

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh -- Introduction

(To be used as part of the opening remarks by the MC)

Bahá'u'lláh (Glory of God) was born on this day in 1817, in Tihrán. His father was known as Mírzá Buzurg, a prominent and wealthy man who had been a minister at the court of the Sháh and subsequently a governor.....

There are no elaborate traditions surrounding His birth. As with Jesus, a few stories have been handed down regarding Bahá'u'lláh's childhood, stories that indicate He was no ordinary child. One story parallels an old Christian tradition about the infant Jesus:

The mother of [Bahá'u'lláh] was so enthralled with Him that she could not contain her amazement at His behaviour. 'This child never cries,' she would say; 'He is so unlike other babies who cry and scream and are forever restless while in the nursing stage...

Bahá'u'lláh displayed a fine sense of justice and fairness at a very young age. Throughout His life He would manifest these qualities....The youthful Bahá'u'lláh's wisdom and spiritual insight were also often remarked.

That life, as it turned out, would be very much like his childhood dream. Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned on false charges when still young. His property was declared confiscate and His house sacked by a mob. He was released from prison only to be exiled to Baghdád in Iraq. His revelation, born in the prison in Tihrán, would be publicly declared ten years later as He was preparing for a second exile to Constantinople. That exile was followed by forced transfers to Adrianople and finally to the distant prison-city of Akká.

Throughout 40 years of imprisonment and exile, Bahá'u'lláh would be beset by enemies in the government, the clergy and even opposition within His own family. Several attempts on His life would leave their marks upon Him. Yet through it all, He remained as He had been in His childhood: a source of deep spiritual insight and wisdom, dedicated to justice and integrity, full of goodness and generosity. In short, He was One through whom the light of God's Teachings illuminated the world.

For Bahá'ís, the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh is a Holy Day celebrating the rebirth of the world through the love of God, just as Christmas is for Christians. We invite and welcome everyone to join us on this joyous occasion.

Childhood and Early Life of Bahá'u'lláh

Mirzá Husayn-'Ali, later on to be known as Bahá'u'lláh, was born and brought up in Tihrán, in a house in the district known as Darvazih Shimran (Shimran Gate).... The infancy of Bahá'u'lláh was a cause of astonishment to His mother, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá' recalled one day. He never cried, never showed restlessness. Mirzá Buzurg had come to realize that amongst all his sons and daughters, this son, Mirzá Husayn-'Ali, was one apart..... It is related that one day, when Mirzá Husayn-'Ali was seven years old, as He was walking His parents were watching Him, and His mother remarked that He was a little short in stature. His father replied: 'That matters not. Do you not know how intelligent He is and what a wonderful mind He has!'. The education and instruction which Mirzá Husayn-'Ali received was limited both in nature and extent, as He Himself states in a Tablet: '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.' As Mirzá Husayn-'Ali, the son of the Vazir-i-Núrí, grew up, the fame of His keen intelligence, His alert mind, His upright character, His benign, compassionate, benevolent nature, spread. By the time Mirzá Husayn-'Ali was fourteen, His rare understanding, His complete mastery of argument, and His unparalleled powers of exposition were remarked in all circles. Yet He was never assertive nor argumentative; rather, always courteous and patient. Only one thing aroused His ire, and that was any disrespectful reference to the Messengers of God and His Chosen Ones. Even then He would admonish the offender with kindness and calm.

In Yalrud there lived a mujtahid, Shaykh Muhammad-Taqi, well-famed throughout the land. He had a thousand scholars of divinity around him, whom he taught..... Shaykh Muhammad-Taqi had a dream of coming upon a room filled with trunks, which, he was told, belonged to Bahá'u'lláh. On opening one of them, he found it packed with books, and all the lines of those books studded with gems, the brilliance of which awakened him, he said. When Bahá'u'lláh was nearly fifteen years old, His elder sister Sarih Khánum and Mirzá Mahmud, the son of Mirzá Isma'il-i-Vazir of Yalrud, were married. This Mirzá Mahmud, had a younger sister, Ásíyih Khánum: winsome, vivacious and exceedingly beautiful. Sarih Khánum requested her father, Mirzá Buzurg, to ask the hand of this sister-in-law for her Brother, Mirzá Husayn-'Ali. Their marriage took place about October 1835. Ásíyih Khánum was the mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá'.

(H.M. Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh - The King of Glory)

Talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' about Bahá'u'lláh

He brought the light of guidance to the world; He kindled the fire of love and revealed the great reality of the True Beloved.....

He likened the world of humanity to a tree, and all the nations to its branches and the people to its leaves, buds and fruits.

His mission was to change ignorant fanaticism into Universal love, to establish in the minds of His followers the basis of the unity of humanity and to bring about in practice the equality of mankind. He declared that all men were equal under the mercy and bounty of God.

Yet the whole Bahá'u'lláh's life was spent in the midst of great trial and cruel tyranny. In Persia He was thrown into prison, put into chains, and lived constantly under the menace of the sword. He was scorned and scourged.....

When He was about thirty years old He was exiled to Baghdad, and from Baghdad to Constantinople, and from there to Adrianople and lastly to the prison of 'Akká. Yet under chains and from His cell He succeeded in spreading His cause, and uplifting the banner of the oneness of humanity.

Now, God be praised, we see the light of Love shining in the East and in the West; and the tent of fellowship is raised in the midst of all the peoples for the drawing together of all hearts and souls.

