou pleasest, and powerful art Thou over all things. All praise be to Thee, O Desire of the worlds!

– 20 –

He is the Most Holy, the Most Glorious.

All praise be to Thee, O Lord my God! This is one of the days of Thy Ridván Festival whereon a servant of Thine hath extended an invitation to the Manifestation of Thine Essence and the Revealer of Thy Sovereignty, and hath decked forth a place in the prison to receive Thine all-glorious Beauty, O Thou Who art the Lord of earth and heaven! All glory be to this hour wherein He Who is the Dayspring of Thy transcendent might hath directed His steps from one room of the prison to another. I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art the King of Names and Creator of earth and heaven, to write down for such of Thy loved ones as have been debarred from entering the precincts of Thy mercy and standing before the throne of Thy might the recompense decreed for such as have attained Thy presence and beheld Him Who is Thy Beauty.

Thou hearest, O Lord, their sighs and lamentations in their separation and remoteness from Thee. I beseech Thee to ordain for them all the good Thou dost possess. Potent art Thou to do as Thou wilt. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Praised.

– 21 –

Lawḥ-i-‘Áshiq va Ma’shúq

(Tablet of the Lover and the Beloved)

He is the Exalted, the Transcendent, the All-Highest.

Release yourselves, O nightingales of God, from the thorns and brambles of wretchedness and misery, and wing your flight to the rose-garden of unfading splendour. O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: “He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God’s Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise.” Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover: “Behold, your Well-Beloved hath come among men!” and to the messengers of the Monarch of love impart the tidings: “Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!” O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.

Behold how the manifold grace of God, which is being showered from the clouds of Divine glory, hath, in this day, encompassed the world. For whereas in days past every lover besought and searched after his Beloved, it is the Beloved Himself Who now is calling His lovers and is inviting them to attain His presence. Take heed lest ye forfeit so precious a favour; beware lest ye belittle so remarkable a token of His grace. Abandon not the incorruptible benefits, and be not content with that which perisheth. Lift up the veil that obscureth your vision, and dispel the darkness with which it is enveloped, that ye may gaze on the naked beauty of the Beloved's face, may behold that which no eye hath beheld, and hear that which no ear hath heard.

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose-Garden of changeless splendour a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervour of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavour to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savours of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

Night hath succeeded day, and day hath succeeded night, and the hours and moments of your lives have come and gone, and yet none of you hath, for one instant, consented to detach himself from that which perisheth. Bestir yourselves, that the brief moments that are still yours may not be dissipated and lost. Even as the swiftness of lightning your days shall pass, and your bodies shall be laid to rest beneath a canopy of dust. What can ye then achieve? How can ye atone for your past failure?

The everlasting Candle shineth in its naked glory. Behold how it hath consumed every mortal veil. O ye moth-like lovers of His light! Brave every danger, and consecrate your souls to its consuming flame. O ye that thirst after Him! Strip yourselves of every earthly affection, and hasten to embrace your Beloved. With a zest that none can equal make haste to attain unto Him. The Flower, thus far hidden from the sight of men, is unveiled to your eyes. In the open radiance of His glory He standeth before you. His voice summoneth all the holy and sanctified beings to come and be united with Him. Happy is he that turneth thereunto; well is it with him that hath attained, and gazed on the light of so wondrous a countenance.

– 22 –

In Thy name, the Most Wondrous, the Most Glorious!

Since Thou hast, O my God, stablished Thyself upon the throne of Thy transcendent unity, and ascended the mercy-seat of Thy oneness, it becometh Thee to blot out from the hearts of all beings whatsoever may keep them back from gaining admittance into the sanctuary of Thy Divine mysteries, and may shut them out from the tabernacle of Thy Divinity, that all hearts may mirror Thy beauty, and may reveal Thee, and speak of Thee, and that all created things may show forth the tokens of Thy most august sovereignty, and shed the splendours of the light of Thy most holy governance, and that all who are in heaven and on earth may laud and magnify

Thy unity, and give Thee glory, for having manifested Thy Self unto them through Him Who is the Revealer of Thy oneness.

Divest, then, Thy servants, O my God, of the garments of self and desire, or grant that the eyes of Thy people may be lifted up to such heights that they will discern in their desires naught except the stirring of the gentle winds of Thine eternal glory, and may recognize in their own selves nothing but the revelation of Thine own merciful Self, that the earth and all that is therein may be cleansed of whatever is alien to Thee, or anything that manifesteth aught save Thy Self. All this can be fulfilled throughout Thy dominion by Thy word of command, "Be," and it is! Nay, even swifter than this, and yet the people understand not.

Glorified, immeasurably glorified art Thou, O my Beloved! I swear by Thy glory! I recognize this very moment that Thou hast granted all for which I have supplicated Thee, in this blessed night which, as decreed by Thee, calleth to remembrance Him Who was the Companion of Thy beauty and the Beholder of Thy face, ere I had been mentioned by Thee, or called into being within the court of Thy holiness. I perceive that Thou hast made all things to be the manifestations of Thy behest, and the revelations of Thy handiwork, and the repositories of Thy knowledge, and the treasures of Thy wisdom. I recognize, moreover, that were any of the revelations of Thy names and Thine attributes to be withheld, though it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, from whatsoever hath been created by Thy power and begotten by Thy might, the foundations of Thine everlasting handiwork would thereby be made incomplete, and the gems of Thy Divine wisdom would become imperfect. For the letters of negation, no matter how far they may be removed from the holy fragrances of Thy knowledge, and however forgetful they may become of the wondrous splendours of the dawning-light of Thy beauty, which are shed from the heaven of Thy majesty, must needs exist in Thy realm, so that the words which affirm Thee may thereby be exalted.

Thy might beareth me witness, O my Well-Beloved! The entire creation hath been called into being to exalt Thy triumph and to establish Thine ascendancy, and all the bounds that have been set by Thee are but the signs of Thy sovereignty, and proclaim the power of Thy might. How great, how very great, are the revelations of Thy wondrous power in all things! They are such that the lowliest among Thy creatures hath been made by Thee a manifestation of Thy most august attribute, and the most contemptible token of Thy handiwork hath been chosen as a recipient of Thy most mighty name. Poverty, as decreed by Thee, hath been made the means for the revelation of Thy riches, and abasement a path leading to Thy glory, and sinfulness a cause for the exercise of Thy forgiveness. By them Thou hast demonstrated that to Thee belong Thy most excellent titles, and unto Thee pertain the wonders of Thy most exalted attributes.

Since Thou hast purposed, O my God, to cause all created things to enter into the tabernacle of Thy transcendent grace and favour, and to waft over the entire creation the fragrances of the raiment of Thy glorious unity, and to look upon all things with the eyes of Thy bounty and Thy oneness, I beseech Thee, therefore, by Thy love, which Thou hast made to be the mainspring of the revelations of Thine eternal holiness, and the flame that gloweth within the hearts of such of Thy creatures as yearn towards Thee, to create, this very moment, for those of Thy people who are wholly devoted to Thee, and for such of Thy loved ones as love Thee, out of the essence of Thy bounty and Thy generosity, and from the inmost spirit of Thy grace and Thy glory, Thy Paradise of transcendent holiness, and to exalt it above everything except Thee, and to sanctify it

from aught else save Thyself. Create, moreover, within it, O my God, out of the lights shed by Thy throne, handmaidens who will intone the melodies of Thy wondrous and most sweet invention, that they may magnify Thy name with such words as have not been heard by any of Thy creatures, be they the inmates of Thy heaven or the dwellers of Thine earth, nor been comprehended by any of Thy people. Unlock, then, the gates of this Paradise to the faces of Thy loved ones, that haply they may enter them in Thy name, and by the power of Thy sovereignty, that thereby the sovereign bounties vouchsafed by Thee unto Thy chosen ones and the transcendent gifts granted unto Thy trusted ones may be perfected, that they may extol Thy virtues with such melodies as none can either intone or describe, and that none of Thy people may conceive the design of appearing in the guise of any of Thy chosen ones, or of emulating the example of Thy loved ones, and that none may fail to discern between Thy friends and Thine enemies, or to distinguish them that are devoted to Thee from such as stubbornly oppose Thee. Potent art Thou to do what Thou wilt, and powerful and supreme art Thou over all things.

Exalted, immeasurably exalted art Thou, O my Beloved, above the strivings of any of Thy creatures, however learned, to know Thee; exalted, immensely exalted art Thou above every human attempt, no matter how searching, to describe Thee! For the highest thought of men, however deep their contemplation, can never hope to outsoar the limitations imposed upon Thy creation, nor ascend beyond the state of the contingent world, nor break the bounds irrevocably set for it by Thee. How can, then, a thing that hath been created by Thy will that overruleth the whole of creation, a thing that is itself a part of the contingent world, have the power to soar into the holy atmosphere of Thy knowledge, or reach unto the seat of Thy transcendent power?

High, immeasurably high art Thou above the endeavours of the evanescent creature to soar unto the throne of Thine eternity, or of the poor and wretched to attain the summit of Thine all-sufficing glory! From eternity Thou didst Thyself describe Thine own Self unto Thy Self, and extol, in Thine own Essence, Thine Essence unto Thine Essence. I swear by Thy glory, O my Best-Beloved! Who is there besides Thee that can claim to know Thee, and who save Thyself can make fitting mention of Thee? Thou art He Who, from eternity, abode in His realm, in the glory of His transcendent unity, and the splendours of His holy grandeur. Were any one except Thee to be deemed worthy of mention, in all the kingdoms of Thy creation, from the highest realms of immortality down to the level of this nether world, how could it, then, be demonstrated that Thou art established upon the throne of Thy unity, and how could the wondrous virtues of Thy oneness and Thy singleness be glorified?

I bear witness, this very moment, to what Thou hast testified for Thine own Self, ere Thou hadst created the heavens and the earth, that Thou art God, and that there is none other God besides Thee. Thou hast from everlasting been potent, through the Manifestations of Thy might, to reveal the signs of Thy power, and Thou hast ever made known, through the Daysprings of Thy knowledge, the words of Thy wisdom. No one besides Thee hath ever been found worthy to be mentioned before the Tabernacle of Thy unity, and none except Thyself hath proved himself capable of being praised within the hallowed court of Thy oneness.

Praise be to Thee, O my God, that Thou hast revealed Thy favours and Thy bounties; and glory be to Thee, O my Beloved, that Thou hast manifested the Day-Star of Thy loving-kindness and Thy tender mercies. I yield Thee such thanks as can direct the steps of the wayward towards the splendours of the morning light of Thy guidance, and enable those who yearn towards Thee to

attain the seat of the revelation of the effulgence of Thy beauty. I yield Thee such thanks as can cause the sick to draw nigh unto the waters of Thy healing, and can help those who are far from Thee to approach the living fountain of Thy presence. I yield Thee such thanks as can divest the bodies of Thy servants of the garments of mortality and abasement, and attire them in the robes of Thine eternity and Thy glory, and lead the poor unto the shores of Thy holiness and all sufficient riches. I yield Thee such thanks as can enable the Heavenly Dove to warble forth, upon the branches of the Lote-Tree of Immortality, her song: "Verily, Thou art God. No God is there besides Thee. From eternity Thou hast been exalted above the praise of aught else but Thee, and been high above the description of any one except Thyself." I yield Thee such thanks as can cause the Nightingale of Glory to pour forth its melody in the highest heaven: "'Alí (the Bá'b), in truth, is Thy servant, Whom Thou hast singled out from among Thy Messengers and Thy chosen Ones, and made Him to be the Manifestation of Thyself in all that pertaineth unto Thee, and that concerneth the revelation of Thine attributes and the evidences of Thy names." I yield Thee such thanks as can stir up all things to extol Thee, and to glorify Thine Essence, and can unloose the tongues of all beings to magnify the sovereignty of Thy beauty. I yield Thee such thanks as can fill the heavens and the earth with the signs of Thy transcendent Essence, and assist all created things to enter the Tabernacle of Thy nearness and Thy presence. I yield Thee such thanks as can make every created thing to be a book that shall speak of Thee, and a scroll that shall unfold Thy praise. I yield Thee such thanks as can stablish the Manifestations of Thy sovereignty upon the throne of Thy governance, and set up the Exponents of Thy glory upon the seat of Thy Divinity. I yield Thee such thanks as can make the corrupt tree to bring forth good fruit through the holy breaths of Thy favours, and revive the bodies of all beings with the gentle winds of Thy transcendent grace. I yield Thee such thanks as can cause the signs of Thine exalted singleness to be sent down out of the heaven of Thy holy unity. I yield Thee such thanks as can teach all things the realities of Thy knowledge and the essence of Thy wisdom, and will not withhold the wretched creatures from the doors of Thy mercy and Thy bountiful favour. I yield Thee such thanks as can enable all who are in heaven and on earth to dispense with all created things, through the treasures of Thine all-sufficing riches, and can aid all created things to reach unto the summit of Thine almighty favours. I yield Thee such thanks as can assist the hearts of Thine ardent lovers to soar into the atmosphere of nearness to Thee, and of longing for Thee, and kindle the Light of Lights within the land of 'Irâq. I yield Thee such thanks as can detach them that are nigh unto Thee from all created things, and draw them to the throne of Thy names and Thine attributes. I yield Thee such thanks as can cause Thee to forgive all sins and trespasses, and to fulfil the needs of the peoples of all religions, and to waft the fragrances of pardon over the entire creation. I yield Thee such thanks as can enable them that recognize Thy unity to scale the heights of Thy love, and cause such as are devoted to Thee to ascend unto the Paradise of Thy presence. I yield Thee such thanks as can satisfy the wants of all such as seek Thee, and realize the aims of them that have recognized Thee. I yield Thee such thanks as can blot out from the hearts of men all suggestions of limitations, and inscribe the signs of Thy unity. I yield Thee such thanks as that with which Thou didst from eternity glorify Thine own Self, and didst exalt it above all peers, rivals, and comparisons, O Thou in Whose hands are the heavens of grace and of bounty, and the kingdoms of glory and of majesty!

Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God, and my Master! Thou bearest witness, and seest, and knowest the things that have befallen Thy loved ones in Thy days, and the continual trials, and the successive tribulations, and the incessant afflictions, which have been sent down upon Thine

elect. Such hath been their plight that the earth became too strait for them, and they were encompassed by the evidences of Thy wrath and the signs of Thy fear in every land, and the doors of Thy mercy and Thy loving-kindness were shut against them, and the garden of their hearts was deprived of the overflowing showers of Thy grace and Thy bountiful favours. Wilt Thou withhold, O my God, from such as love Thee the wonders of Thine ascendancy and triumph? Wilt Thou shatter, O my Beloved, the hopes which they who are devoted to Thee have fixed on Thy manifold bounties and gifts? Wilt Thou keep back, O my Master, those that have recognized Thee from the shores of Thy sanctified knowledge, or wilt Thou cease to rain down upon the hearts of such as desire Thee the showers of Thy transcendent grace? No, no, and to this Thy glory beareth me witness! I testify this very moment that Thy mercy hath surpassed all created things, and Thy loving-kindness encompassed all that are in heaven and all that are on earth. From everlasting the doors of Thy generosity were open to the faces of Thy servants, and the gentle winds of Thy grace were wafted over the hearts of Thy creatures, and the overflowing rains of Thy bounty were showered upon Thy people and the dwellers of Thy realm.

I know full well Thou hast delayed to manifest Thy triumph in the kingdom of creation by reason of Thy knowledge which embraceth both the mysteries of Thy decree, and the hidden things ordained behind the veils of Thine irrevocable purpose, that thereby those who have entered beneath the shadow of Thy transcendent mercy may be separated from those who have dealt disdainfully with Thee, and turned back from Thy presence at the time when Thou didst manifest Thy most exalted Beauty.

Exalted, immeasurably exalted art Thou, therefore, O my Beloved! Forasmuch as Thou hast divided, in Thy realm, Thy loved ones from Thine enemies, and hast perfected Thy most weighty testimony and Thy most infallible Proof unto all who are in heaven and on earth, have mercy, then, upon those who were brought low in Thy land, by reason of what hath befallen them in Thy path. Exalt them, then, O my God, through the power of Thy might and the potency of Thy will, and raise them up to proclaim Thy Cause through Thine omnipotent sovereignty and purpose.

