

Whereupon, addressing the Ark itself, they exclaimed: "Well is it with thee, inasmuch as the Desire of the Worlds hath tarried upon thee!"

The Ark thereupon set forth over the sea. We could hear from every drop of the sea that whereunto no mortal was able to hear. Your Lord is well aware of what I say.

As We approached the prospect of a city [i.e. Alexandria] among the cities of the earth, We found from it the fragrance of the All-Merciful. While We were thus taking in its scents, the very sea itself stood still. And the Ark, too, remained motionless upon it. Yet, by God, never once are the waves of this Ocean stilled, throughout the Eternity of Eternities.

Thereupon, one of the people related to the Son (Jesus) approached unto the Presence of the Countenance, and was bearing, in hand, a lucid epistle[1].

When We, at length, pored over this message, We inhaled from it fragrances of holiness, from one set aflame by the fire of the power of your Lord, the All-Merciful. The rapture of the Revelation had impassioned him in such wise as to detach him from all things worldly, and to cleave unto this Cord, which is hung betwixt the heavens and the earths thereof. We comprehended well what was expressed in the very language of his epistle. Whosoever may wish can himself behold his letter, to begin to realize just how the fingers of the power of your Lord, the Exalted, the Almighty, the Glorious, can so transform the hearts.

If only you could have been present before Us, while this Youth was reading aloud that epistle in the intonations of God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Wise. Thus doth your Lord bring into being whomsoever He willeth, by virtue of His Might.

But, alas, how the people are wrapt in the veils of their own selves, and are of the negligent.

By God! His being [i.e., Faris] is of far greater significance, in the sight of God, than the creation of the heavens and the earth. Whenssoever thou recitest his epistle, do thou exclaim: "Exalted is God, Who hath vivified, through His Might, whatsoever He hath ordained. He, indeed, is the Quickener of humankind."

Note

[1] The epistle was from a Christian physician known as Faris, who had recently become a believer. The following is a summary of the contents of his letter.

"O Thou the Glory of the Most Glorious and the Exalted of the Most Exalted! I write this letter and present it to the One who has been subjected to the same sufferings as Jesus Christ...It is incumbent upon us to offer praise and thanksgiving to God, the All-glorious, the All-bountiful. And now I beseech Thee to grant me and my kindred a portion of the ocean of Thy bounty, O Thou who art the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting and the Wellspring of Purity and Sanctity.

I entreat Thee by the mystery of Thy most joyful Being, by Thy Prophet who conversed with Thee (Moses), by Thy Son (Jesus), by Thy Friend (Muhammad) and by Thy Herald (The Báb) who for the love of Thee offered up His life in Thy path, not to deprive me and my family, these poor ones, from beholding the glory of Thy countenance.

O Thou who hast endured for our sake sufferings and tribulations. Strengthen our faith, choose us for Thy service and accept us as martyrs in Thy path so that our blood may be shed for the love of Thee. We are weak and ignorant, confer upon us Thy glory so that we may not be among the losers. Grant us the distinction of love and faith, and cleanse our hearts from whatsoever runs counter to Thy good pleasure. Aid us to forget our own selves so that we may seek no rest in Thy service except by Thy leave and pleasure.

O Thou who knowest the secrets of the hearts! Art Thou sailing in an ark made of wood? O how I long to be a part of that vessel, for it is blessed to be a carrier of the Lord. O, the surging sea! is thy restlessness because of the fear of the glorious Lord? O Alexandria! art thou grief-stricken because He who is the Ever-living, the All-wise, is leaving thy shores? O, the desolate city of 'Akka! Thou art clapping thy hands in fervent joy and art in a state of rapture and ecstasy, for the Lord in His great glory will bless thy land with His footsteps..."

Quoted from Adib Taherzadeh: The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Akka, the Early Years, vol 3, pp8-9. Accessed here.

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