The call of the Kingdom has been sounded, and the annunciation of the world's need for Universal Peace has enlightened the world's conscience...

As the East and the West are illumined by one sun, so all races, nations, and creeds shall be seen as the servants of the One God. The whole earth is one home, and all peoples, did they but know it, are bathed in the oneness of God's mercy. God created all. He gives sustenance to all. He guides and trains all under the shadow of his bounty. We must follow the example God Himself gives us, and do away with all disputations and quarrels.....

I leave you with prayer that all the beauty of the Kingdom may be yours.....

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá’, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’ in London)

Bahá'u'lláh's father had a dream

When Bahá'u'lláh was still a child, the Vazir, His father, dreamed a dream. Bahá'u'lláh appeared to him swimming in a vast, limitless ocean. His body shone upon the waters with a radiance that illumined the sea. Around His head, which could distinctly be seen above the waters, there radiated, in all directions, His long, jet-black locks, floating in great profusion above the waves. As he dreamed, a multitude of fishes gathered round Him, each holding fast to the extremity of one hair. Fascinated by the effulgence of His face, they followed Him in whatever direction He swam. Great as was their number, and however firmly they clung to His locks, not one single hair seemed to have been detached from His head, nor did the least injury affect His person. Free and unrestrained, He moved above the waters and they all followed Him. The Vazir, greatly impressed by this dream, summoned a soothsayer, who had achieved fame in that region, and asked him to interpret it for him. This man, as if inspired by a premonition of the future glory of Bahá'u'lláh, declared: "The limitless ocean that you have seen in your dream, O Vazir, is none other than the world of being. Single-handed and alone, your son will achieve supreme ascendancy over it. Wherever He may please, He will proceed unhindered. No one will resist His march, no one will hinder His progress. The multitude of fishes signifies the turmoil which He will arouse amidst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Around Him will they gather, and to Him will they cling. Assured of the unfailing protection of the Almighty, this tumult will never harm His person, nor will His loneliness upon the sea of life endanger His safety."

That soothsayer was subsequently taken to see Bahá'u'lláh. He looked intently upon His face, and examined carefully His features. He was charmed by His appearance, and extolled every trait of His countenance. Every expression in that face revealed to his eyes a sign of His concealed glory. So great was his admiration, and so profuse his praise of Bahá'u'lláh, that the Vazir, from that day, became even more passionately devoted to his son. The words spoken by that soothsayer served to fortify his hopes and confidence in Him. Like Jacob, he desired only to ensure the welfare of his beloved Joseph, and to surround Him with his loving protection.

(Shoghi Effendi: The Dawn-Breakers)

From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá'

Bahá'u'lláh, the Sun of Truth, has dawned from the horizon of the Orient, flooding all regions with the light and life which will never pass away. His teachings, which embody the divine spirit of the age and are applicable to this period of maturity in the life of the human world, are:

- The oneness of the world of humanity
- The protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit
- The foundation of all religion is one
- Religion must be the cause of unity
- Religion must accord with science and reason
- Independent investigation of truth
- Equality between men and women
- The abandoning of all prejudices among mankind
- Universal peace
- Universal education
- A universal language
- Solution of the economic problem
- An international tribunal.

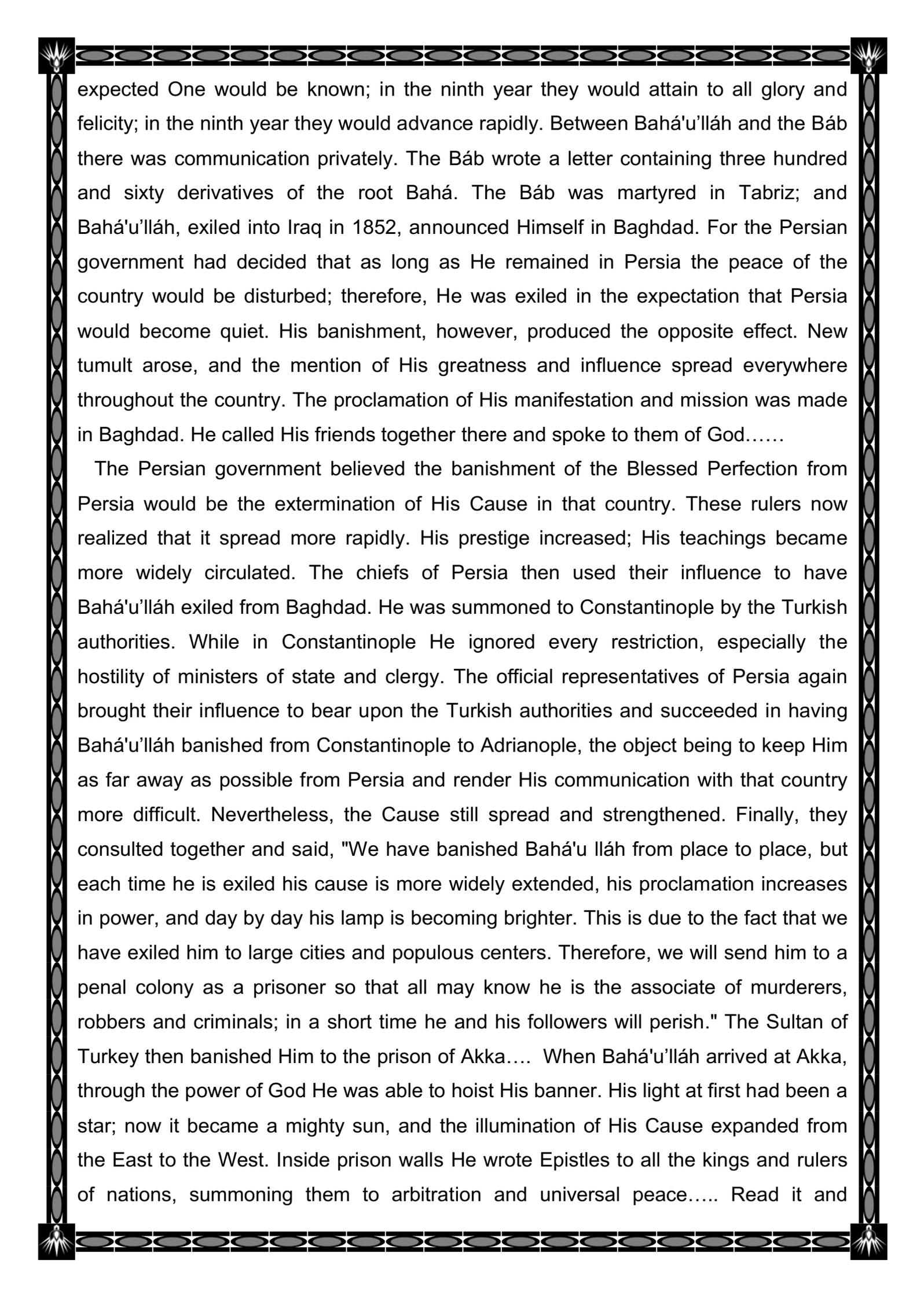
Everyone who truly seeks and justly reflects will admit that the teachings of the present day emanating from mere human sources and authority are the cause of difficulty and disagreement amongst mankind, the very destroyers of humanity, whereas the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the very healing of the sick world, the remedy for every need and condition. In them may be found the realization of every desire and aspiration, the cause of the happiness of the world of humanity, the stimulus and illumination of mentality, the impulse for advancement and uplift, the basis of unity for all nations, the fountain source of love amongst mankind, the centre of agreement, the means of peace and harmony, the one bond which will unite the East and the West.