I swear by Thy glory! My sole purpose in showing forth Thine ascendancy hath been to glorify Thy Cause, and to magnify Thy word. I am persuaded that if Thou wert to delay to send down Thy victory and to demonstrate Thy power, the signs of Thy sovereignty would assuredly perish in Thy land, and the tokens of Thy rule would be blotted out throughout Thy dominion.

My breast is straitened, O my God, and sorrows and vexations have compassed me round, for I hear among Thy servants every praise except Thy wondrous praise, and behold amidst Thy people the evidences of all things save the evidences of what Thou hast prescribed unto them by Thy behest, and destined for them through Thy sovereign will, and ordained unto them by Thine overruling decree. They have strayed so far from Thee that should any of Thy loved ones deliver unto them the wondrous tokens of Thy unity, and the gem-like utterances that attest Thy transcendent oneness, they would thrust their fingers into their ears, and would cavil at him and mock him. All this hast Thou set down through Thine all-encompassing sovereignty, and apprehended through Thine omnipotent supremacy.

Glorified, immeasurably glorified art Thou, O my Master! Look, then, upon the hearts which, in their love for Thee, have been transfixed by the darts of Thine enemies, and the heads which

were borne on spears for the sake of the exaltation of Thy Cause and the glorification of Thy name. Have pity, then, upon those hearts which have been consumed by the fire of Thy love, and been touched by such tribulations as are known only unto Thee.

All laud and honour to Thee, O my God! Thou well knowest the things which, for a score of years, have happened in Thy days, and have continued to happen until this hour. No man can reckon, nor can any tongue tell, what hath befallen Thy chosen ones during all this time. They could obtain no shelter, nor find any refuge in which they could abide in safety. Turn, then, O my God, their fear into the evidences of Thy peace and Thy security, and their abasement into the sovereignty of Thy glory, and their poverty into Thine all-sufficient riches, and their distress into the wonders of Thy perfect tranquillity. Vouchsafe unto them the fragrances of Thy might and Thy mercy, and send down upon them, out of Thy marvellous loving-kindness, what will enable them to dispense with all except Thee, and will detach them from aught save Thyself, that the sovereignty of Thy oneness may be revealed and the supremacy of Thy grace and Thy bounty demonstrated.

Wilt Thou not, O my God, look upon the tears which Thy loved ones have shed? Wilt Thou not pity, O my Beloved, the eyes which have been dimmed by reason of their separation from Thee, and because of the cessation of the signs of Thy victory? Wilt Thou not behold, O my Master, the hearts wherein have beaten the wings of the dove of longing and love for Thee? By Thy glory! Things have come to such a pass that hope hath well nigh been banished from the hearts of Thy chosen ones, and the breaths of despair are ready to seize them, by reason of what hath befallen them in Thy days.

Behold me, then, O my God, how I have fled from myself unto Thee, and have abandoned my own being that I may attain unto the splendours of the light of Thy Being, and have forsaken all that keepeth me back from Thee, and maketh me forgetful of Thee, in order that I may inhale the fragrances of Thy presence and Thy remembrance. Behold how I have stepped upon the dust of the city of Thy forgiveness and Thy bounty, and dwelt within the precincts of Thy transcendent mercy, and have besought Thee, through the sovereignty of Him Who is Thy Remembrance and Who hath appeared in the robe of Thy most pure and most august Beauty, to send down, in the course of this year, upon Thy loved ones what will enable them to dispense with any one except Thee, and will set them free to recognize the evidences of Thy sovereign will and all-conquering purpose, in such wise that they will seek only what Thou didst wish for them through Thy bidding, and will desire naught except what Thou didst desire for them through Thy will. Sanctify, then, their eyes, O my God, that they may behold the light of Thy Beauty, and purge their ears, that they may listen to the melodies of the Dove of Thy transcendent oneness. Flood, then, their hearts with the wonders of Thy love, and preserve their tongues from mentioning any one save Thee, and guard their faces from turning to aught else except Thyself. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Protect, moreover, O my Beloved, through Thy love for them and through the love they bear to Thee, this servant, who hath sacrificed his all for Thee, and expended whatsoever Thou hast given him in the path of Thy love and Thy good-pleasure, and preserve him from all that Thou abhorrest, and from whatsoever may hinder him from entering into the Tabernacle of Thy holy sovereignty, and from attaining the seat of Thy transcendent oneness. Number him, then, O my

God, with such as have allowed nothing whatever to deter them from beholding Thy beauty, or from meditating on the wondrous evidences of Thine everlasting handiwork, that he may have fellowship with none except Thee, and turn to naught save Thyself, and discover in whatever hath been created by Thee in the kingdoms of earth and heaven nothing but Thy wondrous Beauty and the revelation of the splendours of Thy face, and be so immersed beneath the billowing oceans of Thine overruling providence and the surging seas of Thy holy unity, that he will forget every mention except the mention of Thy transcendent oneness, and banish from his soul the traces of all evil suggestions, O Thou in Whose hands are the kingdoms of all names and attributes!

Lauded be Thy name, O Thou Who art the Goal of my desire! I swear by Thy glory! How great is my wish to attain unto a detachment so complete that were there to appear before me those countenances which are hid within the chambers of chastity, and the beauty of which Thou didst veil from the eyes of the entire creation, and whose faces Thou didst sanctify from the sight of all beings, and were they to unveil themselves in all the glory of the splendours of Thine incomparable beauty, I would refuse to look upon them, and would behold them solely for the purpose of discerning the mysteries of Thy handiwork, which have perplexed the minds of such as have drawn nigh unto Thee, and awed the souls of all them that have recognized Thee. I would, by Thy power and Thy might, soar to such heights that nothing whatsoever would have the power to keep me back from the manifold evidences of Thy transcendent dominion, nor would any earthly scheme shut me out from the manifestations of Thy Divine holiness.

Glorified, immeasurably glorified art Thou, O my God, and my Beloved, and my Master, and my Desire! Shatter not the hopes of this lowly one to attain the shores of Thy glory, and deprive not this wretched creature of the immensities of Thy riches, and cast not away this suppliant from the doors of Thy grace, and Thy bounty, and Thy gifts. Have mercy, then, upon this poor and desolate soul who hath sought no friend but Thee, and no companion except Thee, and no comforter save Thee, and no beloved apart from Thee, nor cherished any desire but Thyself.

Cast, then, upon me, O my God, the glances of Thy mercy, and forgive me my trespasses and the trespasses of them that are dear to Thee, and which come in between us and the revelation of Thy triumph and Thy grace. Cancel Thou, moreover, our sins which have shut off our faces from the splendours of the Day-Star of Thy favours. Powerful art Thou to do Thy pleasure. Thou ordainest what Thou wilt, and art not asked of what Thou wishest through the power of Thy sovereignty, nor canst Thou be frustrated in whatsoever Thou prescribest through Thine irrevocable decree. No God is there save Thee, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the Ever-Living, the Most Compassionate.

– 23 –

Súriy-i-Qalam

(Súrih of the Pen)

This is the Súrih of the Pen, which hath been sent down from the heaven of eternity unto them that have fixed their gaze upon His Throne.

In the name of God, the Most Wondrous, the Most Glorious!

O Pen of the Most High! Bear thou witness, in thine own self, that verily He is God and that there is none other God but Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Bear thou witness, then, by thine own essence, that verily I am God and that there is none other God but Him, that all have been created at My behest and that all abide by My command. Bear thou witness, moreover, by thine inmost being, that this is the Beauty of God which hath dawned above the horizon of the Unseen, a Beauty that hath ever been, and shall ever remain, unknown to all save Himself. He, verily, is the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Through but one of His effulgences the Day-Stars of majesty and grandeur have shone forth, the hearts of the denizens of the everlasting realm and the sanctified realities that lay hid beneath the mystic veil have been called into being, and the secrets of all that was and shall be have been laid bare.

O Pen! Let nothing dismay thee, for unto thee have We vouchsafed the inviolable protection of Our sovereign might and power, and into thee have We breathed a spirit, one breath of which would, if wafted upon the bodies of all existence, cause them to arise from their couches, unloose their tongues, speak forth, and bear witness in their inmost being that there is none other God but Me, the Powerful, the Glorious, the Exalted, the Mighty, the Peerless, the All-Subduing, the Self-Subsisting.

O Pen of Command! Be assured in thyself, and reveal then unto all beings a measure of that which God bestowed upon thee ere the creation of words and letters and the fashioning of all things, and ere the establishment of the kingdom of names and attributes and the revelation of His mighty and guarded Tablet. Say: This is a Power unsurpassed from all eternity to all eternity, could ye but know it, O concourse of the Spirit, and this is a Beauty unrivalled from the beginning that hath no beginning, could ye but perceive it. Say: Whoso conceiveth the least design to confront this Pen, to presume partnership with it, to gain intimate access unto it, or to fully grasp that which emanateth from it, be assured that the Evil One doth whisper within his breast. Thus hath the Divine Command been issued, could ye but understand. Say: By God! None hath ever been, nor shall ever be, able to rival Me amidst all creation. Thus hath it been inscribed by the Pen of divine revelation, could ye but comprehend it. Say: A single letter of Mine utterance hath, verily, brought forth the entire universe, the realities of all things, and worlds which none can fathom save God, the Almighty, the Most Manifest.

O Pen! Give ear unto that which the unbelievers have imputed to thee. Say: O assemblage of malice! Perish in your hatred, in your envy and your unbelief! By Him Who is the Eternal Truth! This is that Pen through a mere intimation of whose will the souls of the Concourse on high, and the realities of the denizens of the everlasting realm, and the essences of human hearts and minds, were all fashioned. This is that Pen through but a movement of which the sun of might and grandeur, and the moon of loftiness and sanctity, and the stars of grace and favour, were called into existence. This is that Pen through which were created the all-highest Paradise and all that abide therein, and the celestial garden and all that pertaineth thereto, could ye but comprehend. Say: Through but a single stroke have been manifested the knowledge of all that was and shall be, and the creation of all things past and future. Open then your eyes that ye may bear witness to this truth.

O Pen! Content thyself with that which thou hast so far intimated to the world of thy sovereignty and power, for the hearts of the envious are well-nigh bursting. Veil, then, thy Cause, and reveal no more than this, for thy words would rend asunder the heavens of ancient glory, and cleave in twain the earth of holiness itself, and cause the inmates of the realm of grandeur to swoon away. Be patient in thy heart, for the people of the world are incapable of beholding thy sovereignty or perceiving thy manifold signs, how much less of recognizing Him Who hath created and fashioned thee through but a single word of His utterance! Exalted is thy Lord above all that thou hast revealed in the past or wilt manifest in the future. Exalted is He above all that His sincere and well-favoured servants have comprehended or will ever comprehend. Content thyself, then, with that which thou hast thus far revealed. I swear by the One True God! Should all that are in the heavens and on earth and whatsoever lieth between them—whether trees, fruits, leaves, twigs, branches, rivers, oceans, or mountains—encounter a single word of thy pronouncement, they would assuredly speak forth that which the Burning Bush, springing from the soil of divine revelation, spoke unto Moses in that holy and blessed Vale.

O Pen! Give ear unto the wondrous account of that which God hath graciously bestowed upon thee. Detach thyself, then, from all thou dost possess, and announce unto the people the joyful tidings of the appearance of the Most Exalted Word in this mighty Revelation, that haply they may recognize their Creator and renounce all else but Him. Call then upon the Concourse on high to rejoice, saying: O ye exponents of grandeur sheltered beneath the tabernacle of majesty! O ye denizens of the dominion of power abiding beneath the canopy of glory! O ye dwellers of the kingdom of the seen and the unseen situate in the furthestmost precincts beyond the ocean of eternity! O ye manifestations of the divine names in the highest heaven! Let your hearts rejoice in this Most Great Festival wherein God Himself proffereth this most pure chalice unto such as stand before Him with beseeming lowliness and humility. Adorn, then, your souls with the silken vesture of certitude and your bodies with the brodered robe of the All-Merciful, for lo, a light hath dawned forth and shone resplendent from the horizon of My brow, before whose revelation all that are in the heavens and on earth have bowed down in adoration, could ye but perceive it.

Say: I swear by the one true God that there hath never appeared in all creation another like unto Him. Whoso asserteth otherwise hath gainsaid the testimony of God and is accounted among the faithless in His mighty and well-guarded Tablet. Say: This is the Light through which the inhabitants of the celestial world and their inner realities have been brought forth, and through which the embodiments of the heavenly realm and their inmost essences have been raised up. This is the Light through which God hath created worlds that have neither beginning nor end, worlds whereof none hath the slightest intimation save those whom their Lord hath willed. Thus do We disclose unto you the hidden mysteries, that haply ye may ponder the signs of God. Say: This, verily, is the Light before whose effulgence every head hath bowed down in lowliness, and before whose manifestation the hearts of the well-favoured of God, and the souls of His holy ones, and the inmost realities of His true worshippers, and beyond them His honoured servants, have prostrated themselves in adoration.

O inmates of the holy sanctuary! I swear by God! He in very truth is the Sanctuary of God amongst you and His sacred Precinct in your midst, the holy Site of the Spirit before your eyes and the Station of both inner and outer peace and security. Take heed lest ye deprive yourselves

of the Sanctuary of His knowledge. Hasten unto Him and tarry not. This is that Sanctuary round which circle the Manifestations of the Divine Being and the Embodiments of His eternal Reality, and whose court God hath hallowed beyond the reach of the outcast and the ungodly. This, verily, is that Sanctuary the blessing of whose service is sought by the Maids of Heaven, and them that dwell in the depths of the Most Great Ocean, and them that abide in the habitation of holiness and the realm of reunion—and yet the people, for the most part, comprehend not.

O denizens of earth and heaven! Abandon your couches and undertake the Most Great Pilgrimage for the sake of this pure and refulgent Beauty. Should God witness your inability to do so, He will exempt you therefrom and command you instead to approach Him with heart and soul. And they alone shall attain this who behold all that is in the heavens and on the earth as a day wherein none was deemed worthy of mention. These are they to whom their Lord will give to drink, from His own hands, of the sealed wine of holiness. Verily, whoso turneth his face towards this most blessed and luminous Spot, round him shall circle resplendent suns whose effulgence knoweth neither beginning nor end, and above the horizon of his heart there shall dawn that Sun of suns before Whose light the orbs of worldly names are wrapped in darkness, if ye be of them that understand.

O Pen! Proclaim unto the concourse of eternity, saying: O ye that rove in the arenas of immortality! O ye that abide beneath the tabernacle of grandeur! O ye gem-like realities that lie hid from the eyes of creation! Descend from your lofty retreats to celebrate and rejoice, and to quaff from the cup of everlasting life that the hand of the All-Glorious is proffering on this Day. This, in truth, is a Day the like of which hath never been witnessed in all creation, a Day whereon the Eye of Grandeur hath been cheered in the Seat of transcendent glory. O ye bearers of the throne of God! Adorn the most great throne on this Day, for the unseen Beauty hath appeared—He Whose presence the inmates of the all-highest Paradise and the dwellers of the garden of repose have thus far been powerless to attain. Say: By God! The Hidden Secret hath appeared in the plenitude of His glory and hath solaced by His beauty the eyes of all things seen and unseen, and beyond them the eyes of them that have cleansed their souls with the holy waters streaming from the ocean of the Name of their Lord, the Most Manifest.

Say: This is a Day whereon God hath made His own Self known and revealed it unto all who are in the heavens and on earth, a day whereon He hath established His sovereign ascendancy over the kingdoms of revelation and creation. How exalted, then, is this holy, this most blessed and best-beloved grace! This is a Day, moreover, whereon the Ancient Beauty hath appeared with such an adorning as to cause the veils to be rent asunder, and the mysteries to be revealed, and the fruits to spring forth, and all things to utter the praise of their Lord, the Unconstrained—a Day whereon the earth and all that it holdeth, and the heavens and all that they contain, and the mountains and all that they conceal, and the oceans and all that they treasure in their depths, have laid bare their secrets, though the people remain veiled therefrom. This is a day whereon the idols of misbelief and worldly desire have been shattered and the Ancient Beauty hath ascended His mighty throne. The Spirit of glory hath called out from the precincts of eternity, and the Most Holy Spirit from the Divine Lote-Tree, and the Spirit of command from the Tree beyond which there is no passing, and the Spirit of might from the exalted dominion, and the faithful Spirit from the right hand of the Burning Bush, saying: “Hallowed be the Lord of mercy, Who hath appeared in the world of existence invested with that which mortal eyes had never

beheld!" Say: He it is Who through a movement of His finger causeth the creatures of earth and heaven to perish, Who through a word of His mouth bringeth them to life again, and Who through a mere intimation of His glance turneth all creation unto the presence of God, the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved.

