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FOREWORD

The compiler/editor of this volume has used various orthographical devices in order to highlight what he considers to be notable numbers, letters, words, phrases and passages found in the collected texts. These devices are not integral to the text, nor were they featured in the published editions consulted in preparation for this volume. Quotation marks, square brackets, bold or italic typeface which have been employed within quoted words, phrases or passages are among such devices. While the words written by Bahá'u'lláh are cited without quotation marks, His utterances as reported by others are distinguished from His Writings with quotation marks. All citations have been carefully checked, but some errors may yet be found by vigilant readers. Please report these without delay to the compiler/editor so that he can correct these blemishes in the Second Edition.

As monarchs, emperors, pontiffs and justices of the courts are addressed with honorific titles such as His Majesty, His Eminence, His Honor and the like, so also Bahá'u'lláh, the principal Author of this work, the Báb (also referenced here) and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the interpreter appointed by Bahá'u'lláh for the elucidation of His teachings and writings, are addressed with a capitalized male pronoun. This usage does not assume that the reader is a believer any more than referring to Her Majesty the Queen of England or His Eminence the Pope presupposes that the writer or reader is a British subject or a Roman Catholic. What it conveys is a measure of respect for these persons who are more highly revered by some than kings or emperors, pontiffs or priests. Indeed, as Professor Edward Granville Browne wrote of his first meeting with Bahá'u'lláh, "No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain."¹ It is in honor of such reverence that this convention has been followed in reference to the persons aforementioned, as well as to Muhammad and Jesus and other objects of enduring adoration.

INTRODUCTION

We perceive our actions, our thoughts and feelings from the inside out, through self-knowledge, and others perceive those same actions, and discern those thoughts and feelings from the outside in, what we will characterize as other-knowledge. Both processes may employ intuition, observation, analysis, correlation and synthesis. But the process of perceiving oneself is inaccessible to anyone but oneself, and vice versa—the processes are not reversible. It can be argued, sometimes persuasively, that the other-knowledge is superior to self-knowledge,

because the other-knowledge is less likely to be distorted by the desires, fears and other controlling thoughts and feelings of the individual, what is often called subjectivity, but which comprises the many practices whereby the individual paints a picture of their own self that corresponds to what they want to see, what they want to believe, rather than objectively what exists. The claim is that other-knowledge is not subjective in this way, because the other has no wish to distort or manipulate the self-image of the individual, and that therefore the other-knowledge is objective, or if not entirely objective then more objective than self-knowledge. Others have pointed out that inasmuch as each individual is inclined to manipulate knowledge in such a way as to support and promote their self-image, that therefore there is no objectivity, that there is intra-subjectivity.

On the microcosmic scale, marriage counseling affords some insights into these two processes of self-knowledge and other-knowledge, and the degree to which both may be incomplete but that the ultimate resolution of the two kinds of knowledge depends upon the commitment of the communicating persons, the self and the other, to honor and trust the experience of each other, and to construct a bridge or weave a network of shared perceptions that will permit them to understand one another. In any attempt to truly comprehend another human being, we must transcend both our self-knowledge and our other-knowledge, and engage in a coalescence of the two with that other. Without discovering and valuing points of agreement between our self-knowledge and the other-knowledge, we cannot be in a loving relationship, we cannot collaborate...we are isolated atoms floating in space and time and unable to form molecules, let alone compounds and organisms.

We have been speaking of the knowledge that human beings have of one another. Our knowledge of other realities which are not as complicated as the human reality is quite different. 'Abdu'l-Bahá² wrote and spoke on this theme many times. In one of these expositions we read:

When thou dost carefully consider this matter, thou wilt see that a lower plane can never comprehend a higher. The mineral kingdom, for example, which is lower, is precluded from comprehending the vegetable kingdom; for the mineral, any such understanding would be utterly impossible. In the same way, no matter how far the vegetable kingdom may develop, it will achieve no conception of the animal kingdom, and any such comprehension at its level would be unthinkable, for the animal occupies a plane higher than that of the vegetable: this tree cannot conceive of hearing and sight. And the animal kingdom, no matter how far it may evolve, can never become aware of the reality of the intellect, which discovereth the inner

essence of all things, and comprehendeth those realities which cannot be seen; for the human plane as compared with that of the animal is very high. And although these beings all co-exist in the contingent world, in each case the difference in their stations precludeth their grasp of the whole; for no lower degree can understand a higher, such comprehension being impossible. The higher plane, however, understandeth the lower. The animal, for instance, comprehendeth the mineral and vegetable, the human understandeth the planes of the animal, vegetable and mineral. But the mineral cannot possibly understand the realms of man. And notwithstanding the fact that all these entities co-exist in the phenomenal world, even so, no lower degree can ever comprehend a higher.³

This principle applies to our incapacity to understand a station or plane of existence that is higher than our own, “for no lower degree can understand a higher, such comprehension being impossible”. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continues to make that very point:

Then how could it be possible for a contingent reality, that is, man, to understand the nature of that pre-existent Essence, the Divine Being? The difference in station between man and the Divine Reality is thousands upon thousands of times greater than the difference between vegetable and animal. And that which a human being would conjure up in his mind is but the fanciful image of his human condition, it doth not encompass God's reality but rather is encompassed by it. That is, man graspeth his own illusory conceptions, but the Reality of Divinity can never be grasped: It, Itself, encompasseth all created things, and all created things are in Its grasp.

That Divinity which man doth imagine for himself existeth only in his mind, not in truth.⁴

Bahá’u’lláh sets forth the same principle, and delineates even further the boundaries on human understanding in this passage:

Wert thou to ponder in thine heart, from now until the end that hath no end, and with all the concentrated intelligence and understanding which the greatest minds have attained in the past or will attain in the future, this divinely ordained and subtle Reality [the rational faculty], this sign of the revelation of the All-Abiding, All-Glorious God, thou wilt fail to comprehend its mystery or to appraise its virtue. Having recognized thy powerlessness to attain to an adequate understanding of that Reality which abideth within thee, thou wilt readily admit the futility of such efforts as may be attempted by thee, or by any of the created things, to fathom the mystery of the Living God, the Day Star of unfading glory, the Ancient of everlasting days. This confession of helplessness which mature contemplation must eventually impel every mind to make is in itself the acme of human understanding, and marketh the culmination of man's development.⁵

Bahá’u’lláh indicates that the human soul, the rational faculty is

beyond our comprehension, how much more so the reality of God:

All that the sages and mystics have said or written have never exceeded, nor can they ever hope to exceed, the limitations to which man's finite mind hath been strictly subjected. To whatever heights the mind of the most exalted of men may soar, however great the depths which the detached and understanding heart can penetrate, such mind and heart can never transcend that which is the creature of their own conceptions and the product of their own thoughts. The meditations of the profoundest thinker, the devotions of the holiest of saints, the highest expressions of praise from either

human pen or tongue, are but a reflection of that which hath been created within themselves, through the revelation of the Lord, their God. Whoever pondereth this truth in his heart will readily admit that there are certain

limits which no human being can possibly transgress. Every attempt which, from the beginning that hath no beginning, hath been made to visualize and know God is limited by the exigencies of His own creation -- a creation which He, through the operation of His own Will and for the purposes of none other but His own Self, hath called into being. Immeasurably exalted is He above the strivings of human mind to grasp His Essence, or of human tongue to describe His mystery. No tie of direct intercourse can ever bind Him to the things He hath created, nor can the most abstruse and most remote allusions of His creatures do justice to His being. Through His world-pervading Will He hath brought into being all created things. He is and hath ever been veiled in the ancient eternity of His own exalted and indivisible Essence, and will everlastingly continue to remain concealed in His inaccessible majesty and glory. All that is in heaven and all that is in the earth have come to exist at His bidding, and by His Will all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being. How can, therefore, the creature which the Word of God hath fashioned comprehend the nature of Him Who is the Ancient of Days?⁶

This might induce some souls to embrace agnosticism and believe themselves thereby to be adhering faithfully to the principles set forth in these discourses. However Bahá'u'lláh does not leave us to our own devices at this critical juncture. Having stated that we cannot know God in Himself, Bahá'u'lláh nevertheless affirms that the very purpose for which we have been created is "to know and recognize the one true God"⁷, "to know God"⁸, "to know Him and to love Him"⁹, "to know Thee and to worship Thee"¹⁰, "to know his Creator and to attain His Presence"¹¹, "know Him, Who is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful"¹², "to know Thee and to serve Thy Cause"¹³, "to serve Me, to glorify My Word and to proclaim My Cause"¹⁴, "to remember Thee, to glorify Thee, and to aid Thy Cause."¹⁵

Are we dealing with some kind of Catch-22, a puzzle that cannot be assembled, a labyrinth that cannot be exited, a riddle that

cannot be solved? Is this meant to drive us to distraction, to force us to transcend rational thought, to seek answers in entirely different quarters, or to stop seeking answers altogether? Not at all...Bahá'u'lláh does not abandon us at this juncture either.

How are we to know and recognize, attain the presence, worship, serve and proclaim the Cause, glorify the Word, remember, glorify and aid God? Inasmuch as we cannot know Him directly, how else could we possibly know Him? Bahá'u'lláh gives the answer:

The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation.¹⁶

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace, according to His saying,

"His grace hath transcended all things; My grace hath encompassed them all," hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence.¹⁷

Know thou of a certainty that the Unseen can in no wise incarnate His Essence and reveal it unto men. He is, and hath ever been, immensely exalted beyond all that can either be recounted or perceived. From His retreat of glory His voice is ever proclaiming: "Verily, I am God; there is none other God besides Me, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. I have manifested Myself unto men, and have sent down Him Who is the Day Spring of the signs of My Revelation. Through Him I have caused all creation to testify that there is none other God except Him, the Incomparable, the All-Informed, the All-Wise." He Who is everlastingly hidden from the eyes of men can never be known except through His Manifestation, and His Manifestation can adduce no greater proof of the truth of His Mission than the proof of His own Person.¹⁸

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being hath ever been, and will continue for ever to be, closed in the face of men. No man's understanding shall ever gain access unto His holy court. As a token of His mercy, however, and as a proof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. Whoso hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the Voice of God, and whoso testifieth to the truth of their Revelation, hath testified to the truth of God Himself. Whoso turneth away from them, hath

turned away from God, and whoso disbelieveth in them, hath disbelieved in God. Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above, and the Standard of His Truth unto every one in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. They are the Manifestations of God amidst men, the evidences of His Truth, and the signs of His glory.¹⁹

And since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the one true God with His creation, and no resemblance whatever can exist between the transient and the Eternal, the contingent and the Absolute, He hath ordained that in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. Unto this subtle, this mysterious and ethereal Being He hath assigned a twofold nature; the physical, pertaining to the world of matter, and the spiritual, which is born of the substance of God Himself. He hath, moreover, conferred upon Him a double station. The first station, which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself. To this testifieth the tradition: "Manifold and mysterious is My relationship with God. I am He, Himself, and He is I, Myself, except that I am that I am, and He is that He is." And in like manner, the words: "Arise, O Muhammad, for lo, the Lover and the Beloved are joined together and made one in Thee." He similarly saith: "There is no distinction whatsoever between Thee and Them, except that They are Thy Servants." The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verses: "I am but a man like you." "Say, praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle?" These Essences of Detachment, these resplendent Realities are the channels of God's all-pervasive grace. Led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with supreme sovereignty, They are commissioned to use the inspiration of Their words, the effusions of Their infallible grace and the sanctifying breeze of Their Revelation for the cleansing of every longing heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of earthly cares and limitations. Then, and only then, will the Trust of God, latent in the reality of man, emerge, as resplendent as the rising Orb of Divine Revelation, from behind the veil of concealment, and implant the ensign of its revealed glory upon the summits of men's hearts.²⁰

The Person of the Manifestation hath ever been the representative and mouthpiece of God. He, in truth, is the Day Spring of God's most excellent Titles, and the Dawning-Place of His exalted Attributes. If any be set up by His side as peers, if they be regarded as identical with His Person, how can it, then, be maintained that the Divine Being is One and Incomparable, that His Essence is indivisible and peerless? Meditate on that which We have, through the power of truth, revealed unto thee, and be thou of them that comprehend its meaning.²¹

The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence. To this most excellent aim, this supreme objective, all the heavenly Books and the divinely-revealed and weighty Scriptures unequivocally bear witness. Whoso

hath recognized the Day Spring of Divine guidance and entered His holy court hath drawn nigh unto God and attained His Presence, a Presence which is the real Paradise, and of which the loftiest mansions of heaven are but a symbol. Such a man hath attained the knowledge of the station of Him Who is "at the distance of two bows," Who standeth beyond the Sadratu'l-Muntahá. Whoso hath failed to recognize Him will have condemned himself to the misery of remoteness, a remoteness which is naught but utter nothingness and the essence of the nethermost fire. Such will be his fate, though to outward seeming he may occupy the earth's loftiest seats and be established upon its most exalted throne.²²

The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same. By this is meant that whatever pertaineth to the former, all His acts and doings, whatever He ordaineth or forbiddeth, should be considered, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances, and without any reservation, as identical with the Will of God Himself. This is the loftiest station to which a true believer in the unity of God can ever hope to attain. Blessed is the man that reacheth this station, and is of them that are steadfast in their belief.²³

The purpose in citing all of these statements is to demonstrate conclusively that this is not an isolated, marginal or unparalleled utterance of Bahá'u'lláh; that it is, on the contrary, a fundamental principle of his theology which systematically educates the receptive soul about the realities pertaining to an authentic relationship with God. This is where true knowledge of God is to be found—through knowledge of His Manifestations.

According to the principle set forth earlier, where the lower station cannot comprehend the higher station, how then are human beings to attain to the knowledge of the Manifestations? The difference between the self-perception of the Manifestation of God, and the other-perception of His actions, and discernment of His thoughts and feelings by human beings is much more significant than we can imagine. On the one hand, the Manifestation is endowed with a human body during His earthly sojourn, and a rational soul, and these make Him seem human to us. Bahá'u'lláh indicates that we cannot comprehend the rational soul, so that leaves us with the human body of the Manifestation of God that is comprehensible to us. But the Manifestation of the God is not just endowed with a human body and rational soul. Bahá'u'lláh writes of the two natures of the Manifestation in reference to Himself: "Know verily that whenever this Youth turneth His eyes towards His own self, he findeth it the most insignificant of all creation. When He contemplates, however, the bright effulgences He hath been empowered to manifest, lo, that self is transfigured before Him into a sovereign Potency permeating the essence of all things

visible and invisible. Glory be to Him Who, through the power of truth, hath sent down the Manifestation of His own Self and entrusted Him with His message unto all mankind.”²⁴

‘Abdu’l-Bahá elaborated on this dual nature and indicated that “The Holy Manifestations have three conditions: one, the physical condition; one, that of the rational soul; and one, that of the manifestation of perfection and of the lordly splendor.”²⁵ “We said that the Manifestations have three planes. First, the physical reality, which depends upon the body; second, the individual reality, that is to say, the rational soul; third, the divine appearance, which is the divine perfections, the cause of the life of existence, of the education of souls, of the guidance of people, and of the enlightenment of the contingent world.”²⁶ In order to come to a knowledge of God, it is imperative that we come to know the third condition, the third plane of the Manifestation of God, because it is this third aspect of his nature that is “the manifestation of perfection and of the lordly splendor...the divine appearance, which is the divine perfections, the cause of the life of existence, of the education of souls, of the guidance of people, and of the enlightenment of the contingent world.” Of what profit is it for us to know about the physical condition or even the rational soul of the Manifestation of God? Our purpose is to attain to the knowledge of God, and we can only attain our purpose if we attain to the knowledge of that aspect of the Manifestation which manifests God. We seem to have arrived at another of those junctures where we could turn away and despair of ever discovering the truth. “Do men think when they say 'We believe' they shall be let alone and not be put to proof?”²⁷

Bahá’u’lláh shows the way this time as well. He explains that we can only know the Manifestation of God through His revelation of himself to us. No matter how much we may seek to understand His divine nature, comprehend His manifestation of the names and attributes of God, we will be unable to fathom these mysteries, because they are beyond our ken, beyond the capacity of our minds, of our acquired knowledge, of our rational souls. He will explain, He will reveal, He will show us this Reality which we cannot know otherwise.

To begin with, Bahá’u’lláh sets forth the principle that we cannot know the Manifestation according to the words and deeds of mortal men:

...man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious, can never quaff from the stream of divine knowledge and wisdom, can never enter the abode of immortality, nor partake of the cup of divine

nearness and favour, unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets.²⁸

He specifically indicates that He is among the Prophets of God and reveals the knowledge of God in countless passages of His Writings, a few of which are cited here in order to demonstrate the point and not leave this argument open to diversion or criticism on this point:

Say: I, verily, have not sought to extol Mine own Self, but rather God Himself, were ye to judge fairly. Naught can be seen in Me except God and His Cause, could ye but perceive it. I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned. Thus hath it been decreed in the Scriptures of thy

Lord, the Most Merciful. He, verily, hath borne witness unto Me, as I bear witness unto Him. And God testifieth to the truth of My words.

Say: The Books have been sent down for naught but My remembrance. Whosoever is receptive to their call shall perceive therefrom the sweet fragrances of My name and My praise; and he who hath unstopped the ear of his inmost heart shall hear from every word thereof: "The True One is come! He indeed is the beloved of the worlds!"²⁹

"Wert thou to hear with Mine ear," He also declares, "thou wouldst hear how 'Alí [the Báb] bewaileth Me in the presence of the Glorious Companion, and how Muhammad weepeth over Me in the allhighest Horizon, and how the Spirit [Jesus] beateth Himself upon the head in the heaven of My decree, by reason of what hath befallen this Wronged One at the hands of every impious sinner."³⁰

Say: Deliver your souls, O people, from the bondage of self, and purify them from all attachment to anything besides Me. Remembrance of Me cleanseth all things from defilement, could ye but perceive it. Say: Were all created things to be entirely divested of the veil of worldly vanity and desire, the Hand of God would in this Day clothe them, one and all, with the robe "He doeth whatsoever He willeth in the kingdom of creation," that thereby the sign of His sovereignty might be manifested in all things. Exalted then be He, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Almighty, the Supreme Protector, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.³¹

O My servants! There shineth nothing else in Mine heart except the unfading light of the Morn of Divine guidance, and out of My mouth proceedeth naught but the essence of truth, which the Lord your God hath revealed. Follow not, therefore, your earthly desires, and violate not the Covenant of God, nor break your pledge to Him. With firm determination, with the whole affection of your heart, and with the full force of your words, turn ye unto Him, and walk not in the ways of the foolish.³²

In reference to Himself, Bahá'u'lláh cites the words of the Báb,

Who writes that He cannot adequately describe Bahá'u'lláh.
How impotent are all others if the Báb cannot do Him justice!

He Who is the Heart and Center of the Bayán hath written: "The germ that holdeth within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow Me." And, again, He saith: "Of all the tributes I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in My Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause."³³

He hath said, and His word is the truth: 'Of all the tributes I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in My Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause.'
Moreover We counsel them to observe justice, equity, honesty, piety and that whereby both the Word of God and their own station will be exalted amongst men. Verily I am the One Who exhorteth with justice. Unto this beareth witness He from Whose Pen rivers of mercy have flowed and from Whose utterance fountains of living waters have streamed forth unto all created things. Immeasurably exalted is this boundless grace; immensely blessed is this resplendent favour.³⁴

He hath said -- and He, verily, speaketh the truth: "I have written down in My mention of Him these gem-like words: 'No allusion of Mine can allude unto Him, neither anything mentioned in the Bayán.'" And further, He -- exalted and glorified be He -- saith, concerning this most mighty Revelation, this Great Announcement: "Exalted and glorified is He above the power of any one to reveal Him except Himself, or the description of any of His creatures. I Myself am but the first servant to believe in Him and in His signs, and to partake of the sweet savors of His words from the first-fruits of the Paradise of His knowledge. Yea, by His glory! He is the Truth. There is none other God but Him. All have arisen at His bidding."³⁵

And again, He -- exalted be He -- saith: "Look not upon Him with any eye except His own. For whosoever looketh upon Him with His eye, will recognize Him; otherwise he will be veiled from Him. Shouldst thou seek God and His Presence, seek thou Him and gaze upon Him." And likewise, He saith: "Better is it for thee to recite but one of the verses of Him Whom God shall make manifest than to set down the whole of the Bayan, for on that Day that one verse can save thee, whereas the entire Bayan cannot save thee."³⁶

Bahá'u'lláh did not leave unidentified the perceptual orientation required to attain to knowledge of the Manifestation, and through Him the knowledge of God—on the contrary, His

Writings specifically indicate that we must see Him through His eyes, hear Him through His ears, and not through our own if we are to attain our objective and purpose:

Open Thou, O my Lord, mine eyes and the eyes of all them that have sought Thee, that we may recognize Thee with Thine own eyes. This is Thy bidding given us in the Book sent down by Thee unto Him Whom Thou hast chosen by Thy behest, Whom Thou hast singled out for Thy favor above all Thy creatures, Whom Thou hast been pleased to invest with Thy sovereignty, and Whom Thou hast specially favored and entrusted with Thy Message unto Thy people. Praised be Thou, therefore, O my God, inasmuch as Thou hast graciously enabled us to recognize Him and to acknowledge whatsoever hath been sent down unto Him, and conferred upon us the honor of attaining the presence of the One Whom Thou didst promise in Thy Book and in Thy Tablets.³⁷

God is My witness, O people! I was asleep on My couch, when lo, the Breeze of God wafting over Me roused Me from My slumber. His quickening Spirit revived Me, and My tongue was unloosed to voice His Call. Accuse Me not of having transgressed against God. Behold Me, not with your eyes but with Mine. Thus admonisheth you He Who is the Gracious, the All-Knowing. Think ye, O people, that I hold within My grasp the control of God's ultimate Will and Purpose? Far be it from Me to advance such claim. To this I testify before God, the Almighty, the Exalted, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Had the ultimate destiny of God's Faith been in Mine hands, I would have never consented, even though for one moment, to manifest Myself unto you, nor would I have allowed one word to fall from My lips. Of this God Himself is, verily, a witness.³⁸

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.³⁹

If it be your wish, O people, to know God and to discover the greatness of His might, look, then, upon Me with Mine own eyes, and not with the eyes of any one besides Me. Ye will, otherwise, be never capable of recognizing Me, though ye ponder My Cause as long as My Kingdom endureth, and meditate upon all created things throughout the eternity of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Omnipotent, the Ever-Abiding, the All-Wise. Thus have We manifested the truth of Our Revelation, that haply the people may be roused from their heedlessness, and be of them that understand.⁴⁰

Beware, beware lest thou behave like unto the people of the Bayán. For indeed they erred grievously, misguided the people, ignored the Covenant of God and His Testament and joined partners with Him, the One, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily they failed to recognize the Point of the Bayán, for had they recognized Him they would not have rejected His manifestation in this luminous and resplendent Being. And since they fixed

their eyes on names, therefore when He replaced His Name 'the Most Exalted' by 'the Most Glorious' their eyes were dimmed. They have failed to recognize Him in these days and are reckoned with those that perish. Indeed, had they known Him through His own Self or by virtue of that which He hath revealed, they would not have repudiated Him when He appeared in this glorious and incomparable Name, which God hath ordained to be the Sword of His Revelation between heaven and earth, and through which truth is separated from error, even from now until the Day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.⁴¹

Thou hast surely quaffed from the ocean of Mine utterance and hast witnessed the effulgent splendour of the orb of My wisdom. Thou hast also heard the sayings of the infidels who neither are acquainted with the fundamentals of the Faith, nor have tasted this choice Wine whose seal hath been broken through the power of My Name, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Beseech thou God that the believers who are endued with true understanding may be graciously enabled to do that which is pleasing unto Him.

How strange that despite this ringing Call, despite the appearance of this most wondrous Revelation, We notice that men, for the most part, have fixed their hearts on the vanities of the world and are sorely dismayed and troubled by reason of prevailing doubts and evil suggestions. Say: This is the Day of God Himself; fear ye God and be not of them that have disbelieved in Him. Cast the idle tales behind your backs and behold My Revelation through Mine eyes. Unto this have ye been exhorted in heavenly Books and Scriptures, in the Scrolls and Tablets.⁴²

HIS PREVIOUS EMBODIMENTS

O Jews! If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He hath once more, in My person, been made manifest unto you. Deal with Me as ye wish, for I have vowed to lay down My life in the path of God. I will fear no one, though the powers of earth and heaven be leagued against Me. Followers of the Gospel! If ye cherish the desire to slay Muhammad, the Apostle of God, seize Me and put an end to My life, for I am He, and My Self is His Self. Do unto Me as ye like, for the deepest longing of Mine heart is to attain the presence of My Best-Beloved in His Kingdom of Glory. Such is the Divine decree, if ye know it. Followers of Muhammad! If it be your wish to riddle with your shafts the breast of Him Who hath caused His Book the Bayán to be sent down unto you, lay hands on Me and persecute Me, for I am His Well-Beloved, the revelation of His own Self, though My name be not His name. I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. I, verily, anticipate from you the treatment ye have accorded unto Him that came before Me. To this all things, verily, witness, if ye be of those who hearken. O people of the Bayán! If ye have resolved to shed the blood of Him Whose coming the Bááb hath proclaimed, Whose advent Muhammad hath

prophesied, and Whose Revelation Jesus Christ Himself hath announced, behold Me standing, ready and defenseless, before you. Deal with Me after your own desires.⁴³

Praise be to Thee, O Lord My God, for the wondrous revelations of Thy inscrutable decree and the manifold woes and trials Thou hast destined for Myself. At one time Thou didst deliver Me into the hands of Nimrod [Abraham⁴⁴]; at another Thou hast allowed Pharaoh's rod to persecute Me [Moses]. Thou, alone, canst estimate, through Thine all-encompassing knowledge and the operation of Thy Will, the incalculable afflictions I have suffered at their hands. Again Thou didst cast Me into the prison-cell of the ungodly [Joseph], or no reason except that I was moved to whisper into the ears of the well-favored denizens of Thy Kingdom an intimation of the vision with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired Me, and revealed to Me its meaning through the potency of Thy might. And again Thou didst decree that I be beheaded by the sword of the infidel [Zachariah the Baptist]. Again I was crucified [Jesus] for having unveiled to men's eyes the hidden gems of Thy glorious unity, for having revealed to them the wondrous signs of Thy sovereign and everlasting power.

How bitter the humiliations heaped upon Me, in a subsequent age, on the plain of Karbilá [Imám Husayn⁴⁵! How lonely did I feel amidst Thy people! To what a state of helplessness I was reduced in that land! Unsatisfied with such indignities, My persecutors decapitated Me, and, carrying aloft My head from land to land paraded it before the gaze of the unbelieving multitude, and deposited it on the seats of the perverse and faithless. In a later age, I was suspended, and My breast was made a target to the darts of the malicious cruelty of My foes [the Báb]. My limbs were riddled with bullets, and My body was torn asunder. Finally, behold how, in this Day, My treacherous enemies have leagued themselves against Me [Bahá'u'lláh], and are continually plotting to instill the venom of hate and malice into the souls of Thy servants.⁴⁶

At one time He [Bahá'u'lláh] was sorely afflicted by the hand of Cain [al-qábíl] and was killed in the Path of God and ascended unto Him [God] in meekness/sorely wronged [maz.lúman]...⁴⁷

O Chief! We revealed Ourselves unto thee at one time upon Mount Tíiná [Abraham?], and at another time upon Mount Zaytá, [Jesus] and yet again in this hallowed Spot. Following, however, thy corrupt inclinations, thou didst fail to respond and wert accounted with the heedless. Consider, then, and call thou to mind the time when Muhammad came with clear tokens from Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Knowing. The people were wont to pelt Him with stones from hidden places and in the markets, and they rejected the signs of God, thy Lord and the Lord of thy forefathers. The learned also denied Him, as did their followers, and likewise the kings of the earth, as thou hast heard from the tales of old. Among those kings was Chosroes, to whom Muhammad sent a blessed epistle summoning him unto

God and forbidding him from misbelief. Verily, thy Lord knoweth all things. Following the promptings of his evil and corrupt desires, however, Chosroes waxed arrogant before God and tore up the Tablet. He, verily, is accounted among the inmates of the nethermost fire.

Was it in Pharaoh's power to stay the hand of God from exercising His sovereignty when he acted wantonly in the land and was of the transgressors? From within his own house and in spite of his will We brought forth Him Who conversed with God. Well able are We to achieve Our purpose. Recall, moreover, how Nimrod kindled the fire of impiety that its flames might consume Abraham, the Friend of God; We delivered Him, however, through the power of truth and seized Nimrod with the fury of Our wrath. Say: The Oppressor [Muhammad Sháh] put to death the Beloved of the worlds to quench the light of God amongst the people and to debar them from the wellspring of life eternal in the days of thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful.

We, too, have revealed the Cause of God in His cities and raised aloft His remembrance amidst them that truly believe in Him. Say: This Youth hath come to quicken the world and unite all its peoples. The day is approaching when that which God hath purposed will have prevailed and thou shalt behold the earth transformed into the all-glorious paradise. Thus hath it been inscribed by the Pen of Revelation upon this weighty Tablet.⁴⁹

HIS PRE-EXISTENCE⁵⁰

In the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to His own pre-existence in passages of majestic and mystical import:

O Pen of the Most High! Move Thou upon the Tablet at the bidding of Thy Lord, the Creator of the Heavens, and tell of the time when He Who is the Dayspring of Divine Unity purposed to direct His steps towards the School of Transcendent Oneness; haply the pure in heart may gain thereby a glimpse, be it as small as a needle's eye, of the mysteries of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the Omniscient, that lie concealed behind the veils. Say: We, indeed, set foot within the School of inner meaning and explanation when all created things were unaware. We saw the words sent down by Him Who is the All-Merciful, and We accepted the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, which He presented unto Us, and hearkened unto that which He had solemnly affirmed in the Tablet. This we assuredly did behold. And We assented to His wish through Our behest, for truly We are potent to command.⁵¹

O people of the Bayán! We, verily, set foot within the School of God when ye lay slumbering; and We perused the Tablet while ye were fast asleep. By the one true God! We read the Tablet ere it was revealed, while ye were unaware, and We had perfect knowledge of the Book when ye were yet unborn. These words are to your measure, not to God's. To this testifyeth that which is enshrined within His knowledge, if ye be of them that comprehend; and to this the tongue of the Almighty doth bear

witness, if ye be of those who understand. I swear by God, were We to lift the veil, ye would be dumbfounded.⁵²

Take heed that ye dispute not idly concerning the Almighty and His Cause, for lo! He [the Báb] hath appeared amongst you invested with a Revelation so great as to encompass all things, whether of the past or of the future. Were We to address Our theme by speaking in the language of the inmates of the Kingdom, We would say: "In truth, God created that School ere He created heaven and earth, and We entered it before the letters B and E were joined and knit together." Such is the language of Our servants in Our Kingdom; consider what the tongue of the dwellers of Our exalted Dominion would utter, for We have taught them Our knowledge and have revealed to them whatever had lain hidden in God's wisdom. Imagine then what the Tongue of Might and Grandeur would utter in His All-Glorious Abode!⁵³

HIS IDENTITY WITH THE BÁB

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, caviled 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!⁵⁴

Behold how the people of the Bayán have utterly failed to recognize that the sole object of whatsoever My Previous Manifestation and Harbinger of My Beauty hath revealed hath been My Revelation and the proclamation of My Cause. Never -- and to this He Who is the Sovereign Truth beareth Me witness -- would He have, but for Me, pronounced what He did pronounce.⁵⁵

Say: O people of the Bayán! Did We not admonish you, in all Our Tablets and in all Our hidden Scriptures, not to follow your evil passions and corrupt inclinations, but to keep your eyes directed towards the Scene of transcendent glory, on the Day when the Most Mighty Balance shall be set, the Day when the sweet melodies of the Spirit of God shall be poured out from the right hand of the throne of your Lord, the omnipotent Protector, the All-Powerful, the Holy of Holies? Did We not forbid you to cleave to the things that would shut you out from the Manifestation of our Beauty, in its subsequent Revelation, be they the embodiments of the names of God and all their glory, or the revealers of His attributes and their dominion? Behold, how, as soon as I revealed Myself, ye have rejected My truth and turned away from Me, and been of them that have regarded the signs of God as a play and pastime! By My Beauty! Nothing whatsoever shall, in this Day, be accepted from you, though ye continue to worship and prostrate yourselves before God

throughout the eternity of His dominion. For all things are dependent upon His Will, and the worth of all acts is conditioned upon His acceptance and pleasure. The whole universe is but a handful of clay in His grasp. Unless one recognize God and love Him, his cry shall not be heard by God in this Day. This is of the essence of His Faith, did ye but know it.

Will ye be content with that which is like the vapor in a plain, and be willing to forgo the Ocean Whose waters refresh, by virtue of the Will of God, the souls of men? Woe unto you, for having repaid the bounty of God with so vain and contemptible a thing! Ye are, indeed, of them that have rejected Me in My previous Revelation. Would that your hearts could comprehend!

Arise, and, under the eyes of God, atone for your failures in duty towards Him. This is My commandment unto you, were ye to incline your ears unto My commandment. By Mine own Self! Neither the people of the Qur'án, nor the followers of either the Torah or the Evangel, nor those of any other Book, have committed that which your hands have wrought. I, Myself, have dedicated My whole life to the vindication of the truth of this Faith. I, Myself, have announced, in all My Tablets, the advent of His Revelation. And yet, no sooner did He manifest Himself, in His subsequent Revelation, clothed in the glory of Baha and arrayed in the robe of His grandeur, than ye rebelled against Him Who is the supreme Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Beware, O people! Be ye ashamed of that which hath befallen Me at your hands in the path of God. Take heed that ye be not of them that have rejected that which hath been sent down unto them from the Heaven of God's transcendent glory.⁵⁶

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

men of hearing might be found who could hear the voice of His lamentation in the Bayán bewailing that which hath befallen Me at the hands of these heedless souls, bemoaning His separation from Me and giving utterance to His longing to be united with Me, the Mighty, the Peerless. He, verily,

beholdeth at this very moment His Best-Beloved amidst those who were created to attain His Day and to prostrate themselves before Him, and yet who have inflicted in their tyranny such abasement upon Him as the pen confesseth its inability to describe.

Say: O people! We, verily, summoned you, in Our former Revelation, unto this Scene of transcendent glory, this Seat of stainless sanctity, and announced unto you the advent of the Days of God. Yet, when the most great veil was rent asunder, and the Ancient Beauty came unto you in the clouds of God's decree, ye repudiated Him in Whom ye had believed aforetime.⁵⁷

ON HIS STATION

Verily, He⁵⁸ revealed certain laws⁵⁹ so that, in this Dispensation⁶⁰, the Pen of the Most High⁶¹ might have no need to move in aught but the glorification of His own transcendent Station and His most effulgent Beauty. Since, however, We have wished to evidence Our bounty unto you, We have, through the power of truth, set forth these laws with clarity and mitigated what We desire you to observe⁶². He, verily, is the Munificent, the Generous. He⁶³ hath previously made known unto you that which would be uttered by this Dayspring of Divine wisdom. He said, and He speaketh the truth: "He⁶⁴ is the One Who will under all conditions proclaim: 'Verily, there is none other God besides Me, the One, the Incomparable, the Omniscient, the All-Informed.'" This is a station which God hath assigned exclusively to this sublime, this unique and wondrous Revelation⁶⁵. This is a token of His bounteous favour⁶⁶, if ye be of them who comprehend, and a sign of His irresistible decree⁶⁷. This is His Most Great Name⁶⁸, His Most Exalted Word, and the Dayspring of His Most Excellent Titles, if ye could understand. Nay more, through Him every Fountainhead, every Dawningplace of Divine guidance⁶⁹ is made manifest. Reflect, O people, on that which hath been sent down in truth; ponder thereon, and be not of the transgressors.⁷⁰

CALL TO MIND HIS SUFFERINGS

O Ahmad! Forget not My bounties while I am absent. Remember My days during thy days, and My distress and banishment in this remote prison. And be thou so steadfast in My love that thy heart shall not waver, even if the swords of the enemies rain blows upon thee and all the heavens and the earth arise against thee.⁷¹

O My servant, who hast sought the good-pleasure of God and clung to His love on the Day when all except a few who were endued with insight have broken away from Him! May God, through His grace, recompense thee with a generous, an incorruptible and everlasting reward, inasmuch as thou hast sought Him on the Day when eyes were blinded. Know thou that if We reveal to thee but a sprinkling of the showers which, through God's decree, and at the hands of the envious and the malicious, have rained upon Us, thou wouldst weep with a great weeping, and wouldst bewail day and night Our plight. Oh, would that a discerning and fair-minded soul could be found who would recognize the wonders of this Revelation -- wonders that proclaim the sovereignty of God and the greatness of its power. Would that such a man might arise and, wholly for the sake of God, admonish, privately and openly, the people, that haply they may bestir themselves and aid this wronged One Whom the workers of iniquity have so sorely afflicted.⁷²

We fain would hope that the people of the Bayán will be enlightened, will soar in the realm of the spirit and abide therein, will discern the Truth, and recognize with the eye of insight dissembling falsehood. In

these days, however, such odours of jealousy are diffused, that -- I swear by the Educator of all beings, visible and invisible -- from the beginning of the foundation of the world -- though it hath no beginning -- until the present day, such malice, envy, and hate have in no wise appeared, nor will they ever be witnessed in the future. For a number of people who have never inhaled the fragrance of justice, have raised the standard of sedition, and have leagued themselves against Us. On every side We witness the menace of their spears, and in all directions We recognize the shafts of their arrows. This, although We have never gloried in any thing, nor did We seek preference over any soul. To everyone We have been a most kindly companion, a most forbearing and affectionate friend. In the company of the poor We have sought their fellowship, and amidst the exalted and learned We have been submissive and resigned. I swear by God, the one true God! grievous as have been the woes and sufferings which the hand of the enemy and the people of the Book inflicted upon Us, yet all these fade into utter nothingness when compared with that which hath befallen Us at the hand of those who profess to be Our friends.⁷³

Know thou that if We reveal to thee but a sprinkling of the showers which, through God's decree, and at the hands of the envious and the malicious, have rained upon Us, thou wouldst weep with a great weeping, and wouldst bewail day and night Our plight. Oh, would that a discerning and fair-minded soul could be found who would recognize the wonders of this Revelation -- wonders that proclaim the sovereignty of God and the greatness of its power. Would that such a man might arise and, wholly for the sake of God, admonish, privately and openly, the people, that haply they may bestir themselves and aid this wronged One Whom the workers of iniquity have so sorely afflicted.

Methinks that I hear the Voice of the Holy Spirit calling from behind Me saying: Vary Thou Thy theme, and alter Thy tone, lest the heart of him who hath fixed his gaze upon Thy face be saddened. Say: I have through the grace of God and His might besought the help of no one in the past, neither will I seek the help of any one in the future. He it is Who aided Me, through the power of truth, during the days of My banishment in Iraq. He it is Who overshadowed Me with His protection at a time when the kindreds of the earth were contending with Me. He it is Who enabled Me to depart out of the city, clothed with such majesty as none, except the denier and the malicious, can fail to admit.

Say: My army is My reliance on God; My people, the force of My confidence in Him. My love is My standard, and My companion the remembrance of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Unconditioned.⁷⁴

Recall thou to mind My sorrows, My cares and anxieties, My woes and trials, the state of My captivity, the tears that I have shed, the bitterness of Mine anguish, and now My imprisonment in this far-off land. God, O

Mustafa, beareth Me witness. Couldst thou be told what hath befallen the Ancient Beauty, thou wouldst flee into the wilderness, and weep with a great weeping. In thy grief, thou wouldst smite thyself on the head, and cry out as one stung by the sting of the adder. Be thou grateful to God, that We have refused to divulge unto thee the secrets of those unsearchable decrees that have

been sent down unto Us from the heaven of the Will of thy Lord, the Most Powerful, the Almighty.

By the righteousness of God! Every morning I arose from My bed, I discovered the hosts of countless afflictions massed behind My door; and every night when I lay down, lo! My heart was torn with agony at what it had suffered from the fiendish cruelty of its foes. With every piece of bread the

Ancient Beauty breaketh is coupled the assault of a fresh affliction, and with every drop He drinketh is mixed the bitterness of the most woeful of trials. He is preceded in every step He taketh by an army of unforeseen calamities, while in His rear follow legions of agonizing sorrows.

Such is My plight, wert thou to ponder it in thine heart. Let not, however, thy soul grieve over that which God hath rained down upon Us. Merge thy will in His pleasure, for We have, at no time, desired anything whatsoever except His Will, and have welcomed each one of His irrevocable decrees. Let thine heart be patient, and be thou not dismayed. Follow not in the way of them that are sorely agitated.⁷⁵

Say: Await ye till God will have changed His favor unto you.

Nothing whatsoever escapeth Him. He knoweth the secrets both of the heavens and of the earth. His knowledge embraceth all things. Rejoice not in what ye have done, or will do in the future, nor delight in the tribulation with which ye have afflicted Us, for ye are unable by such means as these to exalt your stations, were ye to examine your works with acute discernment. Neither will ye be capable of detracting from the loftiness of Our state. Nay, God will add unto the recompense with which He shall reward Us, for having sustained with persevering patience the tribulations We have suffered. He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience. Know ye that trials and tribulations have, from time immemorial, been the lot of the chosen Ones of God and His beloved, and such of His servants as are detached from all else but Him, they whom neither merchandise nor traffic beguile from the remembrance of the Almighty, they that speak not till He hath spoken, and act according to His commandment. Such is God's method carried into effect of old, and such will it remain in the future. Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befalleth them, and who tread the path of resignation....

The day is approaching when God will have raised up a people who will call to remembrance Our days, who will tell the tale of Our trials, who will demand the restitution of Our rights from them that, without a tittle of evidence, have treated Us with manifest injustice. God, assuredly,

dominateth the lives of them that wronged Us, and is well aware of their doings. He will, most certainly, lay hold on them for their sins. He, verily, is the fiercest of avengers.⁷⁶

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.⁷⁷

If tribulation touch thee for My sake, call thou to mind My ills and troubles, and remember My banishment and imprisonment. Thus do We devolve on thee what hath descended upon Us from Him Who is the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.⁷⁸

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

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

To this end he conferred with one of My servants and sought to win him over to his own designs; whereupon the Lord despatched unto Mine assistance the hosts of the seen and the unseen, protected Me by the power of truth, and sent down upon Me that which thwarted his purpose. Thus were

foiled the plots of those who disbelieve in the verses of the All-Merciful.

They,

truly, are a rejected people. When news spread of that which the promptings

of self had impelled My brother to attempt, and Our companions in exile learned of his nefarious design, the voice of their indignation and grief was lifted up and threatened to spread throughout the city. We forbade, however, such recriminations, and enjoined upon them patience, that they might be of those that endure steadfastly.

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

By the One in Whose hand is My soul! We were dismayed by his deceitfulness -- nay, bewildered were all things visible and invisible. Nor did he find respite from what he harboured in his bosom until he had committed that which no pen dare describe, and by which he disgraced the dignity of My station and profaned the sanctity of God, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Were God to turn all the oceans of the earth into ink and all created things into pens, they would not suffice Me to exhaust the record of his wrongdoings. Thus do We recount that which befell Us, that haply ye may be of them that understand.

O Pen of Eternity! Grieve not at the things that have befallen

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

defilement of those who have disbelieved in God. Thus have We set down the verses of God and made plain the matter unto those who understand.

O Living Temple! Stretch forth Thy hand over all who are in

heaven and on earth, and seize within the grasp of Thy Will the reins of command. We have, verily, placed in Thy right hand the empire of all things. Do as Thou willest, and fear not the ignorant. Reach out to the Tablet that hath dawned above the horizon of the pen of Thy Lord, and take hold of it with such strength that, through Thee, the hands of all who inhabit the earth may be enabled to lay fast hold upon it. This, in truth, is that which becometh Thee, if Thou be of those who understand. Through the upraising of Thy hand to the heaven of My grace, the hands of all created things shall be lifted up to their Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Gracious. Erelong shall We raise up, through the aid of Thy hand, other hands endued with power, with strength and might, and shall establish through them Our dominion over all that dwell in the realms of revelation and creation. Thus will the servants of God recognize the truth that there is none other God beside Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. With these hands, moreover, We shall both bestow and withhold, though none can understand this save those who see with the eye of the spirit.⁷⁹

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

That which hath befallen Us hath been witnessed before. Ours is not the first goblet dashed to the ground in the lands of Islam, nor is this the first time that such schemers have intrigued against the beloved of the Lord. The tribulations We have sustained are like unto the trials endured aforetime by Imám Husayn. For he was approached by messengers from malicious and evil-hearted plotters, inviting him to come forth from the city; yet when he came unto them, accompanied by his kindred, they rose up against him with all their might, until at last they slew him, slaughtered his sons and his brothers, and took captive the remainder of his family. So did it come to pass in an earlier age, and God, verily, is a witness unto My words.

Of his lineage there survived none, whether young or old, save his son 'Alí al-Awsat, known as Zaynu'l-'Abidin.

Behold then, O heedless ones, how brightly the fire of the love of God blazed aforetime in the heart of Husayn, if ye be of them that ponder! So intense grew its flame that fervour and longing at last seized the reins of patience from his grasp, and the love of Him Who is the All-Compelling so enraptured his heart that he surrendered his soul, his spirit, his substance, and his all in the path of God, the Lord of the worlds. By God! Sweeter was this in his sight than the empire of earth and heaven. For the true lover desireth naught save reunion with his beloved and the seeker hath no goal

but to attain unto the object of his quest. Their hearts long for reunion even as the body yearneth for the spirit, nay greater indeed is their longing, could ye but perceive it!

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

Say: The sincere soul longeth for nearness to God even as the suckling babe yearneth for its mother's breast, nay more ardent is his longing, could ye but know it! Again, his longing is even as the panting of one sore athirst after the living waters of grace, or the yearning of the sinner

for forgiveness and mercy. Thus do We expound unto you the mysteries of the Cause, and impart unto you what shall render you independent of all that hath so far occupied you, that perchance ye may enter the Court of Holiness within this exalted Paradise. I swear by God! Whoso entereth therein shall never abandon its precincts, and whoso gazeth thereon shall never turn away therefrom, even should the swords of infidels and deniers rain blows upon him. Thus have We related unto you that which befell Husayn, and We beseech God that He may destine for Us that which He had decreed for him. He, verily, is the Most Generous, the All-Bountiful. By the righteousness of God! Through his deed the fragrances of holiness were wafted over all things, the proof of God was perfected, and His testimony made manifest to all men. And after him God raised up a people who avenged his death, who slew his enemies, and who wept over him at

dawn and at eventide. Say: God hath pledged in His Book to lay hold upon every oppressor for his tyranny, and to uproot the stirrers of mischief. Know ye that such holy deeds exert, in themselves, a great influence upon the world of being -- an influence which is, however, inscrutable to all save those whose eyes have been opened by God, whose hearts He hath freed from obscuring veils, and whose souls He hath guided aright.

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

Thus have We recounted unto you the tales of the one true God,

and sent down unto you the things He had preordained, that haply ye may ask forgiveness of Him, may return unto Him, may truly repent, may realize your misdeeds, may shake off your slumber, may be roused from your heedlessness, may atone for the things that have escaped you, and be of them that do good. Let him who will, acknowledge the truth of My words; and as to him that willeth not, let him turn aside. My sole duty is to remind you of your failure in duty towards the Cause of God, if perchance ye may be of them that heed My warning. Wherefore, hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses. The greatness of His mercy surpasseth the fury of His wrath, and His grace encompasseth all who have been called into being and been clothed with the robe of life, be they of the past or of the future.⁸⁰

As My tribulations multiplied, so did My love for God and for His Cause increase, in such wise that all that befell Me from the hosts of the wayward was powerless to deter Me from My purpose. Should they hide Me away in the depths of the earth, yet would they find Me riding aloft on the clouds, and calling out unto God, the Lord of strength and of might. I have offered Myself up in the way of God, and I yearn after tribulations in My love for Him, and for the sake of His good pleasure. Unto this bear witness the woes which now afflict Me, the like of which no other man hath suffered. Every single hair of Mine head calleth out that which the Burning Bush uttered on Sinai, and each vein of My body invoceth God and saith: "O would I had been severed in Thy path, so that the world might be quickened, and all its peoples be united!" Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.⁸¹

I sorrow not for the burden of My imprisonment. Neither do I grieve over My abasement, or the tribulation I suffer at the hands of Mine enemies. By My life! They are My glory, a glory wherewith God hath adorned His own Self. Would that ye know it!

The shame I was made to bear hath uncovered the glory with which the whole of creation had been invested, and through the cruelties I have endured, the Day Star of Justice hath manifested itself, and shed its splendor upon men.

My sorrows are for those who have involved themselves in their corrupt passions, and claim to be associated with the Faith of God, the Gracious, the All-Praised.

It behoveth the people of Baha to die to the world and all that is therein, to be so detached from all earthly things that the inmates of Paradise may inhale from their garment the sweet smelling savor of sanctity, that all the peoples of the earth may recognize in their faces the brightness of the All-

Merciful, and that through them may be spread abroad the signs and tokens of God, the Almighty, the All-Wise. They that have tarnished the fair name of the Cause of God, by following the things of the flesh -- these are in

palpable error!82

Though the fierce winds of the hatred of the wicked doers blew and beat on this Lamp, He was, at no time, in His love for Thy beauty, hindered from shedding the fragrance of His light. As the transgressions committed against Thee waxed greater and greater, my eagerness to reveal Thy Cause correspondingly increased, and as the tribulations deepened -- and to this Thy glory beareth me witness -- a fuller measure of Thy sovereignty and of Thy power was vouchsafed by me unto Thy creatures.83

Though -- as Thou beholdest me, O my God -- I be dwelling in a place within whose walls no voice can be heard except the sound of the echo, though all the gates of ease and comfort be shut against us, and thick darkness appear to have compassed us on every side, yet my soul hath been so inflamed by its love for Thee, that nothing whatsoever can either quench the fire of its love or abate the consuming flame of its desire. Lifting up its voice, it crieth aloud amidst Thy servants, and calleth them, at all times and under all conditions, unto Thee.84

But for the troubles that touch me in Thy path, O my God, how else could my heart rejoice in Thy days; and were it not for the blood which is shed for love of Thee, what else could tinge the faces of Thy chosen ones before

the eyes of Thy creatures? I swear by Thy might! The ornament that adorneth the countenance of Thy dear ones is the blood which, in their love for Thee, floweth out of their foreheads over their faces.

Thou beholdest, O my God, how every bone in my body soundeth like a pipe with the music of Thine inspiration, revealing the signs of Thy oneness and the clear tokens of Thy unity. I entreat Thee, O my God, by Thy Name which irradiateth all things, to raise up such servants as shall incline their ears to the voice of the melodies that hath ascended from the right hand of the throne of Thy glory. Make them, then, to quaff from the hand of Thy grace the wine of Thy mercy, that it may assure their hearts, and cause them to turn away from the left hand of idle fancies and vain imaginings to the right hand of confidence and certitude.85

The one true God well knoweth, and all the company of His trusted ones testify, that this Wronged One hath, at all times, been faced with dire peril. But for the tribulations that have touched Me in the path of God, life would have held no sweetness for Me, and My existence would have profited Me nothing. For them who are endued with discernment, and whose eyes are fixed upon the Sublime Vision, it is no secret that I have been, most of the days of My life, even as a slave, sitting under a sword hanging on a thread, knowing not whether it would fall soon or late upon him. And yet, notwithstanding all this We render thanks unto God, the Lord of the worlds. Mine inner tongue reciteth, in the daytime and in the night-season, this prayer: "Glory to Thee, O my God! But for the tribulations which are sustained in Thy path, how could Thy true lovers be recognized; and were it not for the trials which are borne for love of Thee,

how could the station of such as yearn for Thee be revealed? Thy might beareth Me witness! The companions of all who adore Thee are the tears they shed, and the comforters of such as seek Thee are the groans they utter, and the food of them who haste to meet Thee is the fragments of their broken hearts. How sweet to my taste is the bitterness of death suffered in Thy path, and how precious in my estimation are the shafts of Thine enemies when encountered for the sake of the exaltation of Thy Word! Let me quaff in Thy Cause, O my God and my Master, whatsoever Thou didst desire, and send down upon me in Thy love all Thou didst ordain. By Thy glory! I wish only what Thou wishest, and cherish what Thou cherishest. In Thee have I, at all times, placed My whole trust and confidence. Thou art verily the All-Possessing, the Most High. Raise up, I implore Thee, O my God, as helpers to this Revelation such as shall be counted worthy of Thy Name and of Thy sovereignty, that they may remember Thee among Thy creatures, and hoist the ensigns of Thy victory in Thy land, and adorn them with Thy virtues and Thy commandments. No God is there but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting."⁸⁶

All praise be to Thee, O my God! Thou beholdest my helplessness and poverty, and bearest witness unto my woes and trials. How long wilt Thou abandon me among Thy servants? Suffer me to ascend into Thy presence. The power of Thy might beareth me witness! Such are the tribulations with which I am encompassed that I am powerless to recount them before Thy face. Thou, alone, verily, hast through Thy knowledge reckoned them.

I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art my Companion in my lowliness, to rain down upon Thy loved ones from the clouds of Thy mercy that which will cause them to be satisfied with Thy pleasure, and will enable them to turn unto Thee and to be detached from all else except Thee. Ordain, then, for them every good conceived by Thee and predestined in Thy Book. Thou art, verily, the All-Powerful, He Whom nothing whatsoever can frustrate. From everlasting Thou hast been clothed with transcendent greatness and power, with unspeakable majesty and glory. There is no God beside Thee, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving.⁸⁷

Glorified art Thou, O my God! Thou knowest that in my love for Thee I have not sought any rest, that in proclaiming Thy Cause I have denied myself every manner of tranquillity, and that in the observance of whatever Thou hast prescribed in Thy Tablets I have not delayed to do Thy bidding. I have, for this reason, suffered what no man among all the inhabitants of Thy realm hath suffered.

Thy glory beareth me witness! Nothing whatsoever can withhold me from remembering Thee, though all the tribulations of the earth were to assault me from every direction. All the limbs and members of my body proclaim their readiness to be torn asunder in Thy path and for the sake of Thy pleasure, and they yearn to be scattered in the dust before Thee. O would that they who serve Thee could taste what I have tasted of the

sweetness of Thy love!88

I give Thee thanks, O my God, for that Thou hast made me to be a target for the darts of Thine adversaríes in Thy path. I offer Thee most

high praise, O Thou Who art the Knower of the seen and unseen and the Lord of all being, that Thou hast suffered me to be cast into prison for love of Thee, and caused me to quaff the cup of woe, that I may reveal Thy Cause and glorify Thy word.

Which of my tribulations am I to recount before Thy face, O my Lord? Am I to recite before Thee what in days of old befell me at the hands of the workers of iniquity among Thy creatures, or to describe the vexations which have compassed me about in these days for the sake of Thy good pleasure?

Thanks be to Thee, O Thou the Lord of all names; and glory be to Thee, O Maker of the heavens, for all that I have sustained in these days at the hands of such of Thy servants as have transgressed against Thee, and of Thy people that have dealt frowardly towards Thee.

Number us, we implore Thee, with them who have stood fast in Thy Cause until their souls finally winged their flight unto the heaven of Thy grace and the atmosphere of Thy loving-kindness. Thou art, verily, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.89

Glorified art Thou, O my Lord! Thou beholdest my tribulations and all that hath befallen me at the hands of such of Thy servants as keep company with me, who have disbelieved in Thy most resplendent signs, and turned back from Thy most effulgent Beauty. I swear by Thy glory! Such are the troubles that vex me, that no pen in the entire creation can either reckon or describe them.