('Abdu'l-Bahá': The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Another talk by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'

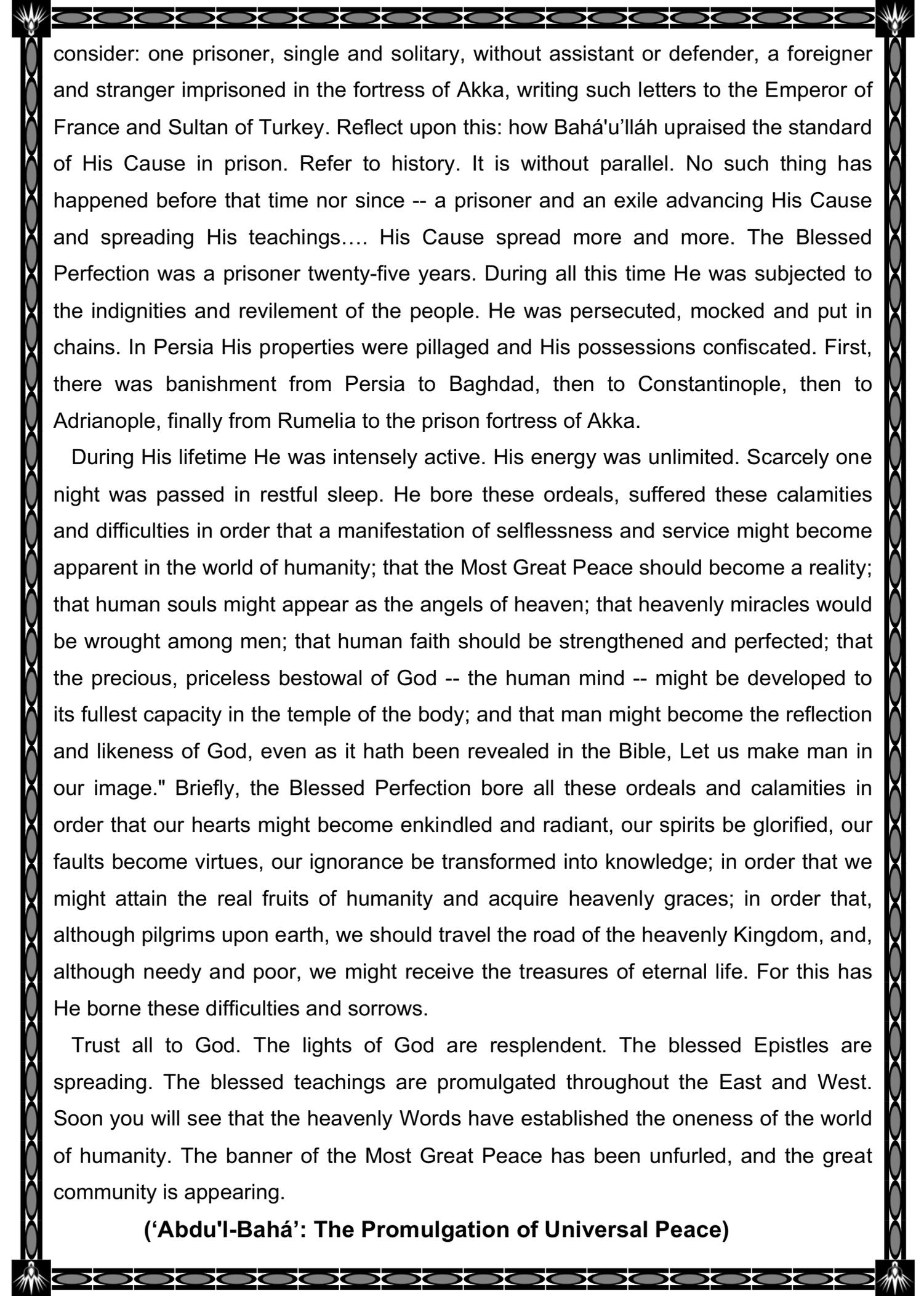
....The Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, belonged to the nobility of Persia. From earliest childhood He was distinguished among His relatives and friends. They said, "This child has extraordinary power." In wisdom, intelligence and as a source of new knowledge, He was advanced beyond His age and superior to His surroundings. All who knew Him were astonished at His precocity. It was usual for them to say, "Such a child will not live," for it is commonly believed that precocious children do not reach maturity. During the period of youth the Blessed Perfection did not enter school. He was not willing to be taught.... Nevertheless, He was capable of solving the difficult problems of all who came to Him. In whatever meeting, scientific assembly or theological discussion He was found, He became the authority of explanation upon intricate and abstruse questions presented.