Say: O concourse of monks! Abandon the churches wherein ye have glorified your Lord, for He Who ascended unto heaven hath in very truth come down again and circleth round the Throne of God. I swear by the one true God! In this Day the bells are pealing out in My remembrance, the Trumpet soundeth My praise, and the Bugle proclaimeth My Name, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Deprive not yourselves of the grace of this day; hasten rather to the seat of the Throne, forsake that which ye possess, and take fast hold of the Cord of God, Who hath arisen and manifested Himself and spoken forth for all to hear.

O inhabitants of the realms of the seen and the unseen! Sing, O sing the most joyous melodies on this Festival of God which hath appeared with the power of truth and to which the former and latter generations had never attained, could ye but know it. This is the Day whereon the Pen of God hath absolved all who are in the heavens and on earth. Thus hath His eternal command shone forth from the dayspring of His Pen, that ye may rejoice in your souls and be of those whose hearts are gladdened.

O Pen! Announce unto the Maid of Paradise: "By God! This day is thy day. Come forth as thou wilt, and array thyself as thou pleasest with the broidered robe of names and the silken vesture of immortality. Emerge then from thine eternal habitation even as the sun that dawneth from the countenance of Bahá. Descend from thy lofty heights and, standing betwixt earth and heaven, lift the veil of concealment from thy luminous face and shine forth above the horizon of creation as the black-eyed Damsel, that haply the most great veil may be torn away from the eyes of these people and they may behold the Scene of transcendent glory, the Beauty of God, the Most Holy, the Most Powerful, the Best-Beloved."

"O Ancient Beauty! The unbelievers, verily, are lost in the stupor of idle fancy and are powerless to turn their eyes towards the most hallowed Court. Through the sovereign potency of Thine inviolable protection, Thou hast shielded me beneath the veils of light and guarded my beauty from the gaze of Thine enemies. Thine is the power to command; Thou ordainest as Thou pleasest through Thy word 'Be', and it is."

"O Maid of Bahá! Step forth from the court of eternity, but let not thy most pure gaze linger upon the faces of mortal men. I swear by the one true God! None save them that are possessed of true insight can ever hope to behold thee in this most sublime vision. Leave the kingdom of names on thy right and the dominion of attributes on thy left, and shine forth by My leave above the horizon of Mine inviolable protection, divested of all that hath been created in the realm of Revelation and shorn of all that hath appeared in the kingdom of creation, that thou mayest manifest the beauteous image of God in all regions. Intone, then, the sweetest of melodies betwixt earth and heaven, that all existence may be detached from aught save the face of thy Lord, the Most Holy, the Most Gracious, the Well-Beloved. Beam forth above the horizon of the Ridván with the beauty of the All-Merciful, and let thy fragrant locks flow upon thy bosom, that the perfume of the garment of thy most gracious Lord may be diffused throughout the world. Hide not thy luminous form from the eyes of the concourse of Revelation, and withhold not

thine ethereal veil of holiness from the gaze of the people. Present thyself, then, before the Throne with thy locks flowing, thine arms bejewelled, thy countenance blushing, thy cheeks aglow, and thine eyes adorned, and take hold of the snow-white chalice in My most exalted Name. Proffer then to the denizens of the realm of eternity the crimson wine of Mine all-glorious Beauty, that haply the concourse of Revelation may sanctify their souls in this most august Festival by virtue of this pure draught, and that they may emerge from behind the veil of concealment through the power of Mine almighty and all-powerful, Mine all-subduing and self-subsisting sovereignty."

"By God! I am the Maid of Heaven, abiding in the midmost heart of Paradise, hidden behind the veil of the All-Merciful and concealed from the eyes of men. From time immemorial I remained shrouded in the veil of sanctity beneath the Tabernacle of Grandeur. I heard a most sweet call from the right hand of the throne of my Lord, the Most Exalted, and I saw Paradise itself set in motion and all its inhabitants stirred up in their longing to attain the presence of God, the All-Glorious. Whereupon another call was raised: 'By God! The Beloved of the worlds is come! Blessed be the one who attaineth His presence, and beholdeth His face, and giveth ear to His most holy, His most glorious and beloved utterance. The Voice of God hath enraptured the souls of the Concourse on high and the hearts of the dwellers of the everlasting realm, and the all-consuming ecstasies of love have caused them to tremble with yearning and to fix their gaze upon the court of sanctity, the station of unapproachable glory.' Were I to speak in every tongue, I would nonetheless be powerless to describe that which I beheld in that state. And yet, in spite of this grace that hath encompassed all things, and this rapture that hath overtaken all that are immersed beneath the ocean of names, behold, I found the people of the Bayán veiled and heedless, and lying as dead in the graves of oblivion. O people of the Bayán! Reckon ye to be treading the path of the spirit even as ye have rejected this Revelation? Nay, by my Beauty, which God hath ordained as the manifestation of His own Beauty amongst all the former and latter generations!"

"O Maid of holiness! Forsake the mention of such people, for their hearts are as immovable as stones and impervious to all but the promptings of idle fancy. For they remain immature in the Cause of God and suckle the milk of ignorance at the breast of waywardness. Leave them to dwell upon the dust, and warble thou My melodies in the realm of eternity. Apprise, then, the inhabitants of Paradise of that which hath been manifested in the kingdom of creation. Thus may they become attracted by Thy sweet accents, hasten towards this hallowed and promised Beauty, and become fully apprised of this Day—a Day whereon all things have been adorned with the ornament of names, a Day whereon every poor one hath found the source of true wealth and every deprived and sinful soul hath attained forgiveness."

O people! Seek ye in these days the grace of God and His all-embracing mercy, and beware lest ye follow in the footsteps of every veiled and heedless soul.

Thus the summons of the Pen regarding this blessed and fated account endeth, in this Tablet.

– 24 –

He is the Ever-Abiding.

It is the Festival of Ridván, the vernal season wherein the Beauty of the All-Glorious was revealed betwixt earth and heaven. In this wondrous Day the gates of Paradise were flung open before the faces of all people, at the behest of Him Who is the All-Praised, and the outpourings of divine mercy rained down from the clouds of celestial favour upon His countless embodiments and manifestations in the world of being.

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Another letter of thine, which made mention of the hallowed and blessed days of Ridván, was received. Praise be to God, there wafted therefrom the sweet savours of the rose-garden of true knowledge and inner meaning. Should the people of the world resolve, one and all, to extol the days that We passed in the garden of Najíb Páshá, which hath been designated as the Garden of Ridván, they would find themselves utterly incapable thereof and would confess to their powerlessness.

Verily, the eye of creation hath never beheld the light of those days, nor hath the gaze of humankind ever witnessed their like. The approach of Him Who is the Desire of the world, His entrance into that garden, His ascent upon the throne of utterance, and the words that streamed forth from the mouth of His will at that moment shall forever transcend every earthly mention. Any attribute that might be ascribed unto them, any praise wherewith they might be extolled will fail to do justice to the dust that hath been ennobled by His footsteps, how much less to His mighty throne, His manifest establishment thereon, and His pervasive and all-embracing utterance. Indeed, the splendours of that Day elude the understanding and comprehension of the peoples of the world.

That garden hath been named after its caretaker, who was called Ridván. Those were the days whereon the All-Merciful cast the splendour of all His names over all who are in His heaven and on His earth. Some among His chosen ones had the honour of witnessing those days and beholding that which was manifested therein. In the arrival and departure of the Ancient Beauty, the signs and tokens of God were made clear and evident, and the light of Revelation was made to shine forth in the plenitude of its glory. Verily, His majesty was exalted, His power magnified, and His sovereignty revealed.

This servant besought his Lord to write down for His chosen ones the recompense of this Day and of that which shone forth thereon above the horizon of the will of our Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Upon perusing thy letter, I presented myself before His throne and read it in its entirety in His presence. He graciously heard it and said, blessed and exalted be His utterance: "In My Name that hath shed its radiance upon all that are in heaven and on earth. O 'Alí! Upon thee be My glory and My loving-kindness. Thou hast attained aforetime, and wilt continue hereafter to attain, unto My mention and My favour, and unto the Ocean and its waves, and the Light and its effulgence, and the Lote-Tree and its fruits, and the Sun and its rays. We have sent down unto thee, from the heaven of Our providence and bounty, verses whose import the wisest and most learned of men are powerless to apprehend. We beseech God, exalted and glorified be He, to aid thee at all times to serve His Cause amidst His servants, and to supply thee under all conditions, from the cup of His favour, with the living waters of His recognition, that all men may draw nigh unto His court of holiness and His throne of glory. He, verily, is the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

“Thou didst mention the days of Riḍván and those who gathered in thy house and in other homes to remember God, the Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, the King of this matchless Day. Well is it with the home that hath been adorned with My favour, within whose walls My remembrance hath been glorified, and which hath been honoured with the presence of such of My loved ones as have extolled My praise, clung to the cord of My providence, and recited My verses. These, verily, are among those honoured servants whom God hath extolled in the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' and other Holy Books. He, verily, is the One Who heareth all, Who seeth all, and Who is ready to answer.

“We, verily, have heard their remembrance and praise of this Announcement concerning which the Concourse on high hath cried out: By God! This is the Great Announcement which hath been mentioned in the Qur'án and in the former Books revealed by God, the Lord of the worlds. He, verily, praiseth His own Self on their behalf and mentioneth Himself through their tongues. He, verily, is the Most Generous, the Lord of grace abounding. Blessed the steadfast soul that hath stood unswayed by the tempestuous gales of doubt which the enemies have unleashed. And blessed the faithful one that hath remained unshaken by the onslaught of the hosts of oppression and the ascendancy of the exponents of denial, them that have fallen prey to their own idle imaginings and repudiated the very One to Whom they claim allegiance. These, verily, are accounted among the lost in My manifest Book.

“O 'Alí! Call upon My loved ones on My behalf. Convey unto them My praise, My remembrance, and My greetings, that the sweet fragrances of the bounty of thy Lord may attract them and draw them nigh unto God, the Almighty, the All-Praised. We, moreover, call to remembrance My handmaidens and My leaves who have held fast to My Tree and clung to the hem of My mighty and luminous Robe. Upon thee, and upon them, man and woman alike, be the glory of God, the Compassionate, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”

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Declaration of the Báb

– 26 –

Lawḥ-i-Náqús

(Tablet of the Bell)

He is the All-Glorious.

This is the garden of Paradise, wherein arise the anthems of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting; wherein ascend the soul-entrancing melodies warbled by the Nightingale of Eternity upon the twigs of the Divine Lote-Tree; wherein abide the Maids of Heaven whom none hath touched save God, the All-Glorious, the Most Holy; and wherein lieth enshrined that which draweth the needy to the shores of the ocean of true wealth and guideth the people to the Word of God. And this, verily, is naught but the manifest truth.

By Thy name “He”! Verily Thou art “He”, O Thou Who art “He”!

O Monk of the Divine Unity! Ring out the bell, for the Day of the Lord is come and the Beauty of the All-Glorious hath ascended His blessed and resplendent throne. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Húd, Prophet of the Divine Decree! Sound the clarion in the name of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful, for the Temple of holiness hath been established upon the seat of supernal glory. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Countenance of immortality! Pluck with the fingers of the spirit the sacred and wondrous strings, for the Beauty of the Divine Essence hath appeared, arrayed in a silken vesture of light. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Angel of light! Sound a blast upon the trumpet at the advent of this Revelation, for the letter Há' hath been joined to the letter of ancient glory. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Nightingale of heaven! Warble upon the boughs of this celestial garden in the name of the Beloved, for the beauty of the Rose hath appeared from behind an impenetrable veil. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Songster of Paradise! Trill out upon the twigs in these wondrous days, for God hath cast His effulgent rays upon all created things. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Bird of eternity! Soar aloft in these heights, for the Bird of faithfulness hath soared in the atmosphere of divine nearness. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O denizens of Paradise! Sing out and chant in the sweetest of tones, for the melody of God hath been raised within the Tabernacle of matchless sanctity. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O inmates of the Kingdom! Intone the name of the Beloved, for the beauty of His Cause hath shone forth from behind the veils, adorned with a luminous spirit. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O dwellers of the kingdom of names! Bedeck the furthest reaches of heaven, for the Most Great Name is come, riding upon the clouds of transcendent majesty. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O inhabitants of the Dominion of divine attributes in the Realm of Glory! Make ready to enter the presence of God, for the soft breezes of holiness have wafted from the sanctuary of the Divine Essence, and this, verily, is a conspicuous bounty. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O paradise of the Divine Unity! Rejoice within thyself, for the paradise of God, the Most Exalted, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, hath appeared. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O heaven of grandeur! Render thanks unto God within thine inmost being, for the heaven of holiness hath been upraised in the firmament of a heart of stainless purity. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O sun of worldly dominion! Eclipse thy face, for above the horizon of a resplendent morn there have shone the rays of the Day-Star of eternity. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O earth of knowledge! Swallow up thy learning, for the Earth of true knowledge hath been outspread through Him Who is the Self of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Bountiful, the Most High. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O lamp of earthly sovereignty! Put out thy light, for the Lamp of God hath been lit within the niche of eternity and hath illumined all that are in heaven and all that are on earth. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O seas of the world! Still the pounding of your waves, for a most wondrous Cause hath made to surge the Crimson Sea. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Peacock of the Divine Unity! Utter thy plaintive cry amidst the thickets of the celestial world, for the melody of God hath sounded near on every side. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O Cockerel of eternity! Sound thy call in the forests of the empyrean heaven, for the Summoner of God hath cried out from every lofty height. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O concourse of ardent lovers! Rejoice in your souls, for the day of separation hath ended, and the Covenant hath been fulfilled, and the Beloved hath appeared arrayed in sublime and majestic beauty. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

O assemblage of mystic knowers! Let your hearts be filled with joy, for the time of remoteness hath passed, and the spirit of certitude hath appeared, and the countenance of the celestial Youth hath beamed forth, adorned with the ornament of holiness in the paradise of His name, the Almighty. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

Glorified art Thou, O Lord, my God! I beseech Thee by Thy Day through which Thou didst bring forth all other days, and in a single moment whereof Thou didst reckon up the appointed time of all that have been and all that shall be—Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!—

And by Thy Name which Thou hast made the sovereign of the kingdom of names and the ruler of all who are in heaven and all who are on earth—Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!—

To graciously enable Thy servants to dispense with all but Thee, to draw nigh unto Thee, and to become detached from aught else save Thee. Thou, verily, art the God of power, of might and mercy. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

Enable them then, O my God, to bear witness to Thy unity and to testify to Thy oneness in such wise that they may behold naught save Thee and shut their eyes to all else. Thou, in truth, art powerful to do what pleaseth Thee. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

Kindle, then, within their breasts, O my Beloved, the fire of Thy love, that it may burn away the mention of aught else, and that they may testify within themselves that from everlasting Thou hast dwelt within the inaccessible heights of Thine eternity, that Thou wert alone with none beside Thee, and that Thou wilt continue unto everlasting to be what Thou hast ever been. No God is there but Thee, the Lord of might and bounty. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

For were Thy servants who long to scale the heights of Thy unity to set their hearts upon aught except Thee, they could not be reckoned among such as have truly believed, nor would the sign of Thy singleness be found within them. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Such being the case, I implore Thee to send down from the clouds of Thy mercy that which shall purify the hearts of Thine ardent lovers and sanctify the souls of those who adore Thee. Raise them up, then, through Thy transcendent power, and render them victorious over all who dwell on earth. This, indeed, is that which Thou hast promised Thy loved ones through Thy word of truth: "And We desire to show favour to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make of them Our heirs." Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

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Lawḥ-i-Ghulámu'l-Khuld

(Tablet of the Immortal Youth)

This is a remembrance of that which was revealed in the year sixty in the days of God, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing.

Lo, the gates of Paradise were unlocked, and the hallowed Youth came forth bearing a serpent plain. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with crystal waters.

Upon His face was a veil woven by the fingers of might and power. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty name.

Upon His brow there shone a beauteous crown, which cast its splendour upon all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty cause.

Upon His shoulders there fell the locks of the spirit, like unto black musk upon white and lustrous pearls. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a transcendent cause.