I implore Thee, O Thou Who art the King of names and the Creator of earth and heaven, so to assist me by Thy strengthening grace that nothing whatsoever will have the power to hinder me from remembering Thee, or celebrating Thy praise, or to keep me back from observing what Thou hast prescribed unto me in Thy Tablets, that I may so arise to serve Thee that with bared head I will hasten forth from my habitation, cry out in Thy name amidst Thy creatures, and proclaim Thy virtues among Thy servants. Having accomplished what Thou hadst decreed, and delivered the thing Thou hadst written down, the wicked doers among Thy people would, then, compass me about and would do with me in Thy path as would please them. In the love I bear to Thee, O my Lord, my heart longeth for Thee with a longing such as no heart hath known. Here am I with my body between Thy hands, and my spirit before Thy face. Do with them as it may please Thee, for the exaltation of Thy word, and the revelation of what hath been enshrined within the treasuries of Thy knowledge.90

HE CONSENTED TO SUFFER FOR OUR SAKE

Say: Still your pens, O concourse of divines, for lo, the shrill voice of the Pen of Glory hath been lifted up between earth and heaven. Cast away

all that ye possess and take fast hold of that which We have revealed unto you with power and authority. The Hour that was concealed within the knowledge of God hath struck, whereupon all the atoms of the earth have proclaimed: "The Ancient of Days is come in His great glory! Hasten unto Him, O peoples of the earth, with humble and contrite hearts." Say: We, in truth, have given Ourselves as a ransom for your own lives. Alas, when We came once again, We beheld you fleeing from Us, whereat the eye of My loving-kindness wept sore over My people. Fear God, O ye that perceive.⁹¹

Thus doth the Pen of the Most High warble unto thee its melodies by the leave of thy Lord, the All-Glorious. When thou hast heard and recited them, say: "Praise be unto Thee, O Lord of all the worlds, inasmuch as Thou hast made mention of me through the tongue of Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy Self at a time when He was confined in the Most Great Prison, that the whole world might attain unto true liberty."⁹²

That which thou hast heard concerning Abraham, the Friend of the All-Merciful, is the truth, and no doubt is there about it. The Voice of God commanded Him to offer up Ishmael as a sacrifice, so that His steadfastness in the Faith of God and His detachment from all else but Him may be demonstrated unto men. The purpose of God, moreover, was to sacrifice him as a ransom for the sins and iniquities of all the peoples of the earth. This same honor, Jesus, the Son of Mary, besought the one true God, exalted be His name and glory, to confer upon Him. For the same reason was Husayn offered up as a sacrifice by Muhammad, the Apostle of God. No man can ever claim to have comprehended the nature of the hidden and manifold grace of God; none can fathom His all-embracing mercy. Such hath been the perversity of men and their transgressions, so grievous have been the trials that have afflicted the Prophets of God and their chosen ones, that all mankind deserveth to be tormented and to perish. God's hidden and most loving providence, however, hath, through both visible and invisible agencies, protected and will continue to protect it from the penalty of its wickedness. Ponder this in thine heart, that the truth may be revealed unto thee, and be thou steadfast in His path.⁹³

The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they that have joined partners with God have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!⁹⁴

It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind.

Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors. Fix your gaze upon Him Who is the Temple of God amongst men. He, in truth, hath offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Gracious, the Most High. If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counselleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. To this beareth witness every man of true understanding.⁹⁵

Praised be Thou, O my God! Thou seest me shut up in this Prison, and art well aware that I have entered it solely for Thy sake and for the sake of the glorification of Thy word and the proclamation of Thy Cause. I cry out to Thee, this very moment, O Thou Who art the Lord of all worlds, beseeching Thee, by Thine undoubted Name, to attract the hearts of Thy servants unto the Day-Spring of Thy most excellent titles and the Dawning-Place of Thy most resplendent signs.⁹⁶

OVERVIEW OF HIS EXILES

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

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

thou attempt either to investigate or ascertain the matter, that the truth might be distinguished from falsehood in thy sight, and that thou mightest be clear in thy discernment. Find out for thyself the sort of man he was by asking those Ministers who were, at that time, in Iraq, as well as the Governor of the City (Baghdád) and its high Counsellor, that the truth may be revealed to thee, and that thou mayest be of the well-informed. God is Our witness! We have, under no circumstances, opposed either him, or others. We observed, under all conditions, the precepts of God, and were never one of those that wrought disorders. To this he himself doth testify. His intention was to lay hold on Us, and send Us back to Persia, that he might thereby exalt his fame and reputation. Thou hast committed the same crime, and for the self-same purpose. Ye both are of equal grade in the sight of God, the sovereign Lord of all, the All-Knowing.⁹⁷

O King! We were in Iraq, when the hour of parting arrived. At the bidding of the King of Islam [The Sultán of Turkey] We set Our steps in his direction. Upon Our arrival, there befell Us at the hands of the malicious that which the books of the world can never adequately recount. Thereupon the inmates of Paradise, and they that dwell within the retreats of holiness, lamented; and yet the people are wrapped in a thick veil! Say: Do ye cavil at Him Who hath come unto you bearing the clear evidence of God and His proof, the testimony of God and His signs? These things are not from Himself; nay, rather they proceed from the One Who hath raised Him up, sent Him forth through the power of truth, and made Him to be a lamp unto all mankind.

More grievous became Our plight from day to day, nay, from hour to hour, until they took Us forth from Our prison and made Us, with glaring injustice, enter the Most Great Prison. And if anyone ask them: "For what crime were they imprisoned?", they would answer and say: "They, verily, sought to supplant the Faith with a new religion!" If that which is ancient be what ye prefer, wherefore, then, have ye discarded that which hath been set down in the Torah and the Evangel? Clear it up, O men! By My life! There is no place for you to flee to in this day. If this be My crime, then Muhammad, the Apostle of God, committed it before Me, and before Him He Who was the Spirit of God, and yet earlier He Who conversed with God. And if My sin be this, that I have exalted the Word of God and revealed His Cause, then indeed am I the greatest of sinners! Such a sin I will not barter for the kingdoms of earth and heaven.

Upon Our arrival at this Prison, We purposed to transmit to the kings the messages of their Lord, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Though We have transmitted to them, in several Tablets, that which We were commanded, yet We do it once again as a token of God's grace. Perchance they may recognize the Lord, Who hath come down in the clouds with manifest sovereignty.⁹⁸

WHERE AND WHEN
HIS BIRTH AS MÍRZÁ HUSAYN 'ALI

(November 12, 1817)

All Feasts have attained their consummation in the two Most Great Festivals, and in the two other Festivals that fall on the twin days -- the first of the Most Great Festivals being those days whereon the All-Merciful shed upon the whole of creation the effulgent glory of His most excellent Names and His most exalted Attributes, and the second being that day on which We raised up the One Who announced unto mankind the glad tidings of this Name, through which the dead have been resurrected and all who are in the heavens and on earth have been gathered together. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Ordainer, the Omniscient⁹⁹.

The Birth of the Abha Beauty was at the hour of dawn on the second day of the month of Muharram, the first day of which marketh the Birth of His Herald. These two days are accounted as one in the sight of God.¹⁰⁰

Let nothing grieve thee, O Land of Ta, for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind. He shall, if it be His Will, bless thy throne with one who will rule with justice, who will gather together the flock of God which the wolves have scattered. Such a ruler will, with joy and gladness, turn his face towards, and extend his favours unto, the people of Baha. He indeed is accounted in the sight of God as a jewel among men. Upon him rest forever the glory of God and the glory of all that dwell in the kingdom of His revelation.

Rejoice with great joy, for God hath made thee "the Dayspring of His light", inasmuch as within thee was born the Manifestation of His Glory. Be thou glad for this name that hath been conferred upon thee -- a name through which the Day-Star of grace hath shed its splendour, through which both earth and heaven have been illumined.¹⁰¹

All Feasts have attained their consummation in the two Most Great Festivals, and in the two other Festivals that fall on the twin days -- the first of the Most Great Festivals being those days whereon the All-Merciful shed upon the whole of creation the effulgent glory of His most excellent Names and His most exalted Attributes, and the second being that day on which We raised up the One Who announced unto mankind the glad tidings of this Name, through which the dead have been resurrected and all who are in the heavens and on earth have been gathered together. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Ordainer, the Omniscient.¹⁰²

All feasts have attained their consummation in the two Most Great Festivals, and in two other Festivals that fall on the twin days -- the first of the Most Great Festivals being those days whereon God shed the effulgent glory of His most excellent Names upon all who are in heaven and on earth, and the second being that day on which We raised up the One Who announced unto the people the glad tidings of this Great Announcement. Thus hath it been set down in the Book by Him Who is the Mighty, the

Powerful. On other than these four consummate days, engage ye in your daily occupations, and withhold yourselves not from the pursuit of your trades and crafts. Thus hath the command been issued and the law gone forth from Him Who is your Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.103

Ever since the day Thou didst create me at Thy bidding, O my God, and didst arouse me through the gentle winds of Thy tender mercies, I have refused to turn to any one except Thee, and have, through the power of Thy sovereignty and Thy might, arisen to face Thine enemies, and have summoned all mankind unto the shores of the ocean of Thy oneness and the heaven of Thine all-glorious unity. I have sought, all my days, not to guard myself from the mischief of the rebellious among Thy creatures, but rather to exalt Thy name amidst Thy people. I have, thereby, suffered what none of Thy creatures hath suffered.

How many the days, O my God, which I have spent in utter loneliness with the transgressors amongst Thy servants, and how many the nights, O my Best-Beloved, during which I lay a captive in the hands of the wayward amidst Thy creatures! In the midst of my troubles and tribulations I have continued to celebrate Thy praise before all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth, and have not ceased to extol Thy wondrous glory in the kingdoms of Thy Revelation and of Thy creation, though all that I have been capable of showing forth hath fallen short of the greatness and the majesty of Thy oneness, and is unworthy of Thine exaltation and of Thine omnipotence.

I swear by Thy glory, O Thou Who art the one alone Beloved! I find myself to be only nothing before the habitation of Thy great glory. Every time I attempt to extol any one of Thy virtues, my heart restraineth me, for naught but Thee is able to soar into the atmosphere of the kingdom of Thy nearness, or reach up to the heaven of Thy presence.

Thy might beareth me witness! I am well aware that were I to bow myself before a handful of dust, from now until the end that hath no end, in acknowledgment of its relationship to Thy name, the Fashioner, I would still find myself far removed from that dust, and incapable of approaching it, and would discover that such an adoration can in no wise befit it, nor transcend the limitations to which I myself have been subjected. And were I to arise to serve one of Thy servants, and to wait at his door so long as Thine own kingdom endureth and Thine omnipotence will last, as a sign of my acknowledgment of the tie that bindeth him to Thy name, the Creator, I would, likewise, -- and to this Thy glory beareth me witness -- have to confess my complete failure to do him adequate service, and my deprivation of what can truly befit his station. And this for the reason that I recognize in them naught else except the bond that bindeth them to Thy names and Thine attributes. How can, then, such a man succeed in befittingly extolling the One through a motion of Whose finger all the names and their kingdom were called into being, and all the attributes and their dominion were created, and Who, through yet another motion of that same finger, hath united the letters B and E (Be) and knit them together, manifesting thereby what the

highest thoughts of Thy chosen ones who enjoy near access to Thee are unable to grasp, and what the profoundest wisdom of those of Thy loved ones that are wholly devoted to Thee are powerless to fathom.

I swear by Thy glory, O Beloved of my soul! I am bewildered when I contemplate the tokens of Thy handiwork, and the evidences of Thy might, and find myself completely unable to unravel the mystery of the least of Thy signs, how much more to apprehend Thine own Self. I beseech Thee, therefore, O my God, by Thy Name through which Thou hast caused all such as love Thee to soar in the atmosphere of Thy will, and hast guided all them that yearn after Thee into the Paradise of Thy nearness and Thy presence, to waft from the heaven of Thy loving-kindness the fragrance of certainty upon the needy among Thy loved ones, in these days when the tempests of trials have compassed them on every side, and so grievously assailed them that the souls of men have been troubled and the foundations of all beings have trembled at what hath been sent down unto them from the heaven of Thine irrevocable Purpose. They were so shaken that the lamp of their love for Thee and of their remembrance of Thee was ready to be extinguished in the recess of their hearts. Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, in truth, art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous. Thou givest ear, O my God and my Master, to the sighing of them that are dear to Thee, and hearest from all sides their cry, by reason of what hath befallen them at the hands of those whose hearts have been deprived of

the sweet savors of Thy love. There is none either to befriend or to succor them, nor can anything deter their enemies from harming them.

Unrestrained, they do what they wish, and deal with them as they please. Give, therefore, O my Lord, the wonders of Thine aid to Thy loved ones, who have sought no helper except Thee, and have turned to none save Thyself, and whose eyes have expectantly awaited to behold the wonders of Thy favors and Thy gifts. Have pity, then, upon them, O my God, through the incomparable tokens of Thy mercy, and shelter them within the stronghold of Thy protection and Thy loving-kindness. Thou art the One, O my Lord, Who from everlasting hath been the Refuge of the fearful, and the Haven of the needy. Withhold not, I beseech Thee, from these feeble creatures the matchless tokens of Thy bounteousness and generosity, and leave them not to the mercy of them whose essence hath been solely created of the fire of Thy wrath and of Thine anger, and who have never discovered the fragrance of compassion and equity, and who have been so deluded by the deceitfulness of the world that they have denied Thy proof, and joined partners with Thee, and repudiated Thy signs, and shed the blood of those who are dear to Thee, and have been trusted by Thee. I swear by Thy might, O my Beloved! They have committed what no man before them hath committed, and have thereby deserved Thy wrath and the scourge of Thine anger. Lay hold on them by the power of Thy sovereignty, and set over them such as will have no mercy upon them, unless they return unto Thee, and enter beneath the shadow of Thy loving-kindness, and are forgiven by Thee. Thou hast from everlasting been supreme over all things, and wilt unto everlasting remain the same. Thou,

truly, art the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Equitable, the All-Wise.104

HIS CHILDHOOD

(1817-1835)

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish.105

When I was still a child and had not yet attained the age of maturity, My father made arrangements in Tihrán for the marriage of one of My older brothers, and as is customary in that city, the festivities lasted for seven days and seven nights. On the last day it was announced that the play "Sháh Sultán Salím" would be presented. A large number of princes, dignitaries, and notables of the capital gathered for the occasion. I was sitting in one of the upper rooms of the building and observing the scene. Presently a tent was pitched in the courtyard, and before long some small human-like figures, each appearing to be no more than about a hand's span in height, were seen to emerge from it and raise the call: "His Majesty is coming! Arrange the seats at once!" Other figures then came forth, some of whom were seen to be engaged in sweeping, others in sprinkling water, and thereafter another, who was announced as the chief town crier, raised his call and bade the people assemble for an audience with the king. Next, several groups of figures made their appearance and took their places, the first attired in hats and sashes after the Persian fashion, the second wielding battleaxes, and the third comprising a number of footmen and executioners carrying bastinados. Finally there appeared, arrayed in regal majesty and crowned with a royal diadem, a kingly figure, bearing himself with the utmost haughtiness and grandeur, at turns advancing and pausing in his progress, who proceeded with great solemnity, poise and dignity to seat himself upon his throne.

At that moment a volley of shots was fired, a fanfare of trumpets was sounded, and king and tent were enveloped in a pall of smoke. When it had cleared, the king, ensconced upon his throne, was seen surrounded by a suite of ministers, princes, and dignitaries of state who, having taken their places, were standing at attention in his presence. A captured thief was then brought before the king, who gave the order that the offender should be beheaded. Without a moment's delay the chief executioner cut off the thief's head, whence a blood-like liquid came forth. After this the king held audience with his court, during which intelligence was received that a rebellion had broken out on a certain frontier. Thereupon the king reviewed his troops and despatched several regiments supported by artillery to quell the

uprising. A few moments later cannons were heard booming from behind the tent, and it was announced that a battle had been engaged.

This Youth regarded the scene with great amazement. When the royal audience was ended, the curtain was drawn, and, after some twenty minutes, a man emerged from behind the tent carrying a box under his arm. "What is this box," I asked him, "and what was the nature of this display?"

"All this lavish display and these elaborate devices," he replied, "the king, the princes, and the ministers, their pomp and glory, their might and power, everything you saw, are now contained within this box."

I swear by My Lord Who, through a single word of His Mouth, hath brought into being all created things! Ever since that day, all the trappings of the world have seemed in the eyes of this Youth akin to that same spectacle. They have never been, nor will they ever be, of any weight and consequence, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. How greatly I marveled that men should pride themselves upon such vanities, whilst those possessed of insight, ere they witness any evidence of human glory, perceive with certainty the inevitability of its waning. "Never have I looked upon any thing save that I have seen extinction before it; and God, verily, is a sufficient witness!"¹⁰⁶

HIS ADULT LIFE IN TIHRÁN (1835-1853)

God witnesseth that there is no God but Him, the Gracious, the Best-Beloved. All grace and bounty are His. To whomsoever He will He giveth whatsoever is His wish. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. We, verily, believe in Him Who, in the person of the Báb, hath been sent down by the Will of the one true God, the King of Kings, the All-Praised. We, moreover, swear fealty to the One Who, in the time of Mustaghath, is destined to be made manifest, as well as to those Who shall come after Him till the end that hath no end. We recognize in the manifestation of each one of them, whether outwardly or inwardly, the manifestation of none but God Himself, if ye be of those that comprehend. Every one of them is a mirror of God, reflecting naught else but His Self, His Beauty, His Might and Glory, if ye will understand. All else besides them are to be regarded as mirrors capable of reflecting the glory of these Manifestations Who are themselves the Primary Mirrors of the Divine Being, if ye be not devoid of understanding. No one hath ever escaped them, neither are they to be hindered from achieving their purpose. These Mirrors will everlastingly succeed each other, and will continue to reflect the light of the Ancient of Days. They that reflect their glory will, in like manner, continue to exist for evermore, for the Grace of God can never cease from flowing. This is a truth that none can disprove.¹⁰⁷

Hasan-i-Mázindarání was the bearer of seventy Tablets. Upon his death, these were not delivered unto those for whom they were intended, but

were entrusted to one of the sisters of this Wronged One, who, for no reason whatever, had turned aside from Me. God knoweth what befell His Tablets. This sister had never lived with Us. I swear by the Sun of Truth that after these things had happened she never saw Mírzá Yahyá, and remained unaware of Our Cause, for in those days she had been estranged from Us. She lived in one quarter, and this Wronged One in another. As a token, however, of Our loving-kindness, our affection and mercy, We, a few days prior to Our departure [1853], visited her and her mother, that haply she might quaff from the living waters of faith, and attain unto that which would draw her nigh unto God, in this day. God well knoweth and beareth Me witness, and she herself testifieth, that I had no thought whatsoever except this. Finally, she -- God be praised -- attained unto this through His grace, and was adorned with the adornment of love. After We were exiled and had departed from Iraq to Constantinople, however, news of her ceased to reach Us. Subsequent to Our separation in the Land of Tá (Tíhrán), We ceased to meet Mírzá Ridá-Qulí, Our brother, and no special news reached Us concerning her. In the early days we all lived in one house¹⁰⁸, which later on was sold at auction, for a negligible sum, and the two brothers, Farman-Farma and Hisamu's-Saltáníh, purchased it and divided it between themselves. After this occurred, We separated from Our brother. He established his residence close to the entrance of Masjid-i-Sháh, whilst We lived near the Gate of Shimírán. Thereafter, however, that sister displayed toward Us, for no reason whatever, a hostile attitude. This Wronged One held His peace under all conditions. However, Our late brother Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan's daughter -- upon him be the glory of God and His peace and His mercy -- who had been betrothed to the Most Great Branch ('Abdu'l-Bahá) was taken by the sister of this Wronged One from Núr to her own house, and from there sent unto another place. Some of Our companions and friends in various places complained against this, as it was a very grievous act, and was disapproved by all the loved ones of God. How strange that Our sister should have taken her to her own house, and then arranged for her to be sent elsewhere! In spite of this, this Wronged One remained, and still remaineth, calm and silent. A word, however, was said in order to tranquilize Our loved ones. God testifieth and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been said was the truth, and was spoken with sincerity. None of Our loved ones, whether in these regions or in that country, could believe Our sister capable of an act so contrary to decency, affection and friendship. After such a thing had occurred, they, recognizing that the way had been barred, conducted themselves in a manner well-known unto thyself and others. It must be evident, therefore, how intense was the grief which this act inflicted upon this Wronged One. Later on, she threw in her lot with Mírzá Yahyá. Conflicting reports concerning her are now reaching Us, nor is it clear what she is saying or doing. We beseech God -- blessed and glorified be He -- to cause her to turn unto Him, and aid her to repent before the door of His grace. He, verily, is the Mighty, the Forgiving; and He is, in truth, the All-Powerful, the Pardoners.¹⁰⁹

Call thou to remembrance, O Land of Tá (Tíhrán), the former days in which thy Lord had made thee the seat of His throne, and had enveloped thee with the effulgence of His glory. How vast the number of those sanctified beings, those symbols of certitude, who, in their great love for thee, have laid down their lives and sacrificed their all for thy sake! Joy be to thee, and blissfulness to them that inhabit thee. I testify that out of thee, as every discerning heart knoweth, proceedeth the living breath of Him Who is the Desire of the world. In thee the Unseen hath been revealed, and out of thee hath gone forth that which lay hid from the eyes of men. Which one of the multitude of thy sincere lovers shall We remember, whose blood hath been shed within thy gates, and whose dust is now concealed beneath thy soil? The sweet savors of God have unceasingly been wafted, and shall everlastingly continue to be wafted upon thee. Our Pen is moved to commemorate thee, and to extol the victims of tyranny, those men and women that sleep beneath thy dust.

Among them is Our own sister, whom We now call to mind as a token of Our fidelity, and as proof of Our loving-kindness, unto her. How piteous was her plight! In what a state of resignation she returned to her God! We, alone, in Our all-encompassing knowledge, have known it. 110

O Land of Tá! Thou art still, through the grace of God, a center around which His beloved ones have gathered. Happy are they; happy every refugee that seeketh thy shelter, in his sufferings in the path of God, the Lord of this wondrous Day! Blessed are they that remember the one true God, that magnify His Name, and seek diligently to serve His Cause. 111 Let nothing grieve thee, O Land of Tá (Tíhrán), for God hath chosen thee to be the source of the joy of all mankind. He shall, if it be His Will, bless thy throne with one who will rule with justice, who will gather together the flock of God which the wolves have scattered. 112

It is Our wish to remember the Abode of supreme blissfulness (Tíhrán), the holy and shining city -- the city wherein the fragrance of the Well-Beloved hath been shed, wherein His signs have been diffused, wherein the evidences of His glory have been revealed, wherein His standards have been raised, wherein His tabernacle hath been pitched, wherein each of His wise decrees hath been unfolded.

It is the city in which the sweet savors of reunion have breathed, which have caused the sincere lovers of God to draw nigh unto Him, and to gain access to the Habitation of holiness and beauty. Happy is the wayfarer that directeth his steps towards this city, that gaineth admittance into it, and quaffeth the wine of reunion, through the outpouring grace of his Lord, the Gracious, the All-Praised.

I am come to thee, O land of the heart's desire, with tidings from

God, and announce to thee His gracious favor and mercy, and greet and magnify thee in His name. He, in truth, is of immense bounteousness and goodness. Blessed be the man that turneth his face towards thee, that perceiveth from thee the fragrance of God's Presence, the Lord of all worlds. His glory be on thee, and the brightness of His light envelop thee, inasmuch as God hath made thee a paradise unto His servants, and proclaimed thee to be the blest and sacred land of which He, Himself, hath made mention in the Books which His Prophets and Messengers have revealed.

Through thee, O land of resplendent glory, the ensign, "There is none other God but Him," hath been unfurled, and the standard, "Verily I am the Truth, the Knower of things unseen," been hoisted. It behoveth every one that visiteth thee to glory in thee and in them that inhabit thee, that have

branched from My Tree, who are the leaves thereof, who are the signs of My glory, who follow Me and are My lovers, and who, with the most mighty determination, have turned their faces in the direction of My glorious station.113

I was walking in the Land of Tá (Tihrán) -- the dayspring of the signs of thy Lord -- when lo, I heard the lamentation of the pulpits and the voice of their supplication unto God, blessed and glorified be He. They cried out and said: "O God of the world and Lord of the nations! Thou beholdest our state and the things which have befallen us by reason of the cruelty of Thy servants. Thou hast created us and revealed us for Thy glorification and praise. Thou dost now hear what the wayward proclaim upon us in Thy days. By Thy might! Our souls are melted and our limbs are trembling. Alas, alas! Would that we had never been created and revealed by Thee!" The hearts of them that enjoy near access to God are consumed by these words, and from them the cries of such as are devoted to Him are raised. Time and again have We, for the sake of God, admonished the distinguished divines, and summoned them unto the Most Sublime Horizon, that perchance they might, in the days of His Revelation, obtain their portion of the ocean of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world, and remain not utterly deprived thereof.114

"In Tihrán We were twice imprisoned as a result of Our having risen to defend the cause of the innocent against a ruthless oppressor. The first confinement to which We were subjected followed the slaying of Mullá Taqíy-i-Qazvíní, and was occasioned by the assistance We were moved to extend to those upon whom a severe punishment had been undeservedly inflicted. Our second imprisonment, infinitely more severe, was precipitated by the attempt which irresponsible followers of the Faith made on the life of the Sháh..."115

IN MÁZINDARÁN

O Shaykh! Time and again have I declared, and now yet again I affirm, that for two score years We have, through the grace of God and by His irresistible and potent will, extended such aid to His Majesty the Sháh

-- may God assist him -- as the exponents of justice and of equity would regard as incontestable and absolute. None can deny it, unless he be a transgressor and sinner, or one who would hate Us or doubt Our truth. How very strange that until now the Ministers of State and the representatives of the people have alike remained unaware of such conspicuous and undeniable service, and, if apprized of it, have, for reasons of their own, chosen to ignore it! Previous to these forty years controversies and conflicts continually prevailed and agitated the servants of God. But since then, aided by the hosts of wisdom, of utterance, of exhortations and understanding, they have all seized and taken fast hold of the firm cord of patience and of the shining hem of fortitude, in such wise that this wronged people endured steadfastly whatever befell them, and committed everything unto God, and this notwithstanding that in Mázindarán and at Rasht a great many have been most hideously tormented. Among them was his honor, Hájí Násir, who, unquestionably, was a brilliant light that shone forth above the horizon of resignation. After he had suffered martyrdom, they plucked out his eyes and cut off his nose, and inflicted on him such indignities that strangers wept and lamented, and secretly raised funds to support his wife and children.

O Shaykh! My Pen is abashed to recount what actually took place.

In the land of Sád (Isfáhán) the fire of tyranny burned with such a hot flame

that every fair-minded person groaned aloud. By thy life! The cities of knowledge and of understanding wept with such a weeping that the souls of the pious and of the God-fearing were melted. The twin shining lights, Hasan and Husayn (The King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs) offered up spontaneously their lives in that city. Neither fortune, nor wealth, nor glory, could deter them! God knoweth the things which befell them and yet the people are, for the most part, unaware!

Before them one named Kazim and they who were with him, and after them, his honor Ashraf, all quaffed the draught of martyrdom with the utmost fervor and longing, and hastened unto the Supreme Companion. In like manner, at the time of Sardár Azíz Khán, that godly man, Mírzá Mustafa, and his fellow martyrs, were arrested, and despatched unto the Supreme Friend in the All-Glorious Horizon. Briefly, in every city the evidences of a tyranny, beyond like or equal, were unmistakably clear and manifest, and yet none arose in self-defence! Call thou to mind his honor Badí', who was the bearer of the Tablet to His Majesty the Sháh, and reflect how he laid down his life. That knight, who spurred on his charger in the arena of renunciation, threw down the precious crown of life for the sake of Him Who is the Incomparable Friend.

O Shaykh! If things such as these are to be denied, what shall, then, be deemed worthy of credence? Set forth the truth, for the sake of God, and be not of them that hold their peace. They arrested his honor Najaf-'Alí, who hastened, with rapture and great longing, unto the field of martyrdom, uttering these words: "We have kept both Baha and the khunbaha

(bloodmoney)!" With these words he yielded up his spirit. Meditate on the splendor and glory which the light of renunciation, shining from the upper chamber of the heart of Mullá 'Alí-Ján, hath shed. He was so carried away by the breezes of the Most Sublime Word and by the power of the Pen of Glory that to him the field of martyrdom equalled, nay outrivalled, the haunts of earthly delights. Ponder upon the conduct of Abá-Basír and Siyyid Ashraf-i-Zanjání. They sent for the mother of Ashraf to dissuade her son from his purpose. But she spurred him on until he suffered a most glorious martyrdom.116

O Shaykh! That which hath touched this Wronged One is beyond compare or equal. We have borne it all with the utmost willingness and resignation, so that the souls of men may be edified, and the Word of God be exalted. While confined in the prison of the Land of Mím (Mázindarán) We were one day delivered into the hands of the divines. Thou canst well imagine what befell Us. Shouldst thou at some time happen to visit the dungeon of His Majesty the Sháh, ask the director and chief jailer to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qara-Guhár, and the other as Salásil. I swear by the Daystar of Justice that for four months this Wronged One was tormented and chained by one or the other of them. "My grief exceedeth all the woes to which Jacob gave vent, and all the afflictions of

Job are but a part of My sorrows!"

Likewise, ponder thou upon the martyrdom of Hájí Muhammad-Ridá in the City of Love ('Ishqábád). The tyrants of the earth have subjected that wronged one to such trials as have caused many foreigners to weep and lament for, as reported and ascertained, no less than thirty-two wounds were inflicted upon his blessed body. Yet none of the faithful transgressed My commandment, nor raised his hand in resistance. Come what might, they refused to allow their own inclinations to supersede that which the Book hath decreed, though a considerable number of this people have resided, and still reside, in that city.

We entreat His Majesty the Sháh, -- may God, hallowed and glorified be He, assist him -- himself to ponder upon these things, and to judge with equity and justice. Although in recent years a number of the faithful have, in most of the cities of Persia, suffered themselves to be killed

rather than kill, yet the hatred smouldering in certain hearts hath blazed more fiercely than before. For the victims of oppression to intercede in favor of

their enemies is, in the estimation of rulers, a princely deed. Some must have certainly heard that this oppressed people have, in that city (Ishqabad), pleaded with the Governor on behalf of their murderers, and asked for the mitigation of their sentence. Take, then, good heed, ye who are men of insight!117

O people of the Bayán! Abandon your idle fancies and vain

imaginings, then with the eye of fairness look at the Dayspring of His Revelation and consider the things He hath manifested, the words He hath divinely revealed and the sufferings that have befallen Him at the hands of His enemies. He is the One Who hath willingly accepted every manner of tribulation for the proclamation of His Cause and the exaltation of His Word. At one time He suffered imprisonment in the land of Tá (Tihrán), at another in the land of Mím (Mázindarán), then once again in the former land, for the sake of the Cause of God, the Maker of the heavens. In His love for the Cause of God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful, He was subjected there to chains and fetters.¹¹⁸

BADASHT

(c. June 23-July 15, 1848)

In a Tablet which We yesterday revealed, We have explained the meaning of the words, 'Turn your eyes away,'¹¹⁹ in the course of Our

reference to the circumstances attending the gathering at Badasht. We were celebrating, in the company of a number of distinguished notables, the nuptials of one of the princes of royal blood in Tihrán, when Siyyid Ahmadi-Yazdí, father of Siyyid Husayn, the Báb's amanuensis, appeared suddenly

at the door. He beckoned to Us, and seemed to be the bearer of an important message which he wished immediately to deliver. We were, however, unable at that moment to leave the gathering, and motioned to him to wait. When the meeting had dispersed, he informed Us that Táhirih had been placed in strict confinement in Qazvín, and that her life was in great danger. We immediately summoned Muhammad-Hadí-i-Farhadí, and gave him the necessary directions to release her from her captivity, and escort her to the capital. As the enemy had seized Our house, We were unable to accommodate her indefinitely in Our home. Accordingly, We arranged for her transference from Our house to that of the Minister of War,¹²⁰ who, in those days, had been disgraced by his sovereign and had been deported to Káshán. We requested his sister, who still was numbered among Our friends, to act as hostess to Táhirih.

She remained in her company until the call of the Báb, bidding Us proceed to Khurásán, reached Our ears. We decided that Táhirih should proceed immediately to that province, and commissioned Mírzá¹²¹ to conduct her to a place outside the gate of the city, and from thence to any locality she

deemed advisable in that neighbourhood. She was taken to an orchard in the vicinity of which was a deserted building, where they found an old man who acted as its caretaker. Mírzá Músá returned and informed Us of the reception which had been accorded to them, and highly praised the beauty of the surrounding landscape. We subsequently arranged for her departure for Khurásán, and promised that We would follow within the space of a few days.

We soon joined her at Badasht, where We rented a garden for her

use, and appointed the same Muhammad-Hadí who had achieved her deliverance, as her doorkeeper. About seventy of Our companions were with Us and lodged in a place in the vicinity of that garden.

We fell ill one day, and were confined to bed. Táhirih sent a request to call upon Us. We were surprised at her message, and were at a loss as to what We should reply. Suddenly We saw her at the door, her face unveiled before Us. How well has Mírzá Áqa Ján¹²² commented upon that incident. 'The face of Fátimih,' he said, 'must needs be revealed on the Day of Judgment and appear unveiled before the eyes of men. At that moment the voice of the Unseen shall be heard saying: "Turn your eyes away from that which ye have seen."

How great was the consternation that seized the companions on that day! Fear and bewilderment filled their hearts. A few, unable to tolerate that which was to them so revolting a departure from the established customs of Islam, fled in horror from before her face. Dismayed, they sought refuge in a deserted castle in that neighbourhood. Among those who were scandalized by her behaviour and severed from her entirely were the Siyyid-i-Nahrí¹²³ and his brother Mírzá Hadí, to both of whom We sent word that it was unnecessary for them to desert their companions and seek refuge in a castle. Our friends eventually dispersed, leaving Us at the mercy of Our enemies. When, at a later time, We went to Ámul, such was the turmoil which the people had raised that above four thousand persons had congregated in the masjid and had crowded onto the roofs of their houses. The leading Mullá of the town denounced Us bitterly. 'You have perverted the Faith of Islám,' he cried in his Mázindaráni dialect, 'and sullied its fame! Last night I saw you in a dream enter the masjid, which was thronged by an eager multitude that had gathered to witness your arrival. As the crowd pressed round you, I beheld, and, lo, the Qá'im was standing in a corner with His gaze fixed upon your countenance, His features betraying great surprise. This dream I regard as evidence of your having deviated from the path of Truth.' We assured him that the expression of surprise on that countenance was a sign of the Qá'im's strong disapproval of the treatment he and his fellow-townsmen had accorded Us. He questioned Us regarding the Mission of the Báb. We informed him that, although We had never met Him face to face, yet We cherished, none the less, a great affection for Him. We expressed Our profound conviction that He had, under no circumstances, acted contrary to the Faith of Islam.

The Mullá and his followers, however refused to believe Us, and rejected Our testimony as a perversion of the truth. They eventually placed Us in confinement, and forbade Our friends to meet Us. The acting governor of Amul succeeded in effecting Our release from captivity. Through an opening in the wall that he ordered his men to make, he enabled Us to leave that room, and conducted Us to his house. No sooner were the inhabitants informed of this act than they arose against Us, besieged the governor's residence, pelted Us with stones, and hurled in Our face the foulest invectives.

At the time We proposed to send Muhammad-Hadfy-i-Farhadí to Qazvín, in order to achieve the deliverance of Táhirih and conduct her to Tíhrán, Shaykh Abú-Turáb wrote Us, insisting that such an attempt was fraught with grave risks and might occasion an unprecedented tumult. We refused to be deflected from Our purpose. That Shaykh was a kind-hearted man, was simple and lowly in temper, and behaved with great dignity. He lacked courage and determination, however, and betrayed weakness on certain occasions.¹²⁴

NÍYÁLÁ

(c. July 17, 1848)

We were all gathered in the village of Níyálá and were resting at the foot of a mountain, when, at the hour of dawn, we were suddenly awakened by the stones which the people of the neighbourhood were hurling upon us from the top of the mountain. The fierceness of their attack induced our companions to flee in terror and consternation. I clothed Quddús in my own garments and despatched him to a place of safety, where I intended to join him. When I arrived, I found that he had gone. None of our companions had remained in Níyálá except Táhirih and a young man from Shíráz, Mírzá Abdu'lláh. The violence with which we were assailed had brought desolation into our camp. I found no one into whose custody I could deliver Táhirih except that young man, who displayed on that occasion a courage and determination that were truly surprising. Sword in hand, undaunted by the savage assault of the inhabitants of the village, who had rushed to plunder our property, he sprang forward to stay the hand of the assailants. Though himself wounded in several parts of his body, he risked his life to protect our property. I bade him desist from his act. When the tumult had subsided, I approached a number of the inhabitants of the village and was able to convince them of the cruelty and shamefulness of their behaviour. I subsequently succeeded in restoring a part of our plundered property.¹²⁵

ÁMUL

(starting c. November 27, 1848¹²⁶)

"No prisoner has ever been accorded the treatment which I received at the hands of the acting governor of Ámul. He treated Me with the utmost consideration and esteem. I was generously entertained by him, and the fullest attention was given to everything that affected My security and comfort. I was, however, unable to leave the gate of the house. My host was afraid lest the governor, who was related to Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Lárjání, might return from the fort of Tabarsí and inflict injury upon Me. I tried to dispel his apprehensions. 'The same Omnipotence,' I assured him, 'who has delivered us from the hands of the mischief-makers of Ámul, and has enabled us to be received with such hospitality by you in this house, is able to

change the heart of the governor and to cause him to treat us with no less

consideration and love.'

"One night we were suddenly awakened by the clamour of the people who had gathered outside the gate of the house. The door was opened, and it was announced that the governor had returned to Ámul. Our companions, who were anticipating a fresh attack upon them, were completely surprised to hear the voice of the governor rebuking those who had denounced us so bitterly on the day of our arrival. 'For what reason,' we heard him loudly remonstrating, 'have these miserable wretches chosen to treat so disrespectfully a guest whose hands are tied and who has not been given the chance to defend himself? What is their justification for having demanded that he be immediately put to death? What evidence have they with which to support their contention? If they be sincere in their claims to be

devotedly attached to Islam and to be the guardians of its interests, let them betake themselves to the fort of Shaykh Tabarsíand there demonstrate their capacity to defend the Faith of which they profess to be the champions.'"127

Our friends eventually dispersed, leaving Us at the mercy of Our enemies. When, at a later time, We went to Ámul, such was the turmoil which the people had raised that above four thousand persons had congregated in the masjid and had crowded onto the roofs of their houses. The leading Mullá of the town denounced Us bitterly. 'You have perverted the Faith of Islám,' he cried in his Mázindarání dialect, 'and sullied its fame! Last night I saw you in a dream enter the masjid, which was thronged by an eager multitude that had gathered to witness your arrival. As the crowd pressed round you, I beheld, and, lo, the Qá'im was standing in a corner with His gaze fixed upon your countenance, His features betraying great surprise. This dream I regard as evidence of your having deviated from the path of Truth.' We assured him that the expression of surprise on that countenance was a sign of the Qá'im's strong disapproval of the treatment he and his fellow-townsmen had accorded Us. He questioned Us regarding the Mission of the Báb. We informed him that, although We had never met Him face to face, yet We cherished, none the less, a great affection for Him. We expressed Our profound conviction that He had, under no circumstances, acted contrary to the Faith of Islám.

The Mullá and his followers, however refused to believe Us, and rejected Our testimony as a perversion of the truth. They eventually placed Us in confinement, and forbade Our friends to meet Us. The acting governor of Amul succeeded in effecting Our release from captivity. Through an opening in the wall that he ordered his men to make, he enabled Us to leave

that room, and conducted Us to his house. No sooner were the inhabitants informed of this act than they arose against Us, besieged the governor's residence, pelted Us with stones, and hurled in Our face the foulest invectives.128

"Praise be to God, that whatever is essential for the believers in this Revelation to be told has been revealed. Their duties have been clearly

defined, and the deeds they are expected to perform have been plainly set forth in Our Book. Now is the time for them to arise and fulfil their duty. Let them translate into deeds the exhortations We have given them. Let them beware lest the love they bear God, a love that glows so brightly in their hearts, cause them to transgress the bounds of moderation, and to overstep the limits We have set for them. In regard to this matter, We wrote thus, while in Iraq, to Hájí Mírzá Músáy-i-Qumí: 'Such is to be the restraint you should exercise that if you be made to quaff from the well-springs of faith and certitude all the rivers of knowledge, your lips must never be allowed to betray, to either friend or stranger, the wonder of the draught of which you have partaken. Though your heart be aflame with His love, take heed lest any eye discover your inner agitation, and though your soul be surging like an ocean, suffer not the serenity of your countenance to be disturbed, nor the manner of your behaviour to reveal the intensity of your emotions.'

"God knows that at no time did We attempt to conceal Ourselves or hide the Cause which We have been bidden to proclaim. Though not wearing the garb of the people of learning, We have again and again faced and reasoned with men of great scholarship in both Núr and Mázindarán, and have succeeded in persuading them of the truth of this Revelation. We never flinched in Our determination; We never hesitated to accept the challenge from whatever direction it came. To whomsoever We spoke in those days, We found him receptive to our Call and ready to identify himself with its precepts. But for the shameful behaviour of the people of Bayán, who sullied by their deeds the work We had accomplished, Núr and Mázindarán would have been entirely won to this Cause and would have been accounted by this time among its leading strongholds.

"At a time when the forces of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá had besieged the fort of Tabarsí, We resolved to depart from Nur and lend Our assistance to its heroic defenders. We had intended to send 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, one of Our companions, in advance of Us, and to request him to announce Our approach to the besieged. Though encompassed by the forces of the enemy, We had decided to throw in Our lot with those steadfast companions, and to risk the dangers with which they were confronted. This, however, was

not to be. The hand of Omnipotence spared Us from their fate and preserved Us for the work We were destined to accomplish. In pursuance of God's inscrutable wisdom, the intention We had formed was, before Our arrival at the fort, communicated by certain inhabitants of Nur to Mírzá Taqí, the governor of Ámul, who sent his men to intercept Us. While We were resting and taking Our tea, We found Ourselves suddenly surrounded by a number of horsemen, who seized Our belongings and captured Our steeds. We were given, in exchange for Our own horse, a poorly saddled animal which We found it extremely uncomfortable to ride. The rest of Our companions were conducted, handcuffed, to Ámul. Mírzá Taqí succeeded, in spite of the tumult Our arrival had raised, and in the face of the opposition of the ulamas, in releasing Us from their grasp and in conducting Us to his own house. He extended to Us the warmest hospitality. Occasionally he yielded to

the pressure which the ulamas were continuously bringing to bear upon him, and felt himself powerless to defeat their attempts to harm Us. We were still in his house when the Sardar, who had joined the army in Mázindarán, returned to Amul. No sooner was he informed of the indignities We had suffered than he rebuked Mírzá Taqí for the weakness he had shown in protecting Us from Our enemies. 'Of what importance,' he indignantly demanded, 'are the denunciations of this ignorant people? Why is it that you have allowed yourself to be swayed by their clamour? You should have been satisfied with preventing the party from reaching their destination and, instead of detaining them in this house, you should have arranged for their safe and immediate return to Tihrán.'"129

O Shaykh! That which hath touched this Wronged One is beyond compare or equal. We have borne it all with the utmost willingness and resignation, so that the souls of men may be edified, and the Word of God be exalted. While confined in the prison of the Land of Mím (Mázindarán) We were one day delivered into the hands of the divines. Thou canst well imagine what befell Us. Shouldst thou at some time happen to visit the dungeon of His Majesty the Sháh, ask the director and chief jailer to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qara-Guhár, and the other as Salásil. I swear by the Daystar of Justice that for four months this Wronged One was tormented and chained by one or the other of them. "My grief exceedeth all the woes to which Jacob gave vent, and all the afflictions of Job are but a part of My sorrows!"130

SARÍ

"Whilst in Sarí, We were again exposed to the insults of the people. Though the notables of that town were, for the most part, Our friends and had on several occasions met Us in Tihrán, no sooner had the townspeople recognized Us, as We walked with Quddús in the streets, than they began to hurl their invectives at Us. The cry 'Bábí! Bábí!' greeted Us wherever We went. We were unable to escape their bitter denunciations..."131

THE PERSECUTION OF THE BÁBÍS (1845-1852)

In this most resplendent Dispensation, however, this most mighty Sovereignty, a number of illumined divines, of men of consummate learning, of doctors of mature wisdom, have attained unto His Court, drunk the cup of His divine Presence, and been invested with the honour of His most excellent favour. They have renounced, for the sake of the Beloved, the world and all that is therein. We will mention the names of some of them, that perchance it may strengthen the faint-hearted, and encourage the timorous. Among them was Mullá Husayn, who became the recipient of the effulgent glory of the Sun of divine Revelation. But for him, God would not have been established upon the seat of His mercy, nor ascended the throne of

eternal glory. Among them also was Siyyid Yahyá, that unique and peerless figure of his age,

Mullá Muhammad ‘Alíy-i-Zanjání

Mullá ‘Alíy-i-Bastámí

Mullá Sa'id-i-Bárfurúshí

Mullá Ni'matu'llah-i-Mázindarání

Mullá Yúsuf-i-Ardibílí

Mullá Mihdíy-i-Khu'í

Siyyid Husayn-i-Turshízí

Mullá Mihdíy-i-Kandí

Mullá Báqir

Mullá ‘Abdu'l-Kháliq-i-Yazdí

Mullá ‘Alíy-i-Baraqání

and others, well nigh four hundred in number, whose names are all inscribed upon the "Guarded Tablet" of God.

All these were guided by the light of that Sun of divine Revelation, confessed and acknowledged His truth. Such was their faith, that most of them renounced their substance and kindred, and cleaved to the goodpleasure of the All-Glorious. They laid down their lives for their Well-Beloved, and surrendered their all in His path. Their breasts were made targets for the darts of the enemy, and their heads adorned the spears of the infidel. No land remained which did not drink the blood of these embodiments of detachment, and no sword that did not bruise their necks. Their deeds, alone, testify to the truth of their words. Doth not the testimony of these holy souls, who have so gloriously risen to offer up their lives for their

Beloved that the whole world marvelled at the manner of their sacrifice, suffice the people of this day? Is it not sufficient witness against the faithlessness of those who for a trifle betrayed their faith, who bartered away immortality for that which perisheth, who gave up the Kawthar of the divine Presence for salty springs, and whose one aim in life is to usurp the property of others? Even as thou dost witness how all of them have busied themselves with the vanities of the world, and have strayed far from Him Who is the Lord, the Most High.

Be fair: Is the testimony of those acceptable and worthy of attention whose deeds agree with their words, whose outward behaviour conforms with their inner life? The mind is bewildered at their deeds, and the soul marvelleth at their fortitude and bodily endurance. Or is the testimony of these faithless souls who breathe naught but the breath of selfish desire, and who lie imprisoned in the cage of their idle fancies, acceptable? Like the bats of darkness, they lift not their heads from their couch except to pursue the transient things of the world, and find no rest by night except as they labour to advance the aims of their sordid life. Immersed in their selfish schemes, they are oblivious of the divine Decree. In the day-time they strive with all their soul after worldly benefits, and in the night-season their sole

occupation

is to gratify their carnal desires. By what law or standard could men be justified in cleaving to the denials of such petty-minded souls, and in ignoring

the faith of them that have renounced, for the sake of the good-pleasure of God, their life, and substance, their fame and renown, their reputation and honour?

Were not the happenings of the life of the "Prince of Martyrs"[Imám Husayn] regarded as the greatest of all events, as the supreme evidence of his truth? Did not the people of old declare those happenings to be unprecedented? Did they not maintain that no manifestation of truth hath ever evinced such constancy, such conspicuous glory? And yet, that episode of his life, commencing as it did in the morning,

was brought to a close by the middle of the same day, whereas, these holy lights have, for eighteen years, heroically endured the showers of afflictions which, from every side, have rained upon them. With what love, what devotion, what exultation and holy rapture, they sacrificed their lives in the path of the All-Glorious! To the truth of this all witness. And yet, how can they belittle this Revelation? Hath any age witnessed such momentous happenings? If these companions be not the true strivers after God, who else could be called by this name? Have these companions been seekers after power or glory? Have they ever yearned for riches? Have they cherished any desire except the good-pleasure of God? If these companions, with all their marvellous testimonies and wondrous works, be false, who then is worthy to claim for himself the truth? I swear by God! Their very deeds are a sufficient testimony, and an irrefutable proof unto all the peoples of the earth, were men to ponder in their hearts the mysteries of divine Revelation. "And they who act unjustly shall soon know what lot awaiteth them!"[Qur'án 26:227]132

No sooner had that eternal Beauty revealed Himself in Shíráz, in the year sixty, and rent asunder the veil of concealment, than the signs of the ascendancy, the might, the sovereignty, and power, emanating from that Essence of Essences and Sea of Seas, were manifest in every land. So much so, that from every city there appeared the signs, the evidences, the tokens, the testimonies of that divine Luminary. How many were those pure and kindly hearts which faithfully reflected the light of that eternal Sun, and how manifold the emanations of knowledge from that Ocean of divine wisdom which encompassed all beings! In every city, all the divines and dignitaries rose to hinder and repress them, and girded up the loins of malice, of envy, and tyranny for their suppression. How great the number of those holy souls, those essences of justice, who, accused of tyranny, were put to death! And how many embodiments of purity, who showed forth naught but true knowledge and stainless deeds, suffered an agonizing death! Notwithstanding all this, each of these holy beings, up to his last moment, breathed the Name of God, and soared in the realm of submission and resignation. Such was the

potency and transmuting influence which He exercised over them, that they ceased to cherish any desire but His will, and wedded their soul to His remembrance.

Reflect: Who in this world is able to manifest such transcendent power, such pervading influence? All these stainless hearts and sanctified souls have, with absolute resignation, responded to the summons of His decree. Instead of complaining, they rendered thanks unto God, and amidst the darkness of their anguish they revealed naught but radiant acquiescence to His will. It is evident how relentless was the hate, and how bitter the malice and enmity entertained by all the peoples of the earth towards these companions. The persecution and pain they inflicted on these holy and spiritual beings were regarded by them as means unto salvation, prosperity, and everlasting success. Hath the world, since the days of Adam, witnessed such tumult, such violent commotion? Notwithstanding all the torture they suffered, and manifold the afflictions they endured, they became the object of universal opprobrium and execration. Methinks patience was revealed only by virtue of their fortitude, and faithfulness itself was begotten only by their deeds.¹³³

The events that have happened in Persia during the early years have truly saddened the well-favored and sincere ones. Each year witnessed a fresh massacre, pillage, plunder, and shedding of blood. At one time there appeared in Zanján that which caused the greatest consternation; at another in Nayríz, and at yet another in Tabarsí, and finally there occurred the episode of the Land of Tá (Tihrán). From that time onwards this Wronged One, assisted by the One True God -- exalted be His glory -- acquainted this oppressed people with the things which beseeemed them. All have sanctified themselves from the things which they and others possess, and have clung unto, and fixed their eyes upon that which pertaineth unto God.¹³⁴

MARTYRDOM OF THE BÁB

(July 9, 1850)

And now consider how this Sadrih of the Ridván of God hath, in the prime of youth, risen to proclaim the Cause of God. Behold what steadfastness that Beauty of God hath revealed. The whole world rose to hinder Him, yet it utterly failed. The more severe the persecution they inflicted on that Sadrih of Blessedness, the more His fervour increased, and the brighter burned the flame of His love. All this is evident, and none disputeth its truth. Finally, He surrendered His soul, and winged His flight unto the realms above.¹³⁵

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!¹³⁶

Reflect, O Shaykh, upon the Shí'ih sect. How many the edifices which they reared with the hands of idle fancies and vain imaginings, and

how numerous the cities which they built! At length those vain imaginings were converted into bullets and aimed at Him Who is the Prince of the world. Not one single soul among the leaders of that sect acknowledged Him in the Day of His Revelation! Whenever His blessed name was mentioned, all would say: "May God hasten the joy His coming will bring!" On the day of the Revelation of that Sun of Truth, however, all, as hath been observed, have exclaimed, saying: "May God hasten His chastisement!" He Who was the Essence of being and Lord of the seen and unseen they suspended, and committed what made the Tablet to weep, and the Pen to groan, and the cries of the sincere to break forth, and the tears of the favored ones to flow.137

VISIT TO 'ATABAT

(1850-1851)

We deem it advisable, in this connection, to recount briefly some past events, that perchance they may be the means of vindicating the cause of equity and justice. At the time when His Majesty the Sháh, may God, his Lord, the Most Merciful, aid him through His strengthening grace, was planning a journey to Isfáhán, this Wronged One, having obtained his permission, visited the holy and luminous resting-places of the Imáms, may the blessings of God be upon them!138

LAVÁSÁN

(1851-August 1852)

We deem it advisable, in this connection, to recount briefly some past events, that perchance they may be the means of vindicating the cause of equity and justice. At the time when His Majesty the Sháh, may God, his Lord, the Most Merciful, aid him through His strengthening grace, was planning a journey to Isfáhán, this Wronged One, having obtained his permission, visited the holy and luminous resting-places of the Imáms, may the blessings of God be upon them! Upon Our return, We proceeded to Lavásán on account of the excessive heat prevailing in the capital. 139

ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF THE SHÁH

(August 15, 1852)

Following Our departure, there occurred the attempt upon the life of His Majesty, may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him. Those days were troublous days, and the fires of hatred burned high. Many were arrested, among them this Wronged One. By the righteousness of God! We were in no wise connected with that evil deed, and Our innocence was indisputably established by the tribunals. Nevertheless, they apprehended Us...140

To enforce the laws of God is naught but justice, and is the source of universal content. Nay more, the divine statutes have always been, and will ever remain, the cause and instrument of the preservation of mankind, as witnessed by His exalted words: "In punishment will ye find life, O men

of insight!" It would, however, ill beseem the justice of thy Majesty that for the trespass of a single soul a whole group of people should be subjected to the scourge of thy wrath. The one true God -- glorified be His Name! -- hath said: "None shall bear the burden of another." 141

So grossly hath Our Cause been misrepresented before thy royal presence that, if some unseemly act be committed by but one of this people, it is portrayed as being prompted by their beliefs. By Him besides Whom there is none other God! This Servant hath refused even to sanction the commission of reprov'd actions, how much less those which have been explicitly prohibited by the Book of God. 142

And when ye took away His life, one of His followers [Azím] 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! 143

IN THE SÍYÁH CHÁL

(August 1852-January 1853)

Following Our departure, there occurred the attempt upon the life of His Majesty, may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him. Those days were troublous days, and the fires of hatred burned high. Many were arrested, among them this Wronged One. By the righteousness of God! We were in no wise connected with that evil deed, and Our innocence was indisputably established by the tribunals. Nevertheless, they apprehended Us, and from Niyavaran, which was then the residence of His Majesty, conducted Us, on foot and in chains, with bared head and bare feet, to the dungeon of Tihrán. A brutal man, accompanying Us on horseback, snatched off Our hat, whilst We were being hurried along by a troop of executioners and officials. We were consigned for four months to a place foul beyond comparison. As to the dungeon in which this Wronged One and others similarly wronged were confined, a dark and narrow pit were preferable.

Upon Our arrival We were first conducted along a pitch-black corridor, from whence We descended three steep flights of stairs to the place of confinement assigned to Us. The dungeon was wrapped in thick darkness, and Our fellow prisoners numbered nearly a hundred and fifty souls: thieves, assassins and highwaymen. Though crowded, it had no other outlet than the passage by which We entered. No pen can depict that place, nor any tongue describe its loathsome smell. Most of these men had neither clothes nor bedding to lie on. God alone knoweth what befell Us in that most foulsmelling and gloomy place!

Day and night, while confined in that dungeon, We meditated upon

the deeds, the condition, and the conduct of the Bábís, wondering what could have led a people so high-minded, so noble, and of such intelligence, to perpetrate such an audacious and outrageous act against the person of His Majesty. This Wronged One, thereupon, decided to arise, after His release from prison, and undertake, with the utmost vigor, the task of regenerating this people.

One night, in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: "Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Erelong will God raise up the treasures of the earth -- men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him."

And when this Wronged One went forth out of His prison, We journeyed, in pursuance of the order of His Majesty the Sháh -- may God, exalted be He, protect him -- to Iraq, escorted by officers in the service of the

esteemed and honored governments of Persia and Russia. After Our arrival, We revealed, as a copious rain, by the aid of God and His Divine Grace and mercy, Our verses, and sent them to various parts of the world. We

exhorted all men, and particularly this people, through Our wise counsels and loving admonitions, and forbade them to engage in sedition, quarrels, disputes and conflict. As a result of this, and by the grace of God, waywardness and folly were changed into piety and understanding, and weapons converted into instruments of peace.

During the days I lay in the prison of Tihrán, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still

in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear. 144

O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow. The learning current amongst men I studied not; their schools I entered not. Ask of the city wherein I dwelt, that thou mayest be well assured that I am not of them who speak falsely. This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes! They move it as they list. The evanescent is as nothing before Him Who is the Ever-Abiding. His all-compelling summons hath reached Me, and caused Me to speak His praise amidst all people. I

was indeed as one dead when His behest was uttered. The hand of the will of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful, transformed Me. Can anyone speak forth of his own accord that for which all men, both high and low, will protest against him? Nay, by Him Who taught the Pen the eternal mysteries, save him whom the grace of the Almighty, the All-Powerful, hath strengthened.¹⁴⁵

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Look Thou upon this wronged one, who hath been sorely afflicted by the oppressors among Thy creatures and the infidels among Thine enemies, though he himself hath refused to breathe a single breath but by Thy leave and at Thy bidding. I lay asleep on my couch, O my God, when lo, the gentle winds of Thy grace and Thy loving-kindness passed over me, and wakened me through the power of Thy sovereignty and Thy gifts, and bade me arise before Thy servants, and speak forth Thy praise, and glorify Thy word. Thereupon most of Thy people reviled me. I swear by Thy glory, O my God! I never thought that they would show forth such deeds, aware as I am that Thou hast Thyself announced this Revelation unto them in the Scrolls of Thy commandment and the Tablets of Thy decree, and hast covenanted with them concerning this youth in every word sent down by Thee unto Thy creatures and Thy people.