Until His father passed away, Bahá'u'lláh did not seek position or political station notwithstanding His connection with the government. This occasioned surprise and comment. It was frequently said, "How is it that a young man of such keen intelligence and subtle perception does not seek lucrative appointments? As a matter of fact, every position is open to him." This is an historical statement fully attested by the people of Persia. He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all. He always had many guests. This unbounded generosity was conducive to greater astonishment from the fact that He sought neither position nor prominence. In commenting upon this His friends said He would become impoverished, for His expenses were many and His wealth becoming more and more limited. "Why is he not thinking of his own affairs?" they inquired of each other; but some who were wise declared, "This personage is connected with another world; he has something sublime within him that is not evident now; the day is coming when it will be manifested." In truth, the Blessed Perfection was a refuge for every weak one, a shelter for every fearing one, kind to every indigent one, lenient and loving to all creatures. He became well-known in regard to these qualities before the Báb appeared. Then Bahá'u'lláh declared the Báb's mission to be true and promulgated His teachings. The Báb announced that the greater Manifestation would take place after Him and called the Promised One "Him Whom God shall make manifest," saying that nine years later the reality of His own mission would become apparent. In His writings He stated that in the ninth year this



expected One would be known; in the ninth year they would attain to all glory and felicity; in the ninth year they would advance rapidly. Between Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb there was communication privately. The Báb wrote a letter containing three hundred and sixty derivatives of the root Bahá. The Báb was martyred in Tabriz; and Bahá'u'lláh, exiled into Iraq in 1852, announced Himself in Baghdad. For the Persian government had decided that as long as He remained in Persia the peace of the country would be disturbed; therefore, He was exiled in the expectation that Persia would become quiet. His banishment, however, produced the opposite effect. New tumult arose, and the mention of His greatness and influence spread everywhere throughout the country. The proclamation of His manifestation and mission was made in Baghdad. He called His friends together there and spoke to them of God.....

The Persian government believed the banishment of the Blessed Perfection from Persia would be the extermination of His Cause in that country. These rulers now realized that it spread more rapidly. His prestige increased; His teachings became more widely circulated. The chiefs of Persia then used their influence to have Bahá'u'lláh exiled from Baghdad. He was summoned to Constantinople by the Turkish authorities. While in Constantinople He ignored every restriction, especially the hostility of ministers of state and clergy. The official representatives of Persia again brought their influence to bear upon the Turkish authorities and succeeded in having Bahá'u'lláh banished from Constantinople to Adrianople, the object being to keep Him as far away as possible from Persia and render His communication with that country more difficult. Nevertheless, the Cause still spread and strengthened. Finally, they consulted together and said, "We have banished Bahá'u'lláh from place to place, but each time he is exiled his cause is more widely extended, his proclamation increases in power, and day by day his lamp is becoming brighter. This is due to the fact that we have exiled him to large cities and populous centers. Therefore, we will send him to a penal colony as a prisoner so that all may know he is the associate of murderers, robbers and criminals; in a short time he and his followers will perish." The Sultan of Turkey then banished Him to the prison of Akka.... When Bahá'u'lláh arrived at Akka, through the power of God He was able to hoist His banner. His light at first had been a star; now it became a mighty sun, and the illumination of His Cause expanded from the East to the West. Inside prison walls He wrote Epistles to all the kings and rulers of nations, summoning them to arbitration and universal peace..... Read it and



consider: one prisoner, single and solitary, without assistant or defender, a foreigner and stranger imprisoned in the fortress of Akka, writing such letters to the Emperor of France and Sultan of Turkey. Reflect upon this: how Bahá'u'lláh upraised the standard of His Cause in prison. Refer to history. It is without parallel. No such thing has happened before that time nor since -- a prisoner and an exile advancing His Cause and spreading His teachings.... His Cause spread more and more. The Blessed Perfection was a prisoner twenty-five years. During all this time He was subjected to the indignities and revilement of the people. He was persecuted, mocked and put in chains. In Persia His properties were pillaged and His possessions confiscated. First, there was banishment from Persia to Baghdad, then to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, finally from Rumelia to the prison fortress of Akka.