On His right hand was a ring adorned with a pure and blessed gem. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty spirit.

Upon it was graven, in a secret and ancient script: "By God! A most noble Angel is this." And the hearts of the inmates of the eternal realm cried out: "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with an ancient light."

Upon His right cheek was a mark whose sight caused every man of understanding to waver in his faith. And they that dwell behind the veil of the Unseen exclaimed: "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty secret."

This is the Point from which the knowledge of the former and the latter generations hath been unfolded. And the denizens of the Kingdom intoned: "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty knowledge."

This, verily, is the Horseman of the Spirit Who circleth round the fount of everlasting life. And they that lie concealed in the retreats of the highest heaven cried out: "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty unveiling."

He descended from the tabernacle of beauty till He stood, even as the sun in the midmost heaven, arrayed with a beauty at once peerless and transcendent. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with the most joyful tidings!

Standing in the midmost heaven, He shone forth like unto the sun in its meridian splendour, illumining the seat of divine beauty with His mighty Name. Whereupon the Crier cried out: "Rejoice! This is the Beauty of the Unseen, come with a mighty spirit."

And the Maids of Heaven cried out from their celestial chambers: "Hallowed be the Lord, the most excellent of all creators!" And the nightingale sang sweetly: "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, Whose like the eyes of the favoured ones of Heaven have never beheld."

And lo, the gates of Paradise were unlocked a second time with the key of His Great Name. "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty name."

And the Maid of beauty shone forth even as the dawning sun above the horizon of a resplendent morn. Rejoice! This is the divine Maiden, come with surpassing beauty.

She came forth with such adorning as to seize with longing desire the minds of them that are nigh unto God. Rejoice! This is the Maid of Heaven, come with alluring charm.

Descending from the chambers of eternity, she sang in accents that entranced the souls of the sincere. Rejoice! This is the immortal Beauty, come with a mighty secret.

Suspended in the air, she let fall a single lock of her hair from beneath her luminous veil— Rejoice! This is the Maid of Heaven, come with a wondrous spirit—

Shedding the fragrance of that lock upon all creation. Whereupon the faces of the holy ones grew pale and the hearts of the ardent lovers were filled with the blood of anguish. Rejoice! This is the Maid of Heaven, come with the sweetest fragrance.

By God! Whosoever closeth his eyes to her beauty hath fallen prey to grave deception and manifest error. Rejoice! This is the immortal Beauty, come with a shining light.

She turned, and round her circled the inhabitants of both this world and the world to come. Rejoice! This is the Maid of Heaven, come with a mighty dispensation.

She advanced, arrayed with a rare and glorious adorning, till she stood face to face before the Youth. Rejoice! This is the immortal Beauty, come with enchanting grace.

From beneath her veil she drew forth her hand, golden tinged as a sunbeam falling upon the face of a stainless mirror. Rejoice! This is the immortal Beauty, come with a resplendent adorning.

Her incomparable ruby fingers seized the hem of the veil that hid the face of the Youth— Rejoice! This is the immortal Beauty, come with a mighty glance—

And drew it back, whereupon the pillars of the Throne on high were made to tremble. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty cause.

Then did the spirits of all created things part from their bodies. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty cause.

And the inmates of Paradise rent their garments asunder as they caught a lightning glimpse of His ancient and shining countenance. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with an effulgent light.

At that moment the Voice of the Eternal was heard from beyond the veil of clouds with a sweet and enchanting call. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty enchantment.

And from the source of God's inscrutable decree the Tongue of the Unseen proclaimed: "By God! The like of this Youth the eyes of the former generations have never beheld." Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty cause.

And the maids of holiness cried out from the chambers of exalted dominion. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with manifest sovereignty.

By God! This is that Youth Whose beauty is the ardent desire of the celestial Concourse. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty cause.

Then did the Youth lift up His head to the concourse of heavenly angels—Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty spirit—

And gave voice to a single word, whereupon the denizens of heaven arose, one and all, to a new life. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty trumpet blast.

He looked then upon the inhabitants of the earth with a wondrous glance. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty glance.

And with that glance He gathered them together each and all. Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with a mighty cause.

With another look He signalled to a chosen few, then repaired to His habitation in the everlasting Paradise. And this, truly, is a mighty cause!

The Herald of Eternity proclaimeth from his cloud-wrapped throne: O ye that wait expectant in the vale of patience and fidelity! O ye that long to soar in the atmosphere of nearness and reunion! The celestial Youth, hidden ere now within the inviolable treasures of God, hath appeared, even as the Sun of Reality and the Eternal Spirit, from the Dawning-Place of changeless splendour, adorned with the ornament of the Almighty and the beauty of the All-Praised. He hath rescued all who are in heaven and on earth from the perils of death and extinction, clothed them in the garment of true and everlasting existence, and bestowed upon them a new life.

That concealed Word upon which the souls of all the Messengers of God and His Chosen Ones have ever depended hath manifested itself out of the invisible world into the visible plane. No sooner had this hidden Word shone forth from the Realm of inmost being and absolute singleness to illumine the peoples of the earth than a breeze of mercy wafted therefrom, purifying all things from the stench of sin and arraying the countless forms of existence and the reality of man with the vesture of forgiveness. So great was the wondrous grace which pervaded all things that through the utterance of the letters "B" and "E" the gems that lay hid within the repositories of this contingent world were brought forth and made manifest. Thus were the seen and the unseen joined in one garment, and the hidden and the manifest clothed in a single robe; thus did utter nothingness attain the realm of eternity, and pure evanescence gain admittance into the court of everlasting life.

Wherefore, O ye lovers of the beauty of the All-Glorious! O ye that ardently seek the court of the presence of the Almighty! This is the day of nearness and reunion, not the time for contention and idle words. If ye be sincere lovers, behold the beauty of the Best-Beloved shining clear and resplendent as the true morn. It behoveth you to be free from all attachment, whether to yourselves or to others; nay, ye should renounce existence and non-existence, light and darkness, glory and abasement alike. Sever your hearts from all transitory things, from all idle fancies and vain imaginings, that ye may, pure and unsullied, enter the realm of the spirit and partake with radiant hearts of the splendours of everlasting holiness.

O friends! The wine of eternal life is flowing. O lovers! The face of the Beloved is unveiled and unconcealed. O companions! The fire of the Sinai of love is burning bright and resplendent. Cast off the burden of love for this world and every attachment thereto, and, even as luminous, heavenly birds, soar in the atmosphere of the celestial Paradise and wing your flight to the everlasting nest. For devoid of this, life itself hath no worth, and bereft of the Beloved, the heart is of no account.

Yea, the moth-like lovers of the All-Glorious at every instant offer up their lives round the consuming flame of the Friend, occupying themselves with naught save Him. Yet not every bird can aspire to such heights. God, verily, guideth whom He willeth unto His mighty and exalted path.

Thus do We bestow upon the dwellers of the mystic realm that which shall draw them nigh unto the right hand of everlasting life and enable them to attain unto that station which hath been upraised in the heaven of holiness.

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He is the Ever-Abiding, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.

Lo, the Tongue of Glory hath called aloud and the Word of God hath cried out, proclaiming: "The Kingdom is God's, the Creator of the heavens and the Lord of all names!" And yet the people, for the most part, are heedless. The entire creation resoundeth with the melodies of the All-Merciful, the realms of sanctity are redolent with the fragrance of His raiment, and the Most Great Name hath shed the splendour of His glory upon all who dwell on earth, and yet the people are wrapped in a palpable veil.

O Pen of Glory! Intone the anthems of grandeur, for We have inhaled the fragrance of reunion at the approach of that Day whereon the kingdom of names was adorned with the ornament of Our Name, the Exalted, the Most High. No sooner was this Day mentioned before the Throne than the Maids of Heaven chanted a wondrous melody, the Nightingale pealed out its heavenly song, and the All-Merciful gave voice to that which enraptured the souls of the Messengers of God, His chosen ones, and those who enjoy near access to Him.

This is the eve of that Day from whose horizon the ancient Morn hath dawned forth with the splendour of the light beaming from that effulgent horizon. Say: This is the Day whereon God established the Covenant concerning Him Who is the voice of Truth by sending forth the One Who imparted unto humankind the glad-tidings of this Great Announcement. This is the Day whereon the Most Great Sign appeared and proclaimed this mighty Name, captivating thereby all created things with the reviving breezes of the verses of God. Happy the one that hath recognized his Lord and is numbered with them that have attained His presence.

Say: He, verily, is the most perfect Balance established amongst the nations, through Whom the measures of all things are made manifest by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. He it is Who hath intoxicated every understanding heart with the wine of His utterance, and Who hath torn asunder the veils through the power of My Name that overshadoweth the worlds. He, verily, hath ordained the Bayán to be a leaf of this Garden and adorned it with the mention of this incomparable Remembrance. He hath admonished all men not to withhold themselves from the Dayspring of ancient glory, nor to cling, at the time of His manifestation, to such tales and traditions as are current amongst them. Thus hath it been decreed in accordance with that which He hath revealed, and unto this beareth witness He Who speaketh the truth. No God is there beside Me, the Almighty, the Most Generous.

They that have turned away from the latter Manifestation have indeed failed to recognize the former. Thus hath it been ordained by the Author of all causes in this mighty adornment. Say: He, verily, announced unto you this Root; wherefore they that are held back by reason of a mere branch are in truth accounted among the dead. Alas, the people are clinging to the branch and have turned away from God, the King, the Glorious, the All-Praised. He conditioned all that He hath revealed upon Mine acceptance and made every matter contingent upon this manifest and resistless Cause. But for Me, He would not have uttered a single word, nor would He have manifested Himself before all who are in heaven and on earth. How often did He lament My banishment, My captivity, and My tribulations! That which was sent down in the Bayán beareth witness unto this, could ye but perceive it. Powerful indeed is the one who, through the might of God, hath become severed from all else but Him, and powerless the one who hath turned away from Him after He hath appeared with manifest sovereignty.

O peoples of the earth! Make mention of God on this Day whereon the Spirit hath spoken and the realities of those who were created by the Word of God, the Mighty, the Exalted, have ascended unto Him. It behoveth everyone on this day to rejoice with exceeding gladness, to clothe himself in his finest attire, to celebrate the praise of his Lord, and to give thanks unto Him for this most great favour. Blessed are they that have apprehended the purpose of God, and woe betide the heedless.

Having revealed this Tablet on this night, We desire to send it unto thee as a token of Our grace, that thou mayest be of those who are grateful. After thou hast received it, recite it in the presence of the loved ones of God, that they may hearken unto that which the Tongue of Grandeur hath pronounced and be of those who act in accordance with its counsels. Thus have We singled thee out and adorned thee with that raiment wherewith We have adorned the pure in heart. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!

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Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh

– 29 –

Súriy-i-Ghuṣn

(Tablet of the Branch)

He it is Who abideth forever in the Realm of Glory.

The Cause of God hath come down upon the clouds of utterance, while they that have joined partners with Him are afflicted with a sore torment. The hosts of Divine Revelation, bearing the banners of celestial inspiration, have descended from the heaven of His Tablet in the name of God, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, and the faithful rejoice in His victory and dominion, while the deniers are filled with dismay.

O people! Do ye flee from the mercy of God after it hath pervaded all that is in the heavens and on the earth? Barter not away that mercy wherewith God hath favoured you, nor withhold yourselves therefrom, for they that turn away are indeed in grievous loss. The mercy of God is

like unto the verses that are sent down from one same heaven: The true believers quaff therefrom the wine of everlasting life, while the ungodly drink a scalding draught. And whensoever the verses of God are rehearsed unto them, the fire of hatred is kindled in their breasts. Thus do they barter away the bounty that God hath bestowed upon them and are reckoned among the heedless.

Strive, O people, to enter beneath the sheltering shadow of the Word of God. Quaff, then, from it the choice wine of inner meaning and explanation, for it is the repository of the living waters of the All-Glorious and hath appeared from the horizon of the Will of the All-Merciful with matchless splendour. Say: Out of this Most Great Ocean there hath branched the Pre-existent Sea; blessed the one that hath attained and found repose upon its shores.

There hath branched from the Sadratu'l-Muntahá this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation. Magnified be He, therefore, for this sublime, this blessed, this mighty, this exalted Handiwork! Draw nigh unto Him, O people, and taste the fruits of wisdom and knowledge that have proceeded from Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Knowing. Whoso hath failed to taste thereof is deprived of God's bounty, though he partake of all that the earth can produce, could ye but perceive it!

A Word hath, as a token of Our grace, gone forth from the Most Great Tablet—a Word which God hath adorned with the ornament of His own Self, and made it sovereign over the earth and all that is therein, and a sign of His greatness and power among its people, that all may glorify thereby their Lord, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise, and extol the praise of their Creator and the sanctity of the Soul of God that holdeth sway over all created things. This, verily, is none other than a Word sent down by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the Ancient of Days.

Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favour unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My Beauty, hath repudiated My Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favoured servants.

Thus was I bidden to deliver unto you the message of God, your Creator, and I have fulfilled that whereunto I was bidden. Unto this bear witness God, and His angels, and His Messengers, and His sanctified servants. Inhale, then, the sweet savours of Paradise from its roses and be not of them that are deprived. Hasten to win your share of the grace which God hath bestowed upon you and suffer not yourselves to be veiled therefrom.

We have sent Him down in the form of a human temple. Blest and sanctified be God Who createth whatsoever He willeth through His inviolable, His infallible decree. They who deprive themselves of the shadow of the Branch are lost in the wilderness of error, are consumed by the heat of worldly desires, and are of those who will assuredly perish.

O people! Hasten to enter beneath the shadow of God, that it may shield you from the blazing heat of this Day wherein none shall find shelter or refuge save under the shadow of His Name, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate. Attire yourselves, O people, with the raiment of certitude, that it may protect you from the darts of idle fancy and vain imaginings and that ye may be numbered with the faithful in these days—days wherein none may attain certitude nor achieve constancy in the Cause of God save by renouncing that which is current amongst men and by turning towards this hallowed and refulgent Beauty.

O people! Will ye take a false deity for your helper rather than God? Will ye follow the Most Great Idol before your Lord, the Almighty, the Most Powerful? Forsake their mention, O people, and seize the cup of life in the name of your Lord, the All-Merciful. By the righteousness of God! A single drop from this cup quickeneth all humankind, could ye but know it.

Say: None shall be immune in this Day from God's decree; none shall find refuge save in Him. This, verily, is the truth, and aught else is but manifest error. God hath made it incumbent upon all to teach His Cause to the extent of their ability. Such is the decree that the Finger of might and power hath recorded in the Tablets of supernal glory. Whoso quickeneth but a single soul in this Revelation, it is as though he had quickened all humanity: Him will God, on the Day of Resurrection, raise again to life in the paradise of His oneness, adorned with the raiment of His own Self, the Sovereign Protector, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. Such is the nature of the assistance ye can render to your Lord, and naught else is worthy of mention in this Day in the presence of God, your Lord and the Lord of your sires of old.

As for thee, O servant, give ear unto that which We have admonished thee in this Tablet, and seek at all times the grace of thy Lord. Disseminate this Tablet amongst them that have believed in God and in His signs, that they may observe its injunctions and be numbered with the righteous.

Say: O people! Spread not disorder on the earth nor dispute with your fellow men, for this would ill beseem them that occupy, beneath the shadow of their Lord, the station of such as are faithful to the one true God. Whosoever ye encounter a thirsty soul, give him to drink from the cup of everlasting life; and whosoever ye find a hearing ear, recite unto him the verses of God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Compassionate. Unloose your tongues with kindly words and, should ye find the people inclined towards the Sanctuary of God, summon them to the truth; otherwise leave them to their own selves and to that condition which is the reality of the nethermost fire. Beware lest ye cast the pearls of inner meaning before the blind and the barren in heart, inasmuch as they are deprived of beholding the light and are unable to distinguish the worthless pebble from the precious and gleaming pearl. Wert thou for a thousand years to recite unto a stone the verses of wondrous glory, would it ever be affected by them or comprehend their significance? Nay, by thy Lord, the All-Merciful, the Most Compassionate! Wert thou to recite unto the deaf all the verses of God, would they hear a single letter thereof? Nay, by His ancient and glorious Beauty!

Thus have We imparted unto thee the gems of divine wisdom and utterance, that thou mayest fix thy gaze upon thy Lord and rid thyself of all attachment to the world. May His spirit rest upon thee and upon them that abide within the habitation of holiness and that are endued with true constancy in the Cause of their Lord.