I am bewildered, therefore, O my God, and know not how to act toward them. Every time I hold my peace, and cease to extol Thy wondrous virtues, Thy Spirit impelleth me to cry out before all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth; and every time I am still, the breaths wafted from the right hand of Thy will and purpose pass over me, and stir me up, and I find myself to be as a leaf which lieth at the mercy of the winds of Thy decree, and is carried away whithersoever Thou dost permit or command it. Every man of insight who considereth what hath been revealed by me, will be persuaded that Thy Cause is not in my hands, but in Thy hands, and will recognize that the reins of power are held not in my grasp but in Thy grasp, and are subject to Thy sovereign might. And yet, Thou seest, O my God, how the inhabitants of Thy realm have arrayed themselves against me, and inflict upon me every moment of my life what causeth the realities of Thy chosen ones and trusted ones to tremble.

I entreat Thee, therefore, O my God, by Thy Name through which Thou hast guided Thy lovers to the living waters of Thy grace and Thy favors, and attracted them that long for Thee to the Paradise of Thy nearness and Thy presence, to open the eyes of Thy people that they may recognize in this Revelation the manifestation of Thy transcendent unity, and the dawning of the lights of Thy countenance and Thy beauty. Cleanse them, then, O my God, from all idle fancies and vain imaginations, that they may inhale the fragrances of sanctity from the robe of Thy Revelation and Thy commandment, that haply they may cease to inflict upon me what will deprive their souls of the fragrances of the manifold tokens of Thy mercy, that are wafted in the days of Him Who is the Manifestation of Thyself, and the Day-Spring of Thy Cause, and that they may not perpetrate what will call

down Thy wrath and anger.

Thou well knowest, O my God, that I was regarded as one of the people of the Bayán, and consorted with them with love and fellowship, and summoned them to Thee in the daytime and in the night season, through the wonders of Thy Revelation and Thine inspiration, and sustained at their hands what the inmates of the cities of Thine invention are powerless to

recount. I swear by Thy might, O my Beloved! Every morning I waken to find that I am made a target for the darts of their envy, and every night, when I lie down to rest, I discover that I have fallen a victim to the spears of

their hate. Though Thou hast made known unto me the secrets of their hearts, and hast set me above them, I have refused to uncover their deeds, and have dealt patiently with them, mindful of the time which Thou hast fixed. And when Thy promise came to pass, and the set time was fulfilled, Thou didst lift, to an imperceptible degree, the veil of concealment, and lo, all

the inmates of the kingdoms of Thy Revelation and of Thy creation shook and trembled, except those who were created by Thee, through the fire of Thy love, and the breath of Thine eagerness, and the water of Thy lovingkindness, and the clay of Thy grace. These are they who are glorified by the Concourse on high and the denizens of the Cities of eternity.¹⁴⁶

Whilst I lay, chained and fettered, in the prison of Tihrán, one of thy ministers extended Me his aid. Wherefore hath God ordained for thee a station which the knowledge of none can comprehend except His knowledge. Beware lest thou barter away this sublime station.¹⁴⁷

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

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

hosts of the unseen through His command "Be", and it is! The day is

approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting. He shall purify them from the defilement of idle fancies and corrupt desires, shall lift them up to the heights of holiness, and shall cause them to manifest the signs of His sovereignty and might upon earth. Thus hath it been ordained by God, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.

O people of the Bayán! Would ye deny Him Whose presence is the very object of your creation, while ye rejoice idly upon your couches? Would ye laugh to scorn and contend with Him, a single hair of Whose head excelleth, in the sight of God, all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth?

O people of the Bayán! Produce, then, that which ye possess, that I may know by what proof ye believed aforetime in the Manifestations of His Cause, and by what reason ye now wax so disdainful!

I swear by Him Who hath fashioned Me from the light of His own Beauty! None have I ever seen that surpasseth you in heedlessness or exceedeth you in ignorance. Ye seek to prove your faith in God through such holy Tablets as ye possess, yet when the verses of God were revealed and His Lamp was lighted, ye disbelieved in Him Whose very Pen hath fixed the destinies of all things in the Preserved Tablet. Ye recite the sacred verses and

yet repudiate Him Who is their Source and Revealer. Thus hath God blinded your eyes in requital for your deeds, would ye but understand. Day and night ye transcribe the verses of God, and yet ye remain shut out, as by a veil, from Him Who hath revealed them.

In this Day the Concourse on high beholdeth you in your evil doings and shunneth your company, and yet ye perceive it not. They ask of one another: "What words do these fools utter, and in what valley are they wont to graze? Do they deny that whereunto their very souls testify, and shut their eyes to that which they plainly behold?" I swear by God, O people! They that inhabit the Cities of the Names of God are bewildered at your actions, while ye roam, aimless and unconscious, in a parched and barren land."148

Whilst I lay, chained and fettered, in the prison of Tíhrán, one of thy ministers extended Me his aid. Wherefore hath God ordained for thee a station which the knowledge of none can comprehend except His knowledge. Beware lest thou barter away this sublime station.149

Shouldst thou at some time happen to visit the dungeon of His Majesty the Sháh, ask the director and chief jailer to show thee those two chains, one of which is known as Qara-Guhár, and the other as Salásil. I

swear by the Daystar of Justice that for four months this Wronged One was tormented and chained by one or the other of them. "My grief exceedeth all the woes to which Jacob gave vent, and all the afflictions of Job are but a part of My sorrows!"150

All this generation could offer Us were wounds from its darts, and the only cup it proffered to Our lips was the cup of its venom. On our neck We still bear the scar of chains, and upon Our body are imprinted the evidences of an unyielding cruelty.151

"All those who were struck down by the storm that raged during that memorable year in Tihrán were Our fellow-prisoners in the Síyáh-Chál, where We were confined. We were all huddled together in one cell, our feet in stocks, and around our necks fastened the most galling of chains. The air we breathed was laden with the foulest impurities, while the floor on which we sat was covered with filth and infested with vermin. No ray of light was allowed to penetrate that pestilential dungeon or to warm its icy-coldness. We were placed in two rows, each facing the other. We had taught them to repeat certain verses which, every night, they chanted with extreme fervour. 'God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-sufficing!' one row would intone, while the other would reply: 'In Him let the trusting trust.' The chorus of these gladsome voices would continue to peal out until the early hours of the morning. Their reverberation would fill the dungeon, and, piercing its massive walls, would reach the ears of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, whose palace was not far distant from the place where we were imprisoned. 'What means this sound?' he was reported to have exclaimed. 'It is the anthem the Bábís are intoning in their prison,' they replied. The Sháh made no further remarks, nor did he attempt to restrain the enthusiasm his prisoners, despite the horrors of their confinement, continued to display.

"One day, there was brought to Our prison a tray of roasted meat, which they informed Us the Sháh had ordered to be distributed among the prisoners. 'The Sháh,' We were told, 'faithful to a vow he made, has chosen this day to offer to you all this lamb in fulfilment of his pledge.' A deep silence fell upon Our companions, who expected Us to make answer on their behalf. 'We return this gift to you,' We replied; 'we can well dispense with this offer.' The answer We made would have greatly irritated the guards had they not been eager to devour the food we had refused to touch. Despite the hunger with which Our companions were afflicted, only one among them, a certain Mírzá Husayn-i-Matavallí-i-Qumí, showed any desire to eat of the food the sovereign had chosen to spread before us. With a fortitude that was truly heroic, Our fellow-prisoners submitted, without a murmur, to endure the piteous plight to which they were reduced. Praise of God, instead of complaint of the treatment meted out to them by the Sháh, fell unceasingly from their lips -- praise with which they sought to beguile the hardships of a cruel captivity.

"Every day Our gaolers, entering Our cell, would call the name of one of Our companions, bidding him arise and follow them to the foot of the gallows. With what eagerness would the owner of that name respond to that solemn call! Relieved of his chains, he would spring to his feet and, in a state of uncontrollable delight, would approach and embrace Us. We would seek to comfort him with the assurance of an everlasting life in the world beyond,

and, filling his heart with hope and joy, would send him forth to win the crown of glory. He would embrace, in turn, the rest of his fellow-prisoners and then proceed to die as dauntlessly as he had lived. Soon after the martyrdom of each of these companions, We would be informed by the executioner, who had grown to be friendly to Us, of the circumstances of the death of his victim, and of the joy with which he had endured his sufferings to the very end.

"We were awakened one night, ere break of day, by Mírzá

‘Abdu'l-Vahháb-i-Shírání, who was bound with Us to the same chains.

He had left Kázimayn and followed Us to Tihrán, where he was arrested and thrown into prison. He asked Us whether We were awake, and proceeded to relate to Us his dream. 'I have this night,' he said, 'been soaring

into a space of infinite vastness and beauty. I seemed to be uplifted on wings that carried me wherever I desired to go. A feeling of rapturous delight filled my soul. I flew in the midst of that immensity with a swiftness and ease that I cannot describe.' 'To-day,' We replied, 'it will be your turn to sacrifice yourself for this Cause. May you remain firm and steadfast to the end. You will then find yourself soaring in that same limitless space of which you dreamed, traversing with the same ease and swiftness the realm of immortal sovereignty, and gazing with that same rapture upon the Infinite Horizon.'

"That morning saw the gaoler again enter Our cell and call out the name of ‘Abdu'l-Vahháb. Throwing off his chains, he sprang to his feet, embraced each of his fellow-prisoners, and, taking Us into his arms, pressed Us lovingly to his heart. That moment We discovered that he had no shoes to wear We gave him Our own, and, speaking a last word of encouragement and cheer, sent him forth to the scene of his martyrdom. Later on, his executioner came to Us, praising in glowing language the spirit which that youth had shown. How thankful We were to God for this testimony which the executioner himself had given!"¹⁵²

Whilst I lay chained and fettered in the prison, one of thy ministers extended Me his aid. Wherefore hath God ordained for thee a station which the knowledge of none can comprehend except His knowledge. Beware lest thou barter away this sublime station. Thy Lord, verily, doeth what He willeth. What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm, and with Him is the knowledge of all things in a Guarded Tablet.¹⁵³

O Shaykh! These perspicuous verses have been sent down in one of the Tablets by the Abhá Pen: "Hearken, O servant, unto the voice of this Wronged One, Who hath endured grievous vexations and trials in the path of God, the Lord of all Names, until such time as He was cast into prison, in the Land of Ta (Tihrán). He summoned men unto the most sublime Paradise, and yet they seized Him and paraded Him through cities and countries. How many the nights during which slumber fled from the eyes of My loved ones, because of their love for Me; and how numerous the days whereon I had to face the assaults of the peoples against Me! At one time I found Myself on the heights of mountains; at another in the depths of the

prison of Ta (Tihrán), in chains and fetters. By the righteousness of God! I was at all times thankful unto Him, uttering His praise, engaged in remembering Him, directed towards Him, satisfied with His pleasure, and lowly and submissive before Him. So passed My days, until they ended in this Prison ('Akká) which hath made the earth to tremble and the heavens to sigh. Happy that one who hath cast away his vain imaginings, when He Who was hid came with the standards of His signs. We, verily, have announced unto men this Most Great Revelation, and yet the people are in a state of strange stupor."

Thereupon, a Voice was raised from the direction of Hijaz, calling aloud and saying: "Great is thy blessedness, O 'Akká, in that God hath made thee the dayspring of His Most Sweet Voice, and the dawn of His most mighty signs. Happy art thou in that the Throne of Justice hath been established upon thee, and the Daystar of God's loving-kindness and bounty hath shone forth above thy horizon. Well is it with every fair-minded person that hath judged fairly Him Who is the Most Great Remembrance, and woe betide him that hath erred and doubted."154

Shake off, O heedless ones, the slumber of negligence, that ye may behold the radiance which His glory hath spread through the world. How foolish are those who murmur against the premature birth of His light. O ye who are inly blind! Whether too soon or too late, the evidences of His effulgent glory are now actually manifest. It behoveth you to ascertain whether

or not such a light hath appeared. It is neither within your power nor mine to set the time at which it should be made manifest. God's inscrutable Wisdom hath fixed its hour beforehand. Be content, O people, with that which God hath desired for you and predestined unto you.... O my illwishers! The Day Star of eternal Guidance beareth me witness: Had it been in my power, I would have, under no circumstances, consented to distinguish myself amongst men, for the Name I bear utterly disdaineth to associate itself with this generation whose tongues are sullied and whose hearts are false. And whenever I chose to hold my peace and be still, lo, the voice of the Holy Ghost, standing on my right hand, aroused me, and the Supreme Spirit appeared before my face, and Gabriel overshadowed me, and the Spirit of Glory stirred within my bosom, bidding me arise and break my silence. If your hearing be purged and your ears be attentive, ye will assuredly

perceive that every limb of my body, nay all the atoms of my being, proclaim and bear witness to this call: "God, besides Whom is none other God, and He, Whose beauty is now manifest, is the reflection of His glory unto all that are in heaven and on earth."155

"That so brief a span," Bahá'u'lláh Himself explains, "should have separated this most mighty and wondrous Revelation from Mine own previous Manifestation, is a secret that no man can unravel and a mystery such as no mind can fathom. Its duration had been foreordained, and no man shall ever discover its reason unless and until he be informed of the

contents of My Hidden Book." "Behold," Bahá'u'lláh further explains in the Kitáb-i-Badí', one of His works refuting the arguments of the people of the Bayán, "behold, how immediately upon the completion of the ninth year of this wondrous, this most holy and merciful Dispensation, the requisite number of pure, of wholly consecrated and sanctified souls had been most secretly consummated." 156

No sooner had He revealed Himself than the foundations of the kindreds of the earth shook and trembled, and the learned swooned away, and the wise were bewildered, except such as have, through the power of Thy might, drawn nigh unto Thee, and received the choice wine of Thy Revelation from the hand of Thy grace, and have quaffed it in Thy name, and exclaimed: "Praise be unto Thee, O Thou the Desire of the worlds! and glory be to Thee, O Thou Who art the Exultation of the hearts that pant after Thee!" My God, my Master, my Highest Hope, and the Goal of my desire! Thou seest and hearest the sighing of this wronged One, from this darksome well which the vain imaginations of Thine adversaries have built, and from this blind pit which the idle fancies of the wicked among Thy creatures have digged. By Thy Beauty, O Thou Whose glory is uncovered to the face of men! I am not impatient in the troubles that touch me in my love for Thee, neither in the adversities which I suffer in Thy path. Nay, I have, by Thy power, chosen them for mine own self, and I glory in them amongst such of Thy creatures as enjoy near access to Thee, and those of Thy servants that are wholly devoted to Thy Self. 157

JOURNEY FROM TIHRÁN TO BAGHDÁD (January 12-April 8, 1853)

"In the days," is yet another illuminating testimony revealed by His pen, "when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia) -- may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him! -- exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was granted. Some of the ulamas of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. ...His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor -- may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him! -- extended to Me for the sake of God his protection -- a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth." 158

We departed out of Tihrán, at the bidding of the King, and, by his leave, transferred Our residence to Iraq. If I had transgressed against him, why, then, did he release Me? And if I were innocent of guilt, wherefore did ye afflict Us with such tribulation as none among them that profess your faith hath suffered? Hath any of Mine acts, after Mine arrival in Iraq, been such as to subvert the authority of the government? Who is it that can be said to have detected any thing reprehensible in Our behavior? Enquire for thyself of its people, that thou mayest be of them who have discerned the

truth.159

And when this Wronged One went forth out of His prison, We journeyed, in pursuance of the order of His Majesty the Sháh -- may God, exalted be He, protect him -- to 'Irâq, escorted by officers in the service of the esteemed and honored governments of Persia and Russia. After Our arrival, We revealed, as a copious rain, by the aid of God and His Divine Grace and mercy, Our verses, and sent them to various parts of the world. We exhorted all men, and particularly this people, through Our wise counsels and loving admonitions, and forbade them to engage in sedition, quarrels, disputes and conflict. As a result of this, and by the grace of God, waywardness and folly were changed into piety and understanding, and weapons converted into instruments of peace.160

"My God, My Master, My Desire!... Thou hast created this atom of dust through the consummate power of Thy might, and nurtured Him with Thine hands which none can chain up.... Thou hast destined for Him trials and tribulations which no tongue can describe, nor any of Thy Tablets adequately recount. The throat Thou didst accustom to the touch of silk Thou hast, in the end, clasped with strong chains, and the body Thou didst ease with brocades and velvets Thou hast at last subjected to the abasement of a dungeon. Thy decree hath shackled Me with unnumbered fetters, and cast about My neck chains that none can sunder. A number of years have passed during which afflictions have, like showers of mercy, rained upon Me.... How many the nights during which the weight of chains and fetters allowed Me no rest, and how numerous the days during which peace and tranquillity were denied Me, by reason of that wherewith the hands and tongues of men have afflicted Me! Both bread and water which Thou hast, through Thy all-embracing mercy, allowed unto the beasts of the field, they have, for a time, forbidden unto this servant, and the things they refused to inflict upon such as have seceded from Thy Cause, the same have they suffered to be inflicted upon Me, until, finally, Thy decree was irrevocably fixed, and Thy behest summoned this servant to depart out of Persia, accompanied by a number of frail-bodied men and children of tender age, at this time when the cold is so intense that one cannot even speak, and ice and snow so abundant that it is impossible to move."161

IN BAGHDÁD

(April 8, 1853-April 10, 1854)

Upon Our arrival in 'Irâq We found the Cause of God sunk in deep apathy and the breeze of divine revelation stilled. Most of the believers were faint and dispirited, nay utterly lost and dead. Hence there was a second blast on the Trumpet, whereupon the Tongue of Grandeur uttered these blessed words: 'We have sounded the Trumpet for the second time.' Thus the whole world was quickened through the vitalizing breaths of divine revelation and inspiration.162

Call Thou to mind God's mercy unto Thee; how, when Thou wert imprisoned with a number of other souls, He delivered Thee and aided Thee with the hosts of the seen and the unseen, until the King sent Thee to 'Iraq after We had disclosed unto him that Thou wert not of the sowers of sedition. Those who follow their corrupt desires and lay aside the fear of God are indeed in grievous error. They that spread disorder in the land, shed the blood of men, and wrongfully consume the substance of others -- We, verily, are clear of them, and We beseech God not to associate Us with them, whether in this world or in the world to come, unless they should repent unto Him. He, verily, is of those who show mercy the most merciful.163

If He be truly unconstrained, behold then how He hath sent down the Manifestation of His Cause with verses which naught in the heavens or on the earth can withstand! Such hath been the manner of their revelation that they have neither peer nor likeness in the world of being, as ye yourselves beheld and heard when once the Daystar of the world shone forth above the horizon of 'Iraq with manifest dominion. All things attain their consummation in the divine verses, and these indeed are the verses of God, the Sovereign Lord, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious, the Almighty. Beyond this, He hath been made manifest as the Bearer of a Cause whose sovereign might is acknowledged by all created things, and this none can deny save the sinners and the ungodly.164

We fain would hope that the people of the Bayán will be enlightened, will soar in the realm of the spirit and abide therein, will discern the Truth, and recognize with the eye of insight dissembling falsehood. In these days, however, such odours of jealousy are diffused, that -- I swear by the Educator of all beings, visible and invisible -- from the beginning of the foundation of the world -- though it hath no beginning -- until the present day, such malice, envy, and hate have in no wise appeared, nor will they ever be witnessed in the future. For a number of people who have never inhaled the fragrance of justice, have raised the standard of sedition, and have leagued themselves against Us. On every side We witness the menace of their spears, and in all directions We recognize the shafts of their arrows. This, although We have never gloried in any thing, nor did We seek preference over any soul. To everyone We have been a most kindly companion, a most forbearing and affectionate friend. In the company of the poor We have sought their fellowship, and amidst the exalted and learned We have been submissive and resigned. I swear by God, the one true God! grievous as have been the woes and sufferings which the hand of the enemy and the people of the Book inflicted upon Us, yet all these fade into utter nothingness when compared with that which hath befallen Us at the hand of those who profess to be Our friends.

What more shall We say? The universe, were it to gaze with the eye of justice, would be incapable of bearing the weight of this utterance!165

By the leave and permission of the King of the Age, this Servant journeyed from the Seat of Sovereignty [Tihrán] to 'Irâq, and dwelt for twelve years in that land. Throughout the entire course of this period no account of Our condition was submitted to the court of thy presence, and no representation ever made to foreign powers. Placing Our whole trust in God, We resided in that land until there came to 'Irâq a certain official who, upon

his arrival, undertook to harass this poor company of exiles. Day after day, at the instigation of some of the outwardly learned and of other individuals, he would stir up trouble for these servants, although they had at no time committed any act detrimental to the state and its people or contrary to the rules and customs of the citizens of the realm.

Fearing lest the actions of these transgressors should produce some outcome at variance with thy world-adorning judgement, this Servant despatched a brief account of the matter to Mírzá Sa'íd Khán at the Foreign Ministry, so that he might submit it to the royal presence and that whatever thou shouldst please to decree in this respect might be obeyed. A long while elapsed, and no decree was issued. Finally matters came to such a pass that there loomed the threat of imminent strife and bloodshed. Of necessity, therefore, and for the protection of the servants of God, a few of them appealed to the Governor of 'Irâq.

Wert thou to observe these events with the eye of fairness, it would become clear and evident in the luminous mirror of thine heart that what occurred was called for by the circumstances, and that no other alternative could be seen. His Majesty himself is witness that in whatever city a number of this people have resided, the hostility of certain functionaries hath enkindled the flame of conflict and contention. This evanescent Soul, however, hath, since His arrival in 'Irâq, forbidden all to engage in dissension and strife. The witness of this Servant is His very deeds, for all are well aware and will testify that, although a greater number of this people resided in 'Irâq than in any other land, no one overstepped his limits or transgressed against his neighbour. Fixing their gaze upon God, and reposing their trust in Him, all have now been abiding in peace for well-nigh fifteen years, and, in whatever hath befallen them, they have shown forth patience and resigned themselves to God.166

We departed out of Tihrán, at the bidding of the King, and, by his leave, transferred Our residence to 'Irâq. If I had transgressed against him,

why, then, did he release Me? And if I were innocent of guilt, wherefore did ye afflict Us with such tribulation as none among them that profess your faith hath suffered? Hath any of Mine acts, after Mine arrival in 'Irâq, been such as to subvert the authority of the government? Who is it that can be said to have detected any thing reprehensible in Our behavior? Enquire for thyself of its people, that thou mayest be of them who have discerned the truth.

For eleven years We dwelt in that land, until the Minister

representing thy government arrived, whose name Our pen is loth to mention, who was given to wine, who followed his lusts, and committed wickedness, and was corrupt and corrupted Iraq. To this will bear witness most of the inhabitants of Baghdád, wert thou to inquire of them, and be of such as seek the truth. He it was who wrongfully seized the substance of his fellow-men, who forsook all the commandments of God, and perpetrated whatever God had forbidden. Eventually, he, following his desires, rose up against Us, and walked in the ways of the unjust. He accused Us, in his letter to thee, and thou didst believe him and followed in his way, without seeking any proof or trustworthy evidence from him. Thou didst ask for no explanation, nor didst thou attempt either to investigate or ascertain the matter, that the truth might be distinguished from falsehood in thy sight, and that thou mightest be clear in thy discernment. Find out for thyself the sort of man he was by asking those Ministers who were, at that time, in Iraq, as well as the Governor of the City (Baghdád) and its high Counsellor, that the truth may be revealed to thee, and that thou mayest be of the well-informed. God is Our witness! We have, under no circumstances, opposed either him, or others. We observed, under all conditions, the precepts of God, and were never one of those that wrought disorders. To this he himself doth testify. His intention was to lay hold on Us, and send Us back to Persia, that he might thereby exalt his fame and reputation. Thou hast committed the same crime, and for the self-same purpose. Ye both are of equal grade in the sight of God, the sovereign Lord of all, the All-Knowing. It is not Our purpose in addressing to thee these words to lighten the burden of Our woe, or to induce thee to intercede for Us with any one. No, by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds! We have set forth the whole matter before thee, that perchance thou might realize what thou hast done, might desist from inflicting on others the hurt thou hast inflicted on Us, and might be of them that have truly repented to God, Who created thee and created all things, and might act with discernment in the future. Better is this

for thee than all thou dost possess, than thy ministry whose days are numbered.¹⁶⁷

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

to everyone who meeteth you with a greeting, 'Thou art not a believer'." "Thrust not away those who cry to their Lord at morn and even, craving to behold His face." Thou hast indeed forsaken what the Book of God hath prescribed, and yet thou deemest thyself to be a believer!168

This Wronged One hath been perpetually afflicted, and found no place of safety in which He could peruse either the writings of the Most Exalted One (the Báb) or those of any one else. About two months after Our arrival in 'Iráq, following the command of His Majesty the Sháh of Persia -- may God assist him -- Mírzá Yahyá joined Us. We said unto him: "In accordance with the Royal command We have been sent unto this place. It is advisable for thee to remain in Persia. We will send Our brother, Mírzá Músá, to some other place. As your names have not been mentioned in the Royal decree, you can arise and render some service."169

Wherever this Wronged One went Mírzá Yahyá followed Him.

Thou art thyself a witness and well knowest that whatever hath been said is the truth. The Siyyid of Isfáhán, however, surreptitiously duped him. They committed that which caused the greatest consternation. Would that thou wouldst inquire from the officials of the government concerning the conduct of Mírzá Yahyá in that land. Aside from all this, I adjure thee by God, the One, the Incomparable, the Lord of Strength, the Most Powerful, to carefully look into the communications addressed in his name to the Primal Point, that thou mayest behold the evidences of Him Who is the Truth as

clear as the sun. Likewise, there proceeded from the words of the Point of the Bayán -- may the souls of all else but Him be sacrificed for His sake -- that which no veil can obscure, and which neither the veils of glory nor the veils interposed by such as have gone astray can hide. The veils have, verily, been rent asunder by the finger of the will of thy Lord, the Strong, the All-Subduing, the All-Powerful. Yea, desperate is the state of such as have calumniated Me and envied Me. Not long ago it was stated that thou hadst ascribed the authorship of the Kitáb-i-Íqán and of other Tablets unto others.

I swear by God! This is a grievous injustice. Others are incapable of apprehending their meaning, how much more of revealing them!170

Concerning this Wronged One, most of the things reported in the newspapers are devoid of truth. Fair speech and truthfulness, by reason of their lofty rank and position, are regarded as a sun shining above the horizon of knowledge. The waves rising from this Ocean are apparent before the eyes of the peoples of the world and the effusions of the Pen of wisdom and utterance are manifest everywhere.

It is reported in the press that this Servant hath fled from the land of Tá (Tíhrán) and gone to 'Iráq. Gracious God! Not even for a single moment hath this Wronged One ever concealed Himself. Rather hath He at all times remained steadfast and conspicuous before the eyes of all men. Never have We retreated, nor shall We ever seek flight. In truth it is the foolish people who flee from Our presence. We left Our home country

accompanied by two mounted escorts, representing the two honoured governments of Persia and Russia until We arrived in `Iráq in the plenitude of glory and power. Praise be to God! The Cause whereof this Wronged One is the Bearer standeth as high as heaven and shineth resplendent as the sun. Concealment hath no access unto this station, nor is there any occasion for fear or silence.171

The days of tests are now come. Oceans of dissension and tribulation are surging, and the Banners of Doubt are, in every nook and corner, occupied in stirring up mischief and in leading men to perdition. ...Suffer not the voice of some of the soldiers of negation to cast doubt into your midst, neither allow yourselves to become heedless of Him Who is the Truth, inasmuch as in every Dispensation such contentions have been raised. God, however, will establish His Faith, and manifest His light albeit the stirrers of sedition abhor it. ...Watch ye every day for the Cause of God.... All are held captive in His grasp. No place is there for any one to flee to. Think not the Cause of God to be a thing lightly taken, in which any one can gratify his whims. In various quarters a number of souls have, at the present time, advanced this same claim. The time is approaching when ... every one of them will have perished and been lost, nay will have come to naught and become a thing unremembered, even as the dust itself.172

“That event led to Our banishment to Baghdád. Soon after Our arrival, We betook Ourselves to the mountains of Kurdistán, where We led for a time a life of complete solitude. We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain which lay at some three days' distance from the nearest human habitation. The comforts of life were completely lacking. We remained entirely isolated from Our fellow men until a certain Shaykh Isma'íl discovered Our abode and brought Us the food We needed...”173

In the early days of Our arrival in this land, when We discerned the signs of impending events, We decided, ere they happened, to retire.174

IN KURDISTÁN

(April 11, 1854-March 19, 1856)

“That event led to Our banishment to Baghdád. Soon after Our arrival, We betook Ourselves to the mountains of Kurdistán, where We led for a time a life of complete solitude. We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain which lay at some three days' distance from the nearest human habitation. The comforts of life were completely lacking. We remained entirely isolated from Our fellow men until a certain Shaykh Isma'íl discovered Our abode and brought Us the food We needed...”175

In the early days of Our arrival in this land, when We discerned the signs of impending events, We decided, ere they happened, to retire. We betook Ourselves to the wilderness, and there, separated and alone, led for two years a life of complete solitude. From Our eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in Our bleeding heart there surged an ocean of agonizing pain.

Many a night We had no food for sustenance, and many a day Our body found no rest. By Him Who hath My being between His hands! notwithstanding these showers of afflictions and unceasing calamities, Our soul was wrapt in blissful joy, and Our whole being evinced an ineffable gladness. For in Our solitude We were unaware of the harm or benefit, the health or ailment, of any soul. Alone, We communed with Our spirit, oblivious of the world and all that is therein. We knew not, however, that the mesh of divine destiny exceedeth the vastest of mortal conceptions, and the dart of His decree transcendeth the boldest of human designs. None can escape the snares He setteth, and no soul can find release except through submission to His will. By the righteousness of God! Our withdrawal contemplated no return, and Our separation hoped for no reunion. The one object of Our retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful, a source of disturbance unto Our companions, the means of injury to any soul, or the cause of sorrow to any heart. Beyond these, We cherished no other intention, and apart from them, We had no end in view. And yet, each person schemed after his own desire, and pursued his own idle fancy, until the hour when, from the Mystic Source, there came the summons bidding Us return whence We came. Surrendering Our will to His, We submitted to His injunction.176

“Tell him that in the days of My retirement in the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih, I, in a certain ode which I composed, set forth the essential requirements from every wayfarer who treads the path of search in his quest of Truth. Share with him this verse from that ode: 'If thine aim be to cherish thy life, approach not our court; but if sacrifice be thy heart's desire, come and let others come with thee. For such is the way of Faith, if in thy heart thou seekest reunion with Bahá; shouldst thou refuse to tread this path, why trouble us? Begone!' If he be willing, he will openly and unreservedly hasten to meet Me; if not, I refuse to see him.”177

Subsequently, this Wronged One departed from Baghdád, and for two years withdrew from the world.178

In the early days of Our arrival in this land, when We discerned the signs of impending events, We decided, ere they happened, to retire. We betook Ourselves to the wilderness, and there, separated and alone, led for two years a life of complete solitude. From Our eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in Our bleeding heart there surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night We had no food for sustenance, and many a day Our body found no rest. By Him Who hath My being between His hands! notwithstanding these showers of afflictions and unceasing calamities, Our soul was wrapt in blissful joy, and Our whole being evinced an ineffable gladness. For in Our solitude We were unaware of the harm or benefit, the health or ailment, of any soul. Alone, We communed with Our spirit, oblivious of the world and all that is therein. We knew not, however, that the mesh of divine destiny exceedeth the vastest of mortal conceptions, and the dart of His decree transcendeth the boldest of human designs. None can

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Subsequently, this Wronged One departed from Baghdád, and for two years withdrew from the world.180

“Soon after Our arrival, We betook Ourselves to the mountains of Kurdistán, where We led for a time a life of complete solitude. We sought shelter upon the summit of a remote mountain which lay at some three days' distance from the nearest human habitation. The comforts of life were completely lacking. We remained entirely isolated from Our fellow men until a certain Shaykh Ismá'íl discovered Our abode and brought Us the food We needed.”181

RETURN TO BAGHDÁD

(March 19, 1856-April 22, 1863)

We entreat the learned men of the Bayán not to follow in such ways, not to inflict, at the time of Mustaghath, upon Him Who is the divine Essence, the heavenly Light, the absolute Eternity, the Beginning and the End of the Manifestations of the Invisible, that which hath been inflicted in this day. We beg them not to depend upon their intellect, their comprehension and learning, nor to contend with the Revealer of celestial and infinite knowledge. And yet, notwithstanding all these admonitions, We perceive that a one-eyed man, who himself is the chief of the people, is arising with the utmost malevolence against Us. We foresee that in every city people will arise to suppress the Blessed Beauty, that the companions of that Lord of being and ultimate Desire of all men will flee from the face of the oppressor and seek refuge from him in the wilderness, whilst others will resign themselves and, with absolute detachment, will sacrifice their lives in His path. Methinks We can discern one who is reputed for such devoutness and piety that men deem it an obligation to obey him, and to whose command they consider it necessary to submit, who will arise to assail the very root of the divine Tree, and endeavour to the uttermost of his power to resist and oppose Him. Such is the way of the people! We fain would hope that the people of the Bayán will be enlightened, will soar in the realm of the spirit and abide therein, will discern

the Truth, and recognize with the eye of insight dissembling falsehood. In these days, however, such odours of jealousy are diffused, that -- I swear by the Educator of all beings, visible and invisible -- from the beginning of the foundation of the world -- though it hath no beginning -- until the present day, such malice, envy, and hate have in no wise appeared, nor will they ever be witnessed in the future. For a number of people who have never inhaled the fragrance of justice, have raised the standard of sedition, and have leagued themselves against Us. On every side We witness the menace of their spears, and in all directions We recognize the shafts of their arrows. This, although We have never gloried in any thing, nor did We seek preference over any soul. To everyone We have been a most kindly companion, a most forbearing and affectionate friend. In the company of the poor We have sought their fellowship, and amidst the exalted and learned We have been submissive and resigned. I swear by God, the one true God! grievous as have been the woes and sufferings which the hand of the enemy and the people of the Book inflicted upon Us, yet all these fade into utter nothingness when compared with that which hath befallen Us at the hand of those who profess to be Our friends.¹⁸²

“Upon Our return to Baghdád, We found, to Our great astonishment, that the Cause of the Báb had been sorely neglected, that its influence had waned, that its very name had almost sunk into oblivion. We arose to revive His Cause and to save it from decay and corruption. At the time when ear and perplexity had taken fast hold of Our companions, We reasserted, with fearlessness and determination, its essential verities, and summoned all those who had become lukewarm to espouse with enthusiasm the Faith they had so grievously neglected. We sent forth Our appeal to the peoples of the world, and invited them to fix their gaze upon the light of His Revelation...”¹⁸³

“But for My recognition of the fact that the blessed Cause of the Primal Point was on the verge of being completely obliterated, and all the sacred blood poured out in the path of God would have been shed in vain, I would in no wise have consented to return to the people of the Bayán, and would have abandoned them to the worship of the idols their imaginations had fashioned.”¹⁸⁴

“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.”¹⁸⁵

What pen can recount the things We beheld upon Our return! Two years have elapsed during which Our enemies have ceaselessly and assiduously contrived to exterminate Us, whereunto all witness. Nevertheless, none amongst the faithful hath risen to render Us any assistance, nor did any one feel inclined to help in Our deliverance. Nay, instead of assisting Us, what showers of continuous sorrows, their words and deeds have caused to rain upon Our soul! Amidst them all, We stand, life in hand, wholly

resigned to His will; that perchance, through God's loving kindness and His grace, this revealed and manifest Letter may lay down His life as a sacrifice in the path of the Primal Point, the most exalted Word. By Him at Whose bidding the Spirit hath spoken, but for this yearning of Our soul, We would not, for one moment, have tarried any longer in this city. "Sufficient Witness is God unto Us." We conclude Our argument with the words: "There is no power nor strength but in God alone." "We are God's, and to Him shall we return."186

Methinks that I hear the Voice of the Holy Spirit calling from behind Me saying: Vary Thou Thy theme, and alter Thy tone, lest the heart of him who hath fixed his gaze upon Thy face be saddened. Say: I have through the grace of God and His might besought the help of no one in the past, neither will I seek the help of any one in the future. He it is Who aided Me, through the power of truth, during the days of My banishment in Iraq. He it is Who overshadowed Me with His protection at a time when the kindreds of the earth were contending with Me. He it is Who enabled Me to depart out of the city, clothed with such majesty as none, except the denier and the malicious, can fail to admit.

Say: My army is My reliance on God; My people, the force of My confidence in Him. My love is My standard, and My companion the remembrance of God, the Sovereign Lord of all, the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Unconditioned.187

If any of the utterances of this Servant may not be comprehended, or may lead to perturbation, the same must be inquired of again, that no doubt may linger, and the meaning be clear as the Face of the Beloved One shining from the "Glorious Station."188

I am wondering why the tie of love was so abruptly severed, and the firm covenant of friendship broken. Did ever, God forbid, My devotion lessen, or My deep affection fail, that thou hast thus forgot Me and blotted Me from thy thoughts?

What fault of Mine hath made thee cease thy favors?

Is it that We are lowly and thou of high degree?189

Or is that a single arrow hath driven thee from the battle?190 Have they not told thee that faithfulness is a duty on those who follow the mystic way, that it is the true guide to His Holy Presence? "But as for those who say, 'Our Lord is God,' and who go straight to Him, the angels shall descend to them...."191

Likewise He saith, "Go straight on then as thou hast been commanded."192 Wherefore, this course is incumbent on those who dwell in the presence of God.

I do as bidden, and I bring the message,
Whether it give thee counsel or offense. 193

Albeit I have received no answer to My letters and it is contrary to the usage of the wise to express My regard anew, yet this new love hath broken all the old rules and ways.

Tell us not the tale of Laylí or of Majnún's woe --
Thy love hath made the world forget the loves of long ago.
When once thy name was on the tongue, the lovers caught it
And it set the speakers and the hearers dancing to and fro.194
And of divine wisdom and heavenly counsel,
Each moon, O my beloved, for three days I go mad;
Today's the first of these -- 'Tis why thou seest me glad.
We hear that thou hast journeyed to Tabriz and Tiflis to disseminate
knowledge, or that some other high purpose hath taken thee to Sanandaj.195
O My eminent friend! Those who progress in mystic wayfaring are of four
kinds. I shall describe them in brief, that the grades and qualities of each
kind may become plain to thee.196

Upon Our return, We found that he had not left, and had
postponed his departure. This Wronged One was greatly saddened. God
testifieth and beareth Us witness that We have, at all times, been busied
with the propagation of this Cause. Neither chains nor bonds, stocks nor
imprisonment, have succeeded in withholding Us from revealing Our Self. In

that land We forbade all mischief, and all unseemly and unholy deeds. Day
and night We sent forth Our Tablets in every direction. We had no other
purpose except to edify the souls of men, and to exalt the blessed Word.
We especially appointed certain ones to collect the writings of the
Primal Point. When this was accomplished, We summoned Mírzá Yahyá
and Mírzá Vahháb-i-Khurásání, known as Mírzá Javád, to meet in a
certain place. Conforming with Our instructions, they completed the task of
transcribing two copies of the works of the Primal Point. I swear by God!
This Wronged One, by reason of His constant association with men, hath
not looked at these books, nor gazed with outward eyes on these writings.
When We departed, these writings were in the possession of these two
persons. It was agreed that Mírzá Yahyá should be entrusted with them,
and proceed to Persia, and disseminate them throughout that land.197

When thou art departed out of the court of My presence, O
Muhammad, direct thy steps towards My House (Baghdád House), and
visit it on behalf of thy Lord. When thou reachest its door, stand thou before
it and say: Whither is the Ancient Beauty gone, O most great House of
God, He through Whom God hath made thee the cynosure of an adoring
world, and proclaimed thee to be the sign of His remembrance unto all who
are in the heavens and all who are on the earth? Oh! for the former days
when thou, O House of God, wert made His footstool, the days when in
ceaseless strains the melody of the All-Merciful poured forth from thee!
What hath become of thy jewel whose glory hath irradiated all creation?
Whither are gone the days in which He, the Ancient King, had made thee
the throne of His glory, the days in which He had chosen thee alone to be the
lamp of salvation between earth and heaven, and caused thee to diffuse, at
dawn and at eventide, the sweet fragrance of the All-Glorious?
Where, O House of God, is the Sun of majesty and power Who

had enveloped thee with the brightness of His presence? Where is He, the Day Spring of the tender mercies of thy Lord, the Unconstrained, Who had established His seat within thy walls? What is it, O throne of God, that hath altered thy countenance, and made thy pillars to tremble? What could have closed thy door to the face of them that eagerly seek thee? What hath made thee so desolate? Couldst thou have been told that the Beloved of the world is pursued by the swords of His enemies? The Lord bless thee, and bless thy fidelity unto Him, inasmuch as thou hast remained His companion through all His sorrows and His sufferings.

I testify that thou art the scene of His transcendent glory, His most holy habitation. Out of thee hath gone forth the Breath of the All-Glorious,

a Breath that hath breathed over all created things, and filled with joy the breasts of the devout that dwell in the mansions of Paradise. The Concourse on high, and they that inhabit the Cities of the Names of God, weep over thee, and bewail the things that have befallen thee.

Thou art still the symbol of the names and attributes of the Almighty, the Point towards which the eyes of the Lord of earth and heaven are directed. There hath befallen thee what hath befallen the Ark in which God's pledge of security had been made to dwell. Well is it with him that apprehendeth the intent of these words, and recognizeth the purpose of Him Who is the Lord of all creation.

Happy are those that inhale from thee the sweet savors of the Merciful, that acknowledge thine exaltation, that safeguard thy sanctity, that reverence, at all times, thy station. We implore the Almighty to grant that the eyes of those who have turned away from thee, and failed to appreciate thy worth, may be opened, that they may truly recognize thee, and Him Who, through the power of truth, hath raised thee up on high. Blind, indeed, are they about thee, and utterly unaware of thee in this day. Thy Lord is, verily, the Gracious, the Forgiving.

I bear witness that through thee God hath proved the hearts of His servants. Blessed be the man that directeth his steps toward thee, and visiteth thee. Woe to him that denieth thy right, that turneth away from thee, that dishonoreth thy name, and profaneth thy holiness.

Grieve not, O House of God, if the veil of thy sanctity be rent asunder by the infidels. God hath, in the world of creation, adorned thee with the jewel of His remembrance. Such an ornament no man can, at any time, profane. Towards thee the eyes of thy Lord shall, under all conditions, remain directed. He, verily, will incline His ear to the prayer of every one that visiteth thee, who will circle around thee, and calleth upon Him in thy name. He, in truth, is the Forgiving, the All-Merciful.

I beseech Thee, O my God, by this House that hath suffered such change in its separation from Thee, that bewaileth its remoteness from Thy presence, and lamenteth Thy tribulation, to forgive me, and my parents, and my kindred, and such of my brethren as have believed in Thee. Grant that all my needs be satisfied, through Thy bounty, O Thou Who art the King of Names. Thou art the most Bountiful of the bountiful, the Lord of all

Call thou to mind that which hath been revealed unto Mihdí, Our servant, in the first year of Our banishment to the Land of Mystery (Adrianople). Unto him have We predicted that which must befall Our

House (Baghdád House), in the days to come, lest he grieve over the acts of robbery and violence already perpetrated against it. Verily, the Lord, thy God, knoweth all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth.

To him We have written: This is not the first humiliation inflicted upon My House. In days gone by the hand of the oppressor hath heaped indignities upon it. Verily, it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears to flow from every discerning eye. Thus have We unfolded to thee things hidden beyond the veil, inscrutable to all save God, the Almighty, the All-Praised. In the fullness of time, the Lord shall, by the power of truth, exalt it in the eyes of all men. He shall cause it to become the Standard of His Kingdom, the Shrine round which will circle the concourse of the faithful. Thus hath spoken the Lord, thy God, ere the day of lamentation arriveth. This revelation have We given thee in Our holy Tablet, lest thou sorrow for what hath befallen Our House through the assaults of the enemy. All praise be to God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.199

Have I at any time transgressed your laws, or disobeyed any of your ministers in 'Iráq? Inquire of them, that ye may act with discernment towards Us and be numbered with those who are well-informed. Hath anyone ever brought before them a plaint against Us? Hath anyone amongst them ever heard from Us a word contrary to that which God hath revealed in His Book? Bring forth, then, your evidence, that We may approve your actions and acknowledge your claims!200

We have heard that one of these calumniators hath alleged that this Servant practised usury whilst residing in 'Iráq, and was engaged in amassing riches for Himself. Say: How can ye judge a matter whereof ye have no knowledge? How can ye hurl calumnies against the servants of God, and entertain such evil suspicions? And how could this accusation be true, when God hath forbidden this practice unto His servants in that most holy and well-guarded Book revealed unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets, a Book which He hath ordained to be His abiding testimony, and His guidance and monition unto all mankind? This is but one of the matters in which We have opposed the divines of Persia, inasmuch as We have, according to the text of the Book, forbidden unto all men the practice of usury. God Himself beareth witness to the truth of My words. "Yet I hold not myself clear, for the soul is prone to evil."72 We intend only to impart unto you the truth, that ye might be informed thereof and be of them that lead a godly life. Beware lest ye give ear to the words of those from whom the foul smell of malice and envy can be discerned; pay no heed to them, and stand ye for righteousness.201

Have I, O King, ever disobeyed thee? Have I, at any time,

transgressed any of thy laws? Can any of thy ministers that represented thee in 'Iráq produce any proof that can establish My disloyalty to thee? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds! Not for one short moment did We rebel against thee, or against any of thy ministers. Never, God willing, shall We revolt against thee, though We be exposed to trials more severe than any We suffered in the past.²⁰²

There hath appeared in this Revelation what hath never appeared before. As to the infidels that have witnessed what hath been manifested, they murmur and say: "Verily, this is a sorcerer who hath devised a lie against God." They are indeed an outcast people.

Tell out to the nations, O Pen of the Ancient of Days, the things that have happened in 'Iráq. Tell them of the messenger whom the congregation of the divines of that land had delegated to meet Us, who, when attaining Our presence, questioned Us concerning certain sciences, and whom We answered by virtue of the knowledge We inherently possess. Thy Lord is, verily, the Knower of things unseen. "We testify," said he, "that the knowledge Thou dost possess is such as none can rival. Such a knowledge, however, is insufficient to vindicate the exalted station which the people ascribe to Thee. Produce, if Thou speakest the truth, what the combined forces of the peoples of the earth are powerless to produce." Thus was it irrevocably decreed in the court of the presence of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Loving.

"Witness! What is it thou seest?" He was dumbfounded. And when he came to himself, he said: "I truly believe in God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised." "Go thou to the people, and tell them: 'Ask whatsoever ye please. Powerful is He to do what He willeth. Nothing whatsoever, be it of the past or of the future, can frustrate His Will.' Say: 'O ye congregation of the divines! Choose any matter ye desire, and ask your Lord, the God of Mercy, to reveal it unto you. If He fulfil your wish, by virtue of His sovereignty, believe ye then in Him, and be not of those that reject His truth.'" "The dawn of understanding hath now broken," said he, "and the testimony of the All-Merciful is fulfilled." He arose and returned unto them that sent him, at the bidding of God, the All-Glorious, the Well-Beloved. Days passed and he failed to come back to Us. Eventually, there came another messenger who informed Us that the people had given up what they originally had purposed. They are indeed a contemptible people. This is what happened in Iraq, and to what I reveal I Myself am witness. This happening was noised abroad, yet none was found to comprehend its meaning. Thus did We ordain it. Would that ye knew this!

By My Self! Whoso hath in bygone ages asked Us to produce the signs of God, hath, no sooner We revealed them to him, repudiated God's truth. The people, however, have, for the most part, remained heedless. They whose eyes are illumined with the light of understanding will perceive the sweet savors of the All-Merciful, and will embrace His truth. These are they who are truly sincere.²⁰³

We departed out of Tíhrán, at the bidding of the King, and, by his leave, transferred Our residence to Iraq. If I had transgressed against him, why, then, did he release Me? And if I were innocent of guilt, wherefore did ye afflict Us with such tribulation as none among them that profess your faith hath suffered? Hath any of Mine acts, after Mine arrival in Iraq, been such as to subvert the authority of the government? Who is it that can be said to have detected any thing reprehensible in Our behavior? Enquire for thyself of its people, that thou mayest be of them who have discerned the truth.

For eleven years We dwelt in that land, until the Minister representing thy government arrived, whose name Our pen is loth to mention, who was given to wine, who followed his lusts, and committed wickedness, and was corrupt and corrupted 'Iráq. To this will bear witness most of the inhabitants of Baghdád, wert thou to inquire of them, and be of such as seek the truth. He it was who wrongfully seized the substance of his fellow-men, who forsook all the commandments of God, and perpetrated whatever God had forbidden. Eventually, he, following his desires, rose up against Us, and walked in the ways of the unjust. He accused Us, in his letter to thee, and thou didst believe him and followed in his way, without seeking any proof or trustworthy evidence from him. Thou didst ask for no explanation, nor didst thou attempt either to investigate or ascertain the matter, that the truth might be distinguished from falsehood in thy sight, and that thou mightest be clear in thy discernment. Find out for thyself the sort of man he was by asking those Ministers who were, at that time, in 'Iráq, as well as the Governor of the City (Baghdád) and its high Counsellor, that the truth may be revealed to thee, and that thou mayest be of the well-informed.

God is Our witness! We have, under no circumstances, opposed either him, or others. We observed, under all conditions, the precepts of God, and were never one of those that wrought disorders. To this he himself doth

testify. His intention was to lay hold on Us, and send Us back to Persia, that he might thereby exalt his fame and reputation. Thou hast committed the same crime, and for the self-same purpose. Ye both are of equal grade in the sight of God, the sovereign Lord of all, the All-Knowing.

It is not Our purpose in addressing to thee these words to lighten the burden of Our woe, or to induce thee to intercede for Us with any one. No, by Him Who is the Lord of all worlds! We have set forth the whole matter before thee, that perchance thou might realize what thou hast done, might desist from inflicting on others the hurt thou hast inflicted on Us, and might be of them that have truly repented to God, Who created thee and created all things, and might act with discernment in the future. Better is this

for thee than all thou dost possess, than thy ministry whose days are numbered.

Beware lest thou be led to connive at injustice. Set thy heart firmly upon justice, and alter not the Cause of God, and be of them whose eyes are directed towards the things that have been revealed in His Book. Follow not,

under any condition, the promptings of thine evil desires. Keep thou the law of God, thy Lord, the Beneficent, the Ancient of Days. Thou shalt most certainly return to dust, and shalt perish like all the things in which thou takest delight. This is what the Tongue of truth and glory hath spoken. Rememberest thou not God's warning uttered in times past, that thou mayest be of them that heed His warning? He said, and He, verily, speaketh the truth: "From it (earth) have We created you, and unto it will We return you, and out of it will We bring you forth a second time." This is what God ordained unto all them that dwell on earth, be they high or low. It behoveth not, therefore, him who was created from dust, who will return unto it, and will again be brought forth out of it, to swell with pride before God, and before His loved ones, to proudly scorn them, and be filled with disdainful arrogance. Nay, rather it behoveth thee and those like thee to submit yourselves to them Who are the Manifestations of the unity of God, and to defer humbly to the faithful, who have forsaken their all for the sake of God, and have detached themselves from the things which engross men's attention, and lead them astray from the path of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Thus do We send down upon you that which shall profit you and profit them that have placed their whole trust and confidence in their Lord.²⁰⁴

Say: What! Cleave ye to your own devices, and cast behind your backs the precepts of God? Ye, indeed, have wronged your own selves and others. Would that ye could perceive it! Say: If your rules and principles be founded on justice, why is it, then, that ye follow those which accord with your corrupt inclinations and reject such as conflict with your desires? By what right claim ye, then, to judge fairly between men? Are your rules and principles such as to justify your persecution of Him Who, at your bidding, hath presented Himself before you, your rejection of Him, and your infliction on Him every day of grievous injury? Hath He ever, though it be for one short moment, disobeyed you? All the inhabitants of 'Irâq, and beyond them every discerning observer, will bear witness to the truth of My words. Be fair in your judgement, O ye Ministers of State! What is it that We have committed that could justify Our banishment? What is the offence that hath warranted Our expulsion? It is We Who have sought you, and yet, behold how ye refused to receive Us! By God! This is a sore injustice that ye have perpetrated -- an injustice with which no earthly injustice can measure. To this the Almighty is Himself a witness. Have I at any time transgressed your laws, or disobeyed any of your ministers in 'Irâq? Inquire of them, that ye may act with discernment towards Us and be numbered with those who are well-informed. Hath anyone ever brought before them a plaint against Us? Hath anyone amongst them ever heard from Us a word contrary to that which God hath revealed in His Book? Bring forth, then, your evidence, that We may approve your actions and acknowledge your claims!²⁰⁵

During the days of Baghdâd We ourself used to visit the coffee

house and meet with everyone. We associated with people whether they were in the community or outside, whether acquaintances or strangers, whether they came from far or near.²⁰⁷

He is the Gracious, the Well-Beloved!

O Holy Mariner! Bid thine ark of eternity appear before the Celestial Concourse,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Launch it upon the ancient sea, in His Name, the Most Wondrous,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And let the angelic spirits enter, in the Name of God, the Most High.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Unmoor it, then, that it may sail upon the ocean of glory,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Haply the dwellers therein may attain the retreats of nearness in the everlasting realm.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Having reached the sacred strand, the shore of the crimson seas,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Bid them issue forth and attain this ethereal invisible station,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! A station wherein the Lord hath in the Flame of His Beauty appeared within the deathless tree;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Wherein the embodiments of His Cause cleansed themselves of self and passion;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Around which the Glory of Moses doth circle with the everlasting hosts;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Wherein the Hand of God was drawn forth from His bosom of Grandeur;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Wherein the ark of the Cause remaineth motionless even though to its dwellers be declared all divine attributes.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! O Mariner! Teach them that are within the ark that which we have taught thee behind the mystic veil,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Perchance they may not tarry in the sacred snow-white spot,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! But may soar upon the wings of the spirit unto that station which the Lord hath exalted above all mention in the worlds below,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! May wing through space even as the favored birds in the realm of eternal reunion;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! May know the mysteries hidden in the Seas of light.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! They passed the grades of worldly limitations and reached that of the divine unity, the center of heavenly guidance.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! They have desired to ascend unto that state which the Lord hath ordained to be above their

stations.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Whereupon the burning meteor cast them out from them that abide in the Kingdom of His Presence,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And they heard the Voice of Grandeur raised from behind the unseen pavilion upon the Height of Glory:

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "O guardian angels! Return them to their abode in the world below,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "Inasmuch as they have purposed to rise to that sphere which the wings of the celestial dove have never attained;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "Whereupon the ship of fancy standeth still which the minds of them that comprehend cannot grasp."

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Whereupon the maid of heaven looked out from her exalted chamber,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And with her brow signed to the Celestial Concourse,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Flooding with the light of her countenance the heaven and the earth,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And as the radiance of her beauty shone upon the people of dust,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! All beings were shaken in their mortal graves.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! She then raised the call which no ear through all eternity hath ever heard,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And thus proclaimed:

"By the Lord! He whose heart hath not the fragrance of the love of the exalted and glorious Arabian Youth,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "Can in no wise ascend unto the glory of the highest heaven."

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Thereupon she summoned unto herself one maiden from her handmaidens,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And commanded her:

"Descend into space from the mansions of eternity,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "And turn thou unto that which they have concealed in the inmost of their hearts.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "Shouldst thou inhale the perfume of the robe from the Youth that hath been hidden within the tabernacle of light by reason of that which the hands of the wicked have wrought,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "Raise a cry within thyself, that all the inmates of the chambers of Paradise, that are the embodiments of the eternal wealth, may understand and hearken;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "That they may all come down from their everlasting chambers and tremble,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "And kiss their hands and feet for having soared to the heights of faithfulness;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "Perchance they may find from their robes the fragrance of the Beloved One."

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Thereupon the countenance of the favored damsel beamed above the celestial chambers even as the light that shineth from the face of the Youth above His mortal temple;

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! She then descended with such an adorning as to illumine the heavens and all that is therein.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! She bestirred herself and perfumed all things in the lands of holiness and grandeur.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! When she reached that place she rose to her full height in the midmost heart of creation,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And sought to inhale their fragrance at a time that knoweth neither beginning nor end.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! She found not in them that which she did desire, and this, verily, is but one of His wondrous tales.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! She then cried aloud, wailed and repaired to her own station within her most lofty mansion,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And then gave utterance to one mystic word, whispered privily by her honeyed tongue,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And raised the call amidst the Celestial Concourse and the immortal maids of heaven:

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "By the Lord! I found not from these idle claimants²⁰⁸ the breeze of Faithfulness!