During His lifetime He was intensely active. His energy was unlimited. Scarcely one night was passed in restful sleep. He bore these ordeals, suffered these calamities and difficulties in order that a manifestation of selflessness and service might become apparent in the world of humanity; that the Most Great Peace should become a reality; that human souls might appear as the angels of heaven; that heavenly miracles would be wrought among men; that human faith should be strengthened and perfected; that the precious, priceless bestowal of God -- the human mind -- might be developed to its fullest capacity in the temple of the body; and that man might become the reflection and likeness of God, even as it hath been revealed in the Bible, Let us make man in our image." Briefly, the Blessed Perfection bore all these ordeals and calamities in order that our hearts might become enkindled and radiant, our spirits be glorified, our faults become virtues, our ignorance be transformed into knowledge; in order that we might attain the real fruits of humanity and acquire heavenly graces; in order that, although pilgrims upon earth, we should travel the road of the heavenly Kingdom, and, although needy and poor, we might receive the treasures of eternal life. For this has He borne these difficulties and sorrows.

Trust all to God. The lights of God are resplendent. The blessed Epistles are spreading. The blessed teachings are promulgated throughout the East and West. Soon you will see that the heavenly Words have established the oneness of the world of humanity. The banner of the Most Great Peace has been unfurled, and the great community is appearing.

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá’: The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Bahá'u'lláh left behind Writings covering a vast range of subjects, teaching that:

- *There is only one God: "Regard thou the one true God as One Who is apart from, and immeasurably exalted above, all created things. The whole universe reflecteth His glory, while He ... transcendeth His creatures."*
- *We have been created to know and to love God, and each other: "I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee." "Ye were created to show love one to another ..."*
- *We are spiritual beings with an eternal soul: "Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God."*
- *Heaven is nearness to God, Hell is remoteness and self-absorption: "They say: 'Where is Paradise, and where is Hell?' Say: 'The one is reunion with Me; the other thine own self ...'"*
- *The unity of the world's religions, and their progressive nature: "This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future." "Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been...charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared"*
- *Peace through collective security and international cooperation: "Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security ..."*
- *The central role of justice in establishing peace: "Justice and equity are twin Guardians that watch over men... (They) are the cause of the well-being of the world and the protection of the nations."*
- *Religion must be a source of unity and not discord: "Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship." and "... the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men..."*
- *The oneness of the human family and the elimination of prejudice: "It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." "Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness."*
- *We must live a moral life, centered on spiritual principals and laws: "... desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves. This is My best counsel unto you, did ye but observe it." "The essence of faith is fewness of words and abundance of deeds..."*

From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory.

Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness. The soul of every Prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day. All the divers kindreds of the earth have, likewise, yearned to attain it. No sooner, however, had the Day Star of His Revelation manifested itself in the heaven of God's Will, than all, except those whom the Almighty was pleased to guide, were found dumbfounded and heedless.

O thou that hast remembered Me! The most grievous veil hath shut out the peoples of the earth from His glory, and hindered them from hearkening to His call. God grant that the light of unity may envelop the whole earth, and that the seal, "the Kingdom is God's", may be stamped upon the brow of all its peoples.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh)

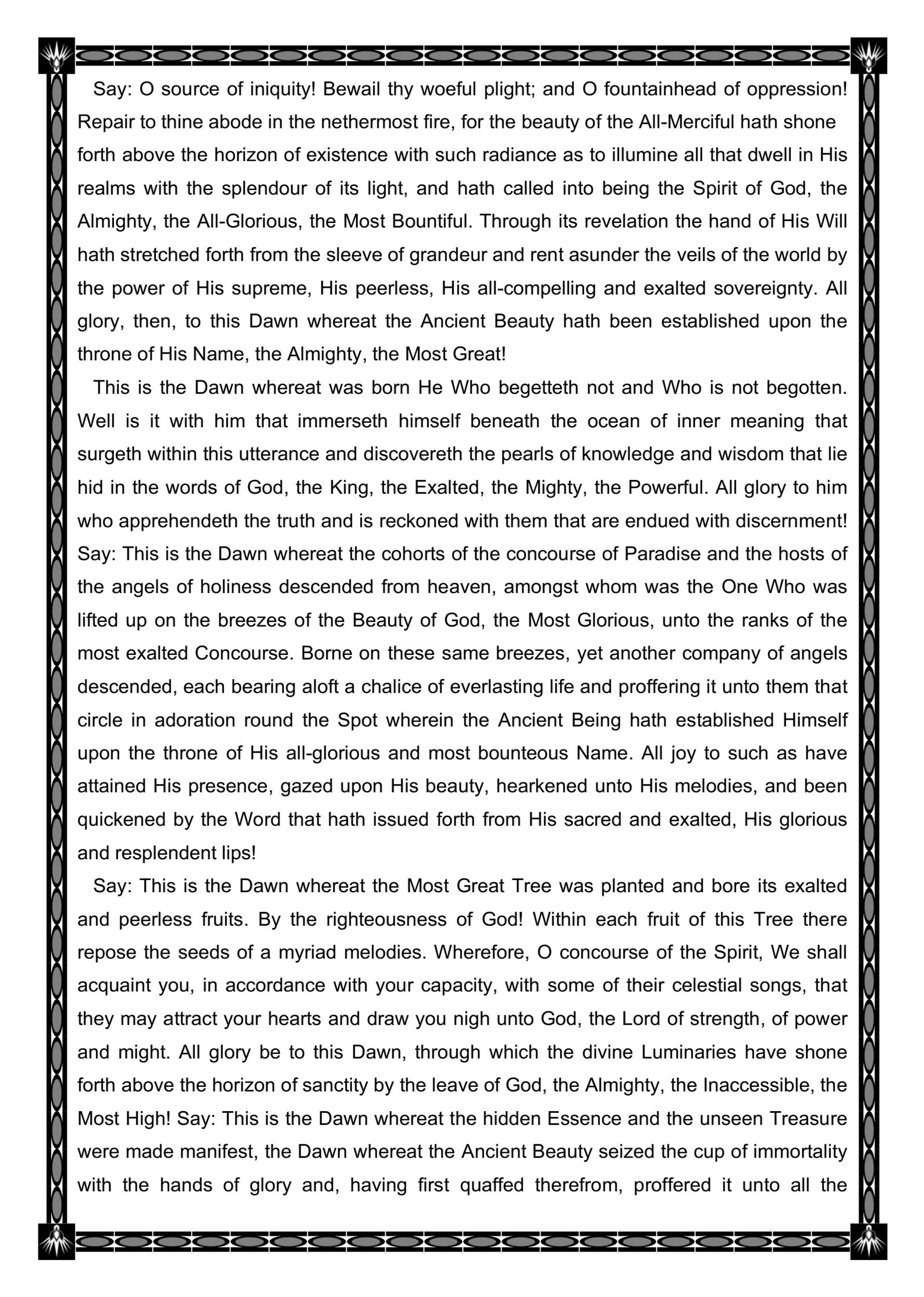
O concourse of the seen and the unseen!