Lawḥ-i-Rasúl

(Tablet to Rasúl)

Verily, I am the One Who abideth disconsolate beneath the canopy of this world.

O Rasúl! Shouldst thou ask concerning the Sun of the heaven of inner meaning, know that it hath been eclipsed by the clouds of envy; and shouldst thou enquire regarding the Moon of the realm of everlasting holiness, be apprised that it hath been obscured by the shrouds of hatred; and shouldst thou search after the Star of the firmament of unseen reality, be informed that it hath sunk below the horizon of malice. Behold, a lone Ḥusayn assailed by a hundred thousand deadly foes! Behold, a solitary Abraham compassed by a myriad tyrant kings! Behold, one stainless Soul that vast multitudes aim to seize! Behold, one single Throat that countless daggers seek to pierce!

Not a single night in Mine earthly life did I find rest; not a single day was I granted repose. At one time My severed head was sent as a trophy from land to land; at another I was suspended in the air. At one time I had for a boon companion him who dealt Me a fatal blow; at another I had for a close associate him who profaned My remains. Every morn, as I arose from My bed, a fresh affliction awaited Me; and every eve, as I repaired to the solitude of My chamber, a sore trial was in store. In the succession of My woes there was no reprieve, and in the onslaught of My sorrows there was no respite.

Notwithstanding all this, I stood against Mine enemies manifest as the sun and appeared before the dwellers of the heavenly kingdom bright as the moon. Not for an instant did I seek to preserve Mine own life, and not for a moment did I pursue Mine own ease and comfort. I offered up My soul in the path of My Beloved and laid down My life for His sake. My fortress was My reliance on God, and My shield Mine attachment to that peerless Friend; Mine armour was Mine unfailing trust in Him, and My hosts Mine ardent hope in His grace.

At length My revelation aroused the envy of My foes and elicited the rancour of the malicious. O My Rasúl! Wert thou to gaze with a keen and discerning eye, thou wouldst behold all things—yea, verily, even the denizens of the Realm on high—sharing in Mine anguish and sorrow. O Rasúl! The oppressive gloom of satanic envy hath concealed the resplendent Morn of the spirit, and the darksome veils of malice have obscured the refulgent rays of the Day-Star of eternal holiness.

At this present hour the Ancient King hath purposed to take leave of this wayward people. Yet none knoweth whether, even after His departure, this Essence of God's mercy will be spared the sting of these venomous serpents, as was clearly witnessed after His first banishment.

O Rasúl! Canst thou perceive the plight of this wronged and banished Soul Who findeth Himself sore tried by two contending peoples, and Who hath neither the pity of His foes nor the compassion of His friends? I swear by My Beauty that the afflictions I suffer at the hands of Mine enemies are a hundred thousand times easier to bear! Render thanks unto God that thou art

not fully acquainted with the condition of Him Who is the Eternal King and that which He hath been made to suffer. These indeed are days whose like the eye of creation hath never seen.

Strive, then, that thou mayest forsake the path of illusion and imitation and gain admittance into the realm of inner vision and the kingdom of spiritual discoveries. For in these days all are bewildered in the drunkenness of ignorance, save those whom thy Lord hath willed to spare. Some consider the fading mirage to be the billowing ocean and reckon the impenetrable darkness as the radiant morn. Others, having forsaken the river of eternal life, content themselves with a vanishing drop. Such is the state and condition of the people: "Thus have We created the souls in divers conditions."

As to thee, O Rasúl, shouldst thou wish to take flight in the atmosphere of My love, it behoveth thee to soar above the kingdoms of earth and heaven and all that they contain, that thou mayest attain the paradise of the good-pleasure of the All-Glorious. Well is it with them that have entered therein!

– 31 –

Lawḥ-i-Maryam

(Tablet to Maryam)

Sorrowful is He at My sorrows.

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

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

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

The birds of the air were My companions and the beasts of the field My associates. In such wise did I, even as the flash of the spirit, pass over this fleeting world. For two years or rather less, I shunned all else but God, and closed Mine eyes to all except Him, that haply the fire of hatred may die down and the heat of jealousy abate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

O Maryam! All the waters of the world and its rivers have flowed from the eyes of this Youth, which, even as the clouds, have rained down their tears at the wrongs He hath suffered. In short, We have ever offered up Our life and soul in the path of the Beloved, and We are thankful and content in the face of whatever may befall Us. At one time My head was raised aloft on a spear,

and at another it fell into the hands of My deadly enemy. At one time I was cast into the fire, and at another I was suspended in the air. Such indeed hath been the treatment that the ungodly have meted out to Us.

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

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Kitáb-i-‘Ahd

(Book of the Covenant)

Although the Realm of Glory hath none of the vanities of the world, yet within the treasury of trust and resignation We have bequeathed to Our heirs an excellent and priceless Heritage. Earthly treasures We have not bequeathed, nor have We added such cares as they entail. By God! In earthly riches fear is hidden and peril is concealed. Consider ye and call to mind that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur’án: “Woe betide every slanderer and defamer, him that layeth up riches and counteth them.” Fleeting are the riches of the world; all that perisheth and changeth is not, and hath never been, worthy of attention, except to a recognized measure.

The aim of this Wronged One in sustaining woes and tribulations, in revealing the Holy Verses and in demonstrating proofs hath been naught but to quench the flame of hate and enmity, that the horizon of the hearts of men may be illumined with the light of concord and attain real peace and tranquillity. From the dawning-place of the divine Tablet the day-star of this utterance shineth resplendent, and it behoveth everyone to fix his gaze upon it: We exhort you, O peoples of the world, to observe that which will elevate your station. Hold fast to the fear of God and firmly adhere to what is right. Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men. Lofty is the station of man! Not long ago this exalted Word streamed forth from the treasury of Our Pen of Glory: Great and blessed is this Day—the Day in which all that lay latent in man hath been and will be made manifest. Lofty is the station of man, were he to hold fast to righteousness and truth and to remain firm and steadfast in the Cause. In the eyes of the All-Merciful a true man appeareth even as a firmament; its sun and moon are his sight and hearing, and his shining and resplendent character its stars. His is the loftiest station, and his influence educateth the world of being.

Every receptive soul who hath in this Day inhaled the fragrance of His garment and hath, with a pure heart, set his face towards the all-glorious Horizon is reckoned among the people of Bahá in the Crimson Book. Grasp ye, in My Name, the chalice of My loving-kindness; drink then your fill in My glorious and wondrous remembrance.

O ye that dwell on earth! The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity or dissension. In the eyes of men of insight and the beholders of the Most Sublime Vision,

whatsoever are the effective means for safeguarding and promoting the happiness and welfare of the children of men have already been revealed by the Pen of Glory. But the foolish ones of the earth, being nurtured in evil passions and desires, have remained heedless of the consummate wisdom of Him Who is, in truth, the All-Wise, while their words and deeds are prompted by idle fancies and vain imaginings.

O ye the loved ones and the trustees of God! Kings are the manifestations of the power, and the daysprings of the might and riches, of God. Pray ye on their behalf. He hath invested them with the rulership of the earth and hath singled out the hearts of men as His Own domain.

Conflict and contention are categorically forbidden in His Book. This is a decree of God in this Most Great Revelation. It is divinely preserved from annulment and is invested by Him with the splendour of His confirmation. Verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

It is incumbent upon everyone to aid those daysprings of authority and sources of command who are adorned with the ornament of equity and justice. Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá. They are My trustees among My servants and the manifestations of My commandments amidst My people. Upon them rest My glory, My blessings and My grace which have pervaded the world of being. In this connection the utterances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are such that from the horizon of their words the light of divine grace shineth luminous and resplendent.

O ye My Branches! A mighty force, a consummate power lieth concealed in the world of being. Fix your gaze upon it and upon its unifying influence, and not upon the differences which appear from it.

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghṣán, the Afnán and My kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: "When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root." The object of this sacred verse is none except the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you Our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Bountiful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch [Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí] to be beneath that of the Most Great Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. He is in truth the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have chosen "the Greater" after "the Most Great", as decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

It is enjoined upon everyone to manifest love towards the Aghṣán, but God hath not granted them any right to the property of others.

O ye My Aghṣán, My Afnán and My kindred! We exhort you to fear God, to perform praiseworthy deeds and to do that which is meet and seemly and serveth to exalt your station. Verily I say, fear of God is the greatest commander that can render the Cause of God victorious, and the hosts which best befit this commander have ever been and are an upright character and pure and goodly deeds.

Say: O servants! Let not the means of order be made the cause of confusion and the instrument of union an occasion for discord. We fain would hope that the people of Bahá may be guided by the blessed words: "Say: All things are of God." This exalted utterance is like unto water for quenching the fire of hate and enmity which smouldereth within the hearts and breasts of men. By this single utterance contending peoples and kindreds will attain the light of true unity. Verily He speaketh the truth and leadeth the way. He is the All-Powerful, the Exalted, the Gracious.

It is incumbent upon everyone to show courtesy to, and have regard for, the Aghsán, that thereby the Cause of God may be glorified and His Word exalted. This injunction hath time and again been mentioned and recorded in the Holy Writ. Well is it with him who is enabled to achieve that which the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days, hath prescribed for him. Ye are bidden moreover to respect the members of the Holy Household, the Afnán and the kindred. We further admonish you to serve all nations and to strive for the betterment of the world.

That which is conducive to the regeneration of the world and the salvation of the peoples and kindreds of the earth hath been sent down from the heaven of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. Give ye a hearing ear to the counsels of the Pen of Glory. Better is this for you than all that is on the earth. Unto this beareth witness My glorious and wondrous Book.

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The Tablet of Visitation

The praise which hath dawned from Thy most august Self, and the glory which hath shone forth from Thy most effulgent Beauty, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art the Manifestation of Grandeur, and the King of Eternity, and the Lord of all who are in heaven and on earth! I testify that through Thee the sovereignty of God and His dominion, and the majesty of God and His grandeur, were revealed, and the Day-Stars of ancient splendour have shed their radiance in the heaven of Thine irrevocable decree, and the Beauty of the Unseen hath shone forth above the horizon of creation. I testify, moreover, that with but a movement of Thy Pen Thine injunction "Be Thou" hath been enforced, and God's hidden Secret hath been divulged, and all created things have been called into being, and all the Revelations have been sent down.

I bear witness, moreover, that through Thy beauty the beauty of the Adored One hath been unveiled, and through Thy face the face of the Desired One hath shone forth, and that through a word from Thee Thou hast decided between all created things, causing them who are devoted to Thee to ascend unto the summit of glory, and the infidels to fall into the lowest abyss.

I bear witness that he who hath known Thee hath known God, and he who hath attained unto Thy presence hath attained unto the presence of God. Great, therefore, is the blessedness of him who hath believed in Thee, and in Thy signs, and hath humbled himself before Thy sovereignty, and hath been honoured with meeting Thee, and hath attained the good-pleasure of Thy will, and circled around Thee, and stood before Thy throne. Woe betide him that hath transgressed against Thee, and hath denied Thee, and repudiated Thy signs, and gainsaid Thy sovereignty, and risen up against Thee, and waxed proud before Thy face, and hath disputed Thy testimonies, and fled from Thy rule and Thy dominion, and been numbered with the infidels whose names have been inscribed by the fingers of Thy behest upon Thy holy Tablets.

Waft, then, unto me, O my God and my Beloved, from the right hand of Thy mercy and Thy loving-kindness, the holy breaths of Thy favours, that they may draw me away from myself and from the world unto the courts of Thy nearness and Thy presence. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, truly, hast been supreme over all things.

The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendour, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art His Beauty! I bear witness that the eye of creation hath never gazed upon one wronged like Thee. Thou wast immersed all the days of Thy life beneath an ocean of tribulations. At one time Thou wast in chains and fetters; at another Thou wast threatened by the sword of Thine enemies. Yet, despite all this, Thou didst enjoin upon all men to observe what had been prescribed unto Thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

May my spirit be a sacrifice to the wrongs Thou didst suffer, and my soul be a ransom for the adversities Thou didst sustain. I beseech God, by Thee and by them whose faces have been illumined with the splendours of the light of Thy countenance, and who, for love of Thee, have observed all whereunto they were bidden, to remove the veils that have come in between Thee and Thy creatures, and to supply me with the good of this world and the world to come. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

Bless Thou, O Lord my God, the Divine Lote-Tree and its leaves, and its boughs, and its branches, and its stems, and its offshoots, as long as Thy most excellent titles will endure and Thy most august attributes will last. Protect it, then, from the mischief of the aggressor and the hosts of tyranny. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. Bless Thou, also, O Lord my God, Thy servants and Thy handmaidens who have attained unto Thee. Thou, truly, art the All-Bountiful, Whose grace is infinite. No God is there save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

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Martyrdom of the Báb

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Give ear, O My servant, unto that which is being sent down unto thee from the Throne of thy Lord, the Inaccessible, the Most Great. There is none other God but Him. He hath called into being His creatures, that they may know Him, Who is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful. Unto the cities of all nations He hath sent His Messengers, Whom He hath commissioned to announce unto men tidings of the Paradise of His good-pleasure, and to draw them nigh unto the Haven of abiding security, the Seat of eternal holiness and transcendent glory.

Some were guided by the Light of God, gained admittance into the court of His presence, and quaffed, from the hand of resignation, the waters of everlasting life, and were accounted of them that have truly recognized and believed in Him. Others rebelled against Him, and rejected the signs of God, the Most Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

Ages rolled away, until they attained their consummation in this, the Lord of days, the Day whereon the Day-Star of the Bayán manifested itself above the horizon of mercy, the Day in which the Beauty of the All-Glorious shone forth in the exalted person of 'Alí-Muḥammad, the

Báb. No sooner did He reveal Himself, than all the people rose up against Him. By some He was denounced as one that hath uttered slanders against God, the Almighty, the Ancient of Days. Others regarded Him as a man smitten with madness, an allegation which I, Myself, have heard from the lips of one of the divines. Still others disputed His claim to be the Mouthpiece of God, and stigmatized Him as one who had stolen and used as his the words of the Almighty, who had perverted their meaning, and mingled them with his own. The Eye of Grandeur weepeth sore for the things which their mouths have uttered, while they continue to rejoice upon their seats.

“God”, said He, “is My witness, O people! I am come to you with a Revelation from the Lord, your God, the Lord of your fathers of old. Look not, O people, at the things ye possess. Look rather at the things God hath sent down unto you. This, surely, will be better for you than the whole of creation, could ye but perceive it. Repeat the gaze, O people, and consider the testimony of God and His proof which are in your possession, and compare them unto the Revelation sent down unto you in this Day, that the truth, the infallible truth, may be indubitably manifested unto you. Follow not, O people, the steps of the Evil One; follow ye the Faith of the All-Merciful, and be ye of them that truly believe. What would it profit man, if he were to fail to recognize the Revelation of God? Nothing whatever. To this Mine own Self, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, will testify.”

The more He exhorted them, the fiercer grew their enmity, till, at the last, they put Him to death with shameful cruelty. The curse of God be upon the oppressors!

A few believed in Him; few of Our servants are the thankful. These He admonished, in all His Tablets—nay, in every passage of His wondrous writings—not to give themselves up in the Day of the promised Revelation to anything whatever, be it in the heaven or in the earth. “O people!” said He, “I have revealed Myself for His Manifestation, and have caused My Book, the Bayán, to descend upon you for no other purpose except to establish the truth of His Cause. Fear ye God, and contend not with Him as the people of the Qur’án have contended with Me. At whatever time ye hear of Him, hasten ye towards Him, and cleave ye to whatsoever He may reveal unto you. Naught else besides Him can ever profit you, no, not though ye produce from first to last the testimonies of all those who were before you.”

And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of the Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all created things. They broke His Covenant, rejected His truth, contended with Him, cavilled at His signs, treated His testimony as falsehood, and joined the company of the infidels. Eventually, they determined to take away His life. Such is the state of them who are in a far-gone error!

And when they realized their powerlessness to achieve their purpose, they arose to plot against Him. Witness how every moment they devise a fresh device to harm Him, that they may injure and dishonour the Cause of God. Say: Woe be to you! By God! Your schemings cover you with shame. Your Lord, the God of mercy, can well dispense with all creatures. Nothing whatever can either increase or diminish the things He doth possess. If ye believe, to your own behoof will ye believe; and if ye believe not, ye yourselves will suffer. At no time can the hand of the infidel profane the hem of His Robe.