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! "By the Lord! The Youth hath remained lone and forlorn in the land of exile in the hands of the ungodly."

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! She then uttered within herself such a cry that the Celestial Concourse did shriek and tremble,

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! And she fell upon the dust and gave up the spirit. It seemeth she was called and hearkened unto Him that summoned her unto the Realm on High.

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Glorified be He that created her out of the essence of love in the midmost heart of his exalted paradise!

Glorified be my Lord, the All-Glorious! Thereupon the maids of heaven hastened forth from their chambers, upon whose countenances the eye of no dweller in the highest paradise had ever gazed.

Glorified be our Lord, the Most High! They all gathered around her, and lo! they found her body fallen upon the dust;

Glorified be our Lord, the Most High! And as they beheld her state and comprehended a word of the tale told by the Youth, they bared their heads, rent their garments asunder, beat upon their faces, forgot their joy, shed tears and smote with their hands upon their cheeks, and this is verily one of the mysterious grievous afflictions -

Glorified be our Lord, the Most High!209

IN THE NAJÍBÍYYIH GARDEN

(April 22-May 2, 1863)

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 name 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 paralyzed 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 where through 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 splendors 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 foot-stool 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 proclaims: "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 Baha 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 favors 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 splendor of the light of His most excellent names, and enveloped them with the radiance of the luminaries of His most gracious favors -- favors 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 kindness 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 Day Spring 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 favors 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 Baha, 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 splendors 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."210

Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather, follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Erelong shall clamorous voices be raised in most lands. Shun them, O My people, and follow not the iniquitous and evil-hearted. This is that of which We gave you forewarning when We were dwelling in Iraq, then later while in the Land of Mystery, and now from this Resplendent Spot.211

O Dhabih! The Tongue of Grandeur saith: By Myself that speaketh the truth! In this most mighty Revelation all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest and final consummation. Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation after Him, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will no doubt forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will assuredly send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. He, verily, is the Almighty, the Most Powerful.²¹²

O present hour! Rejoice thou by virtue of this Hour which hath struck within thee through the power of God, and appreciate this eternal, this imperishable and celestial food which streameth down from the clouds of holiness from behind veils of light and descendeth from the heaven of glory upon Him Who beareth the Name of God.

O present day! Shed thou illumination upon all created things through the advent of this radiant, this glorious Day which hath been manifested unto all the world from the horizon of 'Irâq.²¹³

JOURNEY FROM BAGHDÁD TO CONSTANTINOPLÉ (May 3-August 16, 1863)

"O My companions, I entrust to your keeping this city of Baghdád, in the state ye now behold it, when from the eyes of friends and strangers alike, crowding its housetops, its streets and markets, tears like the rain of spring are flowing down, and I depart. With you it now rests to watch lest your deeds and conduct dim the flame of love that gloweth within the breasts of its inhabitants."²¹⁴

"It will shine resplendently within another globe, as predestined by Him who is the Omnipotent, the Ancient of Days. ...That the Spirit should depart out of the body of 'Irâq is indeed a wondrous sign unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. Erelong will ye behold this Divine Youth riding upon the steed of victory. Then will the hearts of the envious be seized with trembling."²¹⁵

O King! We were in 'Irâq, when the hour of parting arrived. At the bidding of the King of Islam (Sultán of Turkey) We set Our steps in his direction. Upon Our arrival, there befell Us at the hands of the malicious that which the books of the world can never adequately recount. Thereupon the inmates of Paradise, and they that dwell within the retreats of holiness, lamented; and yet the people are wrapped in a thick veil!²¹⁶

This Wronged One proceeded, at the request of the Ministers of the Ottoman Government to their capital. When We arrived in Mosul, We found that Mírzá Yahyá had left before Us for that city, and was awaiting Us there. Briefly, the books and writings were left in Baghdád, while he himself proceeded to Constantinople and joined these servants. God beareth now witness unto the things which have touched this Wronged One, for after We had so arduously striven, he (Mírzá Yahyá) abandoned the writings

and joined the exiles. This Wronged One was, for a long period,

overwhelmed by infinite sorrows until such time when, in pursuance of measures of which none but the one true God is aware, We despatched the writings unto another place and another country, owing to the fact that in Iraq all documents must every month be carefully examined, lest they rot and perish. God, however, preserved them and sent them unto a place which He had previously ordained. He, verily, is the Protector, the Succorer.

Wherever this Wronged One went Mírzá Yahyá followed Him.

Thou art thyself a witness and well knowest that whatever hath been said is the truth. The Siyyid of Isfáhán, however, surreptitiously duped him. They committed that which caused the greatest consternation. Would that thou wouldst inquire from the officials of the government concerning the conduct of Mírzá Yahyá in that land. Aside from all this, I adjure thee by God, the One, the Incomparable, the Lord of Strength, the Most Powerful, to carefully look into the communications addressed in his name to the Primal Point, that thou mayest behold the evidences of Him Who is the Truth as clear as the sun. Likewise, there proceeded from the words of the Point of the Bayán -- may the souls of all else but Him be sacrificed for His sake -- that which no veil can obscure, and which neither the veils of glory nor the veils interposed by such as have gone astray can hide. The veils have, verily, been rent asunder by the finger of the will of thy Lord, the Strong, the All-Subduing, the All-Powerful. Yea, desperate is the state of such as have calumniated Me and envied Me. Not long ago it was stated that thou hadst ascribed the authorship of the Kitáb-i-Íqán and of other Tablets unto others.

I swear by God! This is a grievous injustice. Others are incapable of apprehending their meaning, how much more of revealing them!217

IN CONSTANTINOPLE

(August 16-December 1863)

His Excellency, the late Mírzá Husayn Khán, Mushíru'd-Dawlih, -- may God forgive him -- hath known this Wronged One, and he, no doubt, must have given to the Authorities a circumstantial account of the arrival of this Wronged One at the Sublime Porte, and of the things which He said and did. On the day of Our arrival the Government Official, whose duty it was to receive and entertain official visitors, met Us and escorted Us to the place he had been bidden to take Us. In truth, the Government showed these wronged ones the utmost kindness and consideration. The following day Prince Shuja'u'd-Dawlih, accompanied by Mírzá Safá, acting as the representatives of the late Mushíru'd-Dawlih, the Minister (accredited to the Imperial Court) came to visit Us. Others, among whom were several Ministers of the Imperial Government, and including the late Kamál Páshá, likewise called on Us. Wholly reliant on God, and without any reference to any need He might have had, or to any other matter, this Wronged One sojourned for a period of four months in that city. His actions were known and evident unto all, and none can deny them except such as hate Him, and

speaking not the truth. He that hath recognized God, recognizeth none other but Him. We have never liked, nor like We, to make mention of such things.

Whenever high dignitaries of Persia came to that city (Constantinople) they would exert themselves to the utmost soliciting at every door such allowances and gifts as they might obtain. This Wronged One, however, if He hath done nothing that would redound to the glory of Persia, hath at least acted in a manner that could in no wise disgrace it. That which was done by his late Excellency (Mushíru'd-Dawlih) -- may God exalt his station -- was not actuated by his friendship towards this Wronged One, but rather was prompted by his own sagacious judgment, and by his desire to accomplish the service he secretly contemplated rendering his Government. I testify that he was so faithful in his service to his Government that dishonesty played no part, and was held in contempt, in the domain of his activities. It was he who was responsible for the arrival of these wronged ones in the Most Great Prison ('Akká). As he was faithful, however, in the discharge of his duty, he deserveth Our commendation. This Wronged One hath, at all times, aimed and striven to exalt and advance the interests of both the government and the people, not to elevate His own station. A number of men have, now, gathered others about them, and have arisen to dishonor this Wronged One. He, nevertheless, beseecheth God -- hallowed and glorified be He -- to aid them to return unto Him, and assist them to compensate for that which escaped them, and repent before the door of His bounty. He, verily, is the Forgiving, the Merciful.²¹⁸

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

Say: If the laws and regulations to which ye cleave be of your own making, We will, in no wise, follow them. Thus have I been instructed by Him Who is the All-Wise, the All-Informed. Such hath been My way in the past, and such will it remain in the future, through the power of God

and His might. This, indeed, is the true and right way. If they be ordained by God, bring forth, then, your proofs, if ye be of them that speak the truth.

Say: We have written down in a Book which leaveth not unrecorded the work of any man, however insignificant, all that they have imputed to Thee, and all that they have done unto Thee.

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

repaid for them. This, verily, is the truth, the undoubted truth.

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

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

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

Be fair in your judgment, O ye Ministers of State! What is it that We have committed that could justify Our banishment? What is the offense that hath warranted Our expulsion? It is We Who have sought you, and yet, behold how ye refused to receive Us! By God! This is a sore injustice that

ye have perpetrated -- an injustice with which no earthly injustice can measure. To this the Almighty is Himself a witness...219

Narrate, O Servant, the things Thou didst behold at the time of Thine arrival in the City, that Thy testimony may endure amongst men, and serve as a warning unto them that believe. We found, upon Our arrival in the City, its governors and elders as children gathered about and disporting themselves with clay. We perceived no one sufficiently mature to acquire from Us the truths which God hath taught Us, nor ripe for Our wondrous words of wisdom. Our inner eye wept sore over them, and over their transgressions and their total disregard of the thing for which they were created. This is what We observed in that City, and which We have chosen to note down in Our Book, that it may serve as a warning unto them, and unto the rest of mankind.220

Know, then, that We came unto thy city at thine own behest, and entered therein with conspicuous honour.221

Later this Servant was summoned to Constantinople, whither We arrived accompanied by a poor band of exiles. At no time thereafter did We

seek to meet with anyone, as We had no request to make and no aim in view but to demonstrate unto all that this Servant had no mischief in mind and had never associated with the sowers of sedition. By Him Who hath caused the tongues of all beings to speak forth His praise! While certain considerations rendered it difficult to make application to any quarter, such steps were perforce taken to protect certain souls. My Lord, verily, knoweth what is in Me, and He beareth witness unto the truth of what I say.²²²

O Shaykh! We have time and again stated that for a number of years We have extended Our aid unto His Majesty the Sháh. For years no untoward incident hath occurred in Persia. The reins of the stirrers of sedition among various sects were held firmly in the grasp of power. None hath transgressed his limits. By God! This people have never been, nor are they now, inclined to mischief. Their hearts are illumined with the light of the fear of God, and adorned with the adornment of His love. Their concern hath ever been and now is for the betterment of the world. Their purpose is to obliterate differences, and quench the flame of hatred and enmity, so that the whole earth may come to be viewed as one country.

On the other hand, the officials of the Persian Embassy in the Great City (Constantinople) are energetically and assiduously seeking to exterminate these wronged ones. They desire one thing, and God desireth another. Consider now what hath befallen the trusted ones of God in every land. At one time they have been accused of theft and larceny; at another they have been calumniated in a manner without parallel in this world. Answer thou fairly. What could be the results and consequences, in foreign countries, of the accusation of theft brought by the Persian Embassy against its own subjects? If this Wronged One was ashamed, it was not because of the humiliation it brought this servant, but rather because of the shame of its becoming known to the Ambassadors of foreign countries how incompetent and lacking in understanding are several eminent officials of the Persian Embassy. "Flingest thou thy calumnies into the face of Them Whom the one true God hath made the Trustees of the treasures of His seventh sphere?" Briefly, instead of seeking, as they should, through Him Who occupieth this sublime station, to attain unto the most exalted ranks, and to obtain His advice, they have exerted themselves and are striving their utmost to put out His light. However, according to what hath been reported, His Excellency the Ambassador Mu'ínu'l-Mulk, Mírzá Muhsín Khán -- may God assist him -- was, at that time, absent from Constantinople. Such things have happened because it was believed that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia -- may the All-Merciful assist him -- was angry with them that have attained and revolve round the Sanctuary of Wisdom. God well knoweth and testifieth that this Wronged One hath, at all times, been cleaving fast unto whatever would be conducive to the glory of both the government and the people. God, verily, is sufficient Witness.

Describing the people of Bahá, the Most Sublime Pen hath sent down these words: "These, verily, are men who if they come to cities of pure

gold will consider them not; and if they meet the fairest and most comely of women will turn aside." Thus hath it been sent down by the Most Sublime Pen for the people of Bahá, on the part of Him Who is the Counsellor, the Omniscient. In the concluding passages of the Tablet to His Majesty the Emperor of Paris (Napoleon III) these exalted words have been revealed: "Exultest thou over the treasures thou dost possess, knowing they shall perish? Rejoicest thou in that thou rulest a span of earth, when the whole world, in the estimation of the people of Bahá, is worth as much as the black in the eye of a dead ant? Abandon it unto such as have set their affections upon it, and turn thou unto Him Who is the Desire of the world."

God alone -- exalted be His glory -- is cognizant of the things which befell this Wronged One. Every day bringeth a fresh report of stories current against Us at the Embassy in Constantinople. Gracious God! The sole aim of their machinations is to bring about the extermination of this servant. They are, however, oblivious of the fact that abasement in the path

of God is My true glory. In the newspapers the following hath been recorded: "Touching the fraudulent dealings of some of the exiles of 'Akká, and the excesses committed by them against several people, etc...." Unto them who are the exponents of justice and the daysprings of equity the intention of the writer is evident and his purpose clear. Briefly, he arose and inflicted upon Me divers tribulations, and treated Me with injustice and cruelty. By God! This Wronged One would not barter this place of exile for the Most Sublime Habitation. In the estimation of men of insight whatsoever befalleth in the path of God is manifest glory and a supreme attainment. Already We have said: "Glory to Thee, O my God! But for the tribulations which are sustained in Thy path, how could Thy true lovers be recognized; and were it not for the trials which are borne for love of Thee, how could the station of such as yearn for Thee be revealed?"

Such abasement hath been inflicted that each day they spread fresh calumnies. This Wronged One, however, cleaveth to seemly patience. Would that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia would ask for a report of the things which befell Us in Constantinople, that he might become fully acquainted with the true facts. O Sháh! I adjure thee by thy Lord, the God of Mercy, to look into this matter with the eye of fairness. Is there to be found a just man who will judge in this day according to that which God hath sent down in His Book? Where is the fair-minded person who will equitably consider what hath been perpetrated against Us without any clear token or proof? O Shaykh! Ponder the behavior of men. The inmates of the cities of knowledge and wisdom are sore perplexed asking themselves why it is that the Shi'ih sect, which regarded itself as the most learned, the most righteous, and the most pious of all the peoples of the world, hath turned aside in the Day of His Revelation, and hath shown a cruelty such as hath never been experienced. It is incumbent upon thee to reflect a while. From the inception of this sect until the present day how great hath been the number of the divines that have appeared, none of whom became cognizant of the nature of this Revelation. What could have been the cause of this waywardness? Were

We to mention it, their limbs would cleave asunder. It is necessary for them to meditate, to meditate for a thousand thousand years, that haply they may attain unto a sprinkling from the ocean of knowledge, and discover the things whereof they are oblivious in this day.

I was walking in the Land of Tá (Tihrán) -- the dayspring of the signs of thy Lord -- when lo, I heard the lamentation of the pulpits and the voice of their supplication unto God, blessed and glorified be He. They cried out and said: "O God of the world and Lord of the nations! Thou beholdest our state and the things which have befallen us by reason of the cruelty of

Thy servants. Thou hast created us and revealed us for Thy glorification and praise. Thou dost now hear what the wayward proclaim upon us in Thy days. By Thy might! Our souls are melted and our limbs are trembling.

Alas, alas! Would that we had never been created and revealed by Thee!"²²³

One day, while in Constantinople, Kamál Páshá visited this Wronged One. Our conversation turned upon topics profitable unto man. He said that he had learned several languages. In reply We observed: "You have wasted your life. It beseemeth you and the other officials of the Government to convene a gathering and choose one of the divers languages, and likewise one of the existing scripts, or else to create a new language and a new script to be taught children in schools throughout the world. They would, in this way, be acquiring only two languages, one their own native tongue, the other the language in which all the peoples of the world would converse. Were men to take fast hold on that which hath been mentioned, the whole earth would come to be regarded as one country, and the people would be relieved and freed from the necessity of acquiring and teaching different languages." When in Our presence, he acquiesced, and even evinced great joy and complete satisfaction. We then told him to lay this matter before the officials and ministers of the Government, in order that it might be put into effect throughout the different countries. However, although he often returned to see Us after this, he never again referred to this subject, although that which had been suggested is conducive to the concord and the unity of the peoples of the world.²²⁴

Whenever high dignitaries of Persia came to that city (Constantinople) they would exert themselves to the utmost soliciting at every door such allowances and gifts as they might obtain. This Wronged One, however, if He hath done nothing that would redound to the glory of Persia, hath at least acted in a manner that could in no wise disgrace it. That which was done by his late Excellency (Mushíru'd-Dawlih) -- may God exalt his station -- was not actuated by his friendship towards this Wronged One, but rather was prompted by his own sagacious judgment, and by his desire to accomplish the service he secretly contemplated rendering his Government. I testify that he was so faithful in his service to his Government that dishonesty

played no part, and was held in contempt, in the domain of his activities. It was he who was responsible for the arrival of these wronged ones in the Most

Great Prison (‘Akká). As he was faithful, however, in the discharge of his duty, he deserveth Our commendation. This Wronged One hath, at all times, aimed and striven to exalt and advance the interests of both the government and the people, not to elevate His own station. A number of men have, now, gathered others about them, and have arisen to dishonor this Wronged One. He, nevertheless, beseecheth God -- hallowed and glorified be He -- to aid them to return unto Him, and assist them to compensate for that which escaped them, and repent before the door of His bounty. He, verily, is the Forgiving, the Merciful.²²⁵

Would that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia -- may God perpetuate his sovereignty -- would inquire from the Consuls of the honored Persian Government who have been in this country, that he might become acquainted with the activities and behavior of this Wronged One. Briefly, they have incited a great many such as Akhtar and others, and are busying themselves in spreading calumnies. It is clear and evident that they will surround with their swords of hatred and their shafts of enmity the one whom they know to be an outcast among men and to have been banished from one country to another. This is not the first time that such iniquity hath been perpetrated, nor the first goblet that hath been dashed to the ground, nor the first veil that hath been rent in twain in the path of God, the Lord of the worlds. This Wronged One, however, remained calm and silent in the Most Great Prison, busying Himself with His own affairs, and completely detached from all else but God. Iniquity waxed so grievous that the pens of the world are powerless to record it.

In this connection it is necessary to mention the following occurrence, that haply men may take fast hold of the cord of justice and truthfulness. Hájí Shaykh Muhammad ‘Alí -- upon him be the glory of God, the Ever-Abiding -- was a merchant of high repute, well-known unto most of the inhabitants of the Great City (Constantinople). Not long ago, when the Persian Embassy in Constantinople was secretly engaged in stirring up mischief, it was noticed that this believing and sincere soul was greatly distressed. Finally, one night he threw himself into the sea, but was rescued by some passers-by who chanced to come upon him at that moment. His act was widely commented upon and given varied interpretations by different people. Following this, one night he repaired to a mosque, and, as reported by the guardian of that place, kept vigil the whole night, and was occupied until the morning in offering, ardently and with tearful eyes, his prayers and supplications. Upon hearing him suddenly cease his devotions, the guardian went to him, and found that he had already surrendered his soul. An empty bottle was found by his side, indicating that he had poisoned himself. Briefly, the guardian, while greatly astonished, broke the news to the people. It was found out that he had left two testaments. In the first he recognized and confessed the unity of God, that His Exalted Being had neither peer nor equal, and that His Essence was exalted above all praise, all glorification and description. He also testified to the Revelation of the Prophets and the

holy ones, and recognized what had been written down in the Books of God, the Lord of all men. On another page, in which he had set down a prayer, he wrote these words in conclusion: "This servant and the loved ones of God are perplexed. On the one hand the Pen of the Most High hath forbidden all men to engage in sedition, contention or conflict, and on the other that same Pen hath sent down these most sublime words: 'Should anyone, in the presence of the Manifestation, discover an evil intention on the part of any soul, he must not oppose him, but must leave him to God.' Considering that on the one hand this binding command is clear and firmly established, and that on the other calumnies, beyond human strength to bear or endure, have been uttered, this servant hath chosen to commit this most grievous sin. I turn suppliantly unto the ocean of God's bounty and the heaven of Divine mercy, and hope that He will blot out with the pen of His grace and bounteousness the misdeeds of this servant. Though my transgressions be manifold, and unnumbered my evildoings, yet do I cleave tenaciously to the cord of His bounty, and cling unto the hem of His generosity. God is witness, and they that are nigh unto His Threshold know full well, that this servant could not bear to hear the tales related by the perfidious. I, therefore, have committed this act. If He chastise me, He verily is to be praised for what He doeth; and if He forgive me, His behest shall be obeyed."226

Several times calamities have overtaken you, and yet ye failed utterly to take heed. One of them was the conflagration which devoured most of the City with the flames of justice, and concerning which many poems were written, stating that no such fire had ever been witnessed. And yet, ye waxed more heedless. Plague, likewise, broke out, and ye still failed to give heed! Be expectant, however, for the wrath of God is ready to overtake you. Erelong will ye behold that which hath been sent down from the Pen of My command.227

IN THE COURT OF THE SULTÁN

O Shaykh! We had seized the reins of authority by the power of God and His Divine might, as He alone can seize, Who is the Mighty, the Strong. None had the power to stir up mischief or sedition. Now, however, as they have failed to appreciate this loving-kindness and these bounties, they have been, and will be, afflicted with the retribution which their acts must entail. The State officials, considering the secret progress of the Extended Cord have, from every direction, incited and aided Mine adverSaríes. In the Great City (Constantinople) they have roused a considerable number of people to oppose this Wronged One. Things have come to such a pass that the officials in that city have acted in a manner which hath brought shame to both the government and the people. A distinguished siyyid, whose wellknown integrity, acceptable conduct, and commercial reputation, were recognized by the majority of fair-minded men, and who was regarded by all as a highly honored merchant, once visited Beirut. In view of his friendship

for this Wronged One they telegraphed the Persian Dragoman informing him that this siyyid, assisted by his servant, had stolen a sum of money and other things and gone to 'Akká. Their design in this matter was to dishonor this Wronged One. And yet, far be it from the people of this country to allow themselves to be deflected, by these unseemly tales, from the straight path of uprightness and truth. Briefly, they have assaulted Me from every side, and are reinforcing Mine adversaries. This Wronged One, however, beseecheth the one true God to graciously assist every one in that which becometh these days. Day and night I fix My gaze on these perspicuous words, and recite: "O God, my God! I beseech Thee by the sun of Thy grace, and the sea of Thy knowledge, and the heaven of Thy justice, to aid them that have denied Thee to confess, and such as have turned aside from Thee to return, and those who have calumniated Thee to be just and fair-minded. Assist them, O my Lord, to return unto Thee, and to repent before the door of Thy grace. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou willest, and in Thy grasp are the reins of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Praise be unto God, the Lord of the worlds."228

God alone -- exalted be His glory -- is cognizant of the things which befell this Wronged One. Every day bringeth a fresh report of stories current against Us at the Embassy in Constantinople. Gracious God! The sole aim of their machinations is to bring about the extermination of this servant. They are, however, oblivious of the fact that abasement in the path of God is My true glory. In the newspapers the following hath been recorded: "Touching the fraudulent dealings of some of the exiles of 'Akká, and the excesses committed by them against several people, etc...." Unto them who are the exponents of justice and the daysprings of equity the intention of the writer is evident and his purpose clear. Briefly, he arose and inflicted upon Me divers tribulations, and treated Me with injustice and cruelty. By God! This Wronged One would not barter this place of exile for the Most Sublime Habitation. In the estimation of men of insight whatsoever befalleth in the path of God is manifest glory and a supreme attainment. Already We have said: "Glory to Thee, O my God! But for the tribulations which are sustained in Thy path, how could Thy true lovers be recognized; and were it not for the trials which are borne for love of Thee, how could the station of such as yearn for Thee be revealed?"

Such abasement hath been inflicted that each day they spread fresh calumnies. This Wronged One, however, cleaveth to seemly patience. Would that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia would ask for a report of the things which befell Us in Constantinople, that he might become fully acquainted with the true facts. O Sháh! I adjure thee by thy Lord, the God of Mercy, to look into this matter with the eye of fairness. Is there to be found a just man who will judge in this day according to that which God hath sent down in His Book? Where is the fair-minded person who will equitably consider what hath been perpetrated against Us without any clear token or proof?229

JOURNEY FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO

ADRIANOPLÉ (December 2-12, 1863)

Know, then, that We came unto thy city at thine own behest, and entered therein with conspicuous honour. They expelled Us, however, from thy city with an abasement with which no abasement on earth can compare, if thou be of them that are well-informed. They made Us journey until We reached the place²³⁰ which none entereth except such as have rebelled against the authority of the sovereign, and as are numbered with the transgressors. All this, notwithstanding that We had never disobeyed thee, though it be for a single moment, for when We heard thy bidding We observed it and submitted to thy will. In dealing with Us, however, thy ministers neither honoured the standards of God and His commandments, nor heeded that which hath been revealed to the Prophets and Messengers. They showed Us no mercy and committed against Us that which no one among the faithful hath ever wrought against his fellow, nor any believer inflicted upon an infidel. God knoweth and is a witness unto the truth of Our words.

When they expelled Us from thy city, they placed Us in such conveyances as the people use to carry baggage and the like. Such was the treatment We received at their hands, shouldst thou wish to know the truth. Thus were We sent away, and thus were We brought to the city which they regard as the abode of rebels. Upon our arrival, We could find no house in which to dwell, and perforce resided in a place where none would enter save the most indigent stranger. There We lodged for a time, after which, suffering increasingly from the confined space, We sought and rented houses which by

reason of the extreme cold had been vacated by their occupants. Thus in the depth of winter we were constrained to make our abode in houses wherein none dwell except in the heat of summer. Neither My family, nor those who accompanied Me, had the necessary raiment to protect them from the cold in that freezing weather.

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

All this befell Me, though I had come unto them at their own behest and did not oppose their authority, which deriveth from thine own. Thus did We accept and observe their bidding. They, however, appear to have forgotten that which God hath commanded. He saith, and His Word is the truth: "Act with humility towards the believers." Methinks that their only concern was their own comfort and repose, and that their ears were deaf to the sighs of the poor and the cries of the oppressed. They seem to imagine that they have been created from pure light, while others have been fashioned out of dust. How wretched are their imaginings! We have all been created from a sorry germ.²³¹

Beware lest ye act as did the King of Islám²³² when We came unto him at his bidding. His ministers pronounced judgement against Us with such injustice that all creation lamented and the hearts of those who are nigh unto God were consumed. The winds of self and passion move them as they will, and We found them all bereft of constancy. They are, indeed, of those that are far astray.²³³

What did it profit thee, and such as are like thee, to slay, year after year, so many of the oppressed, and to inflict upon them manifold afflictions, when they have increased a hundredfold, and ye find yourselves in complete bewilderment, knowing not how to relieve your minds of this oppressive thought. ...His Cause transcends any and every plan ye devise. Know this much: Were all the governments on earth to unite and take My life and the lives of all who bear this Name, this Divine Fire would never be quenched. His Cause will rather encompass all the kings of the earth, nay all that hath been created from water and clay.... Whatever may yet befall Us, great shall be our gain, and manifest the loss wherewith they shall be afflicted.²³⁴

O people of Constantinople! Lo, from your midst We hear the baleful hooting of the owl. Hath the drunkenness of passion laid hold upon you, or is it that ye are sunk in heedlessness? O Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas! The throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established upon thee, and the flame of hatred hath been kindled within thy bosom, in such wise that the Concourse on high and they who circle around the Exalted Throne have wailed and lamented. We behold in thee the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light. Thou art indeed filled with manifest pride. Hath thine outward splendour made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament. Thus informeth thee the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.²³⁵

IN ADRIANOPOLE

(December 12, 1863-August 12, 1868)

The cruelties inflicted by My oppressors have bowed Me down, and turned My hair white. Shouldst thou present thyself before My throne, thou wouldst fail to recognize the Ancient Beauty, for the freshness of His countenance is altered, and its brightness hath faded, by reason of the oppression of the infidels.²³⁶

Say: Verily the poison from them who have joined partners with God hath indeed penetrated the Most Holy Fingers and hath hindered them from writing.²³⁷

O Muhammad! He Who is the Spirit hath, verily, issued from His habitation, and with Him have come forth the souls of God's chosen ones and the realities of His Messengers. Behold, then, the dwellers of the realms on high above Mine head, and all the testimonies of the Prophets in My grasp. Say: Were all the divines, all the wise men, all the kings and

rulers on earth to gather together, I, in very truth, would confront them, and would proclaim the verses of God, the Sovereign, the Almighty, the All-Wise. I am He Who feareth no one, though all who are in heaven and all who are on earth rise up against me.... This is Mine hand which God hath turned white for all the worlds to behold. This is My staff; were We to cast it down, it would, of a truth, swallow up all created things.238

Such are the outpourings ... from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed...So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayán would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness...I swear by God! In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed...That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople), secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed.239

Regarding inheritance, that which the Primal Point hath ordained - - may the souls of all else but Him be offered up for His sake -- is well pleasing. The existing heirs should receive their allotted shares of the inheritance, while a statement of the remainder must be submitted to the Court of the Most High. In His hand is the source of authority; He ordaineth as He pleaseth. In this regard, a law was revealed in the Land of Mystery, temporarily awarding the missing heirs' inheritance to the existing heirs until such time as the House of Justice shall be established, when the decree concerning this will be promulgated. The inheritance, however, of those who emigrated in the same year as the Ancient Beauty, hath been awarded to their heirs, and this is a bounty of God bestowed upon them.240

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

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

I swear by God, O King! It is not My wish to make My plaint to thee against them that persecute Me. I only plead My grief and My sorrow to God, Who hath created Me and them, Who well knoweth our state and Who watcheth over all things. My wish is to warn them of the consequences of their actions, if perchance they might desist from treating others as they have treated Me, and be of them that heed My warning.

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

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

Let thine ear be attentive, O King, to the words We have addressed to thee. Let the oppressor desist from his tyranny, and cut off the perpetrators

of injustice from among them that profess thy faith. By the righteousness of God! The tribulations We have sustained are such that any pen that recounteth them cannot but be overwhelmed with anguish. No one of them that truly believe and uphold the unity of God can bear the burden of their recital. So great have been Our sufferings that even the eyes of Our enemies have wept over Us, and beyond them those of every discerning person. And to all these trials have We been subjected, in spite of Our action in approaching thee, and in bidding the people to enter beneath thy shadow, that thou mightest be a stronghold unto them that believe in and uphold the unity of God.²⁴¹

After the arrival of this Servant in this, the city of Adrianople, some of the people of 'Irâq and elsewhere inquired about the meaning of the term "rendering assistance unto God" which hath been mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. Several answers were sent out in reply, one of which is set forth in these pages, that it may be clearly demonstrated in the court of thy presence that this Servant hath had no end in view but to promote the

betterment and well-being of the world. And if certain of the divine favours which, undeserving as I may be, God hath pleased to bestow upon Me be not plain and manifest, this much at least will be clear and apparent, that He, in His surpassing mercy and infinite grace, hath not deprived Mine heart of the ornament of reason.²⁴²

Erelong shall the exponents of wealth and power banish Us from the land of Adrianople to the city of 'Akká. According to what they say, it is the most desolate of the cities of the world, the most unsightly of them in appearance, the most detestable in climate, and the foulest in water. It is as though it were the metropolis of the owl, within whose precincts naught can be heard save the echo of its cry. Therein have they resolved to imprison this Youth, to shut against our faces the doors of ease and comfort, and to deprive us of every worldly benefit throughout the remainder of our days.²⁴³

The day is approaching when the Land of Mystery and what is beside it shall be changed, and shall pass out of the hands of the King, and commotions shall appear, and the voice of lamentation shall be raised, and the evidences of mischief shall be revealed on all sides, and confusion shall spread by reason of that which hath befallen these captives at the hands of the hosts of oppression. The course of things shall be altered, and conditions shall wax so grievous, that the very sands on the desolate hills will moan, and the trees on the mountain will weep, and blood will flow out of all things. Then wilt thou behold the people in sore distress.²⁴⁴

Time hath passed, and we all remain confined in these barracks, notwithstanding that during the five years we dwelt in Adrianople, all its inhabitants, whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, bore witness to the purity and sanctity of these servants. At the time this Youth was departing from Adrianople, one of the loved ones of God attempted to take his own life, so unbearable to him was the sight of this Wronged One in the hands of His oppressors. During the journey we were thrice compelled to change ships, and it is evident how much the children suffered as a result. Upon disembarking, four of the believers were separated and prevented from accompanying Us. As this Youth was leaving, one of the four, named 'Abdu'l-Ghaffár, cast himself into the sea, and no one knoweth what befell him thereafter.²⁴⁵

'Have the stars fallen?' Say: 'Yea, when He Who is the Self-Subsisting dwelt in the Land of Mystery.'²⁴⁶

Consider the Sultán of Turkey! He did not want war, but those like you²⁴⁷ desired it. When its fires were enkindled and its flames rose high, the government and the people were thereby weakened. Unto this beareth witness every man of equity and perception. Its calamities waxed so great that the smoke thereof surrounded the Land of Mystery and its environs, and what had been revealed in the Tablet of the Sultán was made manifest. Thus hath it been decreed in the Book, at the behest of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.²⁴⁸

Such are the outpourings ... from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed...So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the

equivalent of the Persian Bayán would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness...I swear by God! In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed...That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople), secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed.²⁴⁹

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JOURNEY FROM ADRIANOPOLE TO GALLIPOLI²⁵¹

(August 12-16, 1868)

O exponent of might and power! These young children and these poor ones in God did not need to be accompanied by officers and soldiers. Upon our arrival in Gallipoli, a major by the name of 'Umar came into Our presence. God is well aware of what he said. After some exchanges in which his own innocence and thy guilt were mentioned, We declared: "From the outset, a gathering should have been convened at which the learned men of this age could have met with this Youth in order to determine what offence these servants have committed. But now the matter hath gone beyond such considerations, and, according to thine own assertion, thou art charged with incarcerating Us in the most desolate of cities. There is a matter, which, if thou findest it possible, I request thee to submit to His Majesty the Sultán, that for ten minutes this Youth be enabled to meet him, so that he may demand whatsoever he deemeth as a sufficient testimony and regardeth as proof of the veracity of Him Who is the Truth. Should God enable Him to produce it, let him, then, release these wronged ones, and leave them to themselves."

He promised to transmit this message, and to give Us his reply.

We received, however, no news from him²⁵². Although it becometh not Him Who is the Truth to present Himself before any person, inasmuch as all have been created to obey Him, yet in view of the condition of these little children and the large number of women so far removed from their friends and countries, We have acquiesced in this matter. In spite of this nothing hath resulted. 'Umar himself is alive and accessible. Inquire from him, that the truth may be made known unto you.²⁵³

O nightingale! Incline thine ear unto the voice of the All-Glorious on this night when armed troops have surrounded Us while We remain in a state of utmost joy. O would that our blood might be shed upon the earth and our bodies cast upon the dust in the path of God! This, indeed, is My

desire and the desire of whosoever hath sought Me and attained unto My most wondrous, Mine incomparable Kingdom.

Know thou, O servant, that one day, upon awakening, We found the beloved of God at the mercy of Our adversaries. Sentinels were posted at every gate and no one was permitted to enter or leave. Indeed, they perpetrated a sore injustice, for the loved ones of God and His kindred were left on the first night without food. Such was the fate of those for whose sake the world and all that is therein have been created. Woe betide the perpetrators and those who led them into such evil! Erelong will God consume their souls in the fire. He, verily, is the fiercest of avengers. The people surrounded the house, and Muslims and Christians wept over Us, and the voice of lamentation was upraised between earth and heaven by reason of what the hands of the oppressors had wrought. We perceived that the weeping of the people of the Son exceeded the weeping of others -- a sign for such as ponder.²⁵⁴

The consuls of that city [Adrianople] gathered in the presence of this Youth at the hour of His departure and expressed their desire to aid Him. They, verily, evinced toward Us manifest affection.²⁵⁵

"After Our departure from Adrianople, a discussion arose among the government officials in Constantinople as to whether We and Our companions should not be thrown into the sea. The report of such a discussion reached Persia, and gave rise to a rumour that We had actually suffered that fate. In Khurásán particularly, Our friends were greatly perturbed. Mírzá Ahmad-i-Azghandí, as soon as he was informed of this news, was reported to have asserted that under no circumstances could he credit such a rumour. 'The Revelation of the Báb,' he said, 'must, if this be true, be regarded as utterly devoid of foundation.' The news of Our safe arrival in the prison-city of 'Akká rejoiced the hearts of Our friends, deepened the admiration of the believers of Khurásán for the faith of Mírzá Ahmad, and increased their confidence in him."²⁵⁶

GALLIPOLI

(August 18-21, 1868)

One of My companions offered up his life, cutting his throat with his own hands for the love of God, an act unheard of in bygone centuries and which God hath set apart for this Revelation as an evidence of the power of His might.²⁵⁷ He, verily, is the Unconstrained, the All-Subduing. As for the one who thus slew himself in 'Iráq²⁵⁸, he truly is the King and Beloved of

Martyrs, and that which he evinced was a testimony from God unto the peoples of the earth. Such souls have been influenced by the Word of God, have tasted the sweetness of His remembrance, and are so transported by the breezes of reunion that they have detached themselves from all that dwell on earth and turned unto the Divine Countenance with faces beaming with light. And though they have committed an act which God hath forbidden, He hath nevertheless forgiven them as a token of His mercy. He, verily, is

the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate. So enraptured were these souls by Him Who is the All-Compelling that the reins of volition slipped from their grasp, until at last they ascended to the dwelling of the Unseen and entered the presence of God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

Say: This Youth hath departed out of this country and deposited beneath every tree and every stone a trust, which God will ere long bring forth through the power of truth. Thus hath the True One come and the command of Him Who is the Ordainer, the All-Wise, been fulfilled. The hosts of earth and heaven are powerless to resist His Cause, nor can all the kings and rulers of the world ever frustrate His purpose. Say: Adversity is the oil which feedeth the flame of this Lamp and by which its light is increased, did ye but know. Indeed, the repudiation of the froward serveth but to proclaim this Faith and to spread the Cause of God and His Revelation throughout the world.

Great is your blessedness, inasmuch as ye have forsaken your homes and wandered the land for the love of your Lord, the Almighty, the Ancient of Days, until ye entered the Land of Mystery at a time when the fire of oppression was ablaze and the croaking of the raven of discord had been raised. Ye are My partners in My tribulations, for ye were present with Us during the darksome night in which the hearts of those who testify to the unity of God were agitated. Ye entered this land for the sake of Our love, and departed therefrom through Our command. By the righteousness of God! Because of you the earth itself glorieth over heaven. How excellent is this most sublime, this glorious and exalted bounty! Ye have been deprived of your nest, O birds of eternity, for the sake of your Lord, the Unconstrained, but your true abode is beneath the wings of the grace of the All-Merciful. Blessed are they that understand.259

"Tell the king that this territory will pass out of his hands, and his affairs will be thrown into confusion...Not I speak these words, but God speaketh them."260

"It would have been meet for His Majesty the Sultán to have gathered an assembly and called Us to be present, that he should have investigated the matter, and had he then found any portent of sedition, any sign of anything contrary to the Will of God, to have meted out this treatment to which he hath now resorted. He should have asked Us to present him proofs of what We profess. Should he have found Us wanting, then he could have subjected Us to whatever he wished. He should not have allowed such wrongdoing, such enmity, such injuries, without reason, solely by following the behest of authors of mischief."261

"After Our departure from Adrianople, a discussion arose among the government officials in Constantinople as to whether We and Our companions should not be thrown into the sea. The report of such a discussion reached Persia, and gave rise to a rumour that We had actually suffered that fate. In Khurásán particularly, Our friends were greatly perturbed. Mírzá Ahmad-i-Azghandí, as soon as he was informed of this

news, was reported to have asserted that under no circumstances could he credit such a rumour. 'The Revelation of the Báb,' he said, 'must, if this be true, be regarded as utterly devoid of foundation.'"262

IN THE MOST GREAT PRISON IN 'Akká
(August 31, 1868-October, 1870)

"After Our departure from Adrianople, a discussion arose among the government officials in Constantinople as to whether We and Our companions should not be thrown into the sea. The report of such a discussion reached Persia, and gave rise to a rumour that We had actually suffered that fate. In Khurásán particularly, Our friends were greatly perturbed. Mírzá Ahmad-i-Azghandí, as soon as he was informed of this news, was reported to have asserted that under no circumstances could he credit such a rumour. 'The Revelation of the Báb,' he said, 'must, if this be true, be regarded as utterly devoid of foundation.' The news of Our safe arrival in the prison-city of 'Akká rejoiced the hearts of Our friends, deepened the admiration of the believers of Khurásán for the faith of Mírzá Ahmad, and increased their confidence in him.

"From Our Most Great Prison We were moved to address to the several rulers and crowned heads of the world Epistles in which We summoned them to arise and embrace the Cause of God. To the Sháh of Persia We sent Our messenger Badí', into whose hands We entrusted the Tablet. It was he who raised it aloft before the eyes of the multitude and, with uplifted voice, appealed to his sovereign to heed the words that Tablet contained. The rest of the Epistles likewise reached their destination. To the Tablet We addressed to the Emperor of France, an answer was received from his minister, the original of which is now in the possession of the Most Great Branch.²⁶³ To him We addressed these words: 'Bid the high priest, O Monarch of France, to cease ringing his bells, for, lo! the Most Great Bell, which the hands of the will of the Lord thy God are ringing, is made manifest in the person of His chosen One.' The Epistle We addressed to the Czar of Russia, alone failed to reach its destination. Other Tablets, however, have reached him, and that Epistle will eventually be delivered into his hands.

"Be thankful to God for having enabled you to recognize His Cause. Whoever has received this blessing must, prior to his acceptance, have performed some deed which, though he himself was unaware of its character, was ordained by God as a means whereby he has been guided to find and embrace the Truth. As to those who have remained deprived of such a blessing, their acts alone have hindered them from recognising the truth of this Revelation. We cherish the hope that you, who have attained to this light, will exert your utmost to banish the darkness of superstition and unbelief from the midst of the people. May your deeds proclaim your faith

and enable you to lead the erring into the paths of eternal salvation. The memory of this night will never be forgotten. May it never be effaced by the passage of time, and may its mention linger for ever on the lips of men."²⁶⁴

Upon Our arrival, We were welcomed with banners of light,
whereupon the Voice of the Spirit cried out saying: 'Soon will all that dwell
on earth be enlisted under these banners.'²⁶⁵

Upon our arrival, we were surrounded by guards and confined
together, men and women, young and old alike, in the army barracks. The
first night all were deprived of either food or drink, for the sentries were
guarding the gate of the barracks and permitted no one to leave. No one gave
a thought to the plight of these wronged ones. They even begged for water,
and were refused.

Time hath passed, and we all remain confined in these barracks,
notwithstanding that during the five years we dwelt in Adrianople, all its
inhabitants, whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, bore witness to the
purity and sanctity of these servants. At the time this Youth was departing
from Adrianople, one of the loved ones of God attempted to take his own
life, so unbearable to him was the sight of this Wronged One in the hands of
His oppressors. During the journey we were thrice compelled to change ships,
and it is evident how much the children suffered as a result. Upon
disembarking, four of the believers were separated and prevented from
accompanying Us. As this Youth was leaving, one of the four, named
'Abdu'l-Ghaffár, cast himself into the sea, and no one knoweth what befell
him thereafter.

All this is but a drop in the ocean of the wrongs that have been
inflicted upon Us, and still ye are not satisfied! The officials enforce every
day
a new decree, and no end is in sight to their tyranny. Night and day they
conceive new schemes. They have assigned each prisoner, from the government
storehouse, a daily allowance of three loaves of bread that no one can eat.
From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this
hath neither been seen nor heard of.²⁶⁶

Know thou, that upon Our arrival at this Spot, We chose to
designate it as the 'Most Great Prison.' Though previously subjected in
another land (Tihrán) to chains and fetters, We yet refused to call it by that
name. Say: Ponder thereon, O ye endued with understanding!²⁶⁷

Upon Our arrival at this Prison, We purposed to transmit to the
kings the messages of their Lord, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Though We
have transmitted to them, in several Tablets, that which We were
commanded, yet We do it once again as a token of God's grace. Perchance
they may recognize the Lord, Who hath come down in the clouds with
manifest sovereignty.²⁶⁸

Meditate on the world and the state of its people. He, for Whose
sake the world was called into being, hath been imprisoned in the most
desolate of cities, ['Akká] by reason of that which the hands of the wayward
have wrought. From the horizon of His prison-city He summoneth mankind
unto the Dayspring of God, the Exalted, the Great.²⁶⁹

And finally, I was cast by the transgressors into the prison-city of 'Akká, and my kindred were made captives in Baghdád. The power of Thy might beareth me witness, O my God! Every trouble that hath touched me in Thy path hath added to my joy and increased my gladness. I swear by Thee, O Thou Who art the King of Kings! None of the kings of the earth hath power to hinder me from remembering Thee or from extolling Thy virtues. Were they to be leagued -- as they have been leagued -- against me, and to brandish their sharpest swords and most afflictive spears against me, I would not hesitate to magnify Thy name before all them that are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth. Nay rather, I would cry out and say: "This, O my Beloved, is my face which I have offered up for Thy face, and this is my spirit which I have sacrificed for Thy spirit, and this is my blood that seetheth in my veins, in its longing to be shed for love of Thee and in Thy path."270

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 willest 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.271

Do ye imagine that He seeketh His own interests, when He hath, at all times, been threatened by the swords of the enemies; or that He seeketh the vanities of the world, after He hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities? Be fair in your judgement and follow not the footsteps of the unjust.272

Ye perpetrate every day a fresh injustice, and treat Me as ye treated Me in times past, though I never attempted to meddle with your affairs. At no time have I opposed you, neither have I rebelled against your laws. Behold how ye have, at the last, made Me a prisoner in this far-off land! Know for a certainty, however, that whatever your hands or the hands of the infidels have wrought will never, as they never did of old, change the Cause of God or alter His ways.273

Most of Our companions now lie sick in this prison, and none knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing. In the days following Our arrival, two of these servants hastened to the realms above. For an entire day the guards insisted that, until they were paid for the shrouds and burial, those blessed bodies could not be removed, although no one had requested any help from them. At that time we were devoid of earthly means, and pleaded that they leave the matter unto us and allow

those present to carry the bodies, but they refused. Finally, a carpet was taken to the bazaar to be sold, and the sum obtained was delivered to the guards. Later, it was learned that they had merely dug a shallow grave into which they had placed both blessed bodies, although they had taken twice the amount required for shrouds and burial.

The pen is powerless to depict and the tongue faileth to describe the trials which We have suffered. Yet sweeter than honey to Me is the bitterness of such tribulations. Would that at every instant all the afflictions of the world could, in the path of God and for the sake of His love, be visited upon this evanescent Soul Who is immersed in the ocean of divine knowledge! We implore God for patience and forbearance, inasmuch as thou art but a feeble creature and bereft of comprehension. Wert thou to awaken and inhale the fragrance of the breezes that waft from the retreats of eternity, thou wouldst readily abandon all that thou dost possess and in which thou dost rejoice, and choose to abide in one of the dilapidated rooms of this Most Great Prison. Beseech God to grant thee such mature understanding as to enable thee to distinguish praiseworthy actions from those which merit blame. Peace be upon him who followeth the way of guidance!²⁷⁴

Know thou, moreover, that We have been cast into an afflictive Prison, and are encompassed with the hosts of tyranny, as a result of what the hands of the infidels have wrought. Such is the gladness, however, which the Youth hath tasted that no earthly joy can compare unto it. By God! The harm He suffereth at the hands of the oppressor can never grieve His heart, nor can He be saddened by the ascendancy of such as have repudiated His truth.

Say: Tribulation is a horizon unto My Revelation. The day star of grace shineth above it, and sheddeth a light which neither the clouds of men's idle fancy nor the vain imaginations of the aggressor can obscure. Follow thou the footsteps of thy Lord, and remember His servants even as He doth remember thee, undeterred by either the clamor of the heedless ones or the sword of the enemy.... Spread abroad the sweet savors of thy Lord, and hesitate not, though it be for less than a moment, in the service of His Cause. The day is approaching when the victory of thy Lord, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Bountiful, will be proclaimed.²⁷⁵

Every unbiased observer will readily admit that, ever since the dawn of His Revelation, this wronged One hath invited all mankind to turn their faces towards the Day Spring of Glory, and hath forbidden corruption, hatred, oppression, and wickedness. And yet, behold what the hand of the oppressor hath wrought! No pen dare describe his tyranny. Though the purpose of Him Who is the Eternal Truth hath been to confer everlasting life upon all men, and ensure their security and peace, yet witness how they have arisen to shed the blood of His loved ones, and have pronounced on Him the sentence of death.

The instigators of this oppression are those very persons who, though so foolish, are reputed the wisest of the wise. Such is their blindness

that, with unfeigned severity, they have cast into this fortified and afflictive

Prison Him, for the servants of Whose Threshold the world hath been created. The Almighty, however, in spite of them and those that have repudiated the truth of this "Great Announcement," hath transformed this Prison House into the Most Exalted Paradise, the Heaven of Heavens.

We did not refuse such material benefits as could relieve Us from Our afflictions. Every one of Our companions, however, will bear Us witness that Our holy court is sanctified from, and far above, such material benefits.

We have nevertheless accepted, while confined in this Prison, those things of which the infidels have striven to deprive Us. If a man be found willing to rear, in Our name, an edifice of pure gold or silver, or a house begemmed with stones of inestimable value, such a wish will no doubt be granted. He,

verily, doeth what He willeth, and ordaineth that which He pleaseth. Leave hath, moreover, been given to whosoever may desire to raise, throughout the length and breadth of this land, noble and imposing structures, and dedicate the rich and sacred territories adjoining the Jordan and its vicinity to the worship and service of the one true God, magnified be His glory, that the prophecies recorded by the Pen of the Most High in the sacred Scriptures may be fulfilled, and that which God, the Lord of all worlds, hath purposed in this most exalted, this most holy, this mighty, and wondrous Revelation may be made manifest.

We have, of old, uttered these words: Spread thy skirt, O

Jerusalem! Ponder this in your hearts, O people of Bahá, and render thanks unto your Lord, the Expounder, the Most Manifest.²⁷⁶

Ye have plundered and unjustly despoiled a group of people who have never rebelled in your domains, nor disobeyed your government, but rather kept to themselves and engaged day and night in the remembrance of God. Later, when the order was issued to banish this Youth, all were filled with dismay. The officials in charge of My expulsion declared, however: "These others have not been charged with any offence and have not been expelled by the government. Should they desire to accompany you, no one will oppose them." These hapless souls therefore paid their own expenses, forsook all their possessions, and, contenting themselves with Our presence and placing their whole trust in God, journeyed once again with Him until the fortress of 'Akká became the prison of Bahá.

Upon our arrival, we were surrounded by guards and confined together, men and women, young and old alike, in the army barracks. The first night all were deprived of either food or drink, for the sentries were guarding the gate of the barracks and permitted no one to leave. No one gave a thought to the plight of these wronged ones. They even begged for water, and were refused.

Time hath passed, and we all remain confined in these barracks, notwithstanding that during the five years we dwelt in Adrianople, all its inhabitants, whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, bore witness to the purity and sanctity of these servants...

All this is but a drop in the ocean of the wrongs that have been inflicted upon Us, and still ye are not satisfied! The officials enforce every day a new decree, and no end is in sight to their tyranny. Night and day they conceive new schemes. They have assigned each prisoner, from the government storehouse, a daily allowance of three loaves of bread that no one can eat.

From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of.²⁷⁷

While in prison We have revealed a Book which We have entitled 'The Most Holy Book'. We have enacted laws therein and adorned it with the commandments of thy Lord, Who exerciseth authority over all that are in the heavens and on the earth. Say: Take hold of it, O people, and observe that which hath been sent down in it of the wondrous precepts of your Lord, the Forgiving, the Bountiful. It will truly prosper you both in this world and in the next and will purge you of whatsoever ill beseemeth you. He is indeed the Ordainer, the Expounder, the Giver, the Generous, the Gracious, the All-Praised.²⁷⁸

So passed My days, until they ended in this Prison ('Akká) which hath made the earth to tremble and the heavens to sigh. Happy that one who hath cast away his vain imaginings, when He Who was hid came with the standards of His signs. We, verily, have announced unto men this Most Great Revelation, and yet the people are in a state of strange stupor." Thereupon, a Voice was raised from the direction of Hijaz, calling aloud and saying: "Great is thy blessedness, O 'Akká, in that God hath made thee the dayspring of His Most Sweet Voice, and the dawn of His most mighty signs. Happy art thou in that the Throne of Justice hath been established upon thee, and the Daystar of God's loving-kindness and bounty hath shone forth above thy horizon. Well is it with every fair-minded person that hath judged fairly Him Who is the Most Great Remembrance, and woe betide him that hath erred and doubted."²⁷⁹

More grievous became Our plight from day to day, nay, from hour to hour, until they took Us forth from Our prison and made Us, with glaring injustice, enter the Most Great Prison. And if anyone ask them: "For what crime were they imprisoned?", they would answer and say: "They, verily, sought to supplant the Faith with a new religion!" If that which is ancient be what ye prefer, wherefore, then, have ye discarded that which hath been set down in the Torah and the Evangel? Clear it up, O men! By My life! There is no place for you to flee to in this day. If this be My crime, then Muhammad, the Apostle of God, committed it before Me, and before Him He Who was the Spirit of God, and yet earlier He Who conversed with God. And if My sin be this, that I have exalted the Word of God and revealed His Cause, then indeed am I the greatest of sinners! Such a sin I will not barter for the kingdoms of earth and heaven.²⁸⁰

And further We have said: "More grievous became Our plight

from day to day, nay, from hour to hour, until they took Us forth from Our prison and made Us, with glaring injustice, enter the Most Great Prison. And if anyone ask them: 'For what crime were they imprisoned?' they would answer and say: 'They, verily, sought to supplant the Faith with a new religion!' If that which is ancient be what ye prefer, wherefore, then, have ye discarded that which hath been set down in the Torah and the Evangel? Clear it up, O men! By My life! There is no place for you to flee to in this day. If this be My crime, then Muhammad, the Apostle of God, committed it before Me, and before Him He Who was the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ), and yet earlier He Who conversed with God (Moses). And if My sin be this, that I have exalted the Word of God and revealed His Cause, then indeed am I the greatest of sinners! Such a sin I will not barter for the kingdoms of earth and heaven."281

On every side the flame of oppression and tyranny can be discerned. On the one hand, tidings have reached Us that Our loved ones have been arrested in the land of Tá (Tihrán) and this notwithstanding that the sun, and the moon, and the land, and the sea all testify that this people are adorned with the adornment of fidelity, and have clung and will cling to naught except that which can ensure the exaltation of the government, and the maintenance of order within the nation, and the tranquillity of the people.

O Shaykh! We have time and again stated that for a number of years We have extended Our aid unto His Majesty the Sháh. For years no untoward incident hath occurred in Persia. The reins of the stirrers of sedition among various sects were held firmly in the grasp of power. None hath transgressed his limits. By God! This people have never been, nor are they now, inclined to mischief. Their hearts are illumined with the light of the fear of God, and adorned with the adornment of His love. Their concern hath ever been and now is for the betterment of the world. Their purpose is to obliterate differences, and quench the flame of hatred and enmity, so that the whole earth may come to be viewed as one country.

On the other hand, the officials of the Persian Embassy in the Great City (Constantinople) are energetically and assiduously seeking to exterminate these wronged ones. They desire one thing, and God desireth another. Consider now what hath befallen the trusted ones of God in every land. At one time they have been accused of theft and larceny; at another they have been calumniated in a manner without parallel in this world. Answer thou fairly. What could be the results and consequences, in foreign countries, of the accusation of theft brought by the Persian Embassy against its own subjects? If this Wronged One was ashamed, it was not because of the humiliation it brought this servant, but rather because of the shame of its becoming known to the Ambassadors of foreign countries how incompetent and lacking in understanding are several eminent officials of the Persian Embassy. "Flingest thou thy calumnies into the face of Them Whom the one true God hath made the Trustees of the treasures of His seventh sphere?"