Rejoice with exceeding gladness in your hearts and souls, for the night hath come for the harvesting of the ages and the gathering up of past cycles, the night wherein all days and nights were called into being and the time preordained for this Revelation was fulfilled at the behest of Him Who is the Lord of might and power. All joy to the Concourse on high at the appearance of so glorious, so wondrous a Spirit! This is the night wherein the doors of Paradise were flung open and the gates of Hell were shut fast, the night wherein the paradise of the All-Merciful was unveiled in the midmost heart of creation, the breezes of God were wafted from the retreats of forgiveness, and the Last Hour ushered in through the power of truth, could ye but know it. All joy to this night through which all days have been suffused with light, though none can apprehend this save those that are endued with certitude and discernment! This is the night round which have circled the Nights of Power,¹ wherein the angels and the Spirit have come down bearing cups filled at the streams of Paradise, the night wherein Heaven itself was adorned with the ornament of God, the Almighty, the All-Gracious, the Most Bountiful, wherein every created thing was brought to life, and all the peoples of the earth were surrounded by His grace. All joy to the concourse of the Spirit for this manifest and resplendent bounty! This is the night wherein the limbs of Jibt were made to tremble, and the Most Great Idol fell upon the dust, and the foundations of iniquity were shattered, and Manát lamented in its inmost being, and the back of 'Uzzá was broken and its face blackened;² for the Morn of divine Revelation hath dawned, and there hath appeared that which hath solaced the eyes of glory and majesty, and beyond them the eyes of all the Prophets and Messengers of God. All glory, then, to this Dawn which hath broken above the dayspring of effulgent glory!

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

¹ Cf. Qur'án, súrîh 97

² Jibt, Manát, and 'Uzzá are the names of idols worshipped in the days of the pagan Arabs and mentioned in the Qur'án (4:51 and 53:19–20)



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

This is the Dawn whereat was born He Who begetteth not and Who is not begotten. Well is it with him that immerseth himself beneath the ocean of inner meaning that surgeth within this utterance and discovereth the pearls of knowledge and wisdom that lie hid in the words of God, the King, the Exalted, the Mighty, the Powerful. All glory to him who apprehendeth the truth and is reckoned with them that are endued with discernment! Say: This is the Dawn whereat the cohorts of the concourse of Paradise and the hosts of the angels of holiness descended from heaven, amongst whom was the One Who was lifted up on the breezes of the Beauty of God, the Most Glorious, unto the ranks of the most exalted Concourse. Borne on these same breezes, yet another company of angels descended, each bearing aloft a chalice of everlasting life and proffering it unto them that circle in adoration round the Spot wherein the Ancient Being hath established Himself upon the throne of His all-glorious and most bounteous Name. All joy to such as have attained His presence, gazed upon His beauty, hearkened unto His melodies, and been quickened by the Word that hath issued forth from His sacred and exalted, His glorious and resplendent lips!

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

peoples of the earth, high and low alike. All glory, then, to the one who hath approached this cup, taken it up, and drunk therefrom for the love of his Lord, the All-Powerful, the Most High! One fruit of that Tree hath proclaimed what the Burning Bush had proclaimed aforetime in that hallowed and snow-white Spot, words to which Moses gave ear and which caused Him to forsake all created things and to direct His steps towards the retreats of holiness and grandeur. All glory, then, to that ecstasy born of God, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the Most Great! Another fruit thereof hath uttered that which enraptured Jesus and raised Him up to the heaven of manifest splendour. All glory, then, to this Spirit in Whose presence standeth the Faithful Spirit, together with a company of God's chosen angels! Yet another fruit thereof hath disclosed that which captivated the heart of Muhammad, the Apostle of God, Who, carried away by the sweet accents of the Voice from on high, ascended unto the Divine Lote-Tree and heard, proceeding from within the Tabernacle of majesty, the Voice of God speaking forth the mystery of My hallowed, My exalted and mighty Name. All glory, then, to this Tree which hath been raised up through the power of truth, that all the peoples of the world may seek the shelter of its shade!