O My servant that believest in God! By the righteousness of the Almighty! Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness. Watch over thyself, and follow not the footsteps of these people. Meditate diligently upon the Cause of thy Lord. Strive to know Him through His own Self and not through others. For no one else besides Him can ever profit thee. To this all created things will testify, couldst thou but perceive it.

Emerge from behind the veil, by the leave of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful, and seize, before the eyes of those who are in the heavens and those who are on the earth, the Chalice of Immortality, in the name of thy Lord, the Inaccessible, the Most High, and quaff thy fill, and be not of them that tarry. I swear by God! The moment thou touchest the Cup with thy lips, the Concourse on high will acclaim thee saying, "Drink with healthy relish, O man that hast truly believed in God!", and the inhabitants of the Cities of Immortality will cry out, "Joy be to thee, O thou that hast drained the Cup of His love!", and the Tongue of Grandeur will hail thee, "Great is the blessedness that awaiteth thee, O My servant, for thou hast attained unto that which none hath attained, except such as have detached themselves from all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and who are the emblems of true detachment."

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Excerpt from the Súriy-i-Nuṣḥ

(Súrih of Counsel)

Announce unto My servants the advent of the One Who came unto them with the power of truth bearing the name of 'Alí, Who dawned above the horizon of holiness with the splendours of a cherished glory, and from Whose right hand flowed the crystal streams of the spirit, laying bare the wonders of a hidden knowledge.

"O people!" He declared, "The clouds of wisdom have been lifted and God hath revealed His Cause. This is that which ye were promised in all the Scriptures. Fear ye God and hasten unto Me. I am, O people, a scion of your Prophet. I have brought unto you verses that bewilder the minds of them that perceive, and this is but a token of God's proof and testimony. Deny them not at the prompting of your idle fancies, and be fair in your judgement. They verily proceed from the religion of God that hath been sent down unto you through the power of truth, would that ye might believe!

"I swear by God, O people! I wish only to rid your religions of all that hath in this day become the cause of contention. These verses, O people, are the breezes of the spirit that are wafting over you and would transmute your mortal condition into eternal life, could ye but fix your gaze upon them. O people! The tree of knowledge hath yielded its fruit upon this everlasting Lote-Tree; the Primal Point hath been unfolded; and the Word of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, hath been fulfilled. O people! The beauty of His countenance hath been revealed, the veils have been parted, the Nightingale hath warbled its melody, the Mount of holiness hath been made resplendent, and all who are in the heavens and on the earth have been illumined, could ye but see with the eye of the spirit!"

But the people made reply, saying: "We deem Thee a speaker of falsehood; nor do we discern in Thine acts that which we had been promised in the books of our forefathers. Never would we follow Thee, even wert Thou to produce for us all the signs of the world."

"O concourse of men!" He declared, "Fear ye God and consider that which He hath ordained to be His immutable proof and abiding testimony unto all that dwell in the heavens and on the earth, did ye but know it. O people! The truth of all that ye have been awaiting, and all that ye have heard from your forefathers and your divines, is established only through these verses. And these, verily, are the verses of holiness that have been vouchsafed unto all who are in the heavens and on the earth, even as ye yourselves can behold."

"If ye believe not in these verses, how then can ye be assured of the truth of your own religion in this day or establish it in the eyes of others? The day is fast approaching when the world and all that it containeth will have perished, and when ye shall stand in the holy court of His presence. Take heed, O people, lest ye be swayed by the elaborate pronouncements of your divines or misconceive the truth of the matter. Harken unto My counsels and repudiate not the exhortations of God."

The more He extolled the remembrance of God, the greater they waxed in their oppression, until all the divines pronounced sentence against Him, save those that were acquainted with the precepts of God, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved. Matters came to such a pass that they united to put Him to death. They suspended Him in the air, and the hosts of misbelief flung at Him the bullets of malice and hatred, piercing the body of the One unto Whom the Holy Spirit is a humble servant, the dust of Whose feet is the object of adoration of the Concourse on high, and from Whose very sandals the inmates of Paradise seek a blessing. Whereupon the inhabitants of the unseen realm wept sore beneath the pavilion of eternity, the pillars of the Throne trembled, the inmost realities of all things were stirred into commotion, and the divine Tree received its full measure of His gleaming blood which was shed upon the earth.

Erelong will God reveal the mystery of this Tree, make it to flourish through the power of truth, and cause it to intone: "Verily I am God, there is none other God but Him. All are My servants whom We have created to carry out My bidding, and by My bidding they all, verily, abide."

This, in truth, is that which We pledged Ourselves aforetime to accomplish: to show favour unto those who were brought low in the land and to humble them that have waxed proud. At no time did We send an Apostle, a Prophet, or a Vicegerent whom these wicked souls did not oppose, even as ye witness how these workers of iniquity are raising objections in this day.

Nor have the people ever rejected the truth except after their divines rejected it, and swelled with pride before God, and sought to dispute His verses. Thus did the rejection of the leaders give rise to the rejection of those who followed them in their selfish desires. None among these divines ever bore allegiance unto the new Revelation, save for those who could gaze with the eye of holiness, whose hearts God had tested and proved true for His recognition, to whom He hath given to drink from that chalice of holiness sealed with the musk of the spirit, and who were intoxicated by the wine of certitude which they had quaffed from that chalice. These, verily, are they whom the angels of Paradise will glorify in the garden of eternity and who will delight at every moment in a joy and gladness born of God.

No Prophet have We ever raised up except that He was repudiated by the divines whilst they prided themselves in their learning, even as they do in this day. Say: O concourse of divines! Do ye worship the Calf and abandon the One Who hath created you and taught you that which ye knew not?

O people of the earth! Ponder the state of these workers of iniquity, what they have wrought in the past, and what they pursue in this day. Say: If He Who hath come unto you with clear verses be not the True One from God, even as ye proclaim this day from your seats of worldly honour, then by what proof can ye establish the truth of Muḥammad, Whom we sent aforetime? Be fair in your judgement, O concourse of ill-wishers!

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Excerpt from the Súriy-i-Mulúk

(Súrih of the Kings)

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." 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 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. 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 Prophet 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 any one. 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!

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Excerpt from the Lawḥ-i-Salmán I

(Tablet to Salmán I)

O Salmán! Say: O people! Tread ye in the path of the one true God and ponder the ways and words of Him Who is the Manifestation of His ancient Being, that perchance ye may attain unto the Wellspring of the living waters of the All-Glorious. Were believers and non-believers to occupy the same station, were the worlds of God to be confined to this ephemeral plane, never would My previous Manifestation have surrendered Himself into the hands of His foes or laid

down His life as a sacrifice. I swear by the dawning-light of this Cause that were the people to grasp the barest intimation of the fervour and longing which overcame that sovereign Beauty when His celestial Temple was suspended in the air, all would, in the intensity of their own yearning, offer up their souls in the path of this Manifestation of supernal glory. Indeed, sugar is the portion of the parrot, while dung is the share of the beetle; the crow hath no part in the warbling of the nightingale, and the bat fleeth the rays of the sun.

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Excerpt from the Súriy-i-Dhikr

(Súrih of Remembrance)

This is the Súrih of Remembrance, sent down as a token of grace, that perchance the people of the Bayán might renounce that which they possess, turn towards the right hand of justice, shake off the slumber of wayward desires, and seek, through the power of truth, a path to their Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious.

In the name of God, the Most Holy, the Most Exalted, the Most High!

This is a Missive from the Primal Point unto them that have believed in God, the One, the Peerless, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, wherein He addresseth those among the people of the Bayán who have vacillated in this Cause, that haply they may apprehend the wondrous words of God and forsake the couch of heedlessness in this shining and resplendent morn.

Say: We, verily, bid you in Our Book not to advance yourselves before those from whose ranks would appear He Who is the Beloved of every understanding heart and the Object of the adoration of the denizens of earth and heaven. Moreover, We commanded you, should ye attain the presence of God, to stand before Him and to utter on My behalf these mighty and exalted words: "Upon Thee, O Glory of God, and upon Thy kinfolk, be the remembrance of God and the praise of all things at every moment before and after Ḥín." We honoured the people of the Bayán with these words, that they might ascend thereby unto the heights of holiness and be numbered with the blest. Yet they have so utterly forsaken Our injunction that not a single one among them hath appeared in His presence as We had commanded in Our Tablets. Nay rather, from every side they have hurled at Him the darts of malice. And at this, I, and the denizens of the Kingdom of grandeur, and beyond them the Faithful Spirit, have wept sore.

Say: O people! Be abashed before My Beauty. He that hath appeared with the power of truth is indeed the Glory of the worlds, could ye but perceive it. He, verily, is the Glory of God; upon Him be the remembrance of God and His praise, and the praise of the Concourse on high, and of the dwellers of the everlasting realm, and of all things at all times. Beware lest ye become veiled by aught that hath been created in heaven or on earth. Hasten unto the paradise of His good-pleasure and be not of them that slumber.

Say: His beauty is in truth My beauty, and His Self is Mine own Self, and all that We revealed in the Bayán is for the sake of His wondrous and resistless Cause. Fear ye God, and dispute not with the One Whose advent We heralded and Whose Revelation We announced unto you. I established a covenant with you concerning His mission ere I covenanted with you regarding

Mine own, and unto this all things bear witness, even if ye were to deny it. By the righteousness of God! Through but a single one of His melodies the realities of all things were reborn, and through another the hearts of His favoured ones were filled with rapture. Take heed lest anything debar you from Him Whose presence is the same as Mine own. He sacrificed Himself in My path even as I sacrificed Myself in His path for the love of His glorious and incomparable beauty.

Say: But for Him the word “love” would never have been written, nor would the letters of the name of the Beloved have been joined together, nor would creation itself have been brought into being, would that ye might understand! But for Him I would never have surrendered Myself into the hands of the ungodly nor consented to be suspended in the air. By God! I have borne, in My love and yearning for Him, that which no other Prophet or Messenger hath borne, and I have acquiesced to bear all this Myself, that He might never be made to endure aught that would sadden His most kind and tender, His most pure and sanctified heart. We admonished you throughout the Bayán not to be the cause of grief to any soul, that haply no sorrow should ever befall Him. Otherwise, why would I have exhorted you and occupied Myself with your care, O assemblage of wavering ones? I intended in the Bayán none other than Him, I extolled no praise but His praise, and I uttered no name save His most blessed and most exalted, His most holy and most wondrous name.

I swear by My life! If I have made mention of “lordship”, I have intended only His lordship over all things. If the word “divinity” hath ever flowed from My pen, I have intended naught but His divinity in relation to the world; and if an allusion to the “Desired One” hath proceeded therefrom, I have had none other in mind than Him. So too, in regard to the word “Beloved”, He, indeed, is My Beloved and the Beloved of every understanding heart. If I have spoken of “prostration”, I have meant only prostration before His exalted, His glorious and sublime Countenance. If I have praised any soul, Mine aim hath only been to celebrate His praise. And if I have bidden the people to act, My sole purpose hath been that they should act in accordance with His good-pleasure on the day of His Manifestation. Unto this beareth witness whatsoever was sent down unto Me from the kingdom of My Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

I have made all things conditional upon His approval and pleasure. He it is, in truth, Who is the Lord of the worlds and the Object of the desire of every searching soul. Were ye to open your eyes, ye would verily behold the Manifestations of “He doeth whatsoever He willeth” worshipping under His shadow. Yet ye have done to Him what even the people of the Qur’án dared not do to Myself, nor the Jews to Christ. Alas, alas! My heart is consumed with anguish and My soul groaneth at what hath befallen My Beloved at the hands of the infidels. Woe unto you for your faithlessness, O concourse of oppressors! We, verily, created faithfulness and courtesy for His sake, that perchance ye would not commit, in the time of His appearance, aught that would cause Mine inner reality and the realities of all things to lament. But ye have transgressed that which was laid down in the Book of God, the King, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. Ye have rent asunder the veil of restraint and cast aside the vesture of propriety, and ye have committed that which the Pen of creation is abashed to recount before the dwellers of earth and heaven.

Alas, alas, for that which ye have inflicted upon this wronged, this banished and forsaken Soul! Nor do I know what ye will inflict upon Him hereafter. Nay, by Myself, the All-Knowing! I do verily

know, for with Me is the knowledge of all things in a Tablet that God hath shielded from the gaze of those who have joined partners with Him. We apprised Him aforetime of the things that have befallen or will befall Him, even though He Himself is well informed of all that the hearts of men conceal. For nothing can escape His knowledge, and whatever hath been created by a mere word from His mouth can never slip from His grasp. No God is there but Him, the Peerless, the Creator, the Quickener, the Destroyer.

Say: O people! Should it be His desire to cause all the dwellers of earth and heaven to become an abiding testimony of His truth, this would assuredly be within His power. And this, verily, would be easy and possible unto Him. He it is Who created the paradise of the Bayán for His own sake. From Him have all things proceeded and unto Him will they all return, did ye but know it. Yet, I swear by Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of creation, ye deny Him the right to designate Himself by a single one of the divine names, even though He it is at Whose mighty and exalted behest all names and their kingdom were created!

Alas, alas, for your negligence, O people of the Bayán! Alas, alas, for your blindness, O concourse of the faithless! For, prompted by self-conceit and vainglory, ye have ascribed the station of successor to one of His enemies and have contended thereby with God, the Author of all religions aforetime and hereafter. Thus have ye returned to the arguments of the people of the Qur'án, notwithstanding that We prohibited you from uttering a single word in His presence save by His leave. God knoweth and testifieth to the truth of My words. Contemplate, therefore, your condition and the measure of your understanding. Woe betide you, and your thoughts, and your judgement, O ye that are in grievous loss! Know ye not that We have rolled up that which the people possessed, and have unfolded a new order in its place? Blessed, then, be God, the sovereign King, the Unfolder, the Almighty, the Most Generous.

Say: O people, cease your slander of Me. No word have I spoken except in praise of this Revelation; no breath have I drawn but for the love of its Author; and nowhere have I turned My face save towards His shining and luminous Countenance. I have made the Bayán and all that was revealed therein to be as a leaf in the celestial garden that belongeth unto Him, the Protector, the Gracious, the Almighty. Beware lest ye appropriate it and surrender it to him who, in pursuit of self and desire, seeketh to shed My blood anew and who contendeth with God. We, verily, unfolded the Bayán from a single word and returned it again to that same word, bidding it to appear before the Throne of Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, that He might behold His former creation and take delight therein. Be fair, then, in your judgement: Is it the prerogative of the Author of that word to lay hand upon it, or of any other soul? What hath made you so blind, O concourse of veiled ones?

We, verily, enjoined the people of the Bayán to wear silken garments and to be immaculate in their person and dress, that His gaze might not fall upon aught that would displease Him. Likewise, every provision that hath been expounded in Our perspicuous Book is but for His sake, were ye to judge fairly. We created the heavens and the earth and all that lieth between them for His loved ones, how much more for the sake of His most resplendent, His most glorious and radiant beauty. And yet ye have laid hold on that which We have destined for Him and seized upon it to reject My Beloved. What hath made you so heedless, O people of malice? And what will satisfy you in this day, O stirrers of sedition?

Ye have opposed Him and all that He hath manifested, even though We admonished you in Our Tablets that whoso calleth to mind His most great and most wondrous Name should arise from his place and repeat nineteen times: "Glorified be God, the Lord of the kingdoms of earth and heaven!", and then another nineteen times: "Glorified be God, the Lord of all glory and dominion!", and so forth, as We have revealed in a most mighty Tablet. Ye, however, have disbelieved in Him and in His verses. Nay, not contenting yourselves with that, ye have disregarded the rights of God which revert unto Him, and have given no heed to that commandment of God which pertaineth to His own Self, the Most Exalted, the All-Knowing. Ye have rejected all of His actions, one after another, and taken pleasure in deriding Him. Among you is he who saith: "He drinketh tea!", while another complaineth: "He partaketh of food!" Yet another doth object to His apparel, though every thread thereof testifieth that there is none other God but Him and that He is the Object of the adoration of all who are nigh unto God. I bear witness that at times the Ancient Beauty was in want of even a change of garments. Thus testifieth the Tongue of truth and knowledge. Many a night was He unable to provide sustenance for His kindred, yet He concealed His plight to safeguard the honour of God's mighty and unassailable Cause, and this notwithstanding that all things were created for His sake and that the key to the treasure-houses of earth and heaven is in His grasp.