Briefly, instead of seeking, as they should, through Him Who occupieth this sublime station, to attain unto the most exalted ranks, and to obtain His advice, they have exerted themselves and are striving their utmost to put out His light. However, according to what hath been reported, His Excellency the Ambassador Mu'ínu'l-Mulk, Mírzá Muhsín Khán -- may God assist him -- was, at that time, absent from Constantinople. Such things have happened because it was believed that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia -- may the All-Merciful assist him -- was angry with them that have attained and revolve round the Sanctuary of Wisdom. God well knoweth and testifieth that this Wronged One hath, at all times, been cleaving fast unto whatever would be conducive to the glory of both the government and the people. God, verily, is sufficient Witness.

Describing the people of Bahá, the Most Sublime Pen hath sent down these words: "These, verily, are men who if they come to cities of pure gold will consider them not; and if they meet the fairest and most comely of women will turn aside." Thus hath it been sent down by the Most Sublime Pen for the people of Bahá, on the part of Him Who is the Counsellor, the Omniscient. In the concluding passages of the Tablet to His Majesty the Emperor of Paris (Napoleon III) these exalted words have been revealed: "Exuldest thou over the treasures thou dost possess, knowing they shall perish? Rejoicest thou in that thou rulest a span of earth, when the whole world, in the estimation of the people of Baha, is worth as much as the black in the eye of a dead ant? Abandon it unto such as have set their affections upon it, and turn thou unto Him Who is the Desire of the world." God alone -- exalted be His glory -- is cognizant of the things which befell this Wronged One. Every day bringeth a fresh report of stories current against Us at the Embassy in Constantinople. Gracious God! The sole aim of their machinations is to bring about the extermination of this servant. They are, however, oblivious of the fact that abasement in the path of God is My true glory. In the newspapers the following hath been recorded: "Touching the fraudulent dealings of some of the exiles of 'Akká, and the excesses committed by them against several people, etc...." Unto them who are the exponents of justice and the daysprings of equity the intention of the writer is evident and his purpose clear. Briefly, he arose and inflicted upon Me divers tribulations, and treated Me with injustice and cruelty. By God! This Wronged One would not barter this place of exile for the Most Sublime Habitation. In the estimation of men of insight whatsoever befallerth in the path of God is manifest glory and a supreme attainment. Already We have said: "Glory to Thee, O my God! But for the tribulations which are sustained in Thy path, how could Thy true lovers be recognized; and were it not for the trials which are borne for love of Thee, how could the station of such as yearn for Thee be revealed?"

Such abasement hath been inflicted that each day they spread fresh calumnies. This Wronged One, however, cleaveth to seemly patience. Would that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia would ask for a report of the things which befell Us in Constantinople, that he might become fully acquainted

with the true facts. O Sháh! I adjure thee by thy Lord, the God of Mercy, to look into this matter with the eye of fairness. Is there to be found a just man who will judge in this day according to that which God hath sent down in His Book? Where is the fair-minded person who will equitably consider what hath been perpetrated against Us without any clear token or proof?282

IN PRIVATE RESIDENCES IN 'AKKÁ

(October, 1870-June 1877)283

In the Name of God, the Most Ancient, the Most Great.

Indeed the hearts of the sincere are consumed in the fire of separation284: Where is the gleaming of the light of Thy Countenance, O Beloved of the worlds?

Those who are near unto Thee have been abandoned in the darkness of desolation: Where is the shining of the morn of Thy reunion, O Desire of the worlds?

The bodies of Thy chosen ones lie quivering on distant sands: Where is the ocean of Thy presence, O Enchanter of the worlds? Longing hands are uplifted to the heaven of Thy grace and generosity: Where are the rains of Thy bestowal, O Answerer of the worlds?

The infidels have arisen in tyranny on every hand: Where is the compelling power of Thine ordaining pen, O Conqueror of the worlds?

The barking of dogs is loud on every side: Where is the lion of the forest of Thy might, O Chastiser of the worlds?

Coldness hath gripped all mankind: Where is the warmth of Thy love, O Fire of the worlds?

Calamity hath reached its height: Where are the signs of Thy succor, O Salvation of the worlds?

Darkness hath enveloped most of the peoples: Where is the brightness of Thy splendor, O Radiance of the worlds?

The necks of men are stretched out in malice: Where are the swords of Thy vengeance, O Destroyer of the worlds?

Abasement hath reached its lowest depth: Where are the emblems of Thy glory, O Glory of the worlds?

Sorrows have afflicted the Revealer of Thy Name, the All-Merciful: Where is the joy of the Dayspring of Thy Revelation, O Delight of the worlds?

Anguish hath befallen all the peoples of the earth: Where are the ensigns of Thy gladness, O Joy of the worlds?

Thou seest the Dawning Place of Thy signs veiled by evil suggestions: Where are the fingers of Thy might, O Power of the worlds?

Sore thirst hath overcome all men: Where is the river of Thy bounty, O Mercy of the worlds?

Greed hath made captive all mankind: Where are the embodiments of detachment, O Lord of the worlds?

Thou seest this Wronged One lonely in exile: Where are the hosts of the heaven of Thy Command, O Sovereign of the worlds?

I have been forsaken in a foreign land: Where are the emblems of
Thy faithfulness, O Trust of the worlds?

The agonies of death have laid hold on all men: Where is the
surging of Thine ocean of eternal life, O Life of the worlds?

The whisperings of Satan have been breathed to every creature:
Where is the meteor of Thy fire, O Light of the worlds?

The drunkenness of passion hath perverted most of mankind:

Where are the daysprings of purity, O Desire of the worlds?

Thou seest this Wronged One veiled in tyranny among the
Syrians²⁸⁵: Where is the radiance of Thy dawning light, O Light of the
worlds?

Thou seest Me forbidden to speak forth: Then from where will
spring Thy melodies, O Nightingale of the worlds?

Most of the people are enwrapped in fancy and idle imaginings:

Where are the exponents of Thy certitude, O Assurance of the worlds?

Baha is drowning in a sea of tribulation: Where is the Ark of Thy
salvation, O Savior of the worlds?

Thou seest the Dayspring of Thine utterance in the darkness of
creation: Where is the sun of the heaven of Thy grace, O Lightgiver of the
worlds?

The lamps of truth and purity, of loyalty and honor, have been put
out: Where are the signs of Thine avenging wrath, O Mover of the worlds?
Canst Thou see any who have championed Thy Self, or who ponder
on what hath befallen Him in the pathway of Thy love? Now doth My pen
halt, O Beloved of the worlds?

The branches of the Divine Lote-Tree lie broken by the onrushing
gales of destiny: Where are the banners of Thy succor, O Champion of the
worlds?

This Face is hidden in the dust of slander: Where are the breezes of
Thy compassion, O Mercy of the worlds?

The robe of sanctity is sullied by the people of deceit: Where is the
vesture of Thy holiness, O Adorner of the worlds?

The sea of grace is stilled for what the hands of men have wrought:

Where are the waves of Thy bounty, O Desire of the worlds?

The door leading to the Divine Presence is locked through the
tyranny of Thy foes: Where is the key of Thy bestowal, O Unlocker of the
worlds?

The leaves are yellowed by the poisoning winds of sedition: Where is
the downpour of the clouds of Thy bounty, O Giver of the worlds?

The universe is darkened with the dust of sin: Where are the
breezes of Thy forgiveness, O Forgiver of the worlds?

This Youth is lonely in a desolate land: Where is the rain of Thy
heavenly grace, O Bestower of the worlds?

O Supreme Pen, We have heard Thy most sweet call in the eternal
realm: Give Thou ear unto what the Tongue of Grandeur uttereth, O
Wronged One of the worlds?

Were it not for the cold, how would the heat of Thy words prevail,
O Expounder of the worlds?

Were it not for calamity, how would the sun of Thy patience shine,
O Light of the worlds?

Lament not because of the wicked. Thou wert created to bear and
endure, O Patience of the worlds.

How sweet was Thy dawning on the horizon of the Covenant
among the stirrers of sedition, and Thy yearning after God, O Love of the
worlds.

By Thee the banner of independence was planted on the highest
peaks, and the sea of bounty surged, O Rapture of the worlds.

By Thine aloneness the Sun of Oneness shone, and by Thy
banishment the land of Unity was adorned. Be patient, O Thou Exile of
the worlds.

We have made abasement the garment of glory, and affliction the
adornment of Thy temple, O Pride of the worlds.

Thou seest the hearts are filled with hate, and to overlook is Thine,
O Thou Concealer of the sins of the worlds.

When the swords flash, go forward! When the shafts fly, press
onward! O Thou Sacrifice of the worlds.

Dost Thou wail, or shall I wail? Rather shall I weep at the fewness
of Thy champions, O Thou Who hast caused the wailing of the worlds.

Verily, I have heard Thy call, O All-Glorious Beloved; and now is
the face of Baha flaming with the heat of tribulation and with the fire of Thy
shining word, and He hath risen up in faithfulness at the place of sacrifice,
looking toward Thy pleasure, O Ordainer of the worlds.

O 'Alí-Akbar, thank thy Lord for this Tablet whence thou canst
breathe the fragrances of My meekness, and know what hath beset Us in the
path of God, the Adored of all the worlds.

Should all the servants read and ponder this, there shall be kindled
in their veins a fire that shall set aflame the worlds.²⁸⁶

IN MAZRA'IH, HOUSE OF 'ABDU'LLÁH PÁSHÁ

(June 1877-September 1879)²⁸⁷

“In Adrianople We used to meet with some of the people and gave
permission to some to attain Our presence. But while in the Most Great
Prison We did not meet with anyone²⁸⁸ and have completely closed the door
of association with the people. Now the Master has taken upon Himself
this arduous task for Our comfort. He is a mighty shield facing the world
and its peoples and so He has relieved Us [from every care]. At first He
secured the Mansion of Mazra'ih for Us and We stayed there, then the
Mansion of Bahjí.”²⁸⁹

“In His Tablets revealed in this period Bahá'u'lláh refers to the
beauty of the countryside. In a Tablet to the illustrious Afnan, Aqa Mírzá
Áqa, entitled Núru'd-Dín, He writes about the delightful scenery at
Mazra'ih. He describes in cheerful language the view of the sea on the one

side and the hills on the other, and speaks of the charm of the trees laden with oranges which He likens to balls of fire!"²⁹⁰

IN BAHJÍ, HOUSE OF UDI KHAMMAR
(September 1879-May 29, 1892)

"In Adrianople We used to meet with some of the people and gave permission to some to attain Our presence. But while in the Most Great Prison We did not meet with anyone²⁹¹ and have completely closed the door of association with the people. Now the Master has taken upon Himself this arduous task for Our comfort. He is a mighty shield facing the world and its peoples and so He has relieved Us [from every care]. At first He secured the Mansion of Mazra'ih for Us and We stayed there, then the Mansion of Bahjí. He is so occupied in the service of the Cause that for weeks He does not find the opportunity to come to Bahjí. We are engaged in meeting with the believers and revealing the verses of God, while He labours hard and faces every ordeal and suffering. Because to deal and associate with these people is the most arduous task of all."²⁹²

"Praise be to God that thou hast attained!... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile.... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment.... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled - what harm is there in this?... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come.... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold?... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind.... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind...."²⁹³

VISITS TO THE GARDEN OF RIDVÁN
(1877-1892)

"He is God, Glorified be He, Grandeur and Might are His!
"On the morning of the blessed Friday we proceeded from the Mansion and entered the Garden. Every tree uttered a word, and every leaf sang a melody. The trees proclaimed: 'Behold the evidences of God's Mercy' and the twin streams recited in the eloquent tongue the sacred verse 'From us all things were made alive'. Glorified be God! Mysteries were voiced by them, which provoked wonderment. Methought: in which school were they educated, and from whose presence had they acquired their learning? Yea! This Wronged One knoweth and He saith: 'From God, the All-Encompassing,

the Self-Subsistent.'

“Upon Our being seated, Radiyah, upon her be My glory, attained Our presence on thy behalf, laid the table of God's bounty and in thy name extended hospitality to all present. In truth, all that which stimulateth the appetite and pleaseth the eye was offered, and indeed that which delighteth the ear could also be heard as the leaves were stirred by the Will of God, and from this movement a refreshing voice was raised, as if uttering a blissful call

inviting the absent to this Feast. God's power and the perfection of His handiwork could enjoyably be seen in the blossoms, the fruits, the trees, the leaves and the streams. Praised be God who hath thus confirmed thee and her.

“In brief, all in the Garden were recipients of the choicest bounties and in the end expressed their thanksgiving unto their Lord. O that all God's beloved would have been present on this day!

“We beseech God, exalted be He, to cause to descend upon thee at every moment, a blessing and a mercy and a measure of divine grace from His presence. He is the Forgiving, the All-Glorious.

“We send greetings to His loved ones, and supplicate for each one of them that which is worthy of mention and is acceptable in His presence. Peace be upon thee, and upon God's sincere servants. Praise be to Him, the Lord of all mankind.”²⁹⁴

FOUR VISITS TO HAIFA

(1890-1891)²⁹⁵

All glory be to this Day, the Day in which the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things, a Day so blest that past ages and centuries can never hope to rival it, a Day in which the countenance of the Ancient of Days hath turned towards His holy seat. Thereupon the voices of all created things, and beyond them those of the Concourse on High, were heard calling aloud: 'Haste thee, O Carmel, for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee.'

Seized with transports of joy, and raising high her voice, she thus exclaimed: 'May my life be a sacrifice to Thee, inasmuch as Thou hast fixed Thy gaze upon me, hast bestowed upon me Thy bounty, and hast directed towards me Thy steps. Separation from Thee, O Thou Source of everlasting life, hath well nigh consumed me, and my remoteness from Thy presence hath burned away my soul. All praise be to Thee for having enabled me to hearken to Thy call, for having honoured me with Thy footsteps, and for having quickened my soul through the vitalizing fragrance of Thy Day and the shrilling voice of Thy Pen, a voice Thou didst ordain as Thy trumpet-call amidst Thy people. And when the hour at which Thy resistless Faith was to be made manifest did strike, Thou didst breathe a breath of Thy spirit into Thy Pen, and lo, the entire creation shook to its very foundations, unveiling to mankind such mysteries as lay hidden within the treasuries of Him Who

is the Possessor of all created things.'

No sooner had her voice reached that most exalted Spot than We made reply: 'Render thanks unto thy Lord, O Carmel. The fire of thy separation from Me was fast consuming thee, when the ocean of My presence surged before thy face, cheering thine eyes and those of all creation, and filling

with delight all things visible and invisible. Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the dayspring of the evidences of His Revelation. Well is it with him that circleth around thee, that proclaimeth the revelation of thy glory, and recounteth that which the bounty of the Lord thy God hath showered upon thee. Seize thou the Chalice of Immortality in the name of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, and give thanks unto Him, inasmuch as He, in token of His mercy unto thee, hath turned thy sorrow into gladness, and transmuted thy grief into blissful joy. He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His throne, which His footsteps have trodden, which hath been honoured by His presence, from which He raised His call, and upon which He shed His tears.

'Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of

this Revelation -- a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: "Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven." Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Baha who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.'

Sanctified be the Lord of all mankind, at the mention of Whose name all the atoms of the earth have been made to vibrate, and the Tongue of Grandeur hath been moved to disclose that which had been wrapt in His knowledge and lay concealed within the treasury of His might. He, verily, through the potency of His name, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the Most High, is the ruler of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth.²⁹⁶

HIS ASCENSION

(May 29, 1892)

When ye desire to perform this prayer, turn ye towards the Court of My Most Holy Presence, this Hallowed Spot that God hath made the

Centre round which circle the Concourse on High, and which He hath decreed to be the Point of Adoration for the denizens of the Cities of Eternity, and the Source of Command unto all that are in heaven and on earth; and when the Sun of Truth and Utterance shall set, turn your faces towards the Spot that We have ordained for you.²⁹⁷

If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counselleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. To this beareth witness every man of true understanding.²⁹⁸

Should differences arise amongst you over any matter, refer it to God while the Sun still shineth above the horizon of this Heaven and, when it hath set, refer ye to whatsoever hath been sent down by Him. This, verily, is sufficient unto the peoples of the world. Say: Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My Presence is withdrawn, and the ocean of My utterance is stilled. In My presence amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favoured angels.²⁹⁹

When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] from this Ancient Root.³⁰⁰

O people of the world! When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] from this mighty Stock.³⁰¹

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsan, the Afnan 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 toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.' The object of this sacred verse is none other 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-Powerful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch [Muhammad-’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.302

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.303

Open the doors of your hearts. He Who is the Spirit verily standeth before them. Wherefore banish ye Him Who hath purposed to draw you nigh unto a Resplendent Spot? Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face? This indeed is naught but a grievous error. He, verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time. Beware lest ye dispute that which He proclaimeth, even as the people before you disputed His utterances. Thus instructeth you the True One, could ye but perceive it.304

Great is indeed your blessedness inasmuch as His unfailing grace hath been vouchsafed unto you and ye have been aided to recognize this Cause -- a Cause through whose potency the heavens have been folded together and every lofty and towering mountain hath been scattered in dust. Moreover through Our boundless grace We make mention of your mother who hath been privileged to recognize God. We send her Our greetings from this glorious station. We remember every one of you, men and women, and from this Spot -- the Scene of incomparable glory -- regard you all as one soul and send you the joyous tidings of divine blessings which have preceded all created things, and of My remembrance that pervadeth everyone, whether young or old. The glory of God rest upon you, O people of Bahá. Rejoice with exceeding gladness through My remembrance, for He is indeed with you at all times.305

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ABOUT PEOPLE PERSECUTIONS OF HIS FOLLOWERS

Gracious God! This is the day whereon the wise should seek the advice of this Wronged One, and ask Him Who is the Truth what things are conducive to the glory and tranquillity of men. And yet, all are earnestly striving to put out this glorious and shining light, and are diligently seeking either to establish Our guilt, or to voice their protest against Us. Matters have come to such a pass, that the conduct of this Wronged One hath, in every way, been grossly misrepresented, and in a manner which it would be unseemly to mention. One of Our friends hath reported that among the residents of the Great City (Constantinople) he had heard with the greatest

regret someone state that, each year, a sum of fifty thousand tumans was being despatched from his native land to 'Akká! It hath not, however, been made clear who had disbursed the sum, nor through whose hands it had passed!

Briefly, this Wronged One hath, in the face of all that hath befallen Him at their hands, and all that hath been said of Him, endured patiently, and held His peace, inasmuch as it is Our purpose, through the loving providence of God -- exalted be His glory -- and His surpassing mercy, to abolish, through the force of Our utterance, all disputes, war, and bloodshed, from the face of the earth. Under all conditions We have, in spite of what they have said, endured with seemly patience, and have left them to God. In answer to this particular imputation, however, We have replied, that if that which he affirmeth be true, it behooveth him to be thankful to Him Who is the Lord of all being, and the King of the seen and unseen, for having raised up in Persia One Who, though a prisoner and with none to help and assist Him, hath succeeded in establishing His ascendancy over that land, and in drawing from it a yearly revenue. Such an achievement should be praised rather than censured, if he be of them that judge equitably. Should anyone seek to be acquainted with the condition of this Wronged One, let him be told that these captives whom the world hath persecuted and the nations wronged have, for days and nights, been entirely denied the barest means of subsistence. We are loth to mention such things, neither have We had, nor do We have now, any desire to complain against Our accuser. Within the walls of this prison a highly esteemed man was for some time obliged to break stones that he might earn a living, whilst others had, at times, to nourish themselves with that Divine sustenance which is hunger! We entreat God -- exalted and glorified be He -- to aid all men to be just and fair-minded, and to graciously assist them to repent and return unto Him. He, verily, heareth, and is ready to answer.

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou seest what hath befallen this Wronged One at the hands of them that have not associated with Me, and who have arisen to harm and abase Me, in a manner which no pen can describe, nor tongue recount, nor can any Tablet sustain its weight. Thou hearest the cry of Mine heart, and the groaning of Mine inmost being, and the things that have befallen Thy trusted ones in Thy cities and Thy chosen ones in Thy land, at the hands of such as have broken Thy Covenant and Thy Testament. I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by the sighs of Thy lovers throughout the world, and by their lamentation in their remoteness from the court of Thy presence, and by the blood that hath been shed for love of Thee, and by the hearts that have melted in Thy path, to protect Thy loved ones from the cruelty of such as have remained unaware of the mysteries of Thy Name, the Unconstrained. Assist them, O my Lord, by Thy power that hath prevailed over all things, and aid them to be patient and long-suffering. Thou art the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. No God is there but Thee, the Generous, the Lord of grace abounding.306

O Shaykh! Time and again have I declared, and now yet again I affirm, that for two score years We have, through the grace of God and by His irresistible and potent will, extended such aid to His Majesty the Sháh -- may God assist him -- as the exponents of justice and of equity would regard as incontestable and absolute. None can deny it, unless he be a transgressor and sinner, or one who would hate Us or doubt Our truth. How very strange that until now the Ministers of State and the representatives of the people have alike remained unaware of such conspicuous and undeniable service, and, if apprized of it, have, for reasons of their own, chosen to ignore it! Previous to these forty years controversies and conflicts continually prevailed and agitated the servants of God. But since then, aided by the hosts of wisdom, of utterance, of exhortations and understanding, they have all seized and taken fast hold of the firm cord of patience and of the shining hem of fortitude, in such wise that this wronged people endured steadfastly whatever befell them, and committed everything unto God, and this notwithstanding that in Mázindarán and at Rasht a great many have been most hideously tormented. Among them was his honor, Hájí Násir, who, unquestionably, was a brilliant light that shone forth above the horizon of resignation. After he had suffered martyrdom, they plucked out his eyes and cut off his nose, and inflicted on him such indignities that strangers wept and lamented, and secretly raised funds to support his wife and children.

O Shaykh! My Pen is abashed to recount what actually took place.

In the land of Sád (Isfáhán) the fire of tyranny burned with such a hot flame

that every fair-minded person groaned aloud. By thy life! The cities of knowledge and of understanding wept with such a weeping that the souls of the pious and of the God-fearing were melted. The twin shining lights, Hasan and Husayn (The King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs) offered up spontaneously their lives in that city. Neither fortune, nor wealth, nor glory, could deter them! God knoweth the things which befell them and yet the people are, for the most part, unaware!

Before them one named Kázim and they who were with him, and after them, his honor Ashraf, all quaffed the draught of martyrdom with the utmost fervor and longing, and hastened unto the Supreme Companion. In like manner, at the time of Sardár Azíz Khán, that godly man, Mírzá Mustafa, and his fellow martyrs, were arrested, and despatched unto the Supreme Friend in the All-Glorious Horizon. Briefly, in every city the evidences of a tyranny, beyond like or equal, were unmistakably clear and manifest, and yet none arose in self-defence! Call thou to mind his honor Badí', who was the bearer of the Tablet to His Majesty the Sháh, and reflect how he laid down his life. That knight, who spurred on his charger in the arena of renunciation, threw down the precious crown of life for the sake of Him Who is the Incomparable Friend.

O Shaykh! If things such as these are to be denied, what shall, then, be deemed worthy of credence? Set forth the truth, for the sake of God,

and be not of them that hold their peace. They arrested his honor Najaf-‘Alí, who hastened, with rapture and great longing, unto the field of martyrdom, uttering these words: "We have kept both Bahá and the khunbaha (bloodmoney)!" With these words he yielded up his spirit. Meditate on the splendor and glory which the light of renunciation, shining from the upper chamber of the heart of Mullá ‘Alí-Ján, hath shed. He was so carried away by the breezes of the Most Sublime Word and by the power of the Pen of Glory that to him the field of martyrdom equalled, nay outrivalled, the haunts of earthly delights. Ponder upon the conduct of Abá-Basír and Siyyid Ashraf-i-Zanjání. They sent for the mother of Ashraf to dissuade her son from his purpose. But she spurred him on until he suffered a most glorious martyrdom.

O Shaykh! This people have passed beyond the narrow straits of names, and pitched their tents upon the shores of the sea of renunciation. They would willingly lay down a myriad lives, rather than breathe the word desired by their enemies. They have clung to that which pleaseth God, and are wholly detached and freed from the things which pertain unto men. They have preferred to have their heads cut off rather than utter one unseemly word. Ponder this in thine heart. Methinks they have quaffed their fill of the ocean of renunciation. The life of the present world hath failed to withhold them from suffering martyrdom in the path of God.

In Mázindarán a vast number of the servants of God were exterminated. The Governor, under the influence of calumniators, robbed a great many of all that they possessed. Among the charges he laid against them was that they had been laying up arms, whereas upon investigation it was found out that they had nothing but an unloaded rifle! Gracious God! This people need no weapons of destruction, inasmuch as they have girded themselves to reconstruct the world. Their hosts are the hosts of goodly deeds, and their arms the arms of upright conduct, and their commander the fear of God. Blessed that one that judgeth with fairness. By the righteousness of God! Such hath been the patience, the calm, the resignation and contentment of this people that they have become the exponents of justice, and so great hath been their forbearance, that they have suffered themselves to be killed rather than kill, and this notwithstanding that these whom the world hath wronged have endured tribulations the like of which the history of the world hath never recorded, nor the eyes of any nation witnessed. What is it that could have induced them to reconcile themselves to these grievous trials, and to refuse to put forth a hand to repel them? What could have caused such resignation and serenity? The true cause is to be found in the ban which the Pen of Glory hath, day and night, chosen to impose, and in Our assumption of the reins of authority, through the power and might of Him Who is the Lord of all mankind.

Remember the father of Badí’. They arrested that wronged one, and ordered him to curse and revile his Faith. He, however, through the grace of God and the mercy of his Lord, chose martyrdom, and attained thereunto. If ye would reckon up the martyrs in the path of God, ye could not count them.

Consider his honor Siyyid Ismá'íl -- upon him be the peace of God, and His loving-kindness -- how, before daybreak he was wont to dust, with his own turban, the doorstep of My house, and in the end, whilst standing on the banks of the river, with his eyes fixed on that same house, offered up, by his own hand, his life.

Do thou ponder on the penetrative influence of the Word of God.

Every single one of these souls was first ordered to blaspheme and curse his faith, yet none was found to prefer his own will to the Will of God.³⁰⁷

O Shaykh! While hemmed in by tribulations this Wronged One is occupied in setting down these words. On every side the flame of oppression and tyranny can be discerned. On the one hand, tidings have reached Us that Our loved ones have been arrested in the land of Tá (Tíhrán) and this notwithstanding that the sun, and the moon, and the land, and the sea all testify that this people are adorned with the adornment of fidelity, and have clung and will cling to naught except that which can ensure the exaltation of the government, and the maintenance of order within the nation, and the tranquillity of the people.

O Shaykh! We have time and again stated that for a number of years We have extended Our aid unto His Majesty the Sháh. For years no untoward incident hath occurred in Persia. The reins of the stirrers of sedition among various sects were held firmly in the grasp of power. None hath transgressed his limits. By God! This people have never been, nor are they now, inclined to mischief. Their hearts are illumined with the light of the fear of God, and adorned with the adornment of His love. Their concern hath ever been and now is for the betterment of the world. Their purpose is to obliterate differences, and quench the flame of hatred and enmity, so that the whole earth may come to be viewed as one country.

On the other hand, the officials of the Persian Embassy in the Great City (Constantinople) are energetically and assiduously seeking to exterminate these wronged ones. They desire one thing, and God desireth another. Consider now what hath befallen the trusted ones of God in every land. At one time they have been accused of theft and larceny; at another they have been calumniated in a manner without parallel in this world. Answer thou fairly. What could be the results and consequences, in foreign countries, of the accusation of theft brought by the Persian Embassy against its own subjects? If this Wronged One was ashamed, it was not because of the humiliation it brought this servant, but rather because of the shame of its becoming known to the Ambassadors of foreign countries how incompetent and lacking in understanding are several eminent officials of the Persian Embassy. "Flingest thou thy calumnies into the face of Them Whom the one true God hath made the Trustees of the treasures of His seventh sphere?" Briefly, instead of seeking, as they should, through Him Who occupieth this sublime station, to attain unto the most exalted ranks, and to obtain His advice, they have exerted themselves and are striving their utmost to put out His light. However, according to what hath been reported, His Excellency

the Ambassador Mu'ínu'l-Mulk, Mírzá Muhsín Khán -- may God assist him -- was, at that time, absent from Constantinople. Such things have happened because it was believed that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia --

may the All-Merciful assist him -- was angry with them that have attained and revolve round the Sanctuary of Wisdom. God well knoweth and testifieth that this Wronged One hath, at all times, been cleaving fast unto whatever would be conducive to the glory of both the government and the people. God, verily, is sufficient Witness.

Describing the people of Bahá, the Most Sublime Pen hath sent down these words: "These, verily, are men who if they come to cities of pure gold will consider them not; and if they meet the fairest and most comely of women will turn aside." Thus hath it been sent down by the Most Sublime Pen for the people of Bahá, on the part of Him Who is the Counsellor, the Omniscient. In the concluding passages of the Tablet to His Majesty the Emperor of Paris (Napoleon III) these exalted words have been revealed: "Exultest thou over the treasures thou dost possess, knowing they shall perish? Rejoicest thou in that thou rulest a span of earth, when the whole world, in the estimation of the people of Baha, is worth as much as the black in the eye of a dead ant? Abandon it unto such as have set their affections upon it, and turn thou unto Him Who is the Desire of the world."

God alone -- exalted be His glory -- is cognizant of the things which befell this Wronged One. Every day bringeth a fresh report of stories current against Us at the Embassy in Constantinople. Gracious God! The sole aim of their machinations is to bring about the extermination of this servant. They are, however, oblivious of the fact that abasement in the path of God is My true glory. In the newspapers the following hath been recorded: "Touching the fraudulent dealings of some of the exiles of 'Akká, and the excesses committed by them against several people, etc...." Unto them who are the exponents of justice and the daysprings of equity the intention of the writer is evident and his purpose clear. Briefly, he arose and inflicted upon Me divers tribulations, and treated Me with injustice and cruelty. By God! This Wronged One would not barter this place of exile for the Most Sublime Habitation. In the estimation of men of insight whatsoever befallth in the path of God is manifest glory and a supreme attainment. Already We have said: "Glory to Thee, O my God! But for the tribulations which are sustained in Thy path, how could Thy true lovers be recognized; and were it not for the trials which are borne for love of Thee, how could the station of such as yearn for Thee be revealed?"

Such abasement hath been inflicted that each day they spread fresh calumnies. This Wronged One, however, cleaveth to seemly patience. Would that His Majesty the Sháh of Persia would ask for a report of the things which befell Us in Constantinople, that he might become fully acquainted with the true facts. O Sháh! I adjure thee by thy Lord, the God of Mercy, to look into this matter with the eye of fairness. Is there to be found a just man who will judge in this day according to that which God hath sent down in His Book? Where is the fair-minded person who will equitably consider

what hath been perpetrated against Us without any clear token or proof? O Shaykh! Ponder the behavior of men. The inmates of the cities of knowledge and wisdom are sore perplexed asking themselves why it is that the Shi'ih sect, which regarded itself as the most learned, the most righteous, and the most pious of all the peoples of the world, hath turned aside in the Day of His Revelation, and hath shown a cruelty such as hath never been experienced. It is incumbent upon thee to reflect a while. From the inception of this sect until the present day how great hath been the number of the divines that have appeared, none of whom became cognizant of the nature of this Revelation. What could have been the cause of this waywardness? Were We to mention it, their limbs would cleave asunder. It is necessary for them to meditate, to meditate for a thousand thousand years, that haply they may attain unto a sprinkling from the ocean of knowledge, and discover the things whereof they are oblivious in this day.³⁰⁸

Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God! How great is Thy might and Thy sovereignty; how vast Thy strength and Thy dominion! Thou hast called into being Him Who speaketh in Thy name before all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth, and hast bidden Him cry out amongst Thy creatures.

No sooner had a word gone forth from His lips, however, than the divines among Thy people turned back from Him, and the learned among Thy servants caviled at His signs. Thereby the fire of oppression was kindled in Thy land, until the kings themselves rose up to put out Thy light, O Thou Who art the King of kings!

Hostility waxed so intense that my kindred and my loved ones were made captives in Thy land, and they that are dear to Thee were hindered from gazing on Thy beauty and from turning in the direction of Thy mercy. This hostility failed to cause the fire that burned within them to subside. The enemy finally carried away as captive Him Who is the Manifestation of Thy beauty and the Revealer of Thy signs, and confined Him in the fortress-town of 'Akká, and sought to hinder Him from remembering Thee and from magnifying Thy name. Thy servant, however, could not be restrained from carrying out what Thou hadst bidden Him fulfill. Above the horizon of tribulation He hath lifted up His voice and He crieth out, summoning all the inmates of heaven and all the inhabitants of the earth to the immensity of Thy mercy and the court of Thy grace. Day and night He sendeth down the signs of Thine omnipotent power and revealeth the clear tokens of Thy majesty, so that the souls of Thy creatures may be drawn towards Thee, that they may forsake themselves and turn unto Thee, and may flee from their misery and seek the tabernacle of Thy riches, and may haste away from their wretchedness into the court of Thy majesty and glory.

This is the Lamp which the light of Thine own Essence hath lit, and whose radiance the winds of discord can never extinguish. This is the Ocean that moveth by the power of Thy sovereign might, and whose waves the influence of the infidels that have disbelieved in the Judgment Day can never still. This is the Sun that shineth in the heaven of Thy will and the

splendor of which the veils of the workers of iniquity and the doubts of the evil doers can never cloud.

I yield Thee thanks, O my God, for that Thou hast offered me up as a sacrifice in Thy path, and made me a target for the arrows of afflictions as a token of Thy love for Thy servants, and singled me out for all manner of tribulation for the regeneration of Thy people.

How sweet to my taste is the savor of woes sent by Thee, and how dear to my heart the dispositions of Thy providence! Perish the soul that fleeth from the threats of kings in its attempt to save itself in Thy days! I swear by Thy glory! Whoso hath quaffed the living waters of Thy favors can fear no trouble in Thy path, neither can he be deterred by any tribulation from remembering Thee or from celebrating Thy praise.

I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art my Governor and the Possessor of all names, to protect them that have branched out from me (Afnan), whom Thou hast caused to be related to Thyself, and to whom Thou hast, in this Revelation, shown Thy special favor, and whom Thou hast summoned to draw nigh unto Thee and to turn towards the horizon of Thy Revelation. Withhold not from them, O my Lord, the outpourings of Thy mercy or the effulgence of the Day-Star of Thy grace. Enable them to distinguish themselves amongst Thy people, that they may exalt Thy word and promote Thy Cause. Aid them, O my God, to do Thy will and pleasure.³⁰⁹

HAJÍ SIYYID ‘ALÍ MUHAMMAD SHÍRÁZÍ, THE BÁB

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-Muhammad, 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."310

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 Bábes 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. [The Báb] 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 [Imám Husayn] 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?311

Magnify Thou, O Lord my God, Him Who is the Primal Point, the Divine Mystery, the Unseen Essence, the Day-Spring of Divinity, and the Manifestation of Thy Lordship, through Whom all the knowledge of the past and all the knowledge of the future were made plain, through Whom the pearls of Thy hidden wisdom were uncovered, and the mystery of Thy treasured name disclosed, Whom Thou hast appointed as the Announcer of the One through Whose name the letter B and the letter E have been joined and united, through Whom Thy majesty, Thy sovereignty and Thy might were made known, through Whom Thy words have been sent down, and Thy laws set forth with clearness, and Thy signs spread abroad, and Thy Word established, through Whom the hearts of Thy chosen ones were laid

bare, and all that were in the heavens and all that were on the earth were gathered together, Whom Thou hast called 'Alí-Muhammad in the kingdom of Thy names, and the Spirit of Spirits in the Tablets of Thine irrevocable decree, Whom Thou hast invested with Thine own title, unto Whose name all other names have, at Thy bidding and through the power of Thy might, been made to return, and in Whom Thou hast caused all Thine attributes and titles to attain their final consummation. To Him also belong such names as lay hid within Thy stainless tabernacles, in Thine invisible world and Thy sanctified cities.

Magnify Thou, moreover, such as have believed in Him and in His signs and have turned towards Him, from among those that have acknowledged Thy unity in His Latter Manifestation -- a Manifestation whereof He hath made mention in His Tablets, and in His Books, and in His Scriptures, and in all the wondrous verses and gem-like utterances that have descended upon Him. It is this same Manifestation Whose covenant Thou hast bidden Him establish ere He had established His own covenant. He it is Whose praise the Bayán hath celebrated. In it His excellence hath been extolled, and His truth established, and His sovereignty proclaimed, and His Cause perfected. Blessed is the man that hath turned unto Him, and fulfilled the things He hath commanded, O Thou Who art the Lord of the worlds and the Desire of all them that have known Thee!

Praised be Thou, O my God, inasmuch as Thou hast aided us to recognize and love Him. I, therefore, beseech Thee by Him and by Them Who are the Day-Springs of Thy Divinity, and the Manifestations of Thy Lordship, and the Treasuries of Thy Revelation, and the Depositories of Thine inspiration, to enable us to serve and obey Him, and to empower us to become the helpers of His Cause and the dispersers of His adverSaríes. Powerful art Thou to do all that pleaseth Thee. No God is there beside Thee, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the One Whose help is sought by all men!312

Do Thou bless, O Lord my God, the Primal Point, through Whom the point of creation hath been made to revolve in both the visible and invisible worlds, Whom Thou hast designated as the One whereunto should return whatsoever must return unto Thee, and as the Revealer of whatsoever may be manifested by Thee. Do Thou also bless such of His Letters as have not turned away from Thee, who have been firmly established in Thy love, and clung steadfastly to Thy good-pleasure. Bless Thou, likewise, as long as Thine own Self endureth and Thine own Essence doth last, them that have suffered martyrdom in Thy path. Thou art, verily, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Moreover, I beseech Thee, O my God, by Him Whom Thou hast announced unto us in all Thy Tablets and Thy Books and Thy Scrolls and Thy Scriptures, through Whom the kingdom of names hath been convulsed, and all that lay hid in the breasts of them that have followed their evil and corrupt desires hath been revealed, -- I beseech Thee to strengthen us in our love for Him, to make us steadfast in His Cause, to help us befriend His loved ones and challenge His enemies. Shield us, then, O my God, from the mischief wrought by them that have denied Thy presence, and turned away from Thy face, and resolved to put an end to the life of Him Who is the Manifestation of Thine own Self.

O my God and my Master! Thou knowest how they have disgraced Thy Cause and dishonored Thee among Thy creatures, how they have joined Thine enemies, that they may undermine Thy Revelation and injure Thee. Lay hold on them with the power of Thy wrath and might, O my God, and expose their shameful acts and their wickedness, that whatever is hid in their breasts may be revealed unto the people that dwell within Thy land, O Thou Who art the Inflictor of trials, the Fashioner of nations, and the Bestower of favors! No God is there beside Thee, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.³¹³

A praise which is exalted above every mention or description beseebeth the Adored One, the Possessor of all things visible and invisible, Who hath enabled the Primal Point to reveal countless Books and Epistles and Who, through the potency of His sublime Word, hath called into being the entire creation, whether of the former or more recent generations. Moreover He hath in every age and cycle, in conformity with His transcendent wisdom, sent forth a divine Messenger to revive the dispirited and despondent souls with the living waters of His utterance, One Who is indeed the Expounder, the true Interpreter, inasmuch as man is unable to comprehend that which hath streamed forth from the Pen of Glory and is recorded in His heavenly Books. Men at all times and under all conditions stand in need of one to exhort them, guide them and to instruct and teach them. Therefore He hath sent forth His Messengers, His Prophets and chosen ones that they might acquaint the people with the divine purpose underlying the revelation of Books and the raising up of Messengers, and that everyone may become aware of the trust of God which is latent in the reality of every soul.³¹⁴

Reflect, O Shaykh, upon the Shi'ih sect. How many the edifices which they reared with the hands of idle fancies and vain imaginings, and how numerous the cities which they built! At length those vain imaginings were converted into bullets and aimed at Him Who is the Prince of the world. Not one single soul among the leaders of that sect acknowledged Him in the Day of His Revelation! Whenever His blessed name was mentioned, all would say: "May God hasten the joy His coming will bring!" On the day of the Revelation of that Sun of Truth, however, all, as hath been observed, have exclaimed, saying: "May God hasten His chastisement!" He Who was the Essence of being and Lord of the seen and unseen they suspended, and committed what made the Tablet to weep, and the Pen to groan, and the cries of the sincere to break forth, and the tears of the favored ones to flow.³¹⁵

ÁSIYIH KHÁNUM, NAVVÁB,
THE MOST EXALTED LEAF

The first Spirit through which all spirits were revealed, and the first Light by which all lights shone forth, rest upon thee, O Most Exalted Leaf, thou who hast been mentioned in the Crimson Book! Thou art the one whom God created to arise and serve His own Self, and the Manifestation of His Cause, and the Day-Spring of His Revelation, and the Dawning-Place of His signs, and the Source of His commandments; and Who so aided thee that thou didst turn with thy whole being unto Him, at a time when His servants and handmaidens had turned away from His Face. ...Happy art thou, O My handmaiden, and My Leaf, and the one mentioned in My Book, and inscribed by My Pen of Glory in My Scrolls and Tablets. ...Rejoice thou, at this moment, in the most exalted Station and the Allhighest Paradise, and the Abhá Horizon, inasmuch as He Who is the Lord of Names hath remembered thee. We bear witness that thou didst attain unto all good, and that God hath so exalted thee, that all honor and glory circled around thee.³¹⁶

O Navváb! O Leaf that hath sprung from My Tree, and been My companion! My glory be upon thee, and My loving-kindness, and My mercy that hath surpassed all beings. We announce unto thee that which will gladden thine eye, and assure thy soul, and rejoice thine heart. Verily, thy Lord is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful. God hath been and will be pleased with thee, and hath singled thee out for His own Self, and chosen thee from among His handmaidens to serve Him, and hath made thee the companion of His Person in the day-time and in the night-season.³¹⁷

Hear thou Me once again, God is well-pleased with thee, as a token of His grace and a sign of His mercy. He hath made thee to be His companion in every one of His worlds, and hath nourished thee with His meeting and presence, so long as His Name, and His Remembrance, and His Kingdom, and His Empire shall endure. Happy is the handmaid that hath mentioned thee, and sought thy good-pleasure, and humbled herself before thee, and held fast unto the cord of thy love. Woe betide him that

denieth thy exalted station, and the things ordained for thee from God, the Lord of all names, and him that hath turned away from thee, and rejected thy station before God, the Lord of the mighty throne.318

O faithful ones! Should ye visit the resting-place of the Most Exalted Leaf, who hath ascended unto the Glorious Companion, stand ye and say: 'Salutation and blessing and glory upon thee, O Holy Leaf that hath sprung from the Divine Lote-Tree! I bear witness that thou hast believed in God and in His signs, and answered His Call, and turned unto Him, and held fast unto His cord, and clung to the hem of His grace, and fled thy home in His path, and chosen to live as a stranger, out of love for His presence and in thy longing to serve Him. May God have mercy upon him that draweth nigh unto thee, and remembereth thee through the things which My Pen hath voiced in this, the most great station. We pray God that He may forgive us, and forgive them that have turned unto thee, and grant their desires, and bestow upon them, through His wondrous grace, whatever be their wish. He, verily, is the Bountiful, the Generous. Praise be to God, He Who is the Desire of all worlds; and the Beloved of all who recognize Him.319

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, THE MOST MIGHTY BRANCH

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!... 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 ...Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favor 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 favored servants... 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.320

O Thou Who art the apple of Mine eye! My glory, the ocean of My loving-kindness, the sun of My bounty, the heaven of My mercy rest upon

Thee. We pray God to illumine the world through Thy knowledge and wisdom, to ordain for Thee that which will gladden Thine heart and impart consolation to Thine eyes...The glory of God rest upon Thee, and upon whosoever serveth Thee and circleth around Thee. Woe, great woe, betide him that opposeth and injureth Thee. Well is it with him that sweareth fealty to Thee; the fire of hell torment him who is Thine enemy...We have made Thee a shelter for all mankind, a shield unto all who are in heaven and on earth, a stronghold for whosoever hath believed in God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. God grant that through Thee He may protect them, may enrich and sustain them, that He may inspire Thee with that which shall be a wellspring of wealth unto all created things, an ocean of bounty unto all men, and the dayspring of mercy unto all peoples.³²¹

Thou knowest, O my God, that I desire for Him naught except that which Thou didst desire, and have chosen Him for no purpose save that which Thou hadst intended for Him. Render Him victorious, therefore, through Thy hosts of earth and heaven...Ordain, I beseech Thee, by the ardor of My love for Thee and My yearning to manifest Thy Cause, for Him, as well as for them that love Him, that which Thou hast destined for Thy Messengers and the Trustees of Thy Revelation. Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the All-Powerful.³²²

Praise be to Him Who hath honored the Land of Bá (Beirut) through the presence of Him round Whom all names revolve. All the atoms of the earth have announced unto all created things that from behind the gate of the Prison-city there hath appeared and above its horizon there hath shone forth the Orb of the beauty of the great, the Most Mighty Branch of God -- His ancient and immutable Mystery -- proceeding on its way to another land. Sorrow, thereby, hath enveloped this Prison-city, whilst another land rejoiceth... Blessed, doubly blessed, is the ground which His footsteps have trodden, the eye that hath been cheered by the beauty of His countenance, the ear that hath been honored by hearkening to His call, the heart that hath tasted the sweetness of His love, the breast that hath dilated through His remembrance, the pen that hath voiced His praise, the scroll that hath borne the testimony of His writings."³²³

MÍRZÁ MIHDI, THE PUREST BRANCH

Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God! Thou seest me in this day shut up in my prison, and fallen into the hands of Thine adverSaries, and beholdest my son (The Purest Branch) lying on the dust before Thy face. He is Thy servant, O my Lord, whom Thou hast caused to be related to Him Who is the Manifestation of Thyself and the Day-Spring of Thy Cause. At his birth he was afflicted through his separation from Thee, according to what had been ordained for him through Thine irrevocable decree. And when he had quaffed the cup of reunion with Thee, he was cast into prison for having believed in Thee and in Thy signs. He continued to serve Thy Beauty until he entered into this Most Great Prison. Thereupon I

offered him up, O my God, as a sacrifice in Thy path. Thou well knowest what they who love Thee have endured through this trial that hath caused the kindreds of the earth to wail, and beyond them the Concourse on high to lament.

I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by him and by his exile and his imprisonment, to send down upon such as loved him what will quiet their hearts and bless their works. Potent art Thou to do as Thou willest. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.³²⁴

At this very moment, My son is being washed before My face, after Our having sacrificed him in the Most Great Prison. Thereat have the dwellers of the Abhá Tabernacle wept with a great weeping, and such as have suffered imprisonment with this Youth in the path of God, the Lord of the promised Day, lamented. Under such conditions My Pen hath not been prevented from remembering its Lord, the Lord of all nations. It summoneth the people unto God, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. This is the day

whereon he that was created by the light of Bahá has suffered martyrdom, at a time when he lay imprisoned at the hands of his enemies...

Upon thee, O Branch of God! be the remembrance of God and His praise, and the praise of all that dwell in the Realm of Immortality, and of all the denizens of the Kingdom of Names. Happy art thou in that thou hast been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, until Thou didst sacrifice thyself before the face of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Thou, in truth, hast been wronged, and to this testifieth the Beauty of Him, the Self-Subsisting. Thou didst, in the first days of thy life, bear that which hath caused all things to groan, and made every pillar to tremble. Happy is the one that remembereth thee, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Creator of the Morn.³²⁵

Glorified art Thou, O Lord, my God! Thou seest me in the hands of Mine enemies, and My son bloodstained before Thy face, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all names. I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united.³²⁶

Blessed art thou, and blessed he that turneth unto thee, and visiteth thy grave, and draweth nigh, through thee, unto God, the Lord of all that was and shall be.... I testify that thou didst return in meekness unto thine abode. Great is thy blessedness and the blessedness of them that hold fast unto the hem of thy outspread robe.... Thou art, verily, the trust of God and His treasure in this land. Erelong will God reveal through thee that which He hath desired. He, verily, is the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. When thou wast laid to rest in the earth, the earth itself trembled in its longing to meet thee. Thus hath it been decreed, and yet the people perceive not.... Were We to recount the mysteries of thine ascension, they that are asleep would waken, and all beings would be set ablaze with the fire of the remembrance of My Name, the Mighty, the Loving.³²⁷

BAHIYYIH KHÁNUM,
THE GREATEST HOLY LEAF

He is the Eternal! This is My testimony for her who hath heard
My voice and drawn nigh unto Me. Verily, she is a leaf that hath sprung
from this preexistent Root. She hath revealed herself in My name and tasted
of the sweet savours of My holy, My wondrous pleasure. At one time We
gave her to drink from My honeyed Mouth, at another caused her to partake
of My mighty, My luminous Kawthar. Upon her rest the glory of My name
and the fragrance of My shining robe.³²⁸

Let these exalted words be thy love-song on the tree of Baha, O
thou most holy and resplendent Leaf: 'God, besides Whom is none other
God, the Lord of this world and the next!' Verily, We have elevated thee to
the rank of one of the most distinguished among thy sex, and granted thee,
in My court, a station such as none other woman hath surpassed. Thus have
We preferred thee and raised thee above the rest, as a sign of grace from Him
Who is the Lord of the throne on high and earth below. We have created
thine eyes to behold the light of My countenance, thine ears to hearken unto
the melody of My words, thy body to pay homage before My throne. Do thou
render thanks unto God, thy Lord, the Lord of all the world.
How high is the testimony of the Sadratu'l-Muntahá for its leaf;
how exalted the witness of the Tree of Life unto its fruit! Through My
remembrance of her a fragrance laden with the perfume of musk hath been
diffused; well is it with him that hath inhaled it and exclaimed: 'All praise
be to Thee, O God, my Lord the most glorious!' How sweet thy presence
before Me; how sweet to gaze upon thy face, to bestow upon thee My
lovingkindness, to favour thee with My tender care, to make mention of thee in
this, My Tablet - a Tablet which I have ordained as a token of My hidden
and manifest grace unto thee. ³²⁹

O My Leaf! Hearken thou unto My Voice: Verily there is none
other God but Me, the Almighty, the All-Wise. I can well inhale from thee
the fragrance of My love and the sweet-smelling savour wafting from the
raiment of My Name, the Most Holy, the Most Luminous. Be astir upon
God's Tree in conformity with thy pleasure and unloose thy tongue in praise
of thy Lord amidst all mankind. Let not the things of the world grieve thee.
Cling fast unto this divine Lote-Tree from which God hath graciously caused
thee to spring forth. I swear by My life! It behoveth the lover to be closely
joined to the loved one, and here indeed is the Best-Beloved of the world.³³⁰

‘ALI-AKBAR-I-NARÁQI

O Pen of the Ancient of Days! Call Thou to remembrance ‘Alí³³¹,
he who sojourned with Thee in ‘Iráq until the Daystar of the world departed
therefrom. He forsook his home to attain the court of Thy presence at a time
when We were captive in the hands of such as have been deprived of the sweet
savours of the All-Merciful. Grieve not at what hath befallen Us and thee

in the path of God. Rest assured and persevere. He, verily, rendereth victorious those who love Him, and His might is equal to all things. Whoso turneth unto Him brighteneth thereby the faces of the Concourse on high, and unto this God Himself is My witness.³³²

‘ALI-AKBAR SHÁHMÍRZÁDI

Praise and thanksgiving beseem the Lord of manifest dominion Who hath adorned the mighty prison with the presence of their honours ‘Alí-Akbar and Amín³³³, and hath illumined it with the light of certitude, constancy and assurance. The glory of God and the glory of all that are in the heavens and on the earth be upon them.

Light and glory, greeting and praise be upon the Hands of His Cause, through whom the light of fortitude hath shone forth and the truth hath been established that the authority to choose rests with God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained, through whom the ocean of bounty hath surged and the fragrance of the gracious favours of God, the Lord of mankind, hath been diffused. We beseech Him -- exalted is He -- to shield them through the power of His hosts, to protect them through the potency of His dominion and to aid them through His indomitable strength which prevaieth over all created things. Sovereignty is God's, the Creator of the heavens and the Lord of the Kingdom of Names.³³⁴

ISMÁ’IL-I-KÁSHÁNI, DHABIH, ANÍS

Forsake Thy mention of the Chief, O Pen, and call to remembrance Anís³³⁵, that intimate of the love of God who severed himself from the wayward and the infidel. He tore the veils asunder in such wise that the inmates of Paradise could hear them being rent. Glorified be God, the Sovereign, the Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.³³⁶

O Pen of Revelation! Call Thou to remembrance him [Anís] whose letter reached Us during this darksome night. He it is who wandered from region to region until he entered the City, [Adrianople] seeking the shelter of the mercy of his Lord, the Almighty, the Most High. Eagerly awaiting the favours of his Lord, he dwelt therein for a night, but departed therefrom the following morning as bidden by God, filling with sorrow the heart of this Youth. To this the Almighty is Himself a witness. Great is thy blessedness, for thou hast received the wine of utterance from the hand of the All-Merciful, and became so enraptured by the sweet fragrance of the Best-Beloved as to renounce thy comfort and to be numbered with them that have hastened unto His Paradise, the Dawning-Place of the signs of thy Lord, the Gracious, the Peerless. Happy the one who hath quaffed the wine of inner mysteries from the countenance of his Lord and been intoxicated by this pure and crystal draught. By God! It causeth every true believer to soar in the heaven of majesty and grandeur, and transmuteth every doubt into certainty. Grieve not at what hath befallen thee, but put thy whole trust in God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the Wise. Raise thy house upon the

solid foundation of divine utterances, and give praise to thy Lord. He, verily, shall suffice thee above all the peoples of the earth.

God hath, in truth, inscribed your names upon a Tablet wherein are enshrined the hidden secrets of all that hath been. Erelong shall the faithful call to remembrance your exile and all your journeys in His path. He, verily, loveth those who love Him, and is the helper of the sincere. By the righteousness of God! The eyes of the Concourse on high are fixed upon you and their fingers point towards you. Thus doth the bounty of your Lord encompass you. Would that the people might recognize that which hath escaped them in the days of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. Render thanks unto God for having aided thee to know Him and to enter within the precincts of His court at a time when the ungodly surrounded the family of thy Lord and His loved ones, and expelled them from their homes with manifest cruelty, intending to separate us at the shore of the sea. Verily, thy Lord is aware of that which lieth concealed within the breasts of the unbelievers. Say: Even should ye tear our bodies asunder, ye could not banish from our hearts the love of God. We were of a truth created for sacrifice, and in this do we take pride before all creation. O thou who art set aglow with the fire of the love of God! Know thou that thy letter hath reached Us and that We have been apprised of its contents. We beseech God to confirm thee in His love and in His good pleasure, to assist thee in the promotion of His Cause, and to number thee with such as have arisen for the triumph of His Faith.³³⁷

HÁJÍ MULLÁ HADÍ SABZIVÁRI

Christ saith: 'Thou hast granted to children that whereof the learned and the wise are deprived.' The sage of Sabzivár³³⁸ hath said: 'Alas! Attentive ears are lacking, otherwise the whisperings of the Sinaic Bush could be heard from every tree.' In a Tablet to a man of wisdom who had made enquiry as to the meaning of Elementary Reality³³⁹, We addressed this famous sage in these words: 'If this saying is truly thine, how is it that thou hast failed to hearken unto the Call which the Tree of Man hath raised from the loftiest heights of the world? If thou didst hear the Call yet fear and the desire to preserve thy life prompted thee to remain heedless to it, thou art such a person as hath never been nor is worthy of mention; if thou hast not heard it, then thou art bereft of the sense of hearing.' In brief, such men are they whose words are the pride of the world, and whose deeds are the shame of the nations.³⁴⁰

JAMÁLU'D-DIN-I-AFGHÁNI

Gracious God! A thing hath recently happened which caused great astonishment. It is reported that a certain person [Jamálu'd-Dín-i-Afghání] went to the seat of the imperial throne in Persia and succeeded in winning the

good graces of some of the nobility by his ingratiating behaviour. How pitiful indeed, how deplorable! One wondereth why those who have been the symbols of highest glory should now stoop to boundless shame. What is become of their high resolve? Whither is gone the sense of dignity and honour? The sun of glory and wisdom hath unceasingly been shining above the horizon of Persia, but nowadays it hath sunk to such a low level that certain dignitaries have allowed themselves to be treated as playthings in the hands of the foolish. The aforesaid person hath written such things concerning this people in the Egyptian press and in the Beirut Encyclopedia that the well-informed and the learned were astonished. He proceeded then to Paris where he published a newspaper entitled *Urvatu'l-Vuthqa* [The Sure Handle] and sent copies thereof to all parts of the world. He also sent a copy to the Prison

of 'Akká, and by so doing he meant to show affection and to make amends for his past actions. In short, this Wronged One hath observed silence in regard to him. We entreat God, the True One, to protect him and to shed upon him the light of justice and fairness. It behoveth him to say:

O God my God! Thou seest me standing before the door of Thy forgiveness and benevolence, turning my gaze toward the horizon of Thy bountiful favours and manifold blessings. I beg of Thee by Thy sweet accents and by the shrill voice of Thy Pen, O Lord of all mankind, to graciously aid Thy servants as it befitteth Thy days and beseemeth the glory of Thy manifestation and Thy majesty. Verily potent art Thou to do whatsoever Thou willest. All they that dwell in the heavens and on the earth bear witness to Thy power and Thy might, to Thy glory and Thy bounteousness. Praise be to Thee, O Lord of the worlds and the Well-Beloved of the heart of every man of understanding!