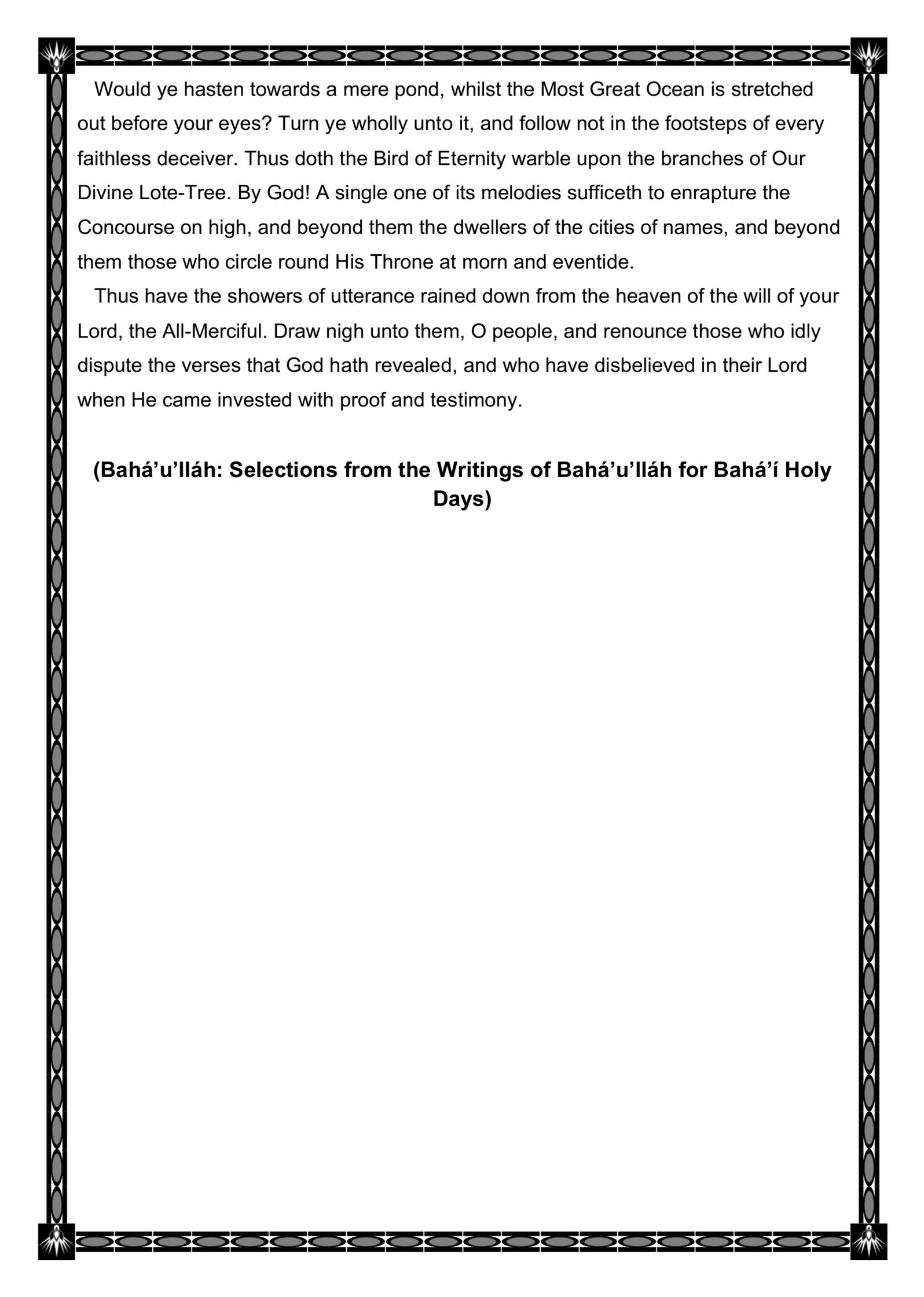
O Pen of the Most High! Write no more; for, by God, wert thou to set forth all the sweet accents of the fruits of this heavenly Tree, thou wouldst find thyself forsaken upon the earth, inasmuch as all would flee from thy presence and abandon thy court of holiness. And this, verily, is the undoubted truth. All glory, then, to the mysteries which none can bear save God, the sovereign Ruler, the Almighty, the Most Gracious! Dost thou not witness, O Pen, what a clamour the hypocrites have raised throughout the land, and what a tumult the wicked and ungodly have provoked? And this notwithstanding that thou didst reveal but an infinitesimal glimmer of the mysteries of thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious. Wherefore, restrain thyself and conceal from the eyes of men that which God, as a sign of His bounty, hath bestowed upon thee. And if it be thy wish to give all created things to quaff from that crystal water that is life indeed, and whereof God hath made thee the Fountainhead, then let thine ink flow only in proportion to their capacity. Thus biddeth thee the One Who hath called thee into being through the power of His behest. Do thou, then, as thou wert bidden, and be not of them that tarry. All glory be to this weighty decree which hath reined in the power of all created things and withheld the Pen of the Most High from divulging to the peoples of the world that from which they had been veiled! His might, verily, is equal to all things.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Lawḥ-i-Mawlúd (Tablet of the Birth))