Woe betide you for your shamelessness, O people of the Bayán! God is My witness! I am abashed at your deeds and I disavow you, O assemblage of evil ones! Alas for the sufferings He hath endured at your hands. Alas for what hath befallen Him and doth continue to afflict Him at every moment. O people! Judge with fairness and reflect for but a moment: If ye remain blinded by such veils, then to what end did I reveal Myself and what fruit did My Revelation bear, O concourse of hypocrites? God hath called Me forth to rend asunder the veils and to purify your hearts in anticipation of this Revelation. Yet ye have committed that which caused My tears and the tears of the holy ones to flow. The faces of the former generations blanch at your doings, for ye are more veiled than they, and more heedless than the followers of the Torah, the Evangel, or any other Book.

O would that I had never been born and had never revealed Myself to you, O treacherous ones! I swear by Him Who sent Me forth with the power of truth! I have reckoned up the knowledge of all things, and I know all that is preserved in the inviolable treasures of God and concealed from the eyes of men, but never have I encountered a people more wayward and more wicked than you. For with all that We have expounded in Our Tablets, and all the admonitions We have addressed unto you in every page thereof, We are unable to conceive that a single soul on earth would dare protest against God, in Whose grasp are the kingdoms of earth and heaven. We are perplexed at your creation and know not from what word ye were fashioned, O ye whose nature and actions astound the hearts of the Concourse on high, and them that are devoted to God, and them that enjoy near access unto Him!

O servant! Thus do We relate unto thee in this Tablet that which the Dove of the Bayán warbleth at this moment before the Throne of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised. Peruse, then, that which is revealed therein, but guard its pearls of inner meaning from the hands of the treacherous and thieving among the hosts of the Evil One. Shouldst thou find a discerning soul, set this Tablet before his eyes that he may in turn behold it and be of them that attain. Haply they that are endued with insight amongst Our righteous servants will become apprised of

what hath befallen the celestial Beauty at the hands of these profligate souls who have chosen to worship the Calf rather than the Lord God, have prostrated themselves before it every morn and eventide, and have exulted therein.

Grieve not on account of Our adversity, but be patient even as We have been patient. He, in truth, is the best of helpers. Remember thy Lord in the daytime and in the night season, and extol His praise amidst His servants. Haply the fire of His love will thereby be kindled in the hearts of the righteous, and all shall arise in turn to extol God, their Lord, the Lord of the seen and the unseen, and the Lord of your sires of old.

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Excerpt from the Súriy-i-Aḥzán

(Súrih of Sorrows)

Would that thou wert standing at this moment before the Throne and couldst hear how the melodies of eternity issue from the Temple of Bahá! By the one true God, should His creatures but cleanse their ears, and should they hear but a single strain of these melodies, they would, one and all, fall thunderstruck upon the dust in the presence of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. Since, however, they have contended with God, He hath denied them the wonders of His grace and hath reckoned them in His sight as discarded lumps of clay. By God! Wert thou to consider their words, thou wouldst hear what was never heard from the Jews when We sent the Spirit unto them with a perspicuous Book, nor from the concourse of the Gospel when We caused the Day-Star of eternity to dawn above the horizon of Mecca with world-illuminating splendours, nor yet from the people of the Qur'án when the heavens of divine knowledge were cleft asunder and God manifested Himself, with the power of the truth and in the shadow of His All-Merciful Name, in the beauty of 'Alí.

At the mention of this blessed, this hallowed, this exalted and unapproachably wondrous Name, a Name in truth most wondrous, there arise within Me two conditions. I see My heart burning with the fire of grief over that which befell the Beauty of the All-Merciful at the hands of the people of the Qur'án. It is as though every limb of My body were being devoured by a consuming flame that, if left unchecked, would set ablaze the entire world. To this, God Himself beareth Me witness. Likewise I behold tears flowing from Mine eyes, and My limbs, and even the hairs of My head, at the calamities that were visited upon Him by the wicked, who slew God and recognized Him not, and who, boasting of allegiance to but one of His Names, suspended Him in the air and riddled His breast with the bullets of hatred.

Would that the universe had never been called into existence! Would that the world had never been brought into being! Would that no Prophet had ever been raised up, no Messenger sent forth, and no Cause established amongst men! Would that the Name of God had never been manifested betwixt earth and heaven, and that no Books, Tablets, or Scriptures had ever been revealed! Would that the Ancient Beauty had never been made to dwell among these workers of iniquity, nor to suffer at the hands of those who openly disbelieved in God and who committed against Him that which none on earth had ever dared commit! By the one true God! Wert thou, O 'Alí, to examine My limbs and members, My heart and vitals, thou wouldst discover

the traces of those same bullets that struck that Temple of God. Alas, alas! Thus was the Revealer of verses prevented from revealing them, and this Ocean from surging, and this Tree from bearing fruit, and this Cloud from pouring down its rain, and this Sun from giving its light, and this Heaven from ascending on high. Yet, so hath it been irrevocably decreed in this Day.

Would that I had never been, and that My mother had never borne Me! Would that I had never heard of that which befell Him at the hands of those who worshipped the Names of God and yet slew Him Who is their Author, their Creator, their Fashioner, and their Revealer! Woe betide them for following the promptings of self and passion, and for committing that which caused the Maids of Heaven to faint away in their celestial chambers and the Spirit to cover its face in the dust by reason of that which these wolves have inflicted upon the Lord of Lords. All things weep at the tears I shed for Him; all things lament at the sighs I uttered over Our separation. Such indeed is My sorrow that the melodies of eternity can no longer flow from My lips, nor can the breezes of the spirit waft from My heart. And had I not sought to protect Myself, My body would have been cleft asunder and My life extinguished.

Behold, My former Manifestation weepeth in turn and addresseth thee, saying, "O 'Alí! By the righteousness of the one true God! Wert thou to examine My heart, My limbs, and My members, and to observe Mine inner and outer being, thou wouldst find the traces of the darts of rancour that have struck My latter Manifestation Who appeareth in My Name, the All-Glorious! Thus do I lament, and the Concourse on high lament My weeping. Thus do I bewail, and the dwellers of the Tabernacle of names bewail My cries. Thus do I sigh in anguish, and the inhabitants of the cities of eternity shed tears at My sighing for this Wronged One Who findeth Himself among the people of the Bayán. By God, they have inflicted upon Him that which the followers of the Qur'án never inflicted upon Me. Alas for what hath befallen Him at their hands! Whereupon did the denizens of earth and heaven fall distraught upon the dust at that which had afflicted that Beauty Who was seated upon the throne of divine nearness. Woe to them and to what their hands have wrought every morn and eve!"

Behold, the Ancient Beauty crieth out: "O Pen of the Most High! Turn aside from this theme which hath saddened all that wear the garment of existence, and make mention of another out of mercy for the Concourse on high. By the one true God! His Throne hath well-nigh been overwhelmed, notwithstanding its grandeur and loftiness."

When We heard this call, We ceased Our account of these sorrows and returned to Our previous theme, that thou mayest be fully apprised thereof. O 'Alí, be not dismayed at that which we have recounted to thee of the calamities that have been visited upon Our former and latter Manifestations. Gird up thy loins to assist the Cause of God, and arise in this path with constancy and unbending resolve.

...

Birth of the Báb

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In the name of the One born on this day, Him Whom God hath made to be the Herald of His name, the Almighty, the All-Loving!

This is a Tablet We have addressed unto that night wherein the heavens and the earth were illumined by a Light that cast its radiance over the entire creation.

Blessed art thou, O night! For through thee was born the Day of God, a Day which We have ordained to be the lamp of salvation unto the denizens of the cities of names, the chalice of victory unto the champions of the arenas of eternity, and the dawning-place of joy and exultation unto all creation.

Immeasurably exalted is God, the Maker of the heavens, Who hath caused this Day to speak forth that Name whereby the veils of idle fancy have been rent asunder, the mists of vain imaginings have been dispelled, and His name "the Self-Subsisting" hath dawned above the horizon of certitude. Through Thee the choice wine of everlasting life hath been unsealed, the doors of knowledge and utterance have been unlocked before the peoples of the earth, and the breezes of the All-Merciful have been wafted over every region. All glory be to that hour wherein the Treasure of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, hath appeared!

O concourse of earth and heaven! This is that first night, which God hath made to be a sign of that second night, whereon was born He Whom no praise can befittingly extol and no attribute describe. Well is it with him who reflecteth upon them both: Verily, he will find their outer reality to correspond to their inner essence, and will become acquainted with the divine mysteries that lie enshrined in this Revelation, a Revelation through which the foundations of misbelief have been shaken, the idols of superstition have been shattered, and the banner hath been unfurled which proclaimeth, "No God is there but Him, the Powerful, the Exalted, the Incomparable, the Protector, the Mighty, the Inaccessible."

On this night the fragrance of nearness was wafted, the portals of reunion at the end of days were flung open, and all created things were moved to exclaim: "The Kingdom is God's, the Lord of all names, Who is come with world-embracing sovereignty!" On this night the Concourse on high celebrated the praise of their Lord, the Exalted, the Most Glorious, and the realities of the divine names extolled Him Who is the King of the beginning and the end in this Revelation, a Revelation through whose potency the mountains have hastened unto Him Who is the All-Sufficing, the Most High, and the hearts have turned towards the countenance of their Best-Beloved, and the leaves have been stirred into motion by the breezes of yearning, and the trees have raised their voices in joyful reply to the call of Him Who is the Unconstrained, and the entire earth hath trembled with longing in its desire to attain reunion with the Eternal King, and all things have been made new by that concealed Word which hath appeared in this mighty Name.

O night of the All-Bountiful! In thee do We verily behold the Mother Book. Is it a Book, in truth, or rather a child begotten? Nay, by Myself! Such words pertain to the realm of names, whilst God hath sanctified this Book above all names. Through it the Hidden Secret and the Treasured Mystery have been revealed. Nay, by My life! All that hath been mentioned pertaineth to the realm of attributes, whereas the Mother Book standeth supreme above this. Through it have appeared the manifestations of "There is no God but God" over them all. Nay, while such things

have been proclaimed to all people, in the estimation of thy Lord naught but His ear is capable of hearing them. Blessed are those that are well assured!

Whereupon, dumbfounded, the Pen of the Most High cried out: "O Thou Who art exalted above all names! I adjure Thee by Thy might that encompasseth the heavens and the earth to exempt me from mentioning Thee, for I myself have been called into being by virtue of Thy creative power. How, then, can I depict that which all created things are powerless to describe? And yet, I swear by Thy glory, were I to proclaim that wherewith Thou hast inspired me, the entire creation would pass away from joy and ecstasy, how much more then would it be overwhelmed before the billows of the ocean of Thine utterance in this most luminous, most exalted and transcendent Spot! Absolve, O Lord, this faltering Pen from magnifying so august a station, and deal mercifully with me, O my Possessor and my King. Overlook then my trespasses in Thy presence. Thou, verily, art the Lord of bounty, the All-Powerful, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous."

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He is the Eternal, the One, the Single, the All-Possessing, the Most Exalted.

All praise be to Thee, O my God, inasmuch as Thou hast adorned the world with the splendour of the dawn following the night wherein was born the One Who heralded the Manifestation of Thy transcendent sovereignty, the Dayspring of Thy divine Essence and the Revelation of Thy supreme Lordship. I beseech Thee, O Creator of the heavens and Fashioner of names, to graciously aid those who have sheltered beneath the shadow of Thine abounding mercy and have raised their voices amidst the peoples of the world for the glorification of Thy Name.

O my God! Thou beholdest the Lord of all mankind confined in His Most Great Prison, calling aloud Thy Name, gazing upon Thy face, proclaiming that which hath enraptured the denizens of Thy kingdoms of revelation and of creation. O my God! I behold Mine own Self captive in the hands of Thy servants, yet the light of Thy sovereignty and the revelations of Thine invincible power shine resplendent from His face, enabling all to know of a certainty that Thou art God, and that there is none other God but Thee. Neither can the power of the powerful frustrate Thee, nor the ascendancy of the rulers prevail against Thee. Thou doest whatsoever Thou wilt by virtue of Thy sovereignty which encompasseth all created things, and ordainest that which Thou pleasest through the potency of Thy behest which pervadeth the entire creation.

I implore Thee by the glory of Thy Manifestation and by the power of Thy might, Thy sovereignty and Thine exaltation to render victorious those who have arisen to serve Thee, who have aided Thy Cause and humbled themselves before the splendour of the light of Thy face. Make them then, O my God, triumphant over Thine enemies and cause them to be steadfast in Thy service, that through them the evidences of Thy dominion may be established throughout Thy realms and the tokens of Thine indomitable power be manifested in Thy lands. Verily Thou art potent to do what Thou wilt; no God is there but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

This glorious Tablet hath been revealed on the Anniversary of the Birth that thou mayest recite it in a spirit of humility and supplication and give thanks unto thy Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-

Informed. Make thou every effort to render service unto God, that from thee may appear that which will immortalize thy memory in His glorious and exalted heaven.

Say: Glorified art Thou, O my God! I implore Thee by the Dawning-Place of Thy signs and by the Revealer of Thy clear tokens to grant that I may, under all conditions, hold fast the cord of Thy loving providence and cling tenaciously to the hem of Thy generosity. Reckon me then with those whom the changes and chances of the world have failed to deter from serving Thee and from bearing allegiance unto Thee, whom the onslaught of the people hath been powerless to hinder from magnifying Thy Name and celebrating Thy praise. Graciously assist me, O my Lord, to do whatever Thou lovest and desirest. Enable me then to fulfil that which will exalt Thy Name and will set ablaze the fire of Thy love.

Thou art, in truth, the Forgiving, the Bountiful.

...

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh

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Lawḥ-i-Mawlúd

(Tablet of the Birth)

O concourse of the seen and the unseen! Rejoice with exceeding gladness in your hearts and souls, for the night hath come for the harvesting of the ages and the gathering up of past cycles, the night wherein all days and nights were called into being and the time preordained for this Revelation was fulfilled at the behest of Him Who is the Lord of might and power. All joy to the Concourse on high at the appearance of so glorious, so wondrous a Spirit!

This is the night wherein the doors of Paradise were flung open and the gates of Hell were shut fast, the night wherein the paradise of the All-Merciful was unveiled in the midmost heart of creation, the breezes of God were wafted from the retreats of forgiveness, and the Last Hour ushered in through the power of truth, could ye but know it. All joy to this night through which all days have been suffused with light, though none can apprehend this save those that are endued with certitude and discernment!

This is the night round which have circled the Nights of Power, wherein the angels and the Spirit have come down bearing cups filled at the streams of Paradise, the night wherein Heaven itself was adorned with the ornament of God, the Almighty, the All-Gracious, the Most Bountiful, wherein every created thing was brought to life, and all the peoples of the earth were surrounded by His grace. All joy to the concourse of the Spirit for this manifest and resplendent bounty!

This is the night wherein the limbs of Jibt were made to tremble, and the Most Great Idol fell upon the dust, and the foundations of iniquity were shattered, and Manát lamented in its inmost being, and the back of 'Uzzá was broken and its face blackened; for the Morn of divine Revelation hath dawned, and there hath appeared that which hath solaced the eyes of glory

and majesty, and beyond them the eyes of all the Prophets and Messengers of God. All glory, then, to this Dawn which hath broken above the dayspring of effulgent glory!

Say: This is the Dawn whereat the evil ones were debarred from approaching the realm of might and grandeur, and wherein the hearts of such as have contended with God, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Unconstrained, were lacerated. This is the Dawn whereat the faces of the wicked were darkened, whilst the countenances of the righteous shone forth with the light of this Beauty, a Beauty Whose advent all things visible and invisible, and beyond them the company of the Concourse on high, have eagerly awaited. All hail the appearance of this Spirit, through Whose potency the dead have been stirred up in their tombs and every mouldering bone brought to life!

Say: O source of iniquity! Bewail thy woeful plight; and O fountainhead of oppression! Repair to thine abode in the nethermost fire, for the beauty of the All-Merciful hath shone forth above the horizon of existence with such radiance as to illumine all that dwell in His realms with the splendour of its light, and hath called into being the Spirit of God, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. Through its revelation the hand of His Will hath stretched forth from the sleeve of grandeur and rent asunder the veils of the world by the power of His supreme, His peerless, His all-compelling and exalted sovereignty. All glory, then, to this Dawn whereat the Ancient Beauty hath been established upon the throne of His Name, the Almighty, the Most Great!