Thou beholdest, O my God, the essence of poverty seeking the ocean of Thy wealth and the substance of iniquity yearning for the waters of Thy forgiveness and Thy tender mercy. Grant Thou, O my God, that which beseemeth Thy great glory and befitteth the loftiness of Thy boundless grace. Thou art in truth the All-Bountiful, the Lord of grace abounding, the Ordainer, the All-Wise. No God is there but Thee, the Most Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Omnipotent.³⁴¹

HÁJÍ MÍRZÁ KARÍM KHÁN-I-KIRMÁNÍ

Inasmuch as they have not apprehended the meaning of Knowledge, and have called by that name those images fashioned by their own fancy and which have sprung from the embodiments of ignorance, they therefore have inflicted upon the Source of Knowledge that which thou hast heard and witnessed.

For instance, a certain man, [Hájí Mírzá Karím Khán-i-Kirmání] reputed for his learning and attainments, and accounting himself as one of the pre-eminent leaders of his people, hath in his book denounced and vilified all the exponents of true learning. This is made abundantly clear by his explicit statements as well as by his allusions throughout his book. As We

had frequently heard about him, We purposed to read some of his works. Although We never felt disposed to peruse other peoples' writings, yet as some had questioned Us concerning him, We felt it necessary to refer to his books, in order that We might answer Our questioners with knowledge and understanding. His works, in the Arabic tongue, were, however, not available, until one day a certain man informed Us that one of his compositions, entitled *Irshadu'l-'Avam*, [Guidance unto the Ignorant] could be found in this city. From this title We perceived the odour of conceit and vainglory, inasmuch as he hath imagined himself a learned man and regarded the rest of the people ignorant. His worth was in fact made known by the very title he had chosen for his book. It became evident that its author was following the path of self and desire, and was lost in the wilderness of ignorance and folly. Methinks, he had forgotten the well-known tradition which sayeth: "Knowledge is all that is knowable; and might and power, all creation." Notwithstanding, We sent for the book, and kept it with Us a few days. It was probably referred to twice. The second time, We accidentally came upon the story of the "Mi'raj" [Night Ascension] of Muhammad, of Whom was spoken: "But for Thee, I would not have created the spheres." We noticed that he had enumerated some twenty or more sciences, the knowledge of which he considered to be essential for the comprehension of the mystery of the "Mi'raj". We gathered from his statements that unless a man be deeply versed in them all, he can never attain to a proper understanding of this transcendent and exalted theme. Among the specified sciences were the science of metaphysical abstractions, of alchemy, and natural magic. Such vain and discarded learnings, this man hath regarded as the pre-requisites of the understanding of the sacred and abiding mysteries of divine Knowledge. Gracious God! Such is the measure of his understanding. And yet, behold what cavils and calumnies he hath heaped upon those Embodiments of God's infinite knowledge! How well and true is the saying: "Flingest thou thy calumnies unto the face of Them Whom the one true God hath made the Trustees of the treasures of His seventh sphere?" Not one understanding heart or mind, not one among the wise and learned, hath taken notice of these preposterous statements. And yet, how clear and evident it is to every discerning heart that this so-called learning is and hath ever been, rejected by Him Who is the one true God. How can the knowledge of these sciences, which are so contemptible in the eyes of the truly learned, be regarded as essential to the apprehension of the mysteries of the "Mi'raj," whilst the Lord of the "Mi'raj" Himself was never burdened with a single letter of these limited and obscure learnings, and never defiled His radiant heart with any of these fanciful illusions? How truly hath he said: "All human attainment moveth upon a lame ass, whilst Truth, riding upon the wind, darteth across space." By the righteousness of God! Whoso desireth to fathom the mystery of this "Mi'raj," and craveth a drop from this ocean, if the mirror of his heart be already obscured by the dust of these learnings, he must needs cleanse and purify it ere the light of this mystery can be reflected

therein.

In this day, they that are submerged beneath the ocean of ancient Knowledge, and dwell within the ark of divine wisdom, forbid the people such idle pursuits. Their shining breasts are, praise be to God, sanctified from every trace of such learning, and are exalted above such grievous veils. We have consumed this densest of all veils, with the fire of the love of the Beloved -- the veil referred to in the saying: "The most grievous of all veils is

the veil of knowledge." Upon its ashes, We have reared the tabernacle of divine knowledge. We have, praise be to God, burned the "veils of glory" with the fire of the beauty of the Best-Beloved. We have driven from the human heart all else but Him Who is the Desire of the world, and glory therein. We cleave to no knowledge but His Knowledge, and set our hearts on naught save the effulgent glories of His light.

We were surprised exceedingly when We observed that his one purpose was to make the people realize that all these learnings were possessed by him. And yet, I swear by God that not one breath, blowing from the meads of divine knowledge, hath ever been wafted upon his soul, nor hath he ever unravelled a single mystery of ancient wisdom. Nay, were the meaning of Knowledge ever to be expounded unto him, dismay would fill his heart, and his whole being would shake to its foundation. Notwithstanding his base and senseless statements, behold to what heights of extravagance his claims have reached!

Gracious God! How great is Our amazement at the way the people have gathered around him, and have borne allegiance to his person! Content with transient dust, these people have turned their face unto it, and cast behind their backs Him Who is the Lord of Lords. Satisfied with the croaking of the crow and enamoured with the visage of the raven, they have renounced the melody of the nightingale and the charm of the rose. What unspeakable fallacies the perusal of this pretentious book hath revealed! They are too unworthy for any pen to describe, and too base for one moment's attention. Should a touchstone be found, however, it would instantly distinguish truth from falsehood, light from darkness, and sun from shadow.

Among the sciences which this pretender hath professed is that of alchemy. We cherish the hope that either a king or a man of preeminent power may call upon him to translate this science from the realm of fancy to the domain of fact and from the plane of mere pretension to that of actual achievement. Would that this unlearned and humble Servant, who never laid any pretension to such things, nor even regarded them as the criterion of true knowledge, might undertake the same task, that thereby the truth might be known and distinguished from falsehood. But of what avail! All this generation could offer Us were wounds from its darts, and the only cup it proffered to Our lips was the cup of its venom. On our neck We still bear the scar of chains, and upon Our body are imprinted the evidences of an unyielding cruelty.

And as to this man's attainments, his ignorance, understanding and belief, behold what the Book which embraceth all things hath revealed; "Verily, the tree of Zaqqum [Infernal tree] shall be the food of the Athim." [Sinner or sinful. See Qur'án 44:43-44] And then follow certain verses, until He saith: "Taste this, for thou forsooth art the mighty Karím!" [Honourable. See Qur'án 44:49] Consider how clearly and explicitly he hath been described in God's incorruptible Book! This man, moreover, feigning humility, hath in his own book referred to himself as the "athim servant": "Athim" in the Book of God, mighty among the common herd, "Karím" in name!

Ponder the blessed verse, so that the meaning of the words: "There is neither a thing green nor sere but it is noted in the unerring Book," [Qur'án 6:59] may be imprinted upon the tablet of thy heart. Notwithstanding, a multitude bear him allegiance. They have rejected the Moses of knowledge and justice, and clung to the Samiri [A magician contemporary with Moses. See Qur'án 20:85-95] of ignorance. They have turned away their eyes from the Day-star of truth which shineth in the divine and everlasting heaven, and have utterly ignored its splendour. O my brother! A divine Mine only can yield the gems of divine knowledge, and the fragrance of the mystic Flower can be inhaled only in the ideal Garden, and the lilies of ancient wisdom can blossom nowhere except in the city of a stainless heart. "In a rich soil, its plants spring forth abundantly by permission of its Lord, and in that soil which is bad, they spring forth but scantily." [Qur'án 7:57] 342

Call ye to mind Karim, and how, when We summoned him unto God, he waxed disdainful, prompted by his own desires; yet We had sent him that which was a solace to the eye of proof in the world of being and the fulfilment of God's testimony to all the denizens of earth and heaven. As a token of the grace of Him Who is the All-Possessing, the Most High, We bade him embrace the Truth. But he turned away until, as an act of justice from God, angels of wrath laid hold upon him. Unto this We truly were a witness. 343

MÍRZÁ ABU'L-QASIM FARAHANI

His Majesty Muhammad Sháh, despite the excellence of his rank, committed two heinous deeds. One was the order to banish the Lord of the Realms of Grace and Bounty, the Primal Point; and the other, the murder of the Prince of the City of Statesmanship and Literary Accomplishment. 344

The faults of kings, like their favours, can be great. A king who is not deterred by the vainglory of power and authority from observing justice, nor is deprived of the splendours of the day-star of equity by luxury, riches, glory or the marshalling of hosts and legions shall occupy a high rank and a sublime station amongst the Concourse on high. It is incumbent upon everyone to extend aid and to manifest kindness to so noble a soul. Well is it with the king who keepeth a tight hold on the reins of his passion,

restraineth his anger and preferreth justice and fairness to injustice and tyranny.³⁴⁵

We entreat His Majesty the Sháh, -- may God, hallowed and glorified be He, assist him -- himself to ponder upon these things, and to judge with equity and justice. Although in recent years a number of the faithful have, in most of the cities of Persia, suffered themselves to be killed rather than kill, yet the hatred smouldering in certain hearts hath blazed more fiercely than before. For the victims of oppression to intercede in favor of their enemies is, in the estimation of rulers, a princely deed. Some must have certainly heard that this oppressed people have, in that city (Ishqabad), pleaded with the Governor on behalf of their murderers, and asked for the mitigation of their sentence. Take, then, good heed, ye who are men of insight!³⁴⁶

MIRZÁ SA'ID KHÁN, MINISTER OF THE SHÁH

Pause for but a little while and reflect, O Minister, and be fair in thy judgement. What is it that We have committed that could justify thee in having slandered Us unto the King's Ministers, in following thy desires, in perverting the truth, and in uttering thy calumnies against Us? We have never met each other except when We met thee in thy father's house, in the days when the martyrdom of Imám Husayn was being commemorated. On those occasions no one could have had the chance of making known to others his views and beliefs in conversation or in discourse. Thou wilt bear witness to the truth of My words, if thou be of the truthful. I have frequented no other gatherings in which thou couldst have learned My mind or in which any other could have done so. How, then, didst thou pronounce thy verdict against Me, when thou hadst not heard My testimony from Mine own lips? Hast thou not heard what God, exalted be His glory, hath said: "Say not to everyone who meeteth you with a greeting, 'Thou art not a believer'." "Thrust not away those who cry to their Lord at morn and even, craving to behold His face." Thou hast indeed forsaken what the Book of God hath prescribed, and yet thou deemest thyself to be a believer! Despite what thou hast done I entertain -- and to this God is My witness -- no ill will against thee, nor against anyone, though from thee and others We receive such hurt as no believer in the unity of God can sustain. My cause is in the hand of none except God, and My trust is in no one else but Him. Erelong shall your days pass away, as shall pass away the days of those who now, with flagrant pride, vaunt themselves over their neighbour. Soon shall ye be gathered together in the presence of God, and shall be asked of your doings, and shall be repaid for what your hands have wrought, and wretched is the abode of the wicked doers!

By God! Wert thou to realize what thou hast done, thou wouldst surely weep sore over thyself, and wouldst flee for refuge to God, and wouldst pine away and mourn all the days of thy life, till God will have forgiven thee,

for He, verily, is the Most Generous, the All-Bountiful. Thou wilt, however, persist, till the hour of thy death, in thy heedlessness, inasmuch as thou hast,

with all thine heart, thy soul and inmost being, busied thyself with the vanities of the world. Thou shalt, after thy departure, discover what We have revealed unto thee, and shalt find all thy doings recorded in the Book wherein the works of all them that dwell on earth, be they greater or less than the weight of an atom, are noted down. Heed, therefore, My counsel, and hearken thou, with the hearing of thine heart, unto My speech, and be not careless of My words, nor be of them that reject My truth. Glory not in the things that have been given thee. Set before thine eyes what hath been revealed in the Book of God, the Help in Peril, the All-Glorious: "And when they had forgotten their warnings, We set open to them the gates of all things," even as We did set open to thee and to thy like the gates of this earth and the ornaments thereof. Wait thou, therefore, for what hath been promised in the latter part of this holy verse, for this is a promise from Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise -- a promise that will not prove untrue.³⁴⁷

MÍRZÁ HUSAYN KHÁN, MUSHIRU'D-DAWLIH

His Excellency, the late Mírzá Husayn Khán, Mushiru'd-Dawlih, -- may God forgive him -- hath known this Wronged One, and he, no doubt, must have given to the Authorities a circumstantial account of the arrival of this Wronged One at the Sublime Porte, and of the things which He said and did. On the day of Our arrival the Government Official, whose duty it was to receive and entertain official visitors, met Us and escorted Us to the place he had been bidden to take Us. In truth, the Government showed these wronged ones the utmost kindness and consideration. The following day Prince Shuja'u'd-Dawlih, accompanied by Mírzá Safá, acting as the representatives of the late Mushiru'd-Dawlih, the Minister (accredited to the Imperial Court) came to visit Us. Others, among whom were several Ministers of the Imperial Government, and including the late Kamal Pasha, likewise called on Us. Wholly reliant on God, and without any reference to any need He might have had, or to any other matter, this Wronged One sojourned for a period of four months in that city. His actions were known and evident unto all, and none can deny them except such as hate Him, and speak not the truth. He that hath recognized God, recognizeth none other but Him. We have never liked, nor like We, to make mention of such things.

Whenever high dignitaries of Persia came to that city (Constantinople) they would exert themselves to the utmost soliciting at every door such allowances and gifts as they might obtain. This Wronged One, however, if He hath done nothing that would redound to the glory of Persia, hath at least acted in a manner that could in no wise disgrace it. That which was done by his late Excellency (Mushiru'd-Dawlih) -- may God exalt his station -- was not actuated by his friendship towards this Wronged One, but

rather was prompted by his own sagacious judgment, and by his desire to accomplish the service he secretly contemplated rendering his Government. I testify that he was so faithful in his service to his Government that dishonesty played no part, and was held in contempt, in the domain of his activities. It was he who was responsible for the arrival of these wronged ones in the Most Great Prison (Akká). As he was faithful, however, in the discharge of his duty, he deserveth Our commendation. This Wronged One hath, at all times, aimed and striven to exalt and advance the interests of both the government and the people, not to elevate His own station. A number of men have, now, gathered others about them, and have arisen to dishonor this Wronged One. He, nevertheless, beseecheth God -- hallowed and glorified be He -- to aid them to return unto Him, and assist them to compensate for that which escaped them, and repent before the door of His bounty. He, verily, is the Forgiving, the Merciful.³⁴⁸

SIYYID MUHAMMAD 'ALIY-I-ISFÁHÁNI

Every one of this people well knoweth that Siyyid Muhammad was but one of Our servants. In the days when, as requested by the Imperial Ottoman Government, We proceeded to their Capital, he accompanied Us. Subsequently, he committed that which -- I swear by God -- hath caused the Pen of the Most High to weep and His Tablet to groan. We, therefore, cast him out; whereupon, he joined Mírzá Yahyá, and did what no tyrant hath ever done. We abandoned him, and said unto him: "Begone, O heedless one!" After these words had been uttered, he joined the order of the Mawlavis, and remained in their company until the time when We were summoned to depart.³⁴⁹

O thou who hast turned thy gaze towards My face! In these days there occurred that which hath plunged Me into dire sadness. Certain wrongdoers who profess allegiance to the Cause of God committed such deeds as

have caused the limbs of sincerity, of honesty, of justice, of equity to quake. One known individual [Siyyid Muhammad-'Alíy-i-Isfáhání] to whom the utmost kindness and favour had been extended perpetrated such acts as have brought tears to the eye of God. Formerly We uttered words of warning and premonition, then for a number of years We kept the matter secret that haply he might take heed and repent. But all to no purpose. In the end he bent his energies upon vilifying the Cause of God before the eyes of all men. He tore the veil of fairness asunder and felt sympathy neither for himself nor for the Cause of God. Now, however, the deeds of certain individuals have brought sorrows far more grievous than those which the deeds of the former had caused. Beseech thou God, the True One, that He may graciously enable the heedless to retract and repent. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Bountiful, the Most Generous.³⁵⁰

MÍRZÁ HADIY-I-DAWLAT-ABADI

It behooveth thee now to reflect upon the state of Mírzá Hadí

Dawlat-Abadi and of Sad-i-Isfáhání (Sadru'l-'Ulama), who reside in the Land of Tá (Tihrán). No sooner had the former heard that he had been called a Bábí than he became so perturbed that his poise and dignity forsook him. He ascended the pulpits and spoke words which ill befitted him. From time immemorial the clay clods of the world have, wholly by reason of their love of leadership, perpetrated such acts as have caused men to err. Thou must not, however, imagine that all the faithful are such as these two. We have described unto thee the constancy, the firmness, the steadfastness, the certitude, the imperturbability and the dignity of the martyrs of this Revelation, that thou mayest be well-informed. My purpose in citing the passages from the Tablets to the kings and others hath been that thou mayest know of a certainty that this Wronged One hath not concealed the Cause of God, but hath proclaimed and delivered, in the most eloquent language, before the face of the world, the things He had been commissioned to set forth. Certain faint-hearted ones, however, such as Hadi and others, have tampered with the Cause of God and have, in their concern for this fleeting life, said and done that which caused the eye of justice to weep and the Pen of Glory to groan, notwithstanding their ignorance of the essentials of this Cause; whereas this Wronged One hath revealed it for the sake of God. O Hadi! Thou hast gone unto My brother and hast seen him. Set now thy face towards the court of this Wronged One, that haply the breezes of Revelation and the breaths of inspiration may assist thee and enable thee to attain thy goal. Whoever gazeth this day on My signs will distinguish truth from falsehood as the sun from shadow, and will be made cognizant of the goal. God is aware and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been mentioned was for the sake of God, that haply thou mayest be the cause of the guidance of men, and mayest deliver the peoples of the world from idle fancies and vain imaginings. Gracious God! Until now they that have turned aside and denied Me have failed to recognize Who despatched that which was delivered unto the Herald -- the Primal Point! The knowledge of it is with God, the Lord of the worlds.³⁵¹

O people of the Bayán! It is men like unto Hadi Dawlat-Abadi who, with turban and staff, [The insignia of a Mullá] have been the source of opposition and hindrance and have so grievously burdened the people with superstitions that even at the present time they still expect the appearance of a fictitious person from a fictitious place. Be ye warned, O men of understanding.

O Hadi! Give ear unto the Voice of this trustworthy Counsellor: direct thy steps from the left unto the right, that is turn away from idle fancy

unto certitude. Lead not the people into error. The divine Luminary shineth, His Cause is manifest and His signs are all-embracing. Set thy face towards God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Renounce thy leadership for the sake of God and leave the people unto themselves. Thou art ignorant of the essential truth, thou art not acquainted therewith.

O Hadi! Be thou of one face in the path of God. When in company

with the infidels, thou art an infidel and with the pious, thou art pious. Reflect thou upon such souls as offered up their lives and their substance in that land, that haply thou mayest be admonished and roused from slumber. Consider: who is to be preferred, he who preserveth his body, his life and his possessions or the one who surrendereth his all in the path of God? Judge thou fairly and be not of the unjust. Take fast hold of justice and adhere unto equity that perchance thou mayest not, for selfish motives, use religion as a snare, nor disregard the truth for the sake of gold. Indeed thine iniquity and the iniquity of such people as thyself have waxed so grievous that the Pen of Glory was moved to make such observations. Fear thou God. He Who heralded this Revelation hath declared: 'He shall proclaim under all conditions: "Verily, verily, I am God, no God is there but Me, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting."'

O people of the Bayán! Ye have been forbidden to contact the loved ones of God. Why hath this ban been imposed and for what purpose? Be ye fair, I adjure you by God, and be not of the heedless. Unto such as are endowed with insight, and before the Most Great Beauty, the object of this ban is known and evident; it is so that no one may become aware of his (Hadi's) secrets and deeds.

O Hadi! Thou hast not been in Our company, thou art therefore ignorant of the Cause. Act not according to thine idle imaginings. Aside from these things, scrutinize the Writings with thine own eyes and ponder upon that which hath come to pass. Have pity upon thyself and upon the servants of God and be not the cause of waywardness like unto the people aforesaid. The path is unmistakable and the proof is evident. Change injustice into justice and inequity into equity. We cherish the hope that the breaths of divine inspiration may strengthen thee and that thine inner ear may be enabled to hear the blessed words: 'Say, it is God, then leave them to entertain themselves with their cavillings.' [Qur'án 6:91] Thou has been there (Cyprus) and hast seen him (Mírzá Yahyá). Now speak forth with fairness. Do not misrepresent the matter, neither to thyself nor to the people. Thou art both ignorant and uninformed. Give ear unto the Voice of this Wronged One and hasten towards the ocean of divine knowledge that perchance thou mayest be adorned with the ornament of comprehension and mayest renounce all else but God. Harken unto the Voice of this benevolent Counsellor, calling aloud, unveiled and manifest, before the faces of kings and their subjects, and summon the people of the world, one and all, unto Him Who is the Lord of Eternity. This is the Word from Whose horizon the day-star of unfailing grace shineth resplendent.

O Hadi! This Wronged One, rid of all attachment to the world, hath striven with utmost endeavour to quench the fire of animosity and hatred which burneth fiercely in the hearts of the peoples of the earth. It behoveth every just and fair-minded person to render thanks unto God -- exalted be His glory -- and to arise to promote this pre-eminent Cause, that fire may turn into light, and hatred may give way to fellowship and love. I swear by the righteousness of God! This is the sole purpose of this Wronged

One. Indeed in proclaiming this momentous Cause and in demonstrating its Truth We have endured manifold sufferings, hardships and tribulations. Thou thyself wouldst bear witness unto that which We have mentioned, couldst thou but speak with fairness. Verily God speaketh the truth and leadeth the Way. He is the Powerful, the Mighty, the Gracious.³⁵²

The disbelievers among the people of the Bayán are like the followers of the Shí'ih sect and walk in their footsteps. Leave them to their

idle fancies and vain imaginings. They are in truth accounted with the lost in the Book of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. The Shi'ih divines, one and all, are now engaged in reviling and denouncing the True One from their pulpits. Gracious God! Dawlat-Abádí too hath followed suit. He ascended

the pulpit and gave voice to that which hath caused the Tablet to cry out in anguish and the Pen to wail. Meditate upon his conduct and the conduct of Ashraf³⁵³ -- upon him be My glory and My tender mercy -- and likewise consider those loved ones who hastened to the place of martyrdom in My Name, and offered up their lives in the path of Him Who is the Desire of the world.³⁵⁴

SHAYKH MURTADA

Those doctors who have indeed drunk of the cup of renunciation have never interfered with this Servant. Thus, for example, Shaykh Murtada -- may God exalt his station and cause him to repose beneath the canopy of His grace! -- showed forth kindness during Our sojourn in 'Iráq, and never spoke of this Cause otherwise than as God hath given leave. We beseech God to graciously assist all to do His will and pleasure.³⁵⁵

SULTÁN 'ABDU'L-'AZIZ

"Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz banished Us to this country in the greatest abasement, and since his object was to destroy Us and humble Us, whenever the means of glory and ease presented themselves, We did not reject them."³⁵⁶

"Now, praise be to God, the point when all the people of these regions are manifesting their submissiveness unto Us...The Ottoman Sultán, without any justification, or reason, arose to oppress Us, and sent Us to the fortress of 'Akká. His imperial farmán decreed that none should associate with Us, and that We should become the object of the hatred of every one. The Hand of Divine power, therefore, swiftly avenged Us. It first loosed the winds of destruction upon his two irreplaceable ministers and confidants, 'Alí and Fu'ád, after which that Hand was stretched out to roll up the panoply of Azíz himself, and to seize him, as He only can seize, Who is the Mighty, the Strong."³⁵⁷

Every unbiased observer will readily admit that, ever since the dawn of His Revelation, this wronged One hath invited all mankind to turn their faces towards the Day Spring of Glory, and hath forbidden corruption, hatred, oppression, and wickedness. And yet, behold what the hand of the

oppressor hath wrought! No pen dare describe his tyranny. Though the purpose of Him Who is the Eternal Truth hath been to confer everlasting life upon all men, and ensure their security and peace, yet witness how they have arisen to shed the blood of His loved ones, and have pronounced on Him the sentence of death.

The instigators of this oppression are those very persons who, though so foolish, are reputed the wisest of the wise. Such is their blindness that, with unfeigned severity, they have cast into this fortified and afflictive

Prison Him, for the servants of Whose Threshold the world hath been created. The Almighty, however, in spite of them and those that have repudiated the truth of this "Great Announcement," hath transformed this Prison House into the Most Exalted Paradise, the Heaven of Heavens.³⁵⁸

MÍRZÁ YAHYÁ

O Shaykh! My Pen, verily, lamenteth over Mine own Self, and My Tablet weepeth sore over what hath befallen Me at the hands of one (Mírzá Yahyá) over whom We watched for successive years, and who, day and night, served in My presence, until he was made to err by one of My servants, named Siyyid Muhammad. Unto this bear witness My believing servants who accompanied Me in My exile from Baghdád to this, the Most Great Prison. And there befell Me at the hands of both of them that which made every man of understanding to cry out, and he who is endued with insight to groan aloud, and the tears of the fair-minded to flow.³⁵⁹

I am the one, O Lord, whose heart and soul, whose limbs, whose inner and outer tongue testify to Thy unity and Thy oneness, and bear witness that Thou art God and that there is no God but Thee. Thou didst bring mankind into being to know Thee and to serve Thy Cause, that their station might thereby be elevated upon Thine earth and their souls be uplifted by virtue of the things Thou hast revealed in Thy Scriptures, Thy Books and Thy Tablets. Yet no sooner didst Thou manifest Thyself and reveal Thy signs than they turned away from Thee and repudiated Thee and rejected that which Thou didst unveil before their eyes through the potency of Thy might and Thy power. They rose up to inflict harm upon Thee, to extinguish Thy light and to put out the flame that blazeth in Thy Burning Bush. Their iniquity waxed so grievous that they conspired to shed Thy blood and to violate Thy honour. And likewise acted he [Mírzá Yahyá] whom Thou hadst nurtured with the hand of Thy loving-kindness, hadst protected from the mischief of the rebellious among Thy creatures and the froward amidst Thy servants, and whom Thou hadst set the task of writing Thy holy verses before Thy throne.

Alas! Alas! for the things he perpetrated in Thy days to such an extent that he violated Thy Covenant and Thy Testament, rejected Thy holy Writ, rose up in rebellion and committed that which caused the denizens of Thy Kingdom to lament. Then no sooner had he found his hopes shattered

and had perceived the odour of utter failure than he raised his voice and gave tongue to that which caused Thy chosen ones, who are nigh unto Thee, and the inmates of the pavilion of glory, to be lost in bewilderment.³⁶⁰

And likewise, He saith: "They will even refuse unto that Tree, which is neither of the East nor of the West, the name believer, for were they so to name Him, they would fail to sadden Him." Hath thine ear, O world, heard with what helplessness these words were revealed from the dayspring of the will of Him Who is the Dawning-Place of all names? He saith: "I have educated all men, that they may recognize this Revelation, and yet the people of the Bayán refuse to concede even the name believer to that blessed Tree that belongeth neither to the East nor to the West." Alas, alas, for the things which have befallen Me! By God! There befell Me at the hands of him whom I have nurtured (Mírzá Yahyá), by day and by night, what hath caused the Holy Spirit, and the dwellers of the Tabernacle of the Grandeur of God, the Lord of this wondrous Day, to lament.³⁶¹

Again I repeat, and plead with thee to carefully scrutinize that which hath been revealed. The breezes of utterance in this Revelation are not to be compared with those of former ages. This Wronged One hath been perpetually afflicted, and found no place of safety in which He could peruse either the writings of the Most Exalted One (the Báb) or those of any one else. About two months after Our arrival in 'Iráq, following the command of His Majesty the Sháh of Persia -- may God assist him -- Mírzá Yahyá joined Us. We said unto him: "In accordance with the Royal command We have been sent unto this place. It is advisable for thee to remain in Persia. We will send Our brother, Mírzá Músá, to some other place. As your names have not been mentioned in the Royal decree, you can arise and render some service." Subsequently, this Wronged One departed from Baghdád, and for two years withdrew from the world. Upon Our return, We found that he had not left, and had postponed his departure. This Wronged One was greatly saddened. God testifieth and beareth Us witness that We have, at all times, been busied with the propagation of this Cause. Neither chains nor bonds, stocks nor imprisonment, have succeeded in withholding Us from revealing Our Self. In that land We forbad all mischief, and all unseemly and unholy deeds. Day and night We sent forth Our Tablets in every direction. We had no other purpose except to edify the souls of men, and to exalt the blessed Word.

We especially appointed certain ones to collect the writings of the Primal Point. When this was accomplished, We summoned Mírzá Yahyá and Mírzá Vahháb-i-Khurásání, known as Mírzá Javád, to meet in a certain place. Conforming with Our instructions, they completed the task of transcribing two copies of the works of the Primal Point. I swear by God! This Wronged One, by reason of His constant association with men, hath not looked at these books, nor gazed with outward eyes on these writings. When We departed, these writings were in the possession of these two persons. It was agreed that Mírzá Yahyá should be entrusted with them,

and proceed to Persia, and disseminate them throughout that land. This Wronged One proceeded, at the request of the Ministers of the Ottoman Government to their capital. When We arrived in Mosul, We found that Mírzá Yahyá had left before Us for that city, and was awaiting Us there. Briefly, the books and writings were left in Baghdád, while he himself proceeded to Constantinople and joined these servants. God beareth now witness unto the things which have touched this Wronged One, for after We had so arduously striven, he (Mírzá Yahyá) abandoned the writings and joined the exiles. This Wronged One was, for a long period, overwhelmed by infinite sorrows until such time when, in pursuance of measures of which none but the one true God is aware, We despatched the writings unto another place and another country, owing to the fact that in Iraq all documents must every month be carefully examined, lest they rot and perish. God, however, preserved them and sent them unto a place which He had previously ordained. He, verily, is the Protector, the Succorer. Wherever this Wronged One went Mírzá Yahyá followed Him. Thou art thyself a witness and well knowest that whatever hath been said is the truth. The Siyyid of Isfáhán, however, surreptitiously duped him. They committed that which caused the greatest consternation. Would that thou wouldst inquire from the officials of the government concerning the conduct of Mírzá Yahyá in that land. Aside from all this, I adjure thee by God, the One, the Incomparable, the Lord of Strength, the Most Powerful, to carefully look into the communications addressed in his name to the Primal Point, that thou mayest behold the evidences of Him Who is the Truth as clear as the sun. Likewise, there proceeded from the words of the Point of the Bayán -- may the souls of all else but Him be sacrificed for His sake -- that which no veil can obscure, and which neither the veils of glory nor the veils interposed by such as have gone astray can hide. The veils have, verily, been rent asunder by the finger of the will of thy Lord, the Strong, the All-Subduing, the All-Powerful. Yea, desperate is the state of such as have calumniated Me and envied Me. Not long ago it was stated that thou hadst ascribed the authorship of the Kitáb-i-Íqán and of other Tablets unto others.

I swear by God! This is a grievous injustice. Others are incapable of apprehending their meaning, how much more of revealing them! Hasan-i-Mázindaráni was the bearer of seventy Tablets. Upon his death, these were not delivered unto those for whom they were intended, but were entrusted to one of the sisters of this Wronged One, who, for no reason whatever, had turned aside from Me. God knoweth what befell His Tablets. This sister had never lived with Us. I swear by the Sun of Truth that after these things had happened she never saw Mírzá Yahyá, and remained unaware of Our Cause, for in those days she had been estranged from Us. She lived in one quarter, and this Wronged One in another. As a token, however, of Our loving-kindness, our affection and mercy, We, a few days prior to Our departure, visited her and her mother, that haply she might quaff from the living waters of faith, and attain unto that which would draw

her nigh unto God, in this day. God well knoweth and beareth Me witness, and she herself testifieth, that I had no thought whatsoever except this. Finally, she -- God be praised -- attained unto this through His grace, and was adorned with the adornment of love. After We were exiled and had departed from Iraq to Constantinople, however, news of her ceased to reach Us. Subsequent to Our separation in the Land of Tá (Tíhrán), We ceased to meet Mírzá Ridá-Qulí, Our brother, and no special news reached Us concerning her. In the early days we all lived in one house, which later on was sold at auction, for a negligible sum, and the two brothers, Farmán-Farmá and Hisamu's-Saltáníh, purchased it and divided it between themselves. After this occurred, We separated from Our brother. He established his residence close to the entrance of Masjid-i-Sháh, whilst We lived near the Gate of Shimírán. Thereafter, however, that sister displayed toward Us, for no reason whatever, a hostile attitude. This Wronged One held His peace under all conditions. However, Our late brother Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan's daughter -- upon him be the glory of God and His peace and His mercy -- who had been betrothed to the Most Great Branch ('Abdu'l-Bahá) was taken by the sister of this Wronged One from Nur to her own house, and from there sent unto another place. Some of Our companions and friends in various places complained against this, as it was a very grievous act, and was disapproved by all the loved ones of God. How strange that Our sister should have taken her to her own house, and then arranged for her to be sent elsewhere! In spite of this, this Wronged One remained, and still remaineth, calm and silent. A word, however, was said

in order to tranquilize Our loved ones. God testifieth and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been said was the truth, and was spoken with sincerity. None of Our loved ones, whether in these regions or in that country, could believe Our sister capable of an act so contrary to decency, affection and friendship. After such a thing had occurred, they, recognizing that the way had been barred, conducted themselves in a manner well-known unto thyself and others. It must be evident, therefore, how intense was the grief which this act inflicted upon this Wronged One. Later on, she threw in her lot with Mírzá Yahyá. Conflicting reports concerning her are now reaching Us, nor is it clear what she is saying or doing. We beseech God -- blessed and glorified be He -- to cause her to turn unto Him, and aid her to repent before the door of His grace. He, verily, is the Mighty, the Forgiving; and He is, in truth, the All-Powerful, the Pardoner.

In another connection He, likewise, saith: "Were He to appear this very moment, I would be the first to adore Him, and the first to bow down before Him." Be fair, O people! The purpose of the Most Exalted One (the Báb) was to insure that the proximity of the Revelation should not withhold men from the Divine and everlasting Law, even as the companions of John (the Baptist) were prevented from acknowledging Him Who is the Spirit (Jesus). Time and again He hath said: "Suffer not the Bayán and all that hath been revealed therein to withhold you from that Essence of Being and Lord of the visible and invisible." Should any one, considering this binding

injunction, cling unto the Bayán, such a one hath, verily, passed out of the shadow of the blessed and exalted Tree. Be fair, O people, and be not of the heedless.

And likewise, He saith: "Let not names shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is their Lord, even the name of Prophet, for such a name is but a creation of His utterance." And likewise, He, in the seventh chapter of the second Vahid, saith: "O people of the Bayán! Act not as the people of the Qur'án have acted, for if ye do so, the fruits of your night will come to naught." And further, He saith -- glorified be His mention: "If thou attainest unto His Revelation, and obeyest Him, thou wilt have revealed the fruit of the Bayán; if not, thou art unworthy of mention before God. Take pity upon thyself. If thou aidest not Him Who is the Manifestation of the Lordship of God, be not, then, a cause of sadness unto Him." And further He saith -- magnified be His station: "If thou attainest not unto the Presence of God, grieve not, then, the Sign of God. Ye will renounce that which can profit them that acknowledge the Bayán, if ye renounce that which can harm Him. I know, however, that ye will refuse to do so."

O Hadí! Methinks it is by reason of these indubitable utterances that thou hast determined to blot out the Bayán. Give ear unto the voice of this Wronged One, and renounce this oppression that hath made the pillars of the Bayán to tremble. I have been neither in Chihriq nor in Máh-Kú. At the present time statements have been circulated among thy disciples identical with those made by the Shi'íhs who have said that the Qur'án is unfinished. These people also contend that this Bayán is not the original one. The copy in the handwriting of Siyyid Husayn is extant, as is also the copy in the handwriting of Mírzá Ahmad.³⁶²

Say: O source of perversion! Abandon thy willful blindness, and speak forth the truth amidst the people. I swear by God that I have wept for thee to see thee following thy selfish passions and renouncing Him Who fashioned thee and brought thee into being. Call to mind the tender mercy of thy Lord, and remember how We nurtured thee by day and by night for service to the Cause. Fear God, and be thou of the truly repentant. Granted that the people were confused about thy station, is it conceivable that thou thyself art similarly confused? Tremble before thy Lord and recall the days when thou didst stand before Our throne, and didst write down the verses that We dictated unto thee -- verses sent down by God, the Omnipotent Protector, the Lord of might and power. Beware lest the fire of thy presumptuousness debar thee from attaining to God's Holy Court. Turn unto Him, and fear not because of thy deeds. He, in truth, forgiveth whomsoever He desireth as a bounty on His part; no God is there but Him, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bounteous. We admonish thee solely for the sake of God. Shouldst thou accept this counsel, thou wilt have acted to thine own behoof; and shouldst thou reject it, thy Lord, verily, can well dispense with thee, and with all those who, in manifest delusion, have followed thee. Behold! God hath laid hold on him who led thee astray. Return unto God, humble, submissive and lowly; verily, He will put away from thee thy sins,

for thy Lord, of a certainty, is the Forgiving, the Mighty, the All-Merciful.363

Say: O Yahyá (Azal), produce a single verse, if thou dost possess divinely-inspired knowledge. These words were formerly spoken by My Herald Who at this hour proclaimeth: 'Verily, verily, I am the first to adore Him.' Be fair, O My brother. Art thou able to express thyself when brought face to face with the billowing ocean of Mine utterance? Canst thou unloose thy tongue when confronted with the shrill voice of My Pen? Hast thou any power before the revelations of Mine omnipotence? Judge thou fairly, I adjure thee by God, and call to mind when thou didst stand in the presence of this Wronged One and We dictated to thee the verses of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Beware lest the source of falsehood withhold thee from the manifest Truth.

O thou who hast fixed thy gaze upon My countenance! Say: O ye heedless ones! By reason of a droplet ye have deprived yourselves of the ocean of heavenly verses and for the sake of an insignificant atom ye have shut yourselves out from the splendours of the Day-Star of Truth. Who else but Baha hath the power to speak forth before the face of mankind? Judge ye fairly and be not of the unjust. Through Him the oceans have surged, the mysteries have been divulged and the trees have lifted up their voices exclaiming: The kingdoms of earth and heaven are God's, the Revealer of signs, the Fountainhead of clear tokens. Peruse ye the Persian Bayán revealed by Him Who heralded this Revelation and look at it with the eye of fairness. Verily He will guide you aright to His Path. At this moment He proclaimeth that which His tongue had formerly uttered when He was seated upon the throne of His most exalted Name.364

YAHYÁ'Í BĀBÍS365

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-Muhammad, 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, caviled 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 dishonor 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.³⁶⁶

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ON PLACES

TÁR

Thou hast made mention of the people of Tár³⁶⁷. We have set Our face toward the servants of God therein and advise them first to consider that which the Point of the Bayán hath revealed concerning this Revelation whereby all names and titles have been shaken, the idols of vain imaginings have crumbled and the Tongue of Grandeur hath, from the realm of glory, proclaimed: By the righteousness of God! The Hidden Treasure, the Impenetrable Mystery, hath been uncovered to men's eyes, causing all things, whether of the past or of the future, to rejoice. He hath said, and His word is the truth: 'Of all the tributes I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in My Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause.'

Moreover We counsel them to observe justice, equity, honesty, piety and that whereby both the Word of God and their own station will be exalted amongst men. Verily I am the One Who exhorteth with justice. Unto this beareth witness He from Whose Pen rivers of mercy have flowed and from Whose utterance fountains of living waters have streamed forth unto all created things. Immeasurably exalted is this boundless grace; immensely blessed is this resplendent favour.

O people of Tár! Give ear unto the Call of Him Who doeth whatsoever He willeth. In truth He remindeth you of that which will draw you nigh unto God, the Lord of the worlds. He hath turned His face towards you from the Prison of 'Akká and hath revealed for your sakes what will immortalize your memory and your names in the Book which cannot be effaced and remaineth unaffected by the doubts of the froward. Cast away the things current amongst men and take fast hold on that whereunto ye are bidden by virtue of the Will of the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day wherein the divine Lote-Tree calleth aloud, saying: O people! Behold ye My fruits and My leaves, incline then your ears unto My rustling. Beware lest the doubts of men debar you from the light of certitude. The Ocean of utterance exclaimeth and saith: 'O ye dwellers on the earth! Behold My billowing waters and the pearls of wisdom and utterance which I have poured forth. Fear ye God and be not of the heedless.'

In this Day a great festival is taking place in the Realm above; for whatsoever was promised in the sacred Scriptures hath been fulfilled. This is the Day of great rejoicing. It behoveth everyone to hasten towards the court of

His nearness with exceeding joy, gladness, exultation and delight and to deliver himself from the fire of remoteness.

O people of Tár! Through the strengthening power of My Name seize ye the chalice of knowledge, drink then your fill in defiance of the people

of the world who have broken the Covenant of God and His Testament, rejected His proofs and clear tokens, and cavilled at His signs which have pervaded all that are in heaven and on earth.

The disbelievers among the people of the Bayán are like the followers of the Shi'ih sect and walk in their footsteps. Leave them to their idle fancies and vain imaginings. They are in truth accounted with the lost in the Book of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. The Shi'ih divines, one and all, are now engaged in reviling and denouncing the True One from their pulpits. Gracious God! Dawlat-Abádí³⁶⁸ too hath followed suit. He ascended the pulpit and gave voice to that which hath caused the Tablet to cry out in anguish and the Pen to wail. Meditate upon his conduct and the conduct of Ashraf³⁶⁹ -- upon him be My glory and My tender mercy -- and likewise consider those loved ones who hastened to the place of martyrdom in My Name, and offered up their lives in the path of Him Who is the Desire of the world.

The Cause is manifest, it shineth resplendent as the sun, but the people have become veils unto themselves. We entreat God that He may graciously assist them to return unto Him. He is, in truth, the Forgiving, the Merciful.

O people of Tár! We send you greetings from this Spot and beseech God -- blessed and exalted is He -- to give you to drink the choice wine of constancy from the hand of His favour. Verily, He is the Lord of Bounty, the Gracious, the All-Praised. Leave ye unto themselves the immature ones of the world -- they that are moved by selfish desire and cling to the exponents of idle fancy. Verily He is your Helper and Succourer. He is, in truth, potent to do whatsoever He willeth. No God is there but Him, the One, the Peerless, the Mighty, the Most Great.³⁷⁰

TIHRÁN

I was walking in the Land of Tá (Tihrán) -- the dayspring of the signs of thy Lord -- when lo, I heard the lamentation of the pulpits and the voice of their supplication unto God, blessed and glorified be He. They cried out and said: "O God of the world and Lord of the nations! Thou beholdest our state and the things which have befallen us by reason of the cruelty of Thy servants. Thou hast created us and revealed us for Thy glorification and praise. Thou dost now hear what the wayward proclaim upon us in Thy days. By Thy might! Our souls are melted and our limbs are trembling. Alas, alas! Would that we had never been created and revealed by Thee!"³⁷¹

Referring to the land of Tá (Tihrán) We have revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that which will admonish mankind. They that perpetrate tyranny in the world have usurped the rights of the peoples and kindreds of the earth and are sedulously pursuing their selfish inclinations. The tyrant³⁷² of the land of Yá (Yazd), committed that which hath caused the Concourse on High to shed tears of blood.³⁷³

The events that have happened in Persia during the early years have

truly saddened the well-favored and sincere ones. Each year witnessed a fresh massacre, pillage, plunder, and shedding of blood. At one time there appeared in Zanján that which caused the greatest consternation; at another in Nayríz, and at yet another in Tabarsí, and finally there occurred the episode of the Land of Tá (Tihrán). From that time onwards this Wronged One, assisted by the One True God -- exalted be His glory -- acquainted this oppressed people with the things which beseeemed them. All have sanctified themselves from the things which they and others possess, and have clung unto, and fixed their eyes upon that which pertaineth unto God.³⁷⁴

ENDNOTES:

E.G. Browne, in the Introduction to *A Traveler's Narrative*, volume II, pp. xxxix-xl; cited in H.M. Balyuzi, E.G. Browne and *The Bahá'í Faith*, pp. 56-57; and in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 194.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, the name preferred by 'Abbas Effendi, called Sirru'llah and Ghusn-i-A'zam by his father, Bahá'u'lláh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was designated by Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and *Kitab-i-'Ahd* as the authoritative interpreter and expounder of his teachings and writings.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 46-47.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 46-47.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXXXIII, pp. 165-166.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, CXLVIII, pp. 317-318.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XCV, p. 194.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 268.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XXVII, p. 65.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Short Obligatory Prayer*.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XXIX, p. 70.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXXVI, pp. 144-145.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Ishraqat*, in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 111.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 246.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 3.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Asl-i-Kullu'l-i-Khayr*, in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XIX, p. 46.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XX, p. 49.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXI, pp. 49-50.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXVII, pp. 66-67.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXVIII, p. 70.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXIX, pp. 70-71.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXXIV, p. 166.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLIX, p. 102. Another passage which sets forth this duality is in Kitáb-i-Iqán, pp. 177-180:

“Thus, viewed from the standpoint of their oneness and sublime detachment, the attributes of Godhead, Divinity, Supreme Singleness, and Inmost Essence, have been and are applicable to those Essences of being, inasmuch as they all abide on the throne of divine Revelation, and are established upon the seat of divine Concealment. Through their appearance the Revelation of God is made manifest, and by their countenance the Beauty of

God is revealed. Thus it is that the accents of God Himself have been heard uttered by these Manifestations of the divine Being.

“Viewed in the light of their second station -- the station of distinction, differentiation, temporal limitations, characteristics and standards, -- they manifest absolute servitude, utter destitution and complete self-effacement. Even as He saith: "I am the servant of God.[1] I am but a man like you." [Qur'án 18:110]

“From these incontrovertible and fully demonstrated statements strive thou to apprehend the meaning of the questions thou hast asked, that thou mayest become steadfast in the Faith of God, and not be dismayed by the divergences in the utterances of His Prophets and Chosen Ones.

“Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: "I am God!" He verily speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His name and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. Thus, He hath revealed: "Those shafts were God's, not Thine!" [Qur'án 8:17] And also He saith: "In truth, they who plighted fealty unto thee, really plighted that fealty unto God." [Qur'án 48:10] And were any of them to voice the utterance: "I am the Messenger of God," He also speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. Even as He saith: "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God." [Qur'án 33:40] Viewed in this light, they are all but

Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim: "I am the Seal of the Prophets," they verily utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the "Beginning" and the "End," the "First" and the "Last," the "Seen" and "Hidden" -- all of which pertain to Him Who is the innermost Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences. And were they to say: "We are the servants of God," this also is a manifest and indisputable fact. For they have been made manifest in the uttermost state of servitude, a servitude the like of which no man can possibly attain. Thus in moments in which these Essences of being were deeply immersed beneath the oceans of ancient and everlasting holiness, or when they soared to the loftiest summits of divine mysteries, they claimed their utterance to be the Voice of divinity, the Call of God Himself. Were the eye of discernment to be opened, it would recognize that in this very state, they have considered themselves utterly effaced and nonexistent in the face of Him Who is the All-Pervading, the Incorruptible. Methinks, they have regarded themselves as utter nothingness, and deemed their mention in that Court an act of blasphemy. For the slightest whispering of self, within such a Court, is an evidence of self-assertion and independent existence. In the eyes of them that have attained unto that Court, such a suggestion is itself a grievous transgression. How much more grievous would it be, were aught else to be mentioned in that Presence, were man's heart, his tongue, his mind, or his soul, to be busied with anyone but the Well-Beloved, were his eyes to behold any countenance other than His beauty, were his ear to be inclined to any melody but His voice, and were his feet to tread any way but His way."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 218.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 153.

Qur’an 29:2; cited by Bahá’u’lláh in *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 8-9; *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 25; and by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 26-27.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 3-4.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 86.

Bahá’u’lláh cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 9.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, CXXXVI, pp. 294-295.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, CLIII, p. 328.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, VI, p. 10.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 77-78.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 140.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 153.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 80-81.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLI, pp. 90-91.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXVI, p. 148.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXXVII, pp. 272-273.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 185-186.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 241-242.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLVII, pp. 101-102.

"As to the list of the prophets with whom Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself in the passage found on pages 26 and 27 of 'The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh their names are as follows: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, John the Baptist, Jesus, Imam Husayn, on whom Bahá'u'lláh has conferred and exceptionally exalted station (and) the Báb.'" (From letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, August 7, 1936; in Lights of Guidance, p. 475; in U.S. Bahá'í News, No. 87 - September 1934 - page 1)

"In the prayer mentioned above Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself with Imám Husayn. This does not make him a Prophet, but his position was very unique, and we know Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the 'return' of the Imám Husayn. He, in other words, identifies His Spirit with these Holy Souls gone before, that does not, of course, make Him in anyway their reincarnation. Nor does it mean all of them were Prophets." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 8, 1949; in Lights of Guidance, p. 498; Directives from the Guardian, p. 58)

Suratu'l-Damm, in Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXXIX, pp. 88-90; Bahá'u'lláh cited by Shoghi Effendi, in The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 26-27; Athar-i Qalam-i A'la, 4, <http://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/b/Q4/q4-58.html>

Necati Alkan translated this passage from the Suratu'z-Ziyara (revealed for Mullá Husayn's sister named "Warqatu'l-Firdaws"), in which Bahá'u'lláh, also mentioning the previously cited Prophets, represents Himself as Abel, who was killed by his brother Cain. The original is found in Athar-i Qalam-i A'la, 4:301; and also in Ma'idih-yi Asmani, 8:83, line 4:

<http://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/b/MAS8/mas8-83.html#pg83>.

The translator indicated that one can learn more about Cain at:

<http://www.answers.com/topic/cain>

“By the fig, by the olive. By Mount Sinai. By this City of Security (Makkah)” (Qur’án, At-Tín – The Figs, verses 1-3)

Bahá’u’lláh, *Suriy-i-Ra’is*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 143-144.

According to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Gospel of John verses 17:5 and 8:58 refer to Christ's pre-existence (‘Abdu’l-Bahá's commentary on this verse in *Some Answered Questions*, Chapter 28, sections 3-5 [pp. 116-117]). "The soul or spirit of the individual comes into being with the conception of this physical body. The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent. The soul of Christ existed in the spiritual world before His birth in this world" (Shoghi Effendi, quoted in Helen Hornby, *Lights of Guidance* [New

Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1994] 505 (no. 1699). "Abortion and surgical operations for the purpose of preventing the birth of unwanted children are forbidden in the Cause unless there are circumstances which justify such actions on medical grounds, in which case the decision, at present, is left to the consciences of those concerned who must carefully weigh the medical advice in the light of the general guidance given in the Teachings. Beyond this nothing has been found in the Writings concerning specific methods or procedures to be used in family planning. It should be pointed out, however, that the Teachings state that the soul appears at conception, and that therefore it would be improper to use such a method, the effect of which would be to produce an abortion after conception has taken place." (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 23, 1975; in *Lights of Guidance*, #1155)

Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K175.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K176.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K177.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, LXXV, p. 147.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, LXV, pp. 244-245.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, CXXXV, pp. 292-294.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 51-52.

The Báb.

In the *Bayán al-‘arabíyya* and the *Bayán-i-fársí*.

The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh (1863ff).

Bahá’u’lláh.

It is out of the bounty of Bahá’u’lláh that He has set forth these laws of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, otherwise it would have sufficed for His followers to adhere to the laws of the Báb.

The Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh (called Him Whom God shall make manifest in many of the Writings of the Báb).

Distinctive to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is this station of "...the One, the Incomparable, the Omniscient, the All-Informed..." also referred to as "...this sublime and momentous Revelation..."

(Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 13), and

"...this sublime, this beautiful Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-

Aqdas, K116, p. 61) and "...this sublime, this unique and wondrous Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K143, p. 71) and

"...whatever hath been set forth in His Books hath attained its final consummation in this most exalted Word..." (Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 19) "...the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation in the Law that hath branched out from this Most Great Ocean..." (Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 78) and "...this mighty, this sublime, and most holy Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, VI, p. 10) and "...this most exalted, this most holy, this mighty, and wondrous Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LVIII, p. 117) and

"...this pre-eminent and Glorious Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XCI, p. 182) and "...this inestimable, this wondrous, and sublime Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XCII, p. 183) and "...this most sublime and momentous Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXXXII, p. 288) and "...this most effulgent, this most holy, and manifest Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 294) and "...this holy, this glorious, and exalted Revelation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLIV, p. 330) and "...in this most mighty Revelation all

the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest and final consummation..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXV, p. 244) and "...this most mighty Revelation, all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation" (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLXI, p. 340). He also wrote "Were the breezes of Revelation to seize thee, thou wouldst flee the world, and turn unto the Kingdom, and wouldst expend all thou possessest, that thou mayest draw nigh unto this sublime Vision..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 56).

God's "bounteous favour". This is not subject to human choice—rejection or acceptance—it is God's decree and it is "irresistible". Baha, or, in its superlative form, Abha. Manifestation of God.

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Manifestation of God.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K142-143.

Bahá'í Prayers, p. 210 [Commentary: Why does Bahá'u'lláh encourage us to contemplate His sufferings, particularly whenever we face sufferings of our own? To remember Him in His days? I think it is because He wants us to see suffering from His point of view. From His point of view suffering is nothing at all of consequence, He will happily sacrifice His life for the glory of God, but there is one thing that causes Him real sorrow-

"I sorrow not for My captivity, nor for the things that have befallen Me at the hand of Mine enemies. Nay, My sorrows are occasioned by those who claim to be related to Me and yet commit that which causeth the voice of My lamentations to be lifted up and My tears to flow. We have exhorted them at length in various Tablets and beseech God to graciously assist them, to enable them to draw nigh unto Him and to confirm them in that which would bring peace to the hearts and tranquillity to the souls and would stay their hands from whatsoever ill-beseemeth His days." (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 121) Once we see things

through His eyes, we know that we must be obedient to God's Will, we must treat everyone on earth with kindness, because to do other than this is to bring sorrow to our Lord. As He writes in the Arabic Hidden Words (#68): "Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory." Referring to our tendency to pick fights with one another, He writes: "If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of lovingkindness and fellowship. Thus counselleth you the All-

Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. To this beareth witness every man of true understanding." (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 315-316)]

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XV,

pp. 36-37.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 249-250; Shoghi Effendi has described Bahá'u'lláh's sufferings during this period citing many passages from the Writings revealed at the time, in *God Passes By*, pp. 117-119:

“The cup of Bahá'u'lláh's sorrows was now running over. All His exhortations, all His efforts to remedy a rapidly deteriorating situation, had remained fruitless. The velocity of His manifold woes was hourly and visibly increasing. Upon the sadness that filled His soul and the gravity of the situation confronting Him, His writings, revealed during that somber period, throw abundant light. In some of His prayers He poignantly confesses that "tribulation upon tribulation" had gathered about Him, that "adversaries with one consent" had fallen upon Him, that "wretchedness" had grievously touched Him, and that "woes at their blackest" had befallen Him. God Himself He calls upon as a Witness to His "sighs and lamentations," His "powerlessness, poverty and destitution," to the "injuries" He sustained, and the "abasement" He suffered. "So grievous hath been My weeping," He, in one of these prayers, avows, "that I have been prevented from making mention of Thee and singing Thy praises." "So loud hath been the voice of My lamentation," He, in another passage, avers, "that every mother mourning for her child would be amazed, and would still her weeping and her grief." "The wrongs which I suffer," He, in His *Lawh-i-Maryam*, laments, "have blotted out the wrongs suffered by My First Name (the Báb) from the Tablet of creation." "O Maryam!" He continues, "From the Land of Ta (Tíhrán), after countless afflictions, We reached Iraq, 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!" And again: "I have borne what no man, be he of the past or of the future, hath borne or will bear." "Oceans of sadness," He testifies in the Tablet of *Kullu't-Ta'am*, "have surged over Me, a drop of which no soul could bear to drink. Such is My grief that My soul hath well nigh departed from My body." "Give ear, O Kamal!" He, in that same Tablet, depicting His plight, exclaims, "to the voice of this lowly, this forsaken ant, that hath hid itself in its hole, and whose desire is to depart from your midst, and vanish from your sight, by reason of that which the hands of men have wrought. God, verily, hath been witness between Me and His servants." And again: "Woe is Me, woe is Me!... All that I have seen from the day on which I first drank the pure milk from the breast of My mother until this moment hath been effaced from My memory, in consequence of that which the hands of the people have committed." Furthermore, in His *Qasídiy-i-Varqá'íyyih*, an ode revealed during the days of His retirement to the mountains of Kurdistán, in praise of the Maiden personifying the Spirit of God recently descended upon Him, He thus gives vent to the agonies of His sorrow-laden heart:

"Noah's flood is but the measure of the tears I have shed, and Abraham's fire an ebullition of My soul. Jacob's grief is but a reflection of My sorrows, and Job's afflictions a fraction of my calamity." "Pour out patience upon Me, O My Lord!" -- such is His supplication in one of His prayers, "and render Me victorious over the transgressors." "In these days," He, describing in the Kitáb-i-Íqán the virulence of the jealousy which, at that time, was beginning to bare its venomous fangs, has written, "such odors of jealousy are diffused, that ... from the beginning of the foundation of the world ... until the present day, such malice, envy and hate have in no wise appeared, nor will they ever be witnessed in the future." "For two years or rather less," He, likewise, in another Tablet, declares, "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."