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

The Birthday Festival is come, and He Who is the Beauty of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the All-Loving, hath ascended His throne. Well is it with the one who in this Day hath attained His presence and towards whom the gaze of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, hath been directed. Say: We have celebrated this Festival in the Most Great Prison at a time when the kings of the earth have risen against Us. Yet the ascendancy of the oppressor can never frustrate Us, nor can the hosts of the world dismay Us. Unto this doth the All-Merciful bear witness in this most august station. Say: Should the quintessence of assurance be dismayed before the clamour of the peoples of the world? Nay, by His beauty, which sheddeth its radiance upon all that hath been and all that shall be! This, verily, is the majesty of the Lord that hath encompassed the entire creation, and this is His transcendent power that hath pervaded all them that see and all that is seen. Take fast hold of the cord of His sovereign might and make mention of your Lord, the Unconstrained, at this dawntide whose light hath laid bare every hidden secret. Thus hath the Tongue of the Ancient of Days spoken on this Day wherein the choice wine hath been unsealed. Take heed lest the vain imaginings of them that have disbelieved in God perturb you, or their idle fancies deter you from this outstretched path.

O people of Bahá! Soar upon the wings of detachment into the atmosphere of the love of your Lord, the All-Merciful. Arise then to render Him victorious, as bidden in the Preserved Tablet. Beware lest ye contend with any of My servants. Bestow upon them the sweet savours of God and His holy utterances, for through their potency all men will be enabled to turn unto Him. They that remain heedless of God in this Day are in truth lost in the drunkenness of their desires and perceive it not. Well is it with the one who, with lowliness and humility, hath set his face towards the Dayspring of the verses of his Lord. It behoveth you to arise and acquaint the people with that which hath been sent down in the Book of their Lord, the Almighty, the Unconstrained. Say: Fear ye God and pay no heed to the vain imaginings of them that walk in the ways of doubt and iniquity. Turn ye with radiant hearts towards the throne of your Lord, the Possessor of all names. He, verily, shall aid you through the power of truth. No God is there but Him, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.



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

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

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

He is God.

O concourse of ardent lovers! By the righteousness of God, this is a night the like of which hath never been witnessed in the world of creation. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. This is the night wherein the Spirit intoned such a melody as to throw into commotion the inner realities of all men, proclaiming: "Rejoice, O Concourse on high, within your retreats of Paradise!" Whereupon did the Voice of God call out from within the Tabernacle of holiness and bounty: "This, indeed, is the night wherein He Who is the reality of the All-Merciful hath been born, the night wherein every eternal command hath been expounded by the Pen of the All-Glorious. Rejoice, then, with exceeding gladness, O concourse of the Bayán!" This is the night wherein the Mystic Dove raised its call upon the branches and boughs of heaven, saying: "Rejoice, O denizens of Paradise!" Say: This is the night wherein the veils of glory were parted before the eyes of the people of certitude, and the Bird of Heaven warbled its melody in the midmost heart of the celestial realm. Rejoice, then, O embodiments of sanctity in the Everlasting City! This is the night wherein God shed abroad the splendour of all His most excellent names and established Himself upon the throne of every pure and radiant heart. Rejoice, then, O concourse of the Bayán! This is the night wherein the oceans of forgiveness surged and the breezes of providence were wafted abroad. Rejoice, then, O companions of the All-Merciful! This is the night wherein the trespasses of all that dwell on earth were forgiven. This, verily, is a joyful tiding unto all who have been created in the contingent realm! Say: This is the night wherein the assigned measures of bounty and grace were inscribed upon the scrolls of might and assurance, that every trace of sorrow might thereby be banished forever from all things. Rejoice, then, O ye that have stepped forth into the realm of being! At this moment the Herald of the Spirit crieth out from the midmost heart of eternity, the seat of loftiness and exaltation—and this, verily, is from the grace of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful—Saying: By God! The musk-scented wine hath been unsealed by the mighty hand of Him Who is the source of sovereignty and power. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. And cups of crimson-coloured wine are being borne round by the hand of the divine Joseph and raised to the beauty of the All-Glorious. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. Hasten then, O concourse of men, and drink your fill from

this stream of everlasting life! And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

Say: O assemblage of true lovers! The beauty of the Desired One hath shone forth in its naked glory. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. O concourse of His loved ones! The countenance of the Best-Beloved hath dawned above the horizon of holiness. Bestir yourselves and hasten unto it with all your hearts, O people of the Bayán! And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. The proof hath been fulfilled and the testimony established, inasmuch as the Resurrection hath come to pass through the appearance of God in the Manifestation of His own Self, the Ever-Abiding. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful. The ages have passed, and the cycles have been stirred up, and every luminary hath beamed with delight, for God hath shed the splendour of His glory upon every tree adorned with verdant twigs. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. Bestir yourselves, O chosen ones of God, for the spirits have been gathered together, the divine breezes have wafted, the fleeting fancies have been dispelled, and the voices of eternity have rung out from every flourishing tree. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. By God! The veils have been burned away, the clouds have been rent asunder, the signs have been revealed and the allusions unravelled by Him Whose might is equal to all things. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. Let your hearts be filled with joy, but conceal this closely guarded, this most hidden secret, lest the stranger become apprised of that which ye have quaffed of the wine that imparteth rapture and delight. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. O concourse of the Bayán! God beareth Me witness that His favour is complete, His mercy is perfected, and His countenance is beaming with joy and radiance. And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful. Drink your fill, O My companions, from this sparkling and luminous stream, and rejoice therein, O My friends! And this, verily, is from the grace of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Bountiful.

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

He is the Most Holy, the Most Great.

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

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

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

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