This is the Dawn whereat was born He Who begetteth not and Who is not begotten. Well is it with him that immerseth himself beneath the ocean of inner meaning that surgeth within this utterance and discovereth the pearls of knowledge and wisdom that lie hid in the words of God, the King, the Exalted, the Mighty, the Powerful. All glory to him who apprehendeth the truth and is reckoned with them that are endued with discernment!

Say: This is the Dawn whereat the cohorts of the concourse of Paradise and the hosts of the angels of holiness descended from heaven, amongst whom was the One Who was lifted up on the breezes of the Beauty of God, the Most Glorious, unto the ranks of the most exalted Concourse. Borne on these same breezes, yet another company of angels descended, each bearing aloft a chalice of everlasting life and proffering it unto them that circle in adoration round the Spot wherein the Ancient Being hath established Himself upon the throne of His all-glorious and most bounteous Name. All joy to such as have attained His presence, gazed upon His beauty, hearkened unto His melodies, and been quickened by the Word that hath issued forth from His sacred and exalted, His glorious and resplendent lips!

Say: This is the Dawn whereat the Most Great Tree was planted and bore its exalted and peerless fruits. By the righteousness of God! Within each fruit of this Tree there repose the seeds of a myriad melodies. Wherefore, O concourse of the Spirit, We shall acquaint you, in accordance with your capacity, with some of their celestial songs, that they may attract your hearts and draw you nigh unto God, the Lord of strength, of power and might. All glory be to this Dawn, through which the divine Luminaries have shone forth above the horizon of sanctity by the leave of God, the Almighty, the Inaccessible, the Most High!

Say: This is the Dawn whereat the hidden Essence and the unseen Treasure were made manifest, the Dawn whereat the Ancient Beauty seized the cup of immortality with the hands of glory and, having first quaffed therefrom, proffered it unto all the peoples of the earth, high and low alike. All glory, then, to the one who hath approached this cup, taken it up, and drunk therefrom for the love of his Lord, the All-Powerful, the Most High!

One fruit of that Tree hath proclaimed what the Burning Bush had proclaimed aforetime in that hallowed and snow-white Spot, words to which Moses gave ear and which caused Him to forsake all created things and to direct His steps towards the retreats of holiness and grandeur. All glory, then, to that ecstasy born of God, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Most Great!

Another fruit thereof hath uttered that which enraptured Jesus and raised Him up to the heaven of manifest splendour. All glory, then, to this Spirit in Whose presence standeth the Faithful Spirit, together with a company of God's chosen angels!

Yet another fruit thereof hath disclosed that which captivated the heart of Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, Who, carried away by the sweet accents of the Voice from on high, ascended unto the Divine Lote-Tree and heard, proceeding from within the Tabernacle of majesty, the Voice of God speaking forth the mystery of My hallowed, My exalted and mighty Name. All glory, then, to this Tree which hath been raised up through the power of truth, that all the peoples of the world may seek the shelter of its shade!

O Pen of the Most High! Write no more; for, by God, wert thou to set forth all the sweet accents of the fruits of this heavenly Tree, thou wouldst find thyself forsaken upon the earth, inasmuch as all would flee from thy presence and abandon thy court of holiness. And this, verily, is the undoubted truth. All glory, then, to the mysteries which none can bear save God, the sovereign Ruler, the Almighty, the Most Gracious!

Dost thou not witness, O Pen, what a clamour the hypocrites have raised throughout the land, and what a tumult the wicked and ungodly have provoked? And this notwithstanding that thou didst reveal but an infinitesimal glimmer of the mysteries of thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious. Wherefore, restrain thyself and conceal from the eyes of men that which God, as a sign of His bounty, hath bestowed upon thee. And if it be thy wish to give all created things to quaff from that crystal water that is life indeed, and whereof God hath made thee the Fountainhead, then let thine ink flow only in proportion to their capacity. Thus biddeth thee the One Who hath called thee into being through the power of His behest. Do thou, then, as thou wert bidden, and be not of them that tarry. All glory be to this weighty decree which hath reined in the power of all created things and withheld the Pen of the Most High from divulging to the peoples of the world that from which they had been veiled! His might, verily, is equal to all things.

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He is the Most Holy, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.

The Birthday Festival is come, and He Who is the Beauty of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the All-Loving, hath ascended His throne. Well is it with the one who in this Day hath attained His presence and towards whom the gaze of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-

Subsisting, hath been directed. Say: We have celebrated this Festival in the Most Great Prison at a time when the kings of the earth have risen against Us. Yet the ascendancy of the oppressor can never frustrate Us, nor can the hosts of the world dismay Us. Unto this doth the All-Merciful bear witness in this most august station.

Say: Should the quintessence of assurance be dismayed before the clamour of the peoples of the world? Nay, by His beauty, which sheddeth its radiance upon all that hath been and all that shall be! This, verily, is the majesty of the Lord that hath encompassed the entire creation, and this is His transcendent power that hath pervaded all them that see and all that is seen. Take fast hold of the cord of His sovereign might and make mention of your Lord, the Unconstrained, at this dawning whose light hath laid bare every hidden secret. Thus hath the Tongue of the Ancient of Days spoken on this Day wherein the choice wine hath been unsealed. Take heed lest the vain imaginings of them that have disbelieved in God perturb you, or their idle fancies deter you from this outstretched path.

O people of Bahá! Soar upon the wings of detachment into the atmosphere of the love of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Arise then to render Him victorious, as bidden in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest ye contend with any of My servants. Bestow upon them the sweet savours of God and His holy utterances, for through their potency all men will be enabled to turn unto Him. They that remain heedless of God in this Day are in truth lost in the drunkenness of their desires and perceive it not. Well is it with the one who, with lowliness and humility, hath set his face towards the Dayspring of the verses of his Lord.

It behoveth you to arise and acquaint the people with that which hath been sent down in the Book of their Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Say: Fear ye God and pay no heed to the vain imaginings of them that walk in the ways of doubt and iniquity. Turn ye with radiant hearts towards the throne of your Lord, the Possessor of all names. He, verily, shall aid you through the power of truth. No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.

Would ye hasten towards a mere pond, whilst the Most Great Ocean is stretched out before your eyes? Turn ye wholly unto it, and follow not in the footsteps of every faithless deceiver. Thus doth the Bird of Eternity warble upon the branches of Our Divine Lote-Tree. By God! A single one of its melodies sufficeth to enrapture the Concourse on high, and beyond them the dwellers of the cities of names, and beyond them those who circle round His Throne at morn and eventide.

Thus have the showers of utterance rained down from the heaven of the will of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Draw nigh unto them, O people, and renounce those who idly dispute the verses that God hath revealed, and who have disbelieved in their Lord when He came invested with proof and testimony.

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He is God.

O concourse of ardent lovers! By the righteousness of God, this is a night the like of which hath never been witnessed in the world of creation. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

This is the night wherein the Spirit intoned such a melody as to throw into commotion the inner realities of all men, proclaiming: "Rejoice, O Concourse on high, within your retreats of Paradise!"

Whereupon did the Voice of God call out from within the Tabernacle of holiness and bounty: "This, indeed, is the night wherein He Who is the reality of the All-Merciful hath been born, the night wherein every eternal command hath been expounded by the Pen of the All-Glorious. Rejoice, then, with exceeding gladness, O concourse of the Bayán!"

This is the night wherein the Mystic Dove raised its call upon the branches and boughs of heaven, saying: "Rejoice, O denizens of Paradise!"

Say: This is the night wherein the veils of glory were parted before the eyes of the people of certitude, and the Bird of Heaven warbled its melody in the midmost heart of the celestial realm. Rejoice, then, O embodiments of sanctity in the Everlasting City!

This is the night wherein God shed abroad the splendour of all His most excellent names and established Himself upon the throne of every pure and radiant heart. Rejoice, then, O concourse of the Bayán!

This is the night wherein the oceans of forgiveness surged and the breezes of providence were wafted abroad. Rejoice, then, O companions of the All-Merciful!

This is the night wherein the trespasses of all that dwell on earth were forgiven. This, verily, is a joyful tidings unto all who have been created in the contingent realm!

Say: This is the night wherein the assigned measures of bounty and grace were inscribed upon the scrolls of might and assurance, that every trace of sorrow might thereby be banished forever from all things. Rejoice, then, O ye that have stepped forth into the realm of being!

At this moment the Herald of the Spirit crieth out from the midmost heart of eternity, the seat of loftiness and exaltation—and this, verily, is from the grace of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful—

Saying: By God! The musk-scented wine hath been unsealed by the mighty hand of Him Who is the source of sovereignty and power. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

And cups of crimson-coloured wine are being borne round by the hand of the divine Joseph and raised to the beauty of the All-Glorious. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

Hasten then, O concourse of men, and drink your fill from this stream of everlasting life! And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

Say: O assemblage of true lovers! The beauty of the Desired One hath shone forth in its naked glory. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

O concourse of His loved ones! The countenance of the Best-Beloved hath dawned above the horizon of holiness. Bestir yourselves and hasten unto it with all your hearts, O people of the Bayán! And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

The proof hath been fulfilled and the testimony established, inasmuch as the Resurrection hath come to pass through the appearance of God in the Manifestation of His own Self, the Ever-Abiding. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

The ages have passed, and the cycles have been stirred up, and every luminary hath beamed with delight, for God hath shed the splendour of His glory upon every tree adorned with verdant twigs. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

Bestir yourselves, O chosen ones of God, for the spirits have been gathered together, the divine breezes have wafted, the fleeting fancies have been dispelled, and the voices of eternity have rung out from every flourishing tree. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

By God! The veils have been burned away, the clouds have been rent asunder, the signs have been revealed and the allusions unravelled by Him Whose might is equal to all things. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

Let your hearts be filled with joy, but conceal this closely guarded, this most hidden secret, lest the stranger become apprised of that which ye have quaffed of the wine that imparteth rapture and delight. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

O concourse of the Bayán! God beareth Me witness that His favour is complete, His mercy is perfected, and His countenance is beaming with joy and radiance. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

Drink your fill, O My companions, from this sparkling and luminous stream, and rejoice therein, O My friends! And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

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He is the Most Holy, the Most Great.

This is the month wherein was born He Who beareth the Most Great Name, Whose appearance hath caused the limbs of humankind to quake and the dust of Whose footsteps the Concourse on high and the dwellers of the cities of names have sought for a blessing. Whereupon they rendered praise unto God and cried out in joy and exultation. By God! This is the month through which all other months have been illumined, the month wherein He Who is the Hidden Secret and the Well-guarded Treasure hath been made manifest and hath called aloud amidst all humankind. All dominion belongeth to this newborn Child through Whom the face of creation hath been wreathed in smiles, and the trees have swayed, and the oceans have surged, and the mountains have taken flight, and Paradise hath lifted its voice, and the Rock hath cried out, and all things have exclaimed, "O concourse of creation! Hasten ye towards the dawning-place of the countenance of your Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate!"

This is the month wherein Paradise itself was decked forth with the splendours of the countenance of its Lord, the All-Merciful, and the heavenly Nightingale warbled its melody upon the Divine Lote-Tree, and the hearts of the favoured ones were filled with rapture. But alas, the people, for the most part, are heedless. Blessed be the one who hath recognized Him and apprehended that which was promised in the Books of God, the Almighty, the All-Praised; and woe betide him that hath turned aside from the One upon Whom the Concourse on high have fixed their gaze, Him Who hath confounded every wayward misbeliever.

When once thou hast received this Tablet, intone it in the sweetest of melodies and say: Praise be to Thee, O my most merciful Lord, for remembering me in this Tablet whereby the fragrance of the garment of Thy knowledge was diffused and the oceans of Thy grace were made to surge. I bear witness that Thou art potent to do as Thou pleasest. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

...

Notes

Preface

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17.
2. Kitáb-i-Íqán ¶51.

Ridván

Selection 9

1. That is, jihad.

Selection 10

2. The angel who will sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection.

Selection 16

3. Jesus.
4. The Báb.

Selection 17

5. A reference to tea.
6. Haifa.

Selection 23

7. Cf. Qur'án 76:1.

8. Here begins a dialogue between the Maid of Heaven and Bahá'u'lláh, alternating from paragraph to paragraph.

Selection 25

9. Mírzá Áqá Ján, the amanuensis of Bahá'u'lláh, in whose voice the first part of this Tablet was revealed.

Declaration of the Báb

Selection 26

10. In the Tafsír-i-Hú Bahá'u'lláh explains that the name “He” (or

Huva

, consisting of the letters Há' and Váv) is God's Most Great Name, for it is a mirror in which all of God's names and attributes are reflected together.

11. That is, the letter “B” in the name “Bahá”.

12. Qur'án 28:5.

Selection 27

13. See Qur'án 7:107.

14. Cf. Qur'án 12:31.

Selection 28

15. Bahá'u'lláh.

16. The Báb.

Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh

Selection 29

17. See Qur'án 4:51.

Selection 30

18. “Deadly foes” (lit., “Shimrs”) and “tyrant kings” (lit., “Nimrods”): Shimr dealt the blow that killed Imám Husayn, and Nimrod was the persecutor of Abraham.

19. Cf. Qur'án 71:14.

Selection 31

20. The Báb.

21. Imám Ḥusayn.

22. Ṭihrán.

23. Náṣiri'd-Dín

Sh

áh.

24. Joseph.

25. Cf. Qur'án 22:54.

Selection 32

26. Qur'án 104:1–2.

27. This translation of the Kitáb-i-'Ahd was first published in

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

.

Martyrdom of the Báb

Selection 35

28. The Báb.

Selection 36

29. Constantinople.

30. Qur'án 40:28.

31. The Báb.

32. Imám Ḥusayn.

Selection 38

33. The Báb.

34. In paragraphs 2–15 Bahá'u'lláh speaks in the voice of the Báb.

35. The numerical value of the letters of the word

Hín

is 68. “After Hín” is thus an allusion to the year after A.H. 1268, which was 1269 (A.D. 1852–3), the year that marked the birth of the Bahá’í Revelation.

36. The letters Ḥá’ and Bá’ spell the word

ḥubb

(love), while Há’ and Váv constitute the word

Huva

(He).

37. These invocations come from a Tablet of the Báb addressed to Mullá Báqir-i-Tabrízí about Him Whom God shall make manifest.

Selection 39

38. The Báb.

39. The Súriy-i-Aḥzán was revealed for Mírzá ‘Alíy-i-Sayyáh-i-Marághih’í.

Birth of the Báb

Selection 41

40. Of the Báb.

41. This selection, with the exception of the invocation, was first published in

Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

.

Birth of Bahá’u’lláh

Selection 42

42. Cf. Qur’án, súrih 97.

43. Jibt, Manát, and ‘Uzzá are the names of idols worshipped in the days of the pagan Arabs and mentioned in the Qur’án (4:51 and 53:19–20).

...

Key to Passages Translated by Shoghi Effendi

Abbreviations

GWB Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh

GPB God Passes By. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974

KI The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude

PMB Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh

WOB The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991

Selection

The entire Tablet, except the invocation (PMB XLVI)

The entire Tablet (PMB LVII and LVIII)

The entire Tablet, except the invocation (GWB XIV)

The entire Tablet, except the invocation (GWB CLI)

The entire Tablet, except the invocation (PMB CLXXXIV)

"And We desire" to "Our heirs." (KI ¶155)

"There hath branched" to "this exalted Handiwork!" (WOB, 135)

"A Word hath" to "among its people" (WOB, 135)

"Render thanks" to "His favoured servants." (WOB, 135) (WOB, 135)

"We have sent" to "will assuredly perish." (WOB, 135)

"The wrongs" to "Tablet of creation." (GPB, 118)

"O Maryam!" to "thereafter!" (GPB, 118)

"I roamed" to "My associates." (GPB, 120)

"For two years" to "jealousy abate." (GPB, 119)

"I have borne" to "or will bear." (GPB 118)

"We found" to "to its message." (GPB, 125)

"It is incumbent upon the Aghṣán" to "the All-Bountiful." (WOB, 134)

The entire Tablet (PMB CLXXX)

The entire selection (GWB LXXVI)

The entire selection (GWB CXIII ¶¶1-8)

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