"Mírzá Aqa Jan himself has testified: "That Blessed Beauty evinced such sadness that the limbs of my body trembled." He has, likewise, related, as reported by Nabil in his narrative, that, shortly before Bahá'u'lláh's retirement, he had on one occasion seen Him, between dawn and sunrise, suddenly come out from His house, His night-cap still on His head, showing such signs of perturbation that he was powerless to gaze into His face, and while walking, angrily remark: "These creatures are the same creatures who for three thousand years have worshipped idols, and bowed down before the Golden Calf. Now, too, they are fit for nothing better. What relation can there be between this people and Him Who is the Countenance of Glory? What ties can bind them to the One Who is the supreme embodiment of all that is lovable?" "I stood," declared Mírzá Áqa Ján, "rooted to the spot, lifeless, dried up as a dead tree, ready to fall under the impact of the stunning power of His words. Finally, He said: 'Bid them recite: "Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!" Tell them to repeat it five hundred times, nay, a thousand times, by day and by night, sleeping and waking, that haply the Countenance of Glory may be unveiled to their eyes, and tiers of light descend upon them.' He Himself, I was subsequently informed, recited this same verse, His face betraying the utmost sadness. ...Several times during those days, He was heard to remark: 'We have, for a while, tarried amongst this people, and failed to discern the slightest response on their part.' Oftentimes He alluded to His disappearance from our midst, yet none of us understood His meaning.'"

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XV, pp. 37-38.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXII, pp. 119-120.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXVI,

pp. 128-130.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXVI, p. 148.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXLIII, p. 312.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 14-18.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 204-208; partially in Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXVI, p. 130.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 74-75.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLVI, pp. 100-101

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 104-105.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 105-106.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, LXVIII, pp. 111-112.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 94-95.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 16-17.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, XC, pp. 151-152.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, p. 230.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLI, pp. 242-243.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 57.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 87.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXXII, pp. 75-76.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLV, pp. 99-100.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXLVI, pp. 315-316.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, LXVIII, p. 111.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXIII, pp. 228-230; Suriy-i-Muluk, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 228-230.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 73-74; Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 52-53.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K110, p. 59.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Questions and Answers compiled by Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin, p. 105: QUESTION: Concerning the Festival

of the Twin Birthdays. ANSWER...

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K91-K92, p. 53.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K110, p. 59.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suratu'l-Haykal, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 80.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 301-306.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXI, p. 216.

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Ra'is, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 165-168.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XXX, pp. 73-74.

"On one occasion," writes Dr. J. E. Esslemont, "Abdu'l-Bahá, the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, related to the writer the following particulars about His Father's early days: 'From childhood He was extremely kind and generous. He was a great lover of outdoor life, most of His time being spent in the garden or the fields. He had an extraordinary power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him. Ministers and people of the Court would surround Him, and the children also were devoted to Him. When He was only thirteen or fourteen years old He became renowned for His learning.... When Bahá'u'lláh was twenty-two years old, His father died, and the Government wished Him to succeed to His father's position in the Ministry as was customary in Persia, but Bahá'u'lláh did not accept the offer. Then the Prime Minister said: "Leave him to himself. Such a position is unworthy of him. He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand him, but I am convinced that he is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let him alone."' (Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pp. 29-30, cited in Shoghi Effendi, The Dawn-Breakers, Note 2, p. 106)

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 169-171.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LV, p. 108.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 109-110.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LVI, p. 109.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXIV, pp. 121-122.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 126.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing

Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, pp. 584-585:

“Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of

Zanjan, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamádiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H., [Footnote #1: "January 9, 1889 A.D."] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Farán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk..." Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 71-74; see also Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, pp. 110-111:

"The first journey Bahá'u'lláh undertook for the purpose of promoting the Revelation announced by the Báb was to His ancestral home in Núr, in the province of Mázindarán. He set

out for the village of Tákur, the personal estate of His father, where He owned a vast mansion, royally furnished and superbly situated. It was my privilege to hear Bahá'u'lláh Himself, one day, recount the following: "The late Vazír, My father, enjoyed a most enviable position among his countrymen. His vast wealth, his noble ancestry, his artistic attainments, his unrivalled prestige and exalted rank made him the object of the admiration of all who knew him. For a period of over twenty years, no one among the wide circle of his family and kindred, which extended over Núr and Tihrán, suffered distress, injury, or illness. They enjoyed, during a long and uninterrupted period, rich and manifold blessings. Quite suddenly, however, this prosperity and glory gave way to a series of calamities which severely shook the foundations of his material prosperity. The first loss he suffered was occasioned by a great flood which, rising in the mountains of Mázindarán, swept with great violence over the village of Tákur, and utterly destroyed half the mansion of the Vazír, situated above the fortress of that village. The best part of that house, which had been known for the solidity of its foundations, was utterly wiped away by the fury of the roaring torrent. Its precious articles of furniture were destroyed, and its elaborate ornamentation irretrievably ruined. This was shortly followed by the loss of various State positions which the Vazír occupied, and by the repeated assaults directed against him by his envious adversaries. Despite this sudden change of fortune, the Vazír maintained his dignity and calm, and continued, within the restricted limits of his means, his acts of benevolence and charity. He continued to exercise towards his faithless associates

that same courtesy and kindness that had characterised his dealings with his fellow-men. With splendid fortitude he grappled, until the last hour of his life, with the adversities that weighed so heavily upon him.””

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 76-78.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 104.

Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 459,

Footnote #1: “According to Islamic traditions, Fátimih,

Muhammad's daughter, will appear unveiled as she crosses the bridge "Sirát" on the Day of Judgment. At her appearance a voice from heaven will declare: "Turn your eyes away, O concourse of people!"

Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 460,

Footnote #1: “Mírzá Áqa Khán-i-Núri, who succeeded the Amír-Nizam as Grand Vazir of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh.”

Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 460,

Footnote #2: “Áqáy-i-Kalím, brother of Bahá'u'lláh.”

Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 460,

Footnote #3: “Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis.”

Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 461,

Footnote #1: “Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí-i-Nahrí.”

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing

Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, pp. 459-462:

“At this stage of my narrative I was privileged to submit to Bahá'u'lláh such sections of my work as I had already revised and completed. How abundantly have my labours been rewarded by Him whose favour alone I seek, and for whose satisfaction I have addressed myself to this task! He graciously summoned me to His presence and vouchsafed me His blessings. I was in my home in the prison-city of 'Akká, and lived in the neighbourhood of the house of Áqáy-i-Kalím, when the summons of my Beloved reached me. That day, the seventh of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani in the year 1306 A.H., [December 11, 1888 A.D.] I shall never forget. I here reproduce the gist of His words to me on that memorable occasion...”

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing

Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, pp. 298-299:

“I have heard Bahá'u'lláh Himself describe that incident...”

Referring to the dispersal on the outskirts of Vas-Kas of the army raised at the command of Nasiri'd-Din Sháh to crush the Bábís, The Dawn-Breakers (pp. 368-376) indicates:

“This memorable engagement fell on the twenty-fifth of Muharram, 1265 A.H. In the beginning of that same month, Bahá'u'lláh, faithful to the promise He had given to Mullá

Husayn, set out, attended by a number of His friends, from Núr for the fort of Tabarsí. Among those who accompanied Him were Hájí Mírzá Jániy-i-Káshání, Mullá Baqir-i-Tabrizi, one of the Letters of the Living, and Mírzá Yahyá, His brother. Bahá'u'lláh had signified His wish that they should proceed directly to their destination and allow no pause in their journey. His intention was to reach that spot at night, inasmuch as strict orders had been issued, ever since 'Abdu'lláh Khán had assumed the command, that no help should be extended, under any circumstances, to the occupants of the fort. Guards had been stationed at different places to ensure the isolation of the besieged. His companions, however, pressed Him to interrupt the journey and to seek a few hours of rest. Although He knew that this delay would involve a grave risk of being surprised by the enemy, He yielded to their earnest request. They halted at a lonely house adjoining the road. After supper, his companions all retired to sleep. He alone, despite the hardships He had endured, remained wakeful. He knew well the perils to which He and His friends were exposed, and was fully aware of the possibilities which His early arrival at the fort involved.

“As He watched beside them, the secret emissaries of the enemy informed the guards of the neighbourhood of the arrival of the party, and ordered the immediate seizure of whatever they could find in their possession. "We have received strict orders, they told Bahá'u'lláh, whom they recognized instantly as the leader of the group, "to arrest every person we chance to meet in this vicinity, and are commanded to conduct him, without any previous investigation, to Amul and deliver him into the hands of its governor." "The matter has been misrepresented in your eyes," Bahá'u'lláh remarked. "You have misconstrued our purpose. I would advise you to act in a manner that will cause you eventually no regret." This admonition, uttered with dignity and calm, induced the chief of the guards to treat with

consideration and courtesy those whom he had arrested. He bade them mount their horses and proceed with him to Ámul. As they were approaching the banks of a river, Bahá'u'lláh signalled to His companions, who were riding at a distance from the guards, to cast into the water whatever manuscripts they had in their possession.

“At daybreak, as they were approaching the town, a message was sent in advance to the acting governor, informing him of the arrival of a party that had been captured on their way to the fort of Tabarsi. The governor himself, together with the members of his body-guard, had been appointed to join the army of Prince Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá, and had commissioned his kinsman to act in his absence. As soon as the message reached him, he went to the

masjid of Ámul and summoned the ulamas and leading siyyids of the town to gather and meet the party. He was greatly surprised as soon as his eyes saw and recognized Bahá'u'lláh, and deeply regretted the orders he had given. He feigned to reprimand Him for the action He had taken, in the hope of appeasing the tumult and allaying the excitement of those who had gathered in the masjid. "We are innocent," Bahá'u'lláh declared, "of the guilt they impute to us. Our blamelessness will eventually be established in your eyes. I would advise you to act in a manner that will cause you eventually no regret." The acting governor asked the ulamas who were present to put any question they desired. To their enquiries Bahá'u'lláh returned explicit and convincing replies. As they were interrogating Him, they discovered a manuscript in the possession of one of His companions which they recognized as the writings of the Báb and which they handed to the chief of the ulamas present at that gathering. As soon as he had perused a few lines of that manuscript, he laid it aside and, turning to those around him, exclaimed: "These people, who advance such extravagant claims, have, in this very sentence which I have read, betrayed their ignorance of the most rudimentary rules of orthography." "Esteemed and learned divine," Bahá'u'lláh replied, "these words which you criticise are not the words of the Báb. They have been uttered by no less a personage than the Imám 'Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, in his reply to Kumayl-ibn-i-Ziyad, whom he had chosen as his companion."

"The circumstances which Bahá'u'lláh proceeded to relate in connection with the reply, no less than the manner of His delivery, convinced the arrogant mujtahid of his stupidity and blunder. Unable to contradict so weighty a statement, he preferred to keep silent. A siyyid angrily interjected: "This very statement conclusively demonstrates that its author is himself a Bábí and no less than a leading expounder of the tenets of that sect." He urged in vehement language that its followers be put to death. "These obscure sectarians are the sworn enemies," he cried, "both of the State and of the Faith of Islám! We must, at all costs, extirpate that heresy." He was seconded in his denunciation by the other siyyids who were present, and who, emboldened by the imprecations uttered at that gathering, insisted that the governor comply unhesitatingly with their wishes.

"The acting governor was much embarrassed, and realised that any evidence of indulgence on his part would be fraught with grave consequences for the safety of his position. In his desire to hold in check the passions which had been aroused, he ordered his attendants to prepare the rods and promptly inflict a befitting

punishment upon the captives. "We will afterwards," he added, "keep them in prison pending the return of the governor, who will send them to Tihrán, where they will receive, at the hands of the sovereign, the chastisement they deserve."

"The first who was bound to receive the bastinado was Mullá Báqir. "I am only a groom of Bahá'u'lláh," he urged. "I was on my way to Mashhad when they suddenly arrested me and brought me to this place." Bahá'u'lláh intervened and succeeded in inducing his oppressors to release him. He likewise interceded for Hájí Mírzá Jání, who He said was "a mere tradesman" whom He regarded as His "guest," so that He was "responsible for any charges brought against him." Mírzá Yahyá, whom they proceeded to bind, was also set free as soon as Bahá'u'lláh had declared him to be His attendant. "None of these men," He told the acting governor, "are guilty of any crime. If you insist on inflicting your punishment, I offer Myself as a willing Victim of your chastisement." The acting governor was reluctantly compelled to give orders that Bahá'u'lláh alone be chosen to

suffer the indignity which he had intended originally for His companions.

"The same treatment that had been meted out to the Báb five months previously in Tabríz, Bahá'u'lláh suffered in the presence of the assembled ulamas of Ámul. The first confinement that the Báb suffered at the hands of His enemies was in the house of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Khán, the chief constable of Shíráz; the first confinement of Bahá'u'lláh was in the home of one of the kadkhudas of Tihrán. The Báb's second imprisonment was in the castle of Máh-Kú; that of Bahá'u'lláh was in the private residence of the governor of Amul. The Báb was scourged in the namazkhanih [Literally "prayer-house"] of the Shaykhu'l-Islám of Tabríz; the same indignity was inflicted on Bahá'u'lláh in the namaz-khanih of the mujtahid of Ámul. The Báb's third confinement was in the castle of Chihríq; Bahá'u'lláh's was in the Síyáh-Chál [Literally "black pit"] of Tihrán. The Báb, whose trials and sufferings had preceded, in almost every case, those of Bahá'u'lláh, had offered Himself to ransom His Beloved from the perils that beset that precious Life; whilst Bahá'u'lláh, on His part, unwilling that He who so greatly loved Him should be the sole Sufferer, shared at every turn the cup that had touched His lips. Such love no eye has ever beheld, nor has mortal heart conceived such mutual devotion. If the branches of every tree were turned into pens, and all the seas into ink, and earth and heaven rolled into one parchment, the immensity of that love would still remain unexplored, and the depths of that devotion unfathomed.

"Bahá'u'lláh and His companions remained for a time

imprisoned in one of the rooms that formed part of the masjid. The acting governor, who was still determined to shield his Prisoner from the assaults of an inveterate enemy, secretly instructed his attendants to open, at an unsuspected hour, a passage through the wall of the room in which the captives were confined, and to transfer their Leader immediately to his home. He was himself conducting Bahá'u'lláh to his residence when a siyyid sprang forward and, directing his fiercest invectives against Him, raised the club which he held in his hand to strike Him. The acting governor immediately interposed himself and, appealing to the assailant, "adjured him by the Prophet of God"

to stay his hand. "What!" burst forth the siyyid. "How dare you release a man who is the sworn enemy of the Faith of our fathers?" A crowd of ruffians had meanwhile gathered around him, and by their howls of derision and abuse added to the clamour which he had raised. Despite the growing tumult, the attendants of the acting governor were able to conduct Bahá'u'lláh in safety to the residence of their master, and displayed on that occasion a courage and presence of mind that were truly surprising.

"Despite the protestations of the mob, the rest of the prisoners were taken to the seat of government, and thus escaped from the perils with which they had been threatened. The acting governor offered profuse apologies to Bahá'u'lláh for the treatment which the people of Amul had accorded Him. "But for the interposition of Providence," he said, "no force would have achieved your deliverance from the grasp of this malevolent people. But for the efficacy of the vow which I had made to risk my own life for your sake, I, too, would have fallen a victim to their violence, and would have been trampled beneath their feet." He bitterly complained of the outrageous conduct of the siyyids of Amul, and denounced the baseness of their character. He expressed himself as being continually tormented by the effects of their malignant designs. He set about serving Bahá'u'lláh with devotion and kindness, and was often heard, in the course of his conversation with Him, to remark: "I am far from regarding you a prisoner in my home. This house, I believe, was built for the very purpose of affording you a shelter from the designs of your foes."

"I have heard Bahá'u'lláh Himself recount the following: "No prisoner has ever been accorded the treatment which I received at the hands of the acting governor of Amul. He treated Me with the utmost consideration and esteem. I was generously entertained by him, and the fullest attention was given to everything that affected My security and comfort. I was, however, unable to leave the gate of the house. My host was

afraid lest the governor, who was related to Abbás-Qulí Khán-i-Lárijání, might return from the fort of Tabarsí and inflict injury upon Me. I tried to dispel his apprehensions. 'The same Omnipotence,' I assured him, 'who has delivered us from the hands of the mischief-makers of Ámul, and has enabled us to be received with such hospitality by you in this house, is able to change the heart of the governor and to cause him to treat us with no less consideration and love.'

““One night we were suddenly awakened by the clamour of the people who had gathered outside the gate of the house. The door was opened, and it was announced that the governor had returned to Amul. Our companions, who were anticipating a fresh attack upon them, were completely surprised to hear the voice of the governor rebuking those who had denounced us so bitterly on the day of our arrival. 'For what reason,' we heard him loudly remonstrating, 'have these miserable wretches chosen to treat so disrespectfully a guest whose hands are tied and who has not been given the chance to defend himself? What is their justification for having demanded that he be immediately put to death? What evidence have they with which to support their contention? If they be sincere in their claims to be devotedly attached to Islam and to be the guardians of its interests, let them betake themselves to the fort of Shaykh Tabarsí and there demonstrate their capacity to defend the Faith of which they profess to be the champions.'”

““What he had seen of the heroism of the defenders of the fort had quite changed the mind and heart of the governor of Amul. He returned filled with admiration for a Cause which he had formerly despised, and the progress of which he had strenuously resisted. The scenes he witnessed had disarmed his wrath and chastened his pride. Humbly and respectfully, he went to Bahá'u'lláh and apologised for the insolence of the inhabitants of a town that he had been chosen to govern. He served Him with extreme devotion, utterly ignoring his own position and rank. He paid a glowing tribute to Mullá Husayn, and expatiated upon his resourcefulness, his intrepidity, his skill, and nobleness of soul. A few days later, he succeeded in arranging for the safe departure of Bahá'u'lláh and His companions for Tihrán.”

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 375:

“I have heard Bahá'u'lláh Himself recount the following...”

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 461-462:

“At this stage of my narrative I was privileged to submit to

Bahá'u'lláh such sections of my work as I had already revised and completed. How abundantly have my labours been rewarded by Him whose favour alone I seek, and for whose satisfaction I have addressed myself to this task! He graciously summoned me to His presence and vouchsafed me His blessings. I was in my home in the prison-city of 'Akká, and lived in the neighbourhood of the house of Áqáy-i-Kalím, when the summons of my Beloved reached me. That day, the seventh of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani in the year 1306 A.H.[December 11, 1888 A.D.], I shall never forget. I here reproduce the gist of His words to me on that memorable occasion”

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 582-584:

“Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanzan, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H.,[Footnote #1: “January 9, 1889 A.D.”] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk...”

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 76-77.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 584:

“Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanzán, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H.,[Footnote #1: “January 9, 1889 A.D.”] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk...”

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 222-227.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 234-236.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 88-89.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Iqán, pp. 233-234.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 145.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 119-120.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 19-20.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 19-20.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 20.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, Nasiri'd-Din Sháh, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, 120.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, Nasiri'd-Din Sháh, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 121-122.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 222-223; The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 223.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 20-22.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Nasiri'd-Din Sháh, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 98-99.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 306-308.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 57; The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 83.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp.5-7; passage cited in God Passes By, pp. 101-102.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to the Czar of Russia; in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 83; Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 57.

This same passage was translated by Shoghi Effendi in The Dawn-Breakers, p. 603, Footnote 1:

“When I was in chains and fetters, in the prison of Ta, one of thine ambassadors assisted Me. Therefore hath God decreed unto thee a station which none but Himself can comprehend. Beware lest thou change this lofty station.”

Shoghi Effendi described the circumstances related to the revelation of this Tablet and provided another translation of the same passage in God Passes By, p. 106:

“The Russian Minister, as soon as he was informed of the Imperial decision, expressed the desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia. This invitation, so spontaneously extended, Bahá'u'lláh declined, preferring, in pursuance of an unerring instinct, to establish His abode in Turkish territory, in the city of Baghdád. "Whilst I lay chained and fettered in the prison," He Himself, years after, testified in His Epistle addressed to the Czar of Russia, Nicolaevitch Alexander II, "one of thy ministers extended Me his aid. Whereupon God hath ordained for thee a station which the knowledge of none can comprehend except His knowledge. Beware lest thou barter away this sublime station."

"In the days," is yet another illuminating testimony revealed by His pen, "when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia) -- may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him! -- exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was granted. Some of the ulamas of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. ...His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor -- may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him! -- extended to Me for the sake of God his protection -- a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth.""

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 76.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 189.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes: "From His own lips I have often heard the following account..." in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 631-634.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 83.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 78-79.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, L, pp. 103-104.

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 124.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 277-278.

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 106.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 228-229; *Suriy-i-Muluk*, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 228-229.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 21-22.

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 108.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 131.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 96-97.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 30-31.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Iqán, pp. 249-250.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 106-107.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 228-230; *Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 228-230.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 225.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 165.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 168-169.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tarazat*, in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.

Bahá'u'lláh, translated in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 114.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 585:

“Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanján, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together

with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H., [Footnote #1: “January 9, 1889 A.D.”] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk...” Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 250.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes, in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 585:

“Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanzan, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H., [Footnote #1: “January 9, 1889 A.D.”] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk...” Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 250-251.

Bahá'u'lláh, related to Nabíl-i-A'zam, translated in Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 137-138.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 166

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 250-251; Shoghi Effendi, citing Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, describes this sojourn in *God Passes By*, p. 120: “At times His dwelling-place was a cave to which He refers in His Tablets addressed to the famous Shaykh Abdu'r-Rahman and to Maryam, a kinswoman of His. "I roamed the wilderness of resignation" He thus depicts, in the *Lawh-i-Maryam*, the rigors of His austere solitude, "traveling 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." "From My eyes," He, referring in the Kitáb-i-Íqán to those days, testifies, "there rained tears of anguish, and in My bleeding heart surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night I had no food for sustenance, and many a day My body found no rest.... Alone I communed with My spirit, oblivious of the world and all that is therein.""

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 166.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing

Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, The Dawn-Breakers, pp. 585:

"Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanján, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H., [Footnote #1: "January 9, 1889 A.D."] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk..."

Shoghi Effendi furthermore reports, in God Passes By, p. 126:

"Deciding to terminate the period of His retirement Bahá'u'lláh bade farewell to the shaykhs of Sulaymaniyyih, who now numbered among His most ardent and, as their future conduct demonstrated, staunchest admirers. Accompanied by Shaykh

Sultán, He retraced His steps to Baghdád, on "the banks of the River of Tribulations," as He Himself termed it, proceeding by slow stages, realizing, as He declared to His fellow-traveler, that these last days of His retirement would be "the only days of peace and tranquillity" left to Him, "days which will never again fall to My lot.""

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Iqán, pp. 248-250. Adib Taherzadeh writes in The Child of the Covenant, p. 104:

"Shortly after Mírzá Yahyá had settled in Baghdád he decided to engage in a profession to hide his identity. At first he changed his headgear, adopting a large turban and assuming the name of Hájí 'Alí, the Las-Furush[*] He then took a shop in a bazaar in a dilapidated part of the city and started working. In the meantime, a man of great evil, described by Bahá'u'lláh as 'the embodiment of wickedness and impiety', 'the prime mover of mischief' and 'one accursed of God', entered the scene to influence Mírzá Yahyá. He was the notorious Siyyid Muhammad-i-Isfáhání, known as the 'Antichrist of the Bahá'í Revelation'. [132] In the early days of the Faith this man was a student at a theological

school in Isfáhán but was expelled for reprehensible conduct. He embraced the Faith during the early part of the ministry of the Báb and later went to Karbilá where he joined the ranks of the believers. In the Kitáb-i-Íqán Bahá'u'lláh alludes to him as that 'one-eyed man, who ... is arising with the utmost malevolence against Us'. [133] Of him Shoghi Effendi writes: "The blackhearted scoundrel who befooled and manipulated this vain and flaccid man [Mírzá Yahyá] with consummate skill and unyielding persistence was a certain Siyyid Muhammad, a native of Isfáhán, notorious for his inordinate ambition, his blind obstinacy and uncontrollable jealousy. To him Bahá'u'lláh had later referred in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas as the one who had 'led astray' Mírzá Yahyá and stigmatized him, in one of His Tablets, as the 'source of envy and the quintessence of mischief', while 'Abdu'l-Bahá had described the relationship existing between these two as that of 'the sucking child' to the 'much-prized breast' of its mother. [134] [*] Las-Furush means a dealer in silk. It is interesting that Mírzá Yahyá was known in official circles as Hájí 'Alí until the end of his life.

[132] Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 164.

[133] Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 248.

[134] Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 112-13."

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (*Nabíl-i-A'zam*), *Narrative*, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes:

"Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanján, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306 A.H., [Footnote #1: "January 9, 1889 A.D."] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk..." in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 585.

Shoghi Effendi cites this passage from Nabil's *Narrative* which is not included in *The Dawn-Breakers*:

"By God besides Whom there is none other God!" is His emphatic assertion to Shaykh Sultán, as reported by Nabil in his narrative, "But for My recognition of the fact that the blessed Cause of the Primal Point was on the verge of being completely obliterated, and all the sacred blood poured out in the path of God would have been shed in vain, I would in no wise have consented to return to the people of the Bayán, and would

have abandoned them to the worship of the idols their imaginations had fashioned." (Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 126)

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 125.

[Comment: In most cases, Shoghi Effendi cites the source of his quotations from Bahá'u'lláh, and since he has not cited a specific Tablet in this case, it may be that the words are cited from Nabíl's Narrative, although only a perusal of that document could determine for certain whether or not this is the case.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 251-252; Shoghi Effendi, in *God Passes By* (p. 147), cites numerous passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh revealed in Baghdád as well as from Nabíl's Narrative:

"Already, as Nabíl has pointed out in his narrative, Bahá'u'lláh had, in the course of His discourses, during the last years of His sojourn in Baghdád, alluded to the period of trial and turmoil that was inexorably approaching, exhibiting a sadness and heaviness of heart which greatly perturbed those around Him. A dream which He had at that time, the ominous character of which could not be mistaken, served to confirm the fears and misgivings that had assailed His companions. "I saw," He wrote in a Tablet, "the Prophets and the Messengers gather and seat themselves around Me, moaning, weeping and loudly lamenting. Amazed, I inquired of them the reason, whereupon their lamentation and weeping waxed greater, and they said unto me: 'We weep for Thee, O Most Great Mystery, O Tabernacle of Immortality!' They wept with such a weeping that I too wept with them. Thereupon the Concourse on high addressed Me saying: '...Erelong shalt Thou behold with Thine own eyes what no Prophet hath beheld.... Be patient, be patient.'... They continued addressing Me the whole night until the approach of dawn." "Oceans of sorrow," Nabíl affirms, "surged in the hearts of the listeners when the Tablet of the Holy Mariner was read aloud to them.... It was evident to every one that the chapter of Baghdád was about to be closed, and a new one opened, in its stead. No sooner had that Tablet been chanted than Bahá'u'lláh ordered that the tents which had been pitched should be folded up, and that all His companions should return to the city. While the tents were being removed He observed: 'These tents may be likened to the trappings of this world, which no sooner are they spread out than the time cometh for them to be rolled up.' From these words of His they who heard them perceived that these tents would never again be pitched on that spot. They had not yet been taken away when the messenger arrived from Baghdád to deliver the afore-mentioned communication from the governor.""

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, XV, pp. 37-38

Maqám-i-Mahmúd. See: Qur'án 17:81; Bahá'u'lláh, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 40.

Sa'adi, Muslihu'd-Dín of Shíráz (ca. 1184-1291), famed author of the Gulistan and other poetical works.

Persian proverb describing a man who gives up easily. As used here one connotation is that the Shaykh might have considered his station as a mystic leader compromised by the fact of his being taught the new truth by Bahá'u'lláh.

Qur'án 41:30.

Qur'án 11:114; 42:14.

Sa'adi.

Sa'adi.

Rumi. Senna, capital of Persian Kurdistán.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Four Valleys*, pp. 72-74.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 166.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LVII, pp. 111-114.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LVIII, pp. 114-115.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Muluk*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 197-198.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Muluk*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 199-200.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Muluk*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 219.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXVII, pp. 131-132; Shoghi Effendi has cited Bahá'u'lláh's and

'Abdu'l-Bahá's descriptions of this occurrence in Baghdád in the following:

"For twelve years," Bahá'u'lláh Himself has testified, "We tarried in Baghdád. Much as We desired that a large gathering of divines and fairminded men be convened, so that truth might be distinguished from falsehood, and be fully demonstrated, no action was taken." And again:

"And likewise, while in Iraq, We wished to come together with the divines of Persia. No sooner did they hear of this, than they fled and said: 'He indeed is a manifest sorcerer!' This is the word that proceeded aforetime out of the mouths of such as were like them. These [divines] objected to what they said, and yet, they themselves repeat, in this day, what was said before them, and understand not. By My life! They are even as ashes in the sight of thy Lord. If He be willing, tempestuous gales will blow over them, and make them as dust. Thy Lord, verily, doth what He pleaseth.'" (Bahá'u'lláh in

asterics, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 85)

"Bahá'u'lláh replied, "Although you have no right to ask this, for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request. But the Cause of God is not a theatrical display that is presented every hour, of which some new diversion may be asked for every

day. If it were thus, the Cause of God would become mere child's play. "The ulamas must, therefore, assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture." The learned man, Hasan 'Amu, rose and replied, "There is no more to be said"; he then kissed the knee of the Blessed One although he was not a believer, and went. He gathered the 'ulama and gave them the sacred message. They consulted together and said, "This man is an enchanter; perhaps he will perform an enchantment, and then we shall have nothing more to say." Acting on this belief, they did not dare to push the matter further." (Bahá'u'lláh, cited in 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, pp. 29-30)

"Frustrated in their designs, but unrelenting in their hostility, the assembled divines delegated the learned and devout Hájí Mullá Hasan-i-'Ammu, recognized for his integrity and wisdom, to submit various questions to Bahá'u'lláh for elucidation. When these were submitted, and answers completely satisfactory to the messenger were given, Hájí Mullá Hasan, affirming the recognition by the ulamas of the vastness of the knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh, asked, as an evidence of the truth of His mission, for a miracle that would satisfy completely all concerned. "Although you have no right to ask this," Bahá'u'lláh replied, "for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request.... The ulamas must assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture." This clear, challenging and courageous reply, unexampled in the annals of any religion, and addressed to the most illustrious Shí'ah divines, assembled in their time-honored stronghold, was so satisfactory to their envoy that he instantly arose, kissed the knee of Bahá'u'lláh, and departed to deliver His message. Three days later he sent word that that august assemblage had failed to arrive at a decision, and had chosen to drop the matter, a decision to which he himself later gave wide publicity, in the course of his visit to Persia, and even communicated it in person to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mírzá Sa'íd Khán. "We have," Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have commented, when informed of their reaction to this challenge, "through this allsatisfying, all-embracing message which We sent, revealed and vindicated the

miracles of all the Prophets, inasmuch as We left the choice to the ulamas themselves, undertaking to reveal whatever they would decide upon." "If we carefully examine the text of the Bible," 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written concerning a similar challenge made later by Bahá'u'lláh in the "Lawh-i-Sultán," "we see that the Divine Manifestation never said to those who denied Him, 'whatever miracle you desire, I am ready to perform, and I will submit to whatever test you propose.' But in the Epistle to the Sháh Bahá'u'lláh said clearly, 'Gather the ulamas and summon Me, that the evidences and proofs may be established.'" (Bahá'u'lláh in asterics, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 143-144)

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, CXIII, p. 228-232.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 197-198.

See Taherzadeh, *Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3, pp. 250-251.

"Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, that spiritual giant immortalized by the title 'the Angel of Carmel', has left the following record of one of his memorable audiences, when Bahá'u'lláh spoke about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's important role in shielding Him from the pressures of the outside world... These are not to be taken as the exact words of Bahá'u'lláh; they are only recollections of His utterances by Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí." (Haydar-'Alí, *Bihjutu's-Sudur*, pp. 251-252, cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 231)

Bahá'u'lláh, in *Suriy-i-Vafa*, revealed after the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 190), refers to this prophecy as follows: "Thou hast enquired about the warning We gave to the people at the time of Our departure from Iraq to the effect that when the Sun disappeareth from sight, birds of darkness will be in motion and the standards of Samiri [1] will be reared high. I swear by God! Those birds have stirred in these days and Samiri hath raised his clamour. Well is it with him who recognizeth and is numbered with men of understanding. We have also warned them against the appearance of the calf. God is My witness! All Our warnings have come to pass, as indeed, they are bound to, inasmuch as they have issued from the fingers of glory and might. Beseech thou God to protect thee from the mischief of these men and to purify thee from the insinuations of the froward. Strengthen thy loins then for the promotion of the Cause and pay no attention unto the words uttered by the people of the Bayán, for they are truly incapable of understanding and have failed to comprehend the essence of the Cause as is revealed in this august, this Most Great Announcement. Thus have We inspired thee, and infused into thy heart that which will make thee independent of the allusions of mankind. [1] The maker of the Golden Calf. See Qur'án 20:87-98.]

Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh al-Mallahu'l-Quds* (translated as *Tablet of the Holy Mariner*), in *Bahá'í Prayers*, pp. 220-228. The historical context in which this Tablet, and to which it alludes is set forth in *Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By*, pp. 146-148:

“It was on the fifth of Naw-Rúz (1863), while Bahá'u'lláh was celebrating that festival in the *Mazra'iy-i-Vashshash*, in the outskirts of Baghdád, and had just revealed the "Tablet of the Holy Mariner," whose gloomy prognostications had aroused the grave apprehensions of His Companions, that an emissary of Namiq Páshá arrived and delivered into His hands a communication requesting an interview between Him and the governor.

“Already, as Nabíl has pointed out in his narrative, Bahá'u'lláh had, in the course of His discourses, during the last years of His sojourn in Baghdád, alluded to the period of trial and turmoil that was inexorably approaching, exhibiting a sadness and heaviness of heart which greatly perturbed those around Him. A dream which He had at that time, the ominous character of which could not be mistaken, served to confirm the fears and misgivings that had assailed His companions. "I saw," He wrote in a Tablet, "the Prophets and the Messengers gather and seat themselves around Me, moaning, weeping and loudly lamenting. Amazed, I inquired of them the reason, whereupon their lamentation and weeping waxed greater, and they said unto me: 'We weep for Thee, O Most Great Mystery, O Tabernacle of Immortality!' They wept with such a weeping that I too wept with them. Thereupon the Concourse on high addressed Me saying: '...Erelong shalt Thou behold with Thine own eyes what no Prophet hath beheld.... Be patient, be patient.'... They continued addressing Me the whole night until the approach of dawn." "Oceans of sorrow," Nabíl affirms, "surged in the hearts of the listeners when the Tablet of the Holy Mariner was read aloud to them.... It was evident to every one that the chapter of Baghdád was about to be closed, and a new one opened, in its stead. No sooner had that Tablet been chanted than Bahá'u'lláh ordered that the tents which had been pitched should be folded up, and that all His companions should return to the city. While the tents were being removed He observed: 'These tents may be likened to the trappings of this world, which no sooner are they spread out than the time cometh for them to be rolled up.' From these words of His they who heard them perceived that these tents would never again be pitched on that spot. They had not yet been taken away when the messenger arrived from Baghdád to deliver the afore-mentioned communication from the governor."

“By the following day the Deputy-Governor had delivered to

Bahá'u'lláh in a mosque, in the neighborhood of the governor's house, 'Alí Páshá's letter, addressed to Namiq Páshá, couched in courteous language, inviting Bahá'u'lláh to proceed, as a guest of the Ottoman government, to Constantinople, placing a sum of money at His disposal, and ordering a mounted escort to accompany Him for His protection. To this request Bahá'u'lláh gave His ready assent, but declined to accept the sum offered Him. On the urgent representations of the Deputy that such a refusal would offend the authorities, He reluctantly consented to receive the generous allowance set aside for His use, and distributed it, that same day, among the poor.

“The effect upon the colony of exiles of this sudden intelligence was instantaneous and overwhelming. "That day," wrote an eyewitness, describing the reaction of the community to the news of Bahá'u'lláh's approaching departure, "witnessed a commotion associated with the turmoil of the Day of Resurrection. Methinks, the very gates and walls of the city wept aloud at their imminent separation from the Abhá Beloved. The first night mention was made of His intended departure His loved ones, one and all, renounced both sleep and food.... Not a soul amongst them could be tranquillized. Many had resolved that in the event of their being deprived of the bounty of accompanying Him, they would, without hesitation, kill themselves.... Gradually, however, through the words which He addressed them, and through His exhortations and His lovingkindness, they were calmed and resigned themselves to His good-pleasure." For every one of them, whether Arab or Persian, man or woman, child or adult, who lived in Baghdád, He revealed during those days, in His own hand, a separate Tablet. In most of these Tablets He predicted the appearance of the "Calf" and of the "Birds of the Night," allusions to those who, as anticipated in the Tablet of the Holy Mariner, and foreshadowed in the dream quoted above, were to raise the standard of rebellion and precipitate the gravest crisis in the history of the Faith.”

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XIV, pp. 27-35.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K37, p. 32; Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLXVI, p. 344.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXV, p. 244.

Bahá'u'lláh, Madinatu'l-Sabr, revealed on the first day in the Najíbíyyih Garden, cited in David S. Ruhe, Robe of Light, p. 176.

“Leaving for the last time, amidst weeping and lamentation, His "Most Holy Habitation," out of which had "gone forth the

breath of the All-Glorious," and from which had poured forth, in "ceaseless strains," the "melody of the All-Merciful," and dispensing on His way with a lavish hand a last alms to the poor He had so faithfully befriended, and uttering words of comfort to the disconsolate who besought Him on every side, He, at length, reached the banks of the river, and was ferried across, accompanied by His sons and amanuensis, to the Najíbíyyih Garden, situated on the opposite shore. "O My companions," He thus addressed the faithful band that surrounded Him before He embarked, "I entrust to your keeping this city of Baghdád, in the state ye now behold it, when from the eyes of friends and strangers alike, crowding its housetops, its streets and markets, tears like the rain of spring are flowing down, and I depart. With you it now rests to watch lest your deeds and conduct dim the flame of love that gloweth within the breasts of its inhabitants."" (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 149)

"He had already flung a daring challenge to the sacerdotal order represented by the eminent ecclesiastics residing in Najaf, Karbilá and Kázimayn. He was now, while in the vicinity of the court of His royal adversary, to offer a similar challenge to the recognized head of Sunni Islám, as well as to the sovereign of Persia, the trustee of the hidden Imám. The entire company of the kings of the earth, and in particular the Sultán and his ministers, were, moreover, to be addressed by Him, appealed to and warned, while the kings of Christendom and the Sunni hierarchy were to be severely admonished. Little wonder that the exiled Bearer of a newly-announced Revelation should have, in anticipation of the future splendor of the Lamp of His Faith, after its removal from 'Iráq, uttered these prophetic words: "It will shine resplendently within another globe, as predestined by Him who is the Omnipotent, the Ancient of Days. ...That the Spirit should depart out of the body of 'Iráq is indeed a wondrous sign unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. Erelong will ye behold this Divine Youth riding upon the steed of victory. Then will the hearts of the envious be seized with trembling."" (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 145)

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 51-52; *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 73.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 167-169.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 68-70.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXV, pp. 122-125; *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 195-197.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXVI, pp. 126-127; *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 201-202.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Muluk*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 215.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 111.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 122-127.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 137-138.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 69-70.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 107-110.

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Ra'is, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 165.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 105-107.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 125-126.

Bahá'u'lláh calls this city the "Land of Mystery". It was known to Europeans as Adrianople at the time, and is now called Edirne.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Muluk, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 215-217.

Sultán of the Ottoman Empire, 'Abdu'l-'Azíz (reigned June 25, 1861 to May 30, 1876).

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Queen Victoria, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 94.

Shoghi Effendi writes of this period in *God Passes By*, pp. 158-162:

"The initial phase of that Proclamation may be said to have opened in Constantinople with the communication (the text of which we, alas, do not possess) addressed by Bahá'u'lláh to Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz himself, the self-styled vicar of the Prophet of Islam and the absolute ruler of a mighty empire. So potent, so august a personage was the first among the sovereigns of the world to receive the Divine Summons, and the first among Oriental monarchs to sustain the impact of God's retributive justice. The occasion for this communication was provided by the infamous edict the Sultán had promulgated, less than four months after the arrival of the exiles in his capital, banishing

them, suddenly and without any justification whatsoever, in the depth of winter, and in the most humiliating circumstances, to Adrianople, situated on the extremities of his empire.

"That fateful and ignominious decision, arrived at by the Sultán and his chief ministers, 'Alí Páshá and Fu'ád Páshá, was in no small degree attributable to the persistent intrigues of the Mushíru'd-Dawlih, Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Persian Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, denounced by Bahá'u'lláh as His "calumniator," who awaited the first opportunity to strike at Him and the Cause of which He was now the avowed and recognized leader. This Ambassador was pressed continually by his government to persist in the policy of arousing against Bahá'u'lláh the hostility of the Turkish authorities. He was encouraged by the refusal of Bahá'u'lláh to follow the invariable

practice of government guests, however highly placed, of calling in person, upon their arrival at the capital, on the Shaykhu'l-Islám, on the Sadr-i-Azam, and on the Foreign Minister -- Bahá'u'lláh did not even return the calls paid Him by several ministers, by Kamál Páshá and by a former Turkish envoy to the court of Persia. He was not deterred by Bahá'u'lláh's upright and independent attitude which contrasted so sharply with the mercenariness of the Persian princes who were wont, on their arrival, to "solicit at every door such allowances and gifts as they might obtain." He resented Bahá'u'lláh's unwillingness to present Himself at the Persian Embassy, and to repay the visit of its representative; and, being seconded, in his efforts, by his accomplice, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-i-Safá, whom he instructed to circulate unfounded reports about Him, he succeeded through his official influence, as well as through his private intercourse with ecclesiastics, notables and government officials, in representing Bahá'u'lláh as a proud and arrogant person, Who regarded Himself as subject to no law, Who entertained designs inimical to all established authority, and Whose forwardness had precipitated the grave differences that had arisen between Himself and the Persian Government. Nor was he the only one who indulged in these nefarious schemes. Others, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "condemned and vilified" the exiles, as "a mischief to all the world," as "destructive of treaties and covenants," as "baleful to all lands" and as "deserving of every chastisement and punishment."

"No less a personage than the highly-respected brother-in-law of the Sadr-i-A'zam was commissioned to apprise the Captive of the edict pronounced against Him -- an edict which evinced a virtual coalition of the Turkish and Persian imperial governments against a common adversary, and which in the end brought such tragic consequences upon the Sultanate, the Caliphate and the Qajar dynasty. Refused an audience by Bahá'u'lláh that envoy had to content himself with a presentation of his puerile observations and trivial arguments to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Áqáy-i-Kalím, who were delegated to see him, and whom he informed that, after three days, he would return to receive the answer to the order he had been bidden to transmit.

"That same day a Tablet, severely condemnatory in tone, was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, was entrusted by Him, in a sealed envelope, on the following morning, to Shamsi Big, who was instructed to deliver it into the hands of 'Alí Páshá, and to say that it was sent down from God. "I know not what that letter contained," Shamsi Big subsequently informed Áqáy-i-Kalím, "for no sooner had the Grand Vizir perused it than he turned the color of a corpse, and remarked: 'It is as if the King of Kings

were issuing his behest to his humblest vassal king and regulating his conduct.' So grievous was his condition that I backed out of his presence." "Whatever action," Bahá'u'lláh, commenting on the effect that Tablet had produced, is reported to have stated, "the ministers of the Sultán took against Us, after having become acquainted with its contents, cannot be regarded as unjustifiable. The acts they committed before its perusal, however, can have no justification."

"That Tablet, according to Nabíl, was of considerable length, opened with words directed to the sovereign himself, severely censured his ministers, exposed their immaturity and incompetence, and included passages in which the ministers themselves were addressed, in which they were boldly challenged, and sternly admonished not to pride themselves on their worldly possessions, nor foolishly seek the riches of which time would inexorably rob them.

"Bahá'u'lláh was on the eve of His departure, which followed almost immediately upon the promulgation of the edict of His banishment, when, in a last and memorable interview with the aforementioned Hájí Mírzá Hasan-i-Safá, He sent the following message to the Persian Ambassador: "What did it profit thee, and such as are like thee, to slay, year after year, so many of the oppressed, and to inflict upon them manifold afflictions, when they have increased a hundredfold, and ye find yourselves in complete bewilderment, knowing not how to relieve your minds of this oppressive thought. ...His Cause transcends any and every plan ye devise. Know this much: Were all the governments on earth to unite and take My life and the lives of all who bear this Name, this Divine Fire would never be quenched. His Cause will rather encompass all the kings of the earth, nay all that hath been created from water and clay.... Whatever may yet befall Us, great shall be our gain, and manifest the loss wherewith they shall be afflicted."

"Pursuant to the peremptory orders issued for the immediate departure of the already twice banished exiles, Bahá'u'lláh, His family, and His companions, some riding in wagons, others mounted on pack animals, with their belongings piled in carts drawn by oxen, set out, accompanied by Turkish officers, on a cold December morning, amidst the weeping of the friends they were leaving behind, on their twelve-day journey, across a bleak and windswept country, to a city characterized by Bahá'u'lláh as "the place which none entereth except such as have rebelled against the authority of the sovereign." "They expelled Us," is His own testimony in the Suriy-i-Mulúk, "from thy city (Constantinople) with an abasement with which no abasement on earth can compare." "Neither My family, nor those who

accompanied Me," He further states, "had the necessary raiment to protect them from the cold in that freezing weather." And again: "The eyes of Our enemies wept over Us, and beyond them those of every discerning person." "A banishment," laments Nabil, "endured with such meekness that the pen sheddeth tears when recounting it, and the page is ashamed to bear its description." "A cold of such intensity," that same chronicler records, "prevailed that year, that nonagenarians could not recall its like. In some regions, in both Turkey and Persia,

animals succumbed to its severity and perished in the snows. The upper reaches of the Euphrates, in Ma'dan-Nuqrih, were covered with ice for several days -- an unprecedented phenomenon -- while in Diyar-Bakr the river froze over for no less than forty days." "To obtain water from the springs," one of the exiles of Adrianople recounts, "a great fire had to be lighted in their immediate neighborhood, and kept burning for a couple of hours before they thawed out."

"Traveling through rain and storm, at times even making night marches, the weary travelers, after brief halts at Kuchik-Chakmachih, Buyuk-Chakmachih, Salvari, Birkas, and Bába-Iski, arrived at their destination, on the first of Rajab 1280 A.H. (December 12, 1863), and were lodged in the Khán-i-'Arab, a two-story caravanserai, near the house of Izzat-Aqa. Three days later, Bahá'u'lláh and His family were consigned to a house suitable only for summer habitation, in the Muradiyyih quarter, near the Takyiy-i-Mawlavi, and were moved again, after a week, to another house, in the vicinity of a mosque in that same neighborhood. About six months later they transferred to more commodious quarters, known as the house of Amru'lláh (House of God's command) situated on the northern side of the mosque of Sultán Salím."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K89; cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, pp. 40, 60, 98; and in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 176

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 169.

The historical context is provided by Shoghi Effendi in the following passage, pp.169-170:

"Bahá'u'lláh's reaction to this most distressful episode in His ministry was, as already observed, characterized by acute anguish. "He who for months and years," He laments, "I reared with the hand of loving-kindness hath risen to take My life." "The cruelties inflicted by My oppressors," He wrote, in allusion to these perfidious enemies, "have bowed Me down, and turned My hair white. Shouldst thou present thyself before My throne, thou wouldst fail to recognize the Ancient Beauty, for the freshness of His countenance is altered, and its brightness hath faded, by reason of the oppression of the infidels." "By God!" He

cries out, "No spot is left on My body that hath not been touched by the spears of thy machinations." And again: "Thou hast perpetrated against thy Brother what no man hath perpetrated against another." "What hath proceeded from thy pen," He, furthermore, has affirmed, "hath caused the Countenances of Glory to be prostrated upon the dust, hath rent in twain the Veil of Grandeur in the Sublime Paradise, and lacerated the hearts of the favored ones established upon the loftiest seats." And yet, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, a forgiving Lord assures this same brother, this "source of perversion," "from whose own soul the winds of passion had risen and blown upon him," to "fear not because of thy deeds," bids him "return unto God, humble, submissive and lowly," and affirms that "He will put away from thee thy sins," and that "thy Lord is the Forgiving, the Mighty, the All-Merciful."

Bahá'u'lláh, cited by 'Abdu'l-Hamid Ishraq Khavari, in *Ma'idíyi-Asmani*, Volume 8, p. 16, in a provisional translation by Shahrokh Monjazeb, found in *Bahá'u'lláh, A Brief Survey of His Life and His Works*, p. 38 and referenced Note 52, p. 74. The historical context of the poisonings that led to Bahá'u'lláh's impaired health is described by Shoghi Effendi, in *God Passes By*, pp. 165-167: "Desperate designs to poison Bahá'u'lláh and His companions, and thereby reanimate his own defunct leadership, began, approximately a year after their arrival in Adrianople, to agitate his mind. Well aware of the erudition of his half-brother, Áqáy-i-Kalím, in matters pertaining to medicine, he, under various pretexts, sought enlightenment from him regarding the effects of certain herbs and poisons, and then began, contrary to his wont, to invite Bahá'u'lláh to his home, where, one day, having smeared His tea-cup with a substance he had concocted, he succeeded in poisoning Him sufficiently to produce a serious illness which lasted no less than a month, and which was accompanied by severe pains and high fever, the aftermath of which left Bahá'u'lláh with a shaking hand till the end of His life. So grave was His condition that a foreign doctor, named Shishman, was called in to attend Him. The doctor was so appalled by His livid hue that he deemed His case hopeless, and, after having fallen at His feet, retired from His presence without prescribing a remedy. A few days later that doctor fell ill and died. Prior to his death Bahá'u'lláh had

intimated that doctor Shishman had sacrificed his life for Him. To Mírzá Áqa Ján, sent by Bahá'u'lláh to visit him, the doctor had stated that God had answered his prayers, and that after his death a certain Dr. Chupan, whom he knew to be reliable, should, whenever necessary, be called in his stead.

"On another occasion this same Mírzá Yahyá had, according to the testimony of one of his wives, who had temporarily deserted him and revealed the details of the above-mentioned act,

poisoned the well which provided water for the family and companions of Bahá'u'lláh, in consequence of which the exiles manifested strange symptoms of illness. He even had, gradually and with great circumspection, disclosed to one of the companions, Ustád Muhammad-'Alí-i-Salmání, the barber, on whom he had lavished great marks of favor, his wish that he, on some propitious occasion, when attending Bahá'u'lláh in His bath, should assassinate Him. "So enraged was Ustád Muhammad-'Alí," Áqáy-i-Kalím, recounting this episode to Nabíl in Adrianople, has stated, "when apprized of this proposition, that he felt a strong desire to kill Mírzá Yahyá on the spot, and would have done so but for his fear of Bahá'u'lláh's displeasure. I happened to be the first person he encountered as he came out of the bath weeping.... I eventually succeeded, after much persuasion, in inducing him to return to the bath and complete his unfinished task." Though ordered subsequently by Bahá'u'lláh not to divulge this occurrence to any one, the barber was unable to hold his peace and betrayed the secret, plunging thereby the community into great consternation. "When the secret nursed in his (Mírzá Yahyá) bosom was revealed by God," Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, "he disclaimed such an intention, and imputed it to that same servant (Ustád Muhammad-'Alí)."

"The moment had now arrived for Him Who had so recently, both verbally and in numerous Tablets, revealed the implications of the claims He had advanced, to acquaint formally the one who was the nominee of the Báb with the character of His Mission. Mírzá Áqa Ján was accordingly commissioned to bear to Mírzá Yahyá the newly revealed Suriy-i-Amr, which unmistakably affirmed those claims, to read aloud to him its contents, and demand an unequivocal and conclusive reply. Mírzá Yahyá's request for a one day respite, during which he

could meditate his answer, was granted. The only reply, however, that was forthcoming was a counter-declaration, specifying the hour and the minute in which he had been made the recipient of an independent Revelation, necessitating the unqualified submission to him of the peoples of the earth in both the East and the West."

Bahau'llah, selections from *Lawh-i-Mubahilih*, cited in the historical context in which the events it reports occurred by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, pp. 168-169:

"After a stay of about one year in the house of Ridá Big Bahá'u'lláh returned to the house He had occupied before His withdrawal from His companions, and thence, after three months, He transferred His residence to the house of Izzat Áqa, in which He continued to live until His departure from Adrianople. It was in this house, in the month of Jamadiyu'l-

Avval 1284 A.H. (Sept. 1867) that an event of the utmost significance occurred, which completely discomfited Mírzá Yahyá and his supporters, and proclaimed to friend and foe 'Alíke Bahá'u'lláh's triumph over them. A certain Mír Muhammad, a Bábí of Shíráz, greatly resenting alike the claims and the cowardly seclusion of Mírzá Yahyá, succeeded in forcing Siyyid Muhammad to induce him to meet Bahá'u'lláh face to face, so that a discrimination might be publicly effected between the true and the false. Foolishly assuming that his illustrious Brother would never countenance such a proposition, Mírzá Yahyá appointed the mosque of Sultán Salím as the place for their encounter. No sooner had Bahá'u'lláh been informed of this arrangement than He set forth, on foot, in the heat of midday, and accompanied by this same Mír Muhammad, for the afore-mentioned mosque, which was situated in a distant part of the city, reciting, as He walked, through the streets and markets, verses, in a voice and in a manner that greatly astonished those who saw and heard Him.

““O Muhammad!", are some of the words He uttered on that memorable occasion, as testified by Himself in a Tablet, "He Who is the Spirit hath, verily, issued from His habitation, and with Him have come forth the souls of God's chosen ones and the realities of His Messengers. Behold, then, the dwellers of the realms on high above Mine head, and all the testimonies of the Prophets in My grasp. Say: Were all the divines, all the wise men, all the kings and rulers on earth to gather together, I, in very truth, would confront them, and would proclaim the verses of God, the Sovereign, the Almighty, the All-Wise. I am He Who feareth no one, though all who are in heaven and all who are on earth rise up against me.... This is Mine hand which God hath turned white for all the worlds to behold. This is My staff; were We to cast it down, it would, of a truth, swallow up all created things." Mír Muhammad, who had been sent ahead to announce Bahá'u'lláh's arrival, soon returned, and informed Him that he who had challenged His authority wished, owing to unforeseen circumstances, to postpone for a day or two the interview. Upon His return to His house Bahá'u'lláh revealed a Tablet, wherein He recounted what had happened, fixed the time for the postponed interview, sealed the Tablet with His seal, entrusted it to Nabíl, and instructed him to deliver it to one of the new believers, Mullá Muhammad-i-Tabrízí, for the information of Siyyid Muhammad, who was in the habit of frequenting that believer's shop. It was arranged to demand from Siyyid Muhammad, ere the delivery of that Tablet, a sealed note pledging Mírzá Yahyá, in the event of failing to appear at the trysting-place, to affirm in writing that his claims were false.

Siyyid Muhammad promised that he would produce the next day the document required, and though Nabíl, for three successive days, waited in that shop for the reply, neither did the Siyyid appear, nor was such a note sent by him. That undelivered Tablet, Nabíl, recording twenty-three years later this historic episode in his chronicle, affirms was still in his possession, "as fresh as the day on which the Most Great Branch had penned it, and the seal of the Ancient Beauty had sealed and adorned it," a tangible and irrefutable testimony to Bahá'u'lláh's established ascendancy over a routed opponent."

The Lawh-i-Mubahilih is described by Adib Taherzadeh in *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 128:

"Mírzá Yahya was now discredited in the eyes of many in Adrianople. In Persia the news of this episode spread among the believers. A Tablet known as Lawh-i-Mubahilih, addressed to Mullá Sádiq-i-Khurásání and describing this event, reached the Bahá'í community in that land and caused some wavering souls among the friends to recognize the power and majesty of Bahá'u'lláh in breaking up, once and for all, this great 'idol' of the Bábí community."

Bahá'u'lláh, passages from various Tablets regarding His revelation of verses during this period, cited by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, pp. 170-172:

"A period of prodigious activity ensued which, in its repercussions, outshone the vernal years of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry. "Day and night," an eye-witness has written, "the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them. Mírzá Áqa Ján wrote them as they were dictated, while the Most Great Branch was continually occupied in transcribing them. There was not a moment to spare." "A number of secretaries," Nabíl has testified, "were busy day and night and yet they were unable to cope with the task. Among them was Mírzá Báqir-i-Shírání.... He alone transcribed no less than two thousand verses every day. He labored during six or seven months. Every month the equivalent of several volumes would be transcribed by him and sent to Persia. About twenty volumes, in his fine penmanship, he left behind as a remembrance for Mírzá Áqa Ján." Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: "Such are the outpourings ... from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed." "So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayán would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness." "I swear by God!" He, in another connection has affirmed, "In

those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed." "That which hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople)," He, furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has declared, "secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed."

"Already in the very midst of that grievous crisis, and even before it came to a head, Tablets unnumbered were streaming

from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, in which the implications of His newly-asserted claims were fully expounded. The Suriy-i-Amr, the Lawh-i-Nuqtih, the Lawh-i-Ahmad, the Suriy-i-Ashab, the Lawh-i-Sayyah, the Suriy-i-Damm, the Suriy-i-Hajj, the Lawhu'r-Ruh, the Lawhu'r-Ridván, the Lawhu't-Tuqa were among the Tablets which His pen had already set down when He transferred His residence to the house of Izzat Áqa. Almost immediately after the "Most Great Separation" had been effected, the weightiest Tablets associated with His sojourn in Adrianople were revealed. The Suriy-i-Mulúk, the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh (Surih of Kings) in which He, for the first time, directs His words collectively to the entire company of the monarchs of East and West, and in which the Sultán of Turkey, and his ministers, the kings of Christendom, the French and Persian Ambassadors accredited to the Sublime Porte, the Muslim ecclesiastical leaders in Constantinople, its wise men and inhabitants, the people of Persia and the philosophers of the world are separately addressed; the Kitáb-i-Badí', His apologia, written to refute the accusations levelled against Him by Mírzá Mihdiy-i-Rashti, corresponding to the Kitáb-i-Íqán, revealed in defense of the Bábí Revelation; the Munajáthay-i-Siyam (Prayers for Fasting), written in anticipation of the Book of His Laws; the first Tablet to Napoleon III, in which the Emperor of the French is addressed and the sincerity of his professions put to the test; the Lawh-i-Sultán, His detailed epistle to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in which the aims, purposes and principles of His Faith are expounded and the validity of His Mission demonstrated; the Suriy-i-Ra'is, begun in the village of Káshánih on His way to Gallipoli, and completed shortly after at Gyawur-Kyuy -- these may be regarded not only as the most outstanding among the innumerable Tablets revealed in Adrianople, but as occupying a foremost position among all the writings of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation."

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Questions and Answers compiled by Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin, pp. 136-137: QUESTION: Concerning inheritance. ANSWER...

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Muluk, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 217-219.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 108.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 133.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Ra'is, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 143).

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Ra'is, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 163.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 132; Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 118.

“Shaykh Muhammad Báqir, denounced by Bahá'u'lláh as the `Wolf'. In this Tablet Bahá'u'lláh refers to Mír Muhammad Husayn, the Imám Jum'ih of Isfahán, surnamed the `She-Serpent', who was Shaykh Muhammad Báqir's accomplice in the persecution of the Bahá'ís. [See God Passes By, pages 198, 200-201 and 219]” (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 201, Note 1)

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Dunya, addressed to Shaykh Muhammad Báqir, in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 213.

Bahá'u'lláh cited by Shoghi Effendi in his account of the vast dimensions of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed verses during this period, in God Passes By, pp. 170-172:

“A period of prodigious activity ensued which, in its repercussions, outshone the vernal years of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry. "Day and night," an eye-witness has written, "the Divine verses were raining down in such number that it was impossible to record them. Mírzá Áqa Ján wrote them as they were dictated, while the Most Great Branch was continually occupied in transcribing them. There was not a moment to spare." "A number of secretaries," Nabíl has testified, "were busy

day and night and yet they were unable to cope with the task. Among them was Mírzá Báqir-i-Shírází.... He alone transcribed no less than two thousand verses every day. He labored during six or seven months. Every month the equivalent of several volumes would be transcribed by him and sent to Persia. About twenty volumes, in his fine penmanship, he left behind as a remembrance for Mírzá Áqa Ján." Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, referring to the verses revealed by Him, has written: "Such are the outpourings...from the clouds of Divine Bounty that within the space of an hour the equivalent of a thousand verses hath been revealed." "So great is the grace vouchsafed in this day that in a single day and night, were an amanuensis capable of accomplishing it to be found, the equivalent of the Persian Bayán would be sent down from the heaven of Divine holiness." "I swear by God!" He, in another connection has affirmed, "In those days the equivalent of all that hath been sent down aforetime unto the Prophets hath been revealed." "That which

hath already been revealed in this land (Adrianople)," He, furthermore, referring to the copiousness of His writings, has declared, "secretaries are incapable of transcribing. It has, therefore, remained for the most part untranscribed."

"Already in the very midst of that grievous crisis, and even before it came to a head, Tablets unnumbered were streaming from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, in which the implications of His newly-asserted claims were fully expounded. The Suriy-i-Amr, the Lawh-i-Nuqtih, the Lawh-i-Ahmad, the Suriy-i-Ashab, the Lawh-i-Sayyah, the Suriy-i-Damm, the Suriy-i-Hajj, the Lawhu'r-Ruh, the Lawhu'r-Ridván, the Lawhu't-Tuqa were among the Tablets which His pen had already set down when He transferred His residence to the house of Izzat Aqa. Almost immediately after the "Most Great Separation" had been effected, the weightiest Tablets associated with His sojourn in Adrianople were revealed. The Suriy-i-Mulúk, the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh (Surih of Kings) in which He, for the first time, directs His words collectively to the entire company of the monarchs of East and West, and in which the Sultán of Turkey, and his ministers, the kings of Christendom, the French and Persian Ambassadors accredited to the Sublime Porte, the Muslim ecclesiastical leaders in Constantinople, its wise men and inhabitants, the people of Persia and the philosophers of the world are separately addressed; the Kitáb-i-Badí', His apologia, written to refute the accusations levelled against Him by Mírzá Mihdíy-i-Rashtí, corresponding to the Kitáb-i-Íqán, revealed in defense of the Bábí Revelation; the Munajáthay-i-Siyam (Prayers for Fasting), written in anticipation of the Book of His Laws; the first Tablet to Napoleon III, in which the Emperor of the French is addressed and the sincerity of his professions put to the test; the Lawh-i-Sultán, His detailed epistle to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in which the aims, purposes and principles of His Faith are expounded and the validity of His Mission demonstrated; the Suriy-i-Ra'is, begun in the village of Kásháníh on His way to Gallipoli, and completed shortly after at Gyawur-Kyuy -- these may be regarded not only as the most outstanding among the innumerable Tablets revealed in Adrianople, but as occupying a foremost position among all the writings of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation."

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 133. This Tablet is cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 185-186: "Akká, the ancient Ptolemais, the St. Jean d'Acre of the Crusaders, that had successfully defied the siege of Napoleon, had sunk, under the Turks, to the level of a penal colony to which murderers, highway robbers and political agitators were consigned from all parts of the Turkish empire. It was girt about

by a double system of ramparts; was inhabited by a people whom Bahá'u'lláh stigmatized as "the generation of vipers"; was devoid of any source of water within its gates; was flea-infested, damp and honey-combed with gloomy, filthy and tortuous lanes. "According to what they say," the Supreme Pen has recorded in the Lawh-i-Sultán, "it is the most desolate of the cities of the world, the most unsightly of them in appearance, the most detestable in climate, and the foulest in water. It is as though it were the metropolis of the owl." So putrid was its air that, according to a proverb, a bird when flying over it would drop dead."

Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, p. 171 indicates that "...the Suriy-i-Ra'is, begun in the village of Káshánih on His way to

Gallipoli, and completed shortly after at Gyawur-Kyuy...may be regarded not only as [among] the most outstanding among the innumerable Tablets revealed in Adrianople, but as occupying a foremost position among all the writings of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation."

Describing this voyage, from Adrianople to Gallipoli, Shoghi Effendi writes in *God Passes By*, pp. 180-181:

"On the twenty-second of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani 1285 A.H. (August 12, 1868) Bahá'u'lláh and His family, escorted by a Turkish captain, Hasan Effendi by name, and other soldiers appointed by the local government, set out on their four-day journey to Gallipoli, riding in carriages and stopping on their way at Uzun-Kupru and Káshánih, at which latter place the Suriy-i-Ra'is was revealed. "The inhabitants of the quarter in which Bahá'u'lláh had been living, and the neighbors who had gathered to bid Him farewell, came one after the other," writes an eyewitness, "with the utmost sadness and regret to kiss His hands and the hem of His robe, expressing meanwhile their sorrow at His departure. That day, too, was a strange day. Methinks the city, its walls and its gates bemoaned their imminent separation from Him." "On that day," writes another eye-witness, "there was a wonderful concourse of Muslims and Christians at the door of our Master's house. The hour of departure was a memorable one. Most of those present were weeping and wailing, especially the Christians." "Say," Bahá'u'lláh Himself declares in the Suriy-i-Ra'is, "this Youth hath departed out of this country and deposited beneath every tree and every stone a trust, which God will ere long bring forth through the power of truth.""

Shoghi Effendi refers to this episode in *God Passes By*, p. 173:

"To this same Sultán He, moreover, as attested by the Suriy-i-Ra'is, transmitted, while in Gallipoli, a verbal message through a Turkish officer named Umar, requesting the sovereign to grant

Him a ten minute interview, "so that he may demand whatsoever he would deem to be a sufficient testimony and would regard as proof of the veracity of Him Who is the Truth," adding that "should God enable Him to produce it, let him, then, release these wronged ones and leave them to themselves.""

Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh-i-Ra'is*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 171-172; cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, pp. 45-46.

Shoghi Effendi once again sets forth the historical context in *God Passes By*, pp. 179-180:

"A great tumult seized the people," writes Aqa Rida, one of the stoutest supporters of Bahá'u'lláh, exiled with him all the way from Baghdád to 'Akká, "All were perplexed and full of regret... Some expressed their sympathy, others consoled us, and wept over us... Most of our possessions were auctioned at half their value.""

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 180:

"Some of the consuls of foreign powers called on Bahá'u'lláh, and expressed their readiness to intervene with their respective governments on His behalf -- suggestions for which He expressed appreciation, but which He firmly declined. "The consuls of that city (Adrianople) gathered in the presence of this Youth at the hour of His departure," He Himself has written, "and expressed their desire to aid Him. They, verily, evinced towards Us manifest affection.""

According to the narrative of Áqa Husayn-i-Ashchí Káshání, cited in H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory*, p. 256, Bahá'u'lláh said the following in response to offers of assistance from foreign consuls in the city: "You wish me to give you the word to bring Me relief, but My relief lies in the hands of God. My focus is God, and to Him alone do I turn."

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (*Nabíl-i-A'zam*), *Narrative*, citing

Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes:

"Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanján, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H., [Footnote #1: "January 9, 1889 A.D.,"] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk..." in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 585-586.

Shoghi Effendi cites this passage in *God Passes By* (p. 180)

with the following explanation:

“Hájí Ja'far-i-Tabrízí, one of the believers, finding that his name had been omitted from the list of the exiles who might accompany Bahá'u'lláh, cut his throat with a razor, but was prevented in time from ending his life -- an act which Bahá'u'lláh, in the *Suriy-i-Ra'is*, characterizes as "unheard of in bygone centuries," and which "God hath set apart for this Revelation, as an evidence of the power of His might.””

Siyid Ismá'íl-i-Zavarih (see *God Passes By*, p. 136).

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Ra'is*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 145-147. This period of time is described by Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, pp. 179-183:

“Suddenly, one morning, the house of Bahá'u'lláh was surrounded by soldiers, sentinels were posted at its gates, His followers were again summoned by the authorities, interrogated, and ordered to make ready for their departure. "The loved ones of God and His kindred," is Bahá'u'lláh's testimony in the *Suriy-i-Ra'is*, "were left on the first night without food... The people surrounded the house, and Muslims and Christians wept over Us... We perceived that the weeping of the people of the Son (Christians) exceeded the weeping of others -- a sign for such as ponder." "A great tumult seized the people," writes Aqa Rida, one of the stoutest supporters of Bahá'u'lláh, exiled with him all the way from Baghdád to 'Akká, "All were perplexed and full of regret... Some expressed their sympathy, others consoled us, and wept over us... Most of our possessions were auctioned at half their value." Some of the consuls of foreign powers called on Bahá'u'lláh, and expressed their readiness to intervene with their respective governments on His behalf -- suggestions for which

He expressed appreciation, but which He firmly declined. "The consuls of that city (Adrianople) gathered in the presence of this Youth at the hour of His departure," He Himself has written, "and expressed their desire to aid Him. They, verily, evinced towards Us manifest affection."

“The Persian Ambassador promptly informed the Persian consuls in Iraq and Egypt that the Turkish government had withdrawn its protection from the Bábís, and that they were free to treat them as they pleased. Several pilgrims, among whom was Hájí Muhammad Ismá'íl-i-Káshání, surnamed Anís in the *Lawh-i-Ra'is*, had, in the meantime, arrived in Adrianople, and had to depart to Gallipoli, without even beholding the face of their Master. Two of the companions were forced to divorce their wives, as their relatives refused to allow them to go into exile. Khurshid Páshá, who had already several times categorically denied the written accusations sent him by the authorities in

Constantinople, and had interceded vigorously on behalf of Bahá'u'lláh, was so embarrassed by the action of his government that he decided to absent himself when informed of His immediate departure from the city, and instructed the Registrar to convey to Him the purport of the Sultán's edict. Hájí Ja'far-i-Tabrízí, one of the believers, finding that his name had been omitted from the list of the exiles who might accompany Bahá'u'lláh, cut his throat with a razor, but was prevented in time from ending his life -- an act which Bahá'u'lláh, in the Suriy-i-Ra'is, characterizes as "unheard of in bygone centuries," and which "God hath set apart for this Revelation, as an evidence of the power of His might."

"On the twenty-second of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani 1285 A.H. (August 12, 1868) Bahá'u'lláh and His family, escorted by a Turkish captain, Hasan Effendi by name, and other soldiers appointed by the local government, set out on their four-day journey to Gallipoli, riding in carriages and stopping on their way at Uzun-Kupru and Kashanih, at which latter place the Suriy-i-Ra'is was revealed. "The inhabitants of the quarter in which Bahá'u'lláh had been living, and the neighbors who had gathered to bid Him farewell, came one after the other," writes an eyewitness, "with the utmost sadness and regret to kiss His hands and the hem of His robe, expressing meanwhile their sorrow at

His departure. That day, too, was a strange day. Methinks the city, its walls and its gates bemoaned their imminent separation from Him." "On that day," writes another eye-witness, "there was a wonderful concourse of Muslims and Christians at the door of our Master's house. The hour of departure was a memorable one. Most of those present were weeping and wailing, especially the Christians." "Say," Bahá'u'lláh Himself declares in the Suriy-i-Ra'is, "this Youth hath departed out of this country and deposited beneath every tree and every stone a trust, which God will ere long bring forth through the power of truth."

"Several of the companions who had been brought from Constantinople were awaiting them in Gallipoli. On his arrival Bahá'u'lláh made the following pronouncement to Hasan Effendi, who, his duty discharged, was taking his leave: "Tell the king that this territory will pass out of his hands, and his affairs will be thrown into confusion." "To this," Áqa Ridá, the recorder of that scene has written, "Bahá'u'lláh furthermore added: 'Not I speak these words, but God speaketh them.' In those moments He was uttering verses which we, who were downstairs, could overhear. They were spoken with such vehemence and power that, methinks, the foundations of the house itself trembled."

"Even in Gallipoli, where three nights were spent, no one knew

what Bahá'u'lláh's destination would be. Some believed that He and His brothers would be banished to one place, and the remainder dispersed, and sent into exile. Others thought that His companions would be sent back to Persia, while still others expected their immediate extermination. The government's original order was to banish Bahá'u'lláh, Áqáy-i-Kalím and Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, with a servant to 'Akká, while the rest were to proceed to Constantinople. This order, which provoked scenes of indescribable distress, was, however, at the insistence of Bahá'u'lláh, and by the instrumentality of Umar Effendi, a major appointed to accompany the exiles, revoked. It was eventually decided that all the exiles, numbering about seventy, should be banished to 'Akká. Instructions were, moreover, issued that a certain number of the adherents of Mírzá Yahyá, among whom were Siyyid Muhammad and Áqa Ján, should accompany these exiles, whilst four of the companions of Bahá'u'lláh were ordered to depart with the Azalis for Cyprus.

“So grievous were the dangers and trials confronting Bahá'u'lláh at the hour of His departure from Gallipoli that He warned His companions that "this journey will be unlike any of the previous journeys," and that whoever did not feel himself "man enough to face the future" had best "depart to whatever place he pleaseth, and be preserved from tests, for hereafter he will find himself unable to leave" -- a warning which His companions unanimously chose to disregard.

“On the morning of the 2nd of Jamadiyu'l-Avval 1285 A.H. (August 21, 1868) they all embarked in an Austrian-Lloyd steamer for Alexandria, touching at Madelli, and stopping for two days at Smyrna, where Jinab-i-Munir, surnamed Ismu'llahu'l-Munib, became gravely ill, and had, to his great distress, to be left behind in a hospital where he soon after died. In Alexandria they transhipped into a steamer of the same company, bound for Haifa, where, after brief stops at Port Said and Jaffa, they landed, setting out, a few hours later, in a sailing vessel, for 'Akká, where they disembarked, in the course of the afternoon of the 12th of Jamadiyu'l-Avval 1285 A.H. (August 31, 1868). It was at the moment when Bahá'u'lláh had stepped into the boat which was to carry Him to the landing-stage in Haifa that ‘Abdu'l-Ghaffár, one of the four companions condemned to share the exile of Mírzá Yahyá, and whose "detachment, love and trust in God" Bahá'u'lláh had greatly praised, cast himself, in his despair, into the sea, shouting "Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá," and was subsequently rescued and resuscitated with the greatest difficulty, only to be forced by adamant officials to continue his voyage, with Mírzá Yahyá's party, to the destination originally appointed for him.” Shoghi Effendi cites these reported utterances of Bahá'u'lláh,

and provides the historical context in *God Passes By*, p. 181:
“Several of the companions who had been brought from Constantinople were awaiting them in Gallipoli. On his arrival Bahá'u'lláh made the following pronouncement to Hasan Effendi, who, his duty discharged, was taking his leave: "Tell the king that this territory will pass out of his hands, and his affairs will be thrown into confusion." "To this," Áqa Ridá, the recorder of that

scene has written, "Bahá'u'lláh furthermore added: 'Not I speak these words, but God speaketh them.' In those moments He was uttering verses which we, who were downstairs, could overhear. They were spoken with such vehemence and power that, methinks, the foundations of the house itself trembled."” H.M. Balyuzi, in *Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory*, gives the full name of “the recorder of that scene” as Áqa Ridáy-i-Qannad-i-Shírází. This citation from the narrative of Áqa Ridáy-i-Qannad-i-Shírází, found in H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory*, pp. 261-262 is a continuation of the oral account cited by Shoghi Effendi.

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 585-586:

“Upon the termination of the description of the struggle of Zanján, I was ushered into His presence, and received, together with a number of other believers, the blessings which on two occasions He deigned to confer upon us. Both visits took place during the four days which Bahá'u'lláh chose to tarry in the home of Áqáy-i-Kalím. On the second and fourth nights after His arrival at His brother's house, which fell on the seventh day of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306 A.H., [Footnote #1: “January 9, 1889 A.D.”] I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk...”
The Dawn-Breakers, p. 586, Footnote #1: “Abdu'l-Bahá's title.”

Muhammad-i-Zarandi (Nabíl-i-A'zam), Narrative, citing Bahá'u'lláh's words, as he describes in Shoghi Effendi, translator, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 585-586:

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of the month of Jamadiyu'l-Avval, in the year 1306

A.H.,[Footnote #1: "January 9, 1889 A.D.]" I, together with a number of pilgrims from Sarvistán and Fárán, as well as a few resident believers, was admitted into His presence. The words He spoke to us lie for ever engraved upon my heart, and I feel it my duty to my readers to share with them the gist of His talk..."

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Sayyah, cited by Shoghi Effendi in God Passes By, p. 184:

"Bahá'u'lláh Himself, as attested by Nabíl in his narrative, had, as far back as the first years of His banishment to Adrianople, alluded to that same city in His Lawh-i-Sayyah, designating it as the "Vale of Nabíl," the word Nabíl being equal in numerical value to that of 'Akká. "Upon Our arrival," that Tablet had predicted, "We were welcomed with banners of light, whereupon the Voice of the Spirit cried out saying: 'Soon will all that dwell on earth be enlisted under these banners.'"

Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 163-164.

Shoghi Effendi cited this passage in his description of

Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká, in God Passes By, pp. 186-187:

"Having, after a miserable voyage, disembarked at 'Akká, all the exiles, men, women and children, were, under the eyes of a curious and callous population that had assembled at the port to behold the "God of the Persians," conducted to the army barracks, where they were locked in, and sentinels detailed to guard them. "The first night," Bahá'u'lláh testifies in the Lawh-i-Ra'ís, "all were deprived of either food or drink... They even begged for water, and were refused." So filthy and brackish was the water in the pool of the courtyard that no one could drink it. Three loaves of black and salty bread were assigned to each, which they were later permitted to exchange, when escorted by guards to the market, for two of better quality. Subsequently they were allowed a mere pittance as substitute for the allotted dole of bread. All fell sick, except two, shortly after their arrival.

Malaria, dysentery, combined with the sultry heat, added to their miseries. Three succumbed, among them two brothers, who died the same night, "locked," as testified by Bahá'u'lláh, "in each other's arms." The carpet used by Him He gave to be sold in order to provide for their winding-sheets and burial. The paltry sum obtained after it had been auctioned was delivered to the guards, who had refused to bury them without first being paid the necessary expenses. Later, it was learned that, unwashed and unshrouded, they had buried them, without coffins, in the clothes they wore, though, as affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, they were given twice the amount required for their burial. "None," He Himself has written, "knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing... From the foundation of the world

until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of." "He hath, during the greater part of His life," He, referring to Himself, has, moreover, recorded, "been sore-tried in the clutches of His enemies. His sufferings have now reached their culmination in this afflictive Prison, into which His oppressors have so unjustly thrown Him.""

Bahá'u'lláh cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 185:

"His arrival at the penal colony of 'Akká, far from proving the end of His afflictions, was but the beginning of a major crisis, characterized by bitter suffering, severe restrictions, and intense turmoil, which, in its gravity, surpassed even the agonies of the Siyah-Chal of Tihrán, and to which no other event, in the history of the entire century can compare, except the internal convulsion that rocked the Faith in Adrianople. "Know thou," Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to emphasize the criticalness of the first nine years of His banishment to that prison-city, has written, "that upon Our arrival at this Spot, We chose to designate it as the 'Most Great Prison.' Though previously subjected in another land (Tihrán) to chains and fetters, We yet refused to call it by that name. Say: Ponder thereon, O ye endued with understanding!"

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Haykal*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 74; cited in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 206.

Apparently some of these epistles to the kings revealed in 'Akká may have remained undelivered at the close of Bahá'u'lláh's

earthly sojourn, inasmuch as He writes in *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 59:

"Likewise, We mention some verses from the Tablet of Her Majesty, the Queen (Queen Victoria) -- may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist her. Our purpose is that haply the breezes of Revelation may envelop thee, and cause thee to arise, wholly for the sake of God, and serve His Cause, and that thou mayest transmit any of the Tablets of the kings which might have remained undelivered. This mission is a great mission, and this service a great service. In those regions distinguished divines are numerous, among whom are those Siyyids who are renowned for their eminence and distinction. Confer with them, and show them what hath flowed out of the Pen of Glory, that haply they may be graciously aided to better the condition of the world, and improve the character of peoples of different nations, and may, through the living waters of God's counsels, quench the hatred and the animosity which lie hid and smolder in the hearts of men. We pray God that thou mayest be assisted therein. And this, verily, would not be hard for Him."

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 81-82;

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 55-56.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 105.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 233.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 10.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Muluk*, in *The Summons of the Lord of*

Hosts, p. 224.

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Ra'is, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 172-173. The events alluded to in this Tablet are described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Memorials to the Faithful*, pp. 167, 169-170:

“Áqa Muhammad-Báqir and Áqa Muhammad-Ismá'íl, the Tailor -- These were two brothers who, in the path of God, captives along with the rest, were shut in the 'Akká fortress. They were brothers of the late Pahlavan Ridá. They left Persia and emigrated to Adrianople, hastening to the loving-kindness of Bahá'u'lláh; and under His protection, they came to

'Akká...through the grace of the Blessed Beauty, after they were taken captive by the tyrants, they were shut in the Most Great Prison, where they shared the lot of these homeless wanderers. Here, during the early days at 'Akká, with complete detachment, with ardent love, they hastened away to the all-glorious Realm. For our ruthless oppressors, as soon as we arrived, imprisoned all of us inside the fortress in the soldiers' barracks, and they closed up every issue, so that none could come and go. At that time the air of 'Akká was poisonous, and every stranger, immediately following his arrival, would be taken ill.

Muhammad-Báqir and Muhammad-Ismá'íl came down with a violent ailment and there was neither doctor nor medicine to be had; and those two embodied lights died on the same night, wrapped in each other's arms. They rose up to the undying Kingdom, leaving the friends to mourn them forever. There was none there but wept that night.

“When morning came we wished to carry their sanctified bodies away. The oppressors told us: "You are forbidden to go out of the fortress. You must hand over these two corpses to us. We will wash them, shroud them and bury them. But first you must pay for it." It happened that we had no money. There was a prayer carpet which had been placed under the feet of Bahá'u'lláh. He took up this carpet and said, "Sell it. Give the money to the guards." The prayer carpet was sold for 170 piasters [1] and that sum was handed over. But the two were never washed for their burial nor wrapped in their winding sheets; the guards only dug a hole in the ground and thrust them in, as they were, in the clothes they had on; so that even now, their two graves are one, and just as their souls are joined in the Abha Realm, their bodies are together here, under the earth, each holding the other in his close embrace.

“The Blessed Beauty showered His blessings on these two brothers. In life, they were encompassed by His grace and favor; in death, they were memorialized in His Tablets. Their grave is in 'Akká. Greetings be unto them, and praise. The glory of the All-

Glorious be upon them, and God's mercy, and His benediction.”

[1] The Turkish ghurush or piaster of the time was forty paras, the para one-ninth of a cent. These figures are approximate only.

Shoghi Effendi describes the same events and others in the *Most Great Prison in God Passes By*, p. 186:

“Having, after a miserable voyage, disembarked at 'Akká, all the exiles, men, women and children, were, under the eyes of a curious and callous population that had assembled at the port to behold the "God of the Persians," conducted to the army barracks, where they were locked in, and sentinels detailed to guard them. "The first night," Bahá'u'lláh testifies in the *Lawh-i-Ra'ís*, "all were deprived of either food or drink... They even begged for water, and were refused." So filthy and brackish was the water in the pool of the courtyard that no one could drink it. Three loaves of black and salty bread were assigned to each, which they were later permitted to exchange, when escorted by guards to the market, for two of better quality. Subsequently they were allowed a mere pittance as substitute for the allotted dole of bread. All fell sick, except two, shortly after their arrival. Malaria, dysentery, combined with the sultry heat, added to their miseries. Three succumbed, among them two brothers, who died the same night, "locked," as testified by Bahá'u'lláh, "in each other's arms." The carpet used by Him He gave to be sold in order to provide for their winding-sheets and burial. The paltry sum obtained after it had been auctioned was delivered to the guards, who had refused to bury them without first being paid the necessary expenses. Later, it was learned that, unwashed and unshrouded, they had buried them, without coffins, in the clothes they wore, though, as affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, they were given twice the amount required for their burial. "None," He Himself has written, "knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing... From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of." "He hath, during the greater part of His life," He, referring to Himself, has, moreover, recorded, "been sore-tried in the clutches of His enemies. His sufferings have now reached their culmination in this afflictive Prison, into which His oppressors have so unjustly thrown Him.””

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LXII, pp. 42-43.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, LIX, pp. 115-117.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh-i-Ra'ís*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 162-163, 163-164.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 261.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 78.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Haykal*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 73-74.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 51.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 122-126.

'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the accommodations of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká in *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 26-27:

“For the Most Great Name was held prisoner and confined nine years in the fortress-town of 'Akká; and at all times, both in the barracks and afterward, from without the house, the police and farrashes had Him under constant guard. The Blessed Beauty [Bahá'u'lláh] lived in a very small house, and He never set foot outside that narrow lodging, because His oppressors kept continual watch at the door. When, however, nine years had elapsed, the fixed and predetermined length of days was over; and at that time, against the rancorous will of the tyrant, Abdu'l-Hamid, and all his minions, Bahá'u'lláh proceeded out of the fortress with authority and might, and in a kingly mansion beyond the city, made His home.”

Shoghi Effendi describes the historical circumstances alluded to in the Fire Tablet, including the separation of the Bahá'ís from Bahá'u'lláh, in *God Passes By*, pp. 189-192:

“Nor was this the full measure of the afflictions endured by the Prisoner of 'Akká and His fellow-exiles. Four months after this tragic event a mobilization of Turkish troops necessitated the removal of Bahá'u'lláh and all who bore Him company from the

barracks. He and His family were accordingly assigned the house of Malík, in the western quarter of the city, whence, after a brief stay of three months, they were moved by the authorities to the house of Khavvam which faced it, and from which, after a few months, they were again obliged to take up new quarters in the house of Rabi'ih, being finally transferred, four months later, to the house of Udi Khammar, which was so insufficient to their needs that in one of its rooms no less than thirteen persons of both sexes had to accommodate themselves. Some of the companions had to take up their residence in other houses, while the remainder were consigned to a caravanserai named the Khán-i-'Avamid.

“Their strict confinement had hardly been mitigated, and the guards who had kept watch over them been dismissed, when an internal crisis, which had been brewing in the midst of the community, was brought to a sudden and catastrophic climax. Such had been the conduct of two of the exiles, who had been included in the party that accompanied Bahá'u'lláh to 'Akká, that He was eventually forced to expel them, an act of which Siyyid Muhammad did not hesitate to take the fullest advantage. Reinforced by these recruits, he, together with his old associates,

acting as spies, embarked on a campaign of abuse, calumny and intrigue, even more pernicious than that which had been launched by him in Constantinople, calculated to arouse an already prejudiced and suspicious populace to a new pitch of animosity and excitement. A fresh danger now clearly threatened the life of Bahá'u'lláh. Though He Himself had stringently forbidden His followers, on several occasions, both verbally and in writing, any retaliatory acts against their tormentors, and had even sent back to Beirut an irresponsible Arab convert, who had meditated avenging the wrongs suffered by his beloved Leader, seven of the companions clandestinely sought out and slew three of their persecutors, among whom were Siyyid Muhammad and Áqa Ján.

“The consternation that seized an already oppressed community was indescribable. Bahá'u'lláh's indignation knew no bounds.

"Were We," He thus voices His emotions, in a Tablet revealed shortly after this act had been committed, "to make mention of what befell Us, the heavens would be rent asunder and the

mountains would crumble." "My captivity," He wrote on another occasion, "cannot harm Me. That which can harm Me is the conduct of those who love Me, who claim to be related to Me, and yet perpetrate what causeth My heart and My pen to groan." And again: "My captivity can bring on Me no shame. Nay, by My life, it conferreth on Me glory. That which can make Me ashamed is the conduct of such of My followers as profess to love Me, yet in fact follow the Evil One."

“He was dictating His Tablets to His amanuensis when the governor, at the head of his troops, with drawn swords, surrounded His house. The entire populace, as well as the military authorities, were in a state of great agitation. The shouts and clamor of the people could be heard on all sides. Bahá'u'lláh was peremptorily summoned to the Governorate, interrogated, kept in custody the first night, with one of His sons, in a chamber in the Khán-i-Shavirdi, transferred for the following two nights to better quarters in that neighborhood, and allowed only after the lapse of seventy hours to regain His home.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was thrown into prison and chained during the first night, after which He was permitted to join His Father. Twentyfive of the companions were cast into another prison and shackled, all of whom, except those responsible for that odious deed, whose imprisonment lasted several years, were, after six days, moved to the Khán-i-Shavirdi, and there placed, for six months, under confinement.

““Is it proper," the Commandant of the city, turning to Bahá'u'lláh, after He had arrived at the Governorate, boldly inquired, "that some of your followers should act in such a

manner?" "If one of your soldiers," was the swift rejoinder, "were to commit a reprehensible act, would you be held responsible, and be punished in his place?" When interrogated, He was asked to state His name and that of the country from which He came. "It is more manifest than the sun," He answered. The same question was put to Him again, to which He gave the following reply: "I deem it not proper to mention it. Refer to the farman of the government which is in your possession." Once again they, with marked deference, reiterated their request, whereupon Bahá'u'lláh spoke with majesty and power these words: "My name is Bahá'u'lláh (Light of God), and My country is Núr (Light). Be ye apprized of it." Turning then, to the Mufti, He addressed him words of veiled rebuke, after which He spoke to the entire gathering, in such vehement and exalted language that none made bold to answer Him. Having quoted verses from the Suriy-i-Mulúk, He, afterwards, arose and left the gathering. The Governor, soon after, sent word that He was at liberty to return to His home, and apologized for what had occurred.

"A population, already ill-disposed towards the exiles, was, after such an incident, fired with uncontrollable animosity for all those who bore the name of the Faith which those exiles professed. The charges of impiety, atheism, terrorism and heresy were openly and without restraint flung into their faces. Abbud, who lived next door to Bahá'u'lláh, reinforced the partition that separated his house from the dwelling of his now much-feared and suspected Neighbor. Even the children of the imprisoned exiles, whenever they ventured to show themselves in the streets during those days, would be pursued, vilified and pelted with stones.

"The cup of Bahá'u'lláh's tribulations was now filled to overflowing. A situation, greatly humiliating, full of anxieties and even perilous, continued to face the exiles, until the time, set by an inscrutable Will, at which the tide of misery and abasement began to ebb, signaling a transformation in the fortunes of the Faith even more conspicuous than the revolutionary change effected during the latter years of Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn in Baghdád.

"The gradual recognition by all elements of the population of Bahá'u'lláh's complete innocence; the slow penetration of the true spirit of His teachings through the hard crust of their indifference and bigotry; the substitution of the sagacious and humane governor, Ahmad Big Tawfiq, for one whose mind had been hopelessly poisoned against the Faith and its followers; the unremitting labors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, now in the full flower of His manhood, Who, through His contacts with the rank and file of

the population, was increasingly demonstrating His capacity to act as the shield of His Father; the providential dismissal of the officials who had been instrumental in prolonging the confinement of the innocent companions -- all paved the way

for the reaction that was now setting in, a reaction with which the period of Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to 'Akká will ever remain indissolubly associated.

“Such was the devotion gradually kindled in the heart of that governor, through his association with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and later through his perusal of the literature of the Faith, which mischiefmakers, in the hope of angering him, had submitted for his consideration, that he invariably refused to enter His presence without first removing his shoes, as a token of his respect for Him. It was even bruited about that his favored counselors were those very exiles who were the followers of the Prisoner in his custody. His own son he was wont to send to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for instruction and enlightenment. It was on the occasion of a longsought audience with Bahá'u'lláh that, in response to a request for permission to render Him some service, the suggestion was made to him to restore the aqueduct which for thirty years had been allowed to fall into disuse -- a suggestion which he immediately arose to carry out. To the inflow of pilgrims, among whom were numbered the devout and venerable Mullá Sádiq-i-Khurásání and the father of Badí', both survivors of the struggle of Tabarsí, he offered scarcely any opposition, though the text of the imperial farmán forbade their admission into the city.

Mustafa Diya Páshá, who became governor a few years later, had even gone so far as to intimate that his Prisoner was free to pass through its gates whenever He pleased, a suggestion which Bahá'u'lláh declined. Even the Mufti of 'Akká, Shaykh Mahmúd, a man notorious for his bigotry, had been converted to the Faith, and, fired by his newborn enthusiasm, made a compilation of the Muhammadan traditions related to 'Akká. Nor were the occasionally unsympathetic governors, despatched to that city, able, despite the arbitrary power they wielded, to check the forces which were carrying the Author of the Faith towards His virtual emancipation and the ultimate accomplishment of His purpose. Men of letters, and even ulamas residing in Syria, were moved, as the years rolled by, to voice their recognition of Bahá'u'lláh's rising greatness and power. Azíz Páshá, who, in Adrianople, had evinced a profound attachment to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and had in the meantime been promoted to the rank of Valí, twice visited 'Akká for the express purpose of paying his respects to Bahá'u'lláh, and to renew his friendship with One Whom he had learned to admire and revere.

“Though Bahá'u'lláh Himself practically never granted personal

interviews, as He had been used to do in Baghdád, yet such was the influence He now wielded that the inhabitants openly asserted that the noticeable improvement in the climate and water of their city was directly attributable to His continued presence in their midst. The very designations by which they chose to refer to him, such as the "august leader," and "his highness" bespoke the reverence with which He inspired them. On one occasion, a European general who, together with the governor, was granted an audience by Him, was so impressed that he "remained kneeling on the ground near the door.""

Inasmuch as 'Akká was located in the Ottoman province of Syria, this city and its general location is often called Syria by Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh-i-Ihtiraq* (also known as *Lawh-i-Qad Ihtaraqa'l-Mukhlisun*) translated as the Fire Tablet; in *Bahá'í Prayers*, pp. 213-219.

'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the accommodations of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká in *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 27-28:

"Although the policy of Sultán 'Abdu'l-Hamíd was harsher than ever; although he constantly insisted on his Captive's strict confinement -- still, the Blessed Beauty [Bahá'u'lláh] now lived, as everyone knows, with all power and glory. Some of the time Bahá'u'lláh would spend at the Mansion [Bahjí], and again, at the farm village of Mazra'ih; for a while He would sojourn in Haifa, and occasionally His tent would be pitched on the heights of Mount Carmel. Friends from everywhere presented themselves and gained an audience. The people and the government authorities witnessed it all, yet no one so much as breathed a word. And this is one of Bahá'u'lláh's greatest miracles: that He, a captive, surrounded Himself with panoply and He wielded power. The prison changed into a palace, the jail itself became a Garden of Eden. Such a thing has not occurred in history before; no former age has seen its like: that a man confined to a prison should move about with authority and might; that one in chains should carry the fame of the Cause of God to the high heavens, should win splendid victories in both East and West, and should, by His almighty pen, subdue the world. Such is the distinguishing feature of this supreme Theophany.

"One day the government leaders, pillars of the country, the city's ulamas, leading mystics and intellectuals came out to the Mansion. The Blessed Beauty paid them no attention whatever. They were not admitted to His presence, nor did He inquire after any of them. I sat down with them and kept them company for some hours, after which they returned whence they had come. Although the royal farman specifically decreed that Bahá'u'lláh was to be held in solitary confinement within the

'Akká fortress, in a cell, under perpetual guard; that He was never to set foot outside; that He was never even to see any of the believers -- notwithstanding such a farman, such a drastic order, His tent was raised in majesty on the heights of Mount Carmel. What greater display of power could there be than this, that from the very prison, the banner of the Lord was raised aloft, and rippled out for all the world to see! Praised be the Possessor of such majesty and might; praised be He, weaponed with the power and the glory; praised be He, Who defeated His foes when He lay captive in the 'Akká prison!"

“That is, with non-Bahá’ís” (Footnote in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 231)

“Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, that spiritual giant immortalized by the title 'the Angel of Carmel', has left the following record of one of his memorable audiences, when Bahá'u'lláh spoke about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's important role in shielding Him from the pressures of the outside world... These are not to be taken as the exact words of Bahá'u'lláh; they are only recollections of His utterances by Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí.” (Haydar-‘Alí, *Bihjutu's-Sudur*, pp. 251-252, cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 231)

Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah*, vol. 4, p. 7; preceded by “Bahá'u'lláh loved the beauty of nature and was

fond of the outdoor life. Living in the Mansion of Mazra'ih enabled Him to enjoy the scenery after nine years of confinement within the walls of a depressing prison-city.”

“That is, with non-Bahá’ís” (Footnote in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 231)

“Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, that spiritual giant immortalized by the title 'the Angel of Carmel', has left the following record of one of his memorable audiences, when Bahá'u'lláh spoke about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's important role in shielding Him from the pressures of the outside world... These are not to be taken as the exact words of Bahá'u'lláh; they are only recollections of His utterances by Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí.” (Haydar-‘Alí, *Bihjutu's-Sudur*, pp. 251-252, cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 231)

Bahá'u'lláh quoted by Edward Granville Browne, in his Introduction (p. xl) to *A Traveler's Narrative*, first published in 1891. Hasan Muhammad Balyuzi sets forth the historical circumstances of this meeting in *Bahá'u'lláh, King of Glory*, pp. 373-374:

“The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith states that Bahá'u'lláh visited Haifa four times. The first visit was of short duration, when He disembarked in 1868 from the Lloyd-Triestino steamer. The second visit was for just a few days, and He stayed in Bayt-i-

Fandūq, a house in the German colony, part of which still stands today. There is a dated Tablet, in the handwriting of Mírzá Áqa Ján, which indicates that Bahá'u'lláh was in Haifa in August 1883, probably the date of this second visit. The third visit was in 1890, and when Edward Granville Browne reached 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh was in Haifa. In the course of this visit, He stayed, at first, near Bayt-i-Zahlan, near the town, and then He moved to a house in the German colony which was known as the Oliphant house. His tent was pitched on a piece of land opposite that house. His fourth and last visit was in the year 1891. This sojourn was the longest, and it was here in Haifa that members of the Afnan family met him when they came in July, as described in a later chapter. Bahá'u'lláh was then in Haifa for

three months, staying in the house of Ilyas Abyad near the German colony, and His tent stood near by." E.G. Browne recalled the event differently. He wrote in his Introduction to A Traveler's Narrative, pp. xl-xli: "During the morning of the day after my installation at Behjé..." was when his first visit with Bahá'u'lláh took place. After citing the words quoted above Browne writes, "Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Behá. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion. My interview lasted altogether about twenty minutes, and during the latter part of it Behá read a portion of that epistle (lawh) whereof the translation occupies the last paragraph on p. 70 and the greater part of p. 71 of this book.

"During the five days spent at Behjé (Tuesday, April 15th to Sunday, April 20th), I was admitted to Behá's presence four times. These interviews always took place an hour or two before noon, and lasted from twenty minutes to half-an-hour. One of Behá's sons always accompanied me, and once Áká Mírzá Aká Ján (Jenáb-i-Khádimu'lláh) the amanuensis (kátib-i-áyát) was also present. In their general features these interviews resembled the first, of which I have attempted to give a description. Besides this, one afternoon I saw Behá walking in one of the gardens which belong to him. He was surrounded by a little group of his chief followers. How the journey to and from the garden was accomplished I know not: probably under cover of the darkness of night."

Bahá'u'lláh cited in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, volume IV, pp. 14-16:

"There is a little house at the end of the Garden of Ridván. Here the small room in which Bahá'u'lláh rested, dined and at times revealed Tablets is kept in its original form. The renowned Hájí

Mírzá Haydar-'Alí recounts an interesting story of how he was able to see the colour of the head-dress of Bahá'u'lláh for the first time as He was having a meal in that room. This story has been recorded in a previous volume.[The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, volume II, pp. 9-10] A Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh

revealed there and translated into English hangs on the wall of that room today. Its perusal enables the reader to see how much Bahá'u'lláh enjoyed the Garden and how much He loved the beauty of nature...Radíyih, who is mentioned in this Tablet, was a sister of Munírih Khánum, the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The dinner was given on behalf of her husband who was not present at the time. He was her cousin Siyyid 'Alí, the only son of Mírzá Hadí, a distinguished Bábí, and the illustrious Shams-i-Duha." [See 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Memorials of the Faithful, pp. 175-190]

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Memorials of the Faithful, p. 27:

"Although the policy of Sultán 'Abdu'l-Hamíd was harsher than ever; although he constantly insisted on his Captive's strict confinement -- still, the Blessed Beauty now lived, as everyone knows, with all power and glory. Some of the time Bahá'u'lláh would spend at the Mansion, and again, at the farm village of Mazra'ih; for a while He would sojourn in Haifa, and occasionally His tent would be pitched on the heights of Mount Carmel."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Reply to letter dated 27 May 1906, in Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 66:

"The Blessed Beauty proceeded to Haifa on many occasions. Thou beheldest Him there, but thou didst not know Him at that time. It is my hope that thou wilt attain unto the true meeting with Him, which is to behold Him with the inner, not the outer eye."

Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 194:

"In that same year Bahá'u'lláh's tent, the "Tabernacle of Glory," was raised on Mt. Carmel, "the Hill of God and His Vineyard," the home of Elijah, extolled by Isaiah as the "mountain of the Lord," to which "all nations shall flow." Four times He visited Haifa, His last visit being no less than three months long. In the course of one of these visits, when His tent was pitched in the vicinity of the Carmelite Monastery, He, the "Lord of the Vineyard," revealed the Tablet of Carmel, remarkable for its allusions and prophecies. On another occasion He pointed out Himself to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as He stood on the slopes of that mountain, the site which was to serve as the permanent resting-place of the Báb, and on which a befitting mausoleum was later to be erected."

Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah, vol. 3, pp. 30-31:

“...towards the end of His ministry, Bahá'u'lláh Himself visited Haifa and at one time stayed in one of the houses belonging to the Templers.”

Baha'u'llah, Lawh-i-Karmíl, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pp. 3-5.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K6.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXLVI, pp. 315-316.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K53.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K121.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K174.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 221-222.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLI, pp. 321-322.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 10.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 264.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 33-36.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 71-76.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 122-127.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, XCI, p p. 151-155.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 145-147.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Muluk, in The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, pp. 221-223.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, LVI, pp. 84-86.

Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, CLXXIX, pp. 300-301.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 161.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 119-120.

Bahá'u'lláh, cited in Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, p. 34.

Bahá'u'lláh cited in Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, pp. 34-35.

Bahá'u'lláh cited in Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, p. 35.

Bahá'u'lláh cited in Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, p. 35.

Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Ghusn, cited in Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 134-135.

Bahá'u'lláh, various Tablets cited in Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 135-136.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, in a prayer revealed in ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s honor, cited in Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 136.

“In a letter dictated by Bahá'u'lláh and addressed by Mírzá Áqa Ján, His amanuensis, to 'Abdu'l-Bahá while the latter was on a

visit to Beirut,” cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 136.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations* by Bahá'u'lláh, XXX, pp. 34-35.

Bahá'u'lláh cited by Shoghi Effendi, in *Messages to America*, pp. 33-34.

Bahá'u'lláh cited by Shoghi Effendi, in *Messages to America*, p. 34.

Bahá'u'lláh cited by Shoghi Effendi, in *Messages to America*, p. 34.

Bahíyyih Khánum, p. 2: Dedicatory Passage. From a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the Greatest Holy Leaf, inscribed in the original Arabic around the circular dome of her Monument on Mount Carmel. (See *The Bahá'í World*, vol. V, p. 171)

Bahíyyih Khánum, pp. 3-4: From a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the Greatest Holy Leaf. (See *The Bahá'í World*, vol. V, p. 171)

Bahíyyih Khánum, p. 4: From an unpublished Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the Greatest Holy Leaf.

Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar-i-Naráqí, see brief reference in Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory*, p. 260.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Ra'is*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 155-156.

The two Hands of the Cause of God, Hájí Mullá 'Alí-Akbar Sháhmírzádi and Hájí Abu'l-Hasan Ardakání, *Amín-i-Iláhí* (Trustee of Huququ'lláh), were originally arrested in Tihrán, imprisoned in Qazvín in the year 1891, and then transferred to prison in Tihrán.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 81.

This Tablet was dedicated and addressed to Hájí Muhammad Ismá'íl-i-Káshání, entitled *Dhábih* (Sacrifice) and *Anís* (Companion) by Bahá'u'lláh, see Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, Note p. 239)

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Ra'is*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 145.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Ra'is*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 150-152.

“Hájí Mullá Hadí Sabzivári, a renowned philosopher and poet of Irán contemporary with Bahá'u'lláh. He passed away in 1873.” (See *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 60, Note 1)

Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh al-Basit al-Haqiqah*, provisional translation by Moojan Momen:

<http://bahai-library.com/provisionals/basit.html>

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kalímat-i-Firdawsíyyih*, in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 60.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 94-96. See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (pp. 296, 317).

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 184-191.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K170.

“Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim Farahání, the Qá'im Maqám, a distinguished poet and scholar during the reign of Fath 'Alí Sháh. He was a friend of Mírzá Buzurg, father of Bahá'u'lláh. Qá'im Maqám became Prime Minister of Persia in 1821, but in 1835 he was put to death by order of Muhammad Sháh at the instigation of Hájí Mírzá Áqásí.” (*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 65,

Note 1)

Bahá'u'lláh, *Kalimat-i-Firdawsiiyih*, in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 65.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 77-78.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Muluk*, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 225-227.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 68-70.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 164.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 59-60.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 86-88.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 42-44.

Mírzá Ashraf, who was martyred in the city of Isfáhán. See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 201.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 78.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Suriy-i-Haykal*, to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 119.

Bahá'u'lláh cited by an unidentified Bahá'í eye-witness, in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 195:

““Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz," Bahá'u'lláh is reported by one of His fellow-exiles to have stated, "banished Us to this country in the greatest abasement, and since his object was to destroy Us and humble Us, whenever the means of glory and ease presented themselves, We did not reject them.””

Bahá'u'lláh cited by Muhammad Zarandi (*Nabíl-i-A'zam*), in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 195-196:

““Now, praise be to God," He, moreover, as reported by Nabíl in his narrative, once remarked, "it has reached the point when all the people of these regions are manifesting their

submissiveness unto Us." And again, as recorded in that same narrative: "The Ottoman Sultán, without any justification, or reason, arose to oppress Us, and sent Us to the fortress of 'Akká. His imperial farmán decreed that none should associate with Us, and that We should become the object of the hatred of every one. The Hand of Divine power, therefore, swiftly avenged Us. It first loosed the winds of destruction upon his two

irreplaceable ministers and confidants, 'Alí and Fu'ád, after which that Hand was stretched out to roll up the panoply of 'Azíz himself, and to seize him, as He only can seize, Who is the Mighty, the Strong.'"

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LIX, pp. 115-116.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 70.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 111-112.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 156-157.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 165-173.

Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, K184; about the final break that Mírzá Yahyá made with Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, Shoghi Effendi writes in God Passes By, pp. 169-170:

"Bahá'u'lláh's reaction to this most distressful episode in His ministry was, as already observed, characterized by acute anguish. "He who for months and years," He laments, "I reared with the hand of loving-kindness hath risen to take My life." "The cruelties inflicted by My oppressors," He wrote, in allusion to these perfidious enemies, "have bowed Me down, and turned My hair white. Shouldst thou present thyself before My throne, thou wouldst fail to recognize the Ancient Beauty, for the freshness of His countenance is altered, and its brightness hath faded, by reason of the oppression of the infidels." "By God!" He cries out, "No spot is left on My body that hath not been touched by the spears of thy machinations." And again: "Thou hast perpetrated against thy Brother what no man hath

perpetrated against another." "What hath proceeded from thy pen," He, furthermore, has affirmed, "hath caused the Countenances of Glory to be prostrated upon the dust, hath rent in twain the Veil of Grandeur in the Sublime Paradise, and lacerated the hearts of the favored ones established upon the loftiest seats." And yet, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, a forgiving Lord assures this same brother, this "source of perversion," "from whose own soul the winds of passion had risen and blown upon him," to "fear not because of thy deeds," bids him "return unto God, humble, submissive and lowly," and affirms that "He will put away from thee thy sins," and that "thy Lord is the Forgiving, the Mighty, the All-Merciful."

"The "Most Great Idol" had at the bidding and through the power of Him Who is the Fountain-head of the Most Great Justice been cast out of the community of the Most Great Name, confounded, abhorred and broken. Cleansed from this pollution, delivered from this horrible possession, God's infant Faith could now forge ahead, and, despite the turmoil that had convulsed it, demonstrate its capacity to fight further battles, capture loftier heights, and win mightier victories."

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 75-76.

This was the term used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to identify the partisans of Mírzá Yahyá, who are more generally known to history (in keeping with the assumed title of their leader, Subh-i-Azal) as Azalis or Azali Bábís. See H.M. Balyuzi, E.G. Browne and *The Bahá'í Faith*, pp. 91-92:

“It is a Tablet addressed to Haji Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh-i-Sahih-Furush. This is what 'Abdu'l-Bahá said [1]: “You wrote that it had been stated in the *Hablu'l-Matin* published at Rasht that the Bahá'ís were partisans of the Autocracy, and at Zanján had collected aid for the Royalist Cause. One of the 'Friends' must write to some other newspaper, or it must be spread abroad amongst the people, that this is a calumny concerning the Bahá'ís [emanating] from the Yahyá'í [i.e. Azali] Bábís, because these people are the enemies of the Bahá'ís. The aim of the Bahá'ís is the reformation of the world, so that amongst all the nations and governments reconciliation may be effected, disputation and conflict may cease, war and bloodshed may be abolished. Therefore they hasten onward with heart and soul, endeavour hard and spend themselves that perchance the Government and the Nation, nay all groups and nations, may be united to one another, and that peace and reconciliation may enter in. Hence they have no part in such quarrels. And a clear proof and conclusive argument as to the falsity of the accuser, which leaves no opening for doubt, is the decree of the mujtahid [2] Mullá Hasan of Tabriz for the slaughter of the Bahá'ís, and also the slanderous proclamations of the mujtahid Mírzá Fadlu'llah-i-Nuri [3] and Siyyid 'Alí-Akbar, which were posted on the walls in all the streets and bazars of Tihrán. But the Yahya'í [i.e. Azali] Bábís, who are the enemies of the Bahá'ís, and who keep themselves in concealment, tell the Nationalists that the Bahá'ís are the partisans of the Court, while telling the Royalists that they are ready to lay down their lives for the Nation, in order to stir up both sides against the Bahá'ís and make them their enemies, that perchance they may seduce certain souls on either side. This is the truth of the matter; therefore it behoves that men who are just should investigate this very question of the aid said to have been rendered at Zanján. If such a thing had been done by the Bahá'ís, we shall admit and submit. Glory be to God! This is sheer calumny! From the very beginning of the Revolution it was constantly written that the Friends of God should stand aside from this clamour and unrest, this strife and contest, and should seek to reconcile the Government and the Nation, and should spend themselves so that Government and Nation should be harmonized like unto milk and honey, for safety and success are unattainable and impossible without reconciliation. Now when

they who wish us ill utter calumnies, the 'Friends' keep silent, wherefore these our foes each day boldly enunciate some new slander.”

[1]The translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet is fundamentally Edward Browne's (The Persian Revolution, pp. 428-9), but the present writer has made alterations which he has considered to be better expressive of the original.

[2]A divine: applied as an honorific title to those divines that are eminent, and have the authority to interpret.

[3]This cleric who, upon the triumph of the Constitutionalists in July 1909, was publicly hanged in Tíhrán, in his halcyon days ascended the pulpit in the Masjid-i-Sháh (the Royal Mosque) of the capital, produced the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (the Most Holy Book) -- Bahá'u'lláh's Book of Laws -- and read passages therefrom, presaging change of regime and the establishment of constitutional government in Persia, thus laying the movement for the overthrow of absolutism at the door of Bahá'ís.”

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXXVI, pp. 145-148.

A village near Isfáhán.

Mírzá Hadí Dawlat-Abádí, one of the divines of Isfáhán, who became a follower of the Báb, later supported Mírzá Yahyá, and was appointed his representative in Irán and his successor.

During the persecutions against the Bábís he recanted his faith.

Mírzá Ashraf, who was martyred in the city of Isfáhán. (See God Passes By, p. 201).

Bahá'u'lláh, Kalimat-i-Firdawsíyyih, in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp.

77-80.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 127.

Prince Mahmúd Mírzá, the Jalálu'd'Dawlih, Governor of Yazd, Persia.

Bahá'u'lláh, Lawh-i-Dunya, in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 85.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pp. 88-89.

— Baha'u'llah in His Own Words (Used by permission of the curator)