

## **The Declaration of the Báb – 23 May**

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

May 23, 1844, signalizes the commencement of the most turbulent period of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Era, an age which marks the opening of the most glorious epoch in the greatest cycle which the spiritual history of mankind has yet witnessed. No more than a span of nine short years marks the duration of this most spectacular, this most tragic, this most eventful period of the first Bahá'í century. It was ushered in by the birth of a Revelation whose Bearer posterity will acclaim as the "Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve," and terminated with the first stirrings of a still more potent Revelation, "whose day," Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, "every Prophet hath announced," for which "the soul of every Divine Messenger hath thirsted," and through which "God hath proved the hearts of the entire company of His Messengers and Prophets."....

The opening scene of the initial act of this great drama was laid in the upper chamber of the modest residence of the son of a mercer of Shiraz, in an obscure corner of that city. The time was the hour before sunset, on the 22nd day of May, 1844. The participants were the Báb, a twenty-five year old siyyid, of pure and holy lineage, and the young Mulla Husayn, the first to believe in Him. Their meeting immediately before that interview seemed to be purely fortuitous. The interview itself was protracted till the hour of dawn. The Host remained closeted alone with His guest, nor was the sleeping city remotely aware of the import of the conversation they held with each other. No record has passed to posterity of that unique night save the fragmentary but highly illuminating account that fell from the lips of Mulla Husayn.

"I sat spellbound by His utterance, oblivious of time and of those who awaited me," he himself has testified, after describing the nature of the questions he had put to his Host and the conclusive replies he had received from Him, replies which had established beyond the shadow of a doubt the validity of His claim to be the promised Qa'im. "Suddenly the call of the Mu'adhdhin, summoning the faithful to their morning prayer, awakened me from the state of ecstasy into which I seemed to have fallen. All the delights, all the ineffable glories, which the Almighty has recounted in His Book as the priceless possessions of the people of Paradise -- these I seemed to be experiencing that night. Methinks I was in a place of which it

could be truly said: 'Therein no toil shall reach us, and therein no weariness shall touch us;' 'no vain discourse shall they hear therein, nor any falsehood, but only the cry, "Peace! Peace!";' 'their cry therein shall be, "Glory to Thee, O God!" and their salutation therein, "Peace!", and the close of their cry, "Praise be to God, Lord of all creatures!'"

Sleep had departed from me that night. I was enthralled by the music of that voice which rose and fell as He chanted; now swelling forth as He revealed verses of the Qayyumu'l-Asma', again acquiring ethereal, subtle harmonies as He uttered the prayers He was revealing. At the end of each invocation, He would repeat this verse: 'Far from the glory of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, be that which His creatures affirm of Him! And peace be upon His Messengers! And praise be to God, the Lord of all beings!'"

"This Revelation," Mulla Husayn has further testified, "so suddenly and impetuously thrust upon me, came as a thunderbolt which, for a time, seemed to have benumbed my faculties. I was blinded by its dazzling splendor and overwhelmed by its crushing force. Excitement, joy, awe, and wonder stirred the depths of my soul. Predominant among these emotions was a sense of gladness and strength which seemed to have transfigured me. How feeble and impotent, how dejected and timid, I had felt previously! Then I could neither write nor walk, so tremulous were my hands and feet. Now, however, the knowledge of His Revelation had galvanized my being. I felt possessed of such courage and power that were the world, all its peoples and its potentates, to rise against me, I would, alone and undaunted, withstand their onslaught. The universe seemed but a handful of dust in my grasp. I seemed to be the voice of Gabriel personified, calling unto all mankind: 'Awake, for, lo! The morning Light has broken. Arise, for His Cause is made manifest. The portal of His grace is open wide; enter therein, O peoples of the world! For He Who is your promised One is come!'"

**(Shoghi Effendi: 'God Passes By')**

## **Dearily-beloved friends!**

That the Báb, the inaugurator of the Bábi Dispensation, is fully entitled to rank as one of the self-sufficient Manifestations of God, that He has been invested with sovereign power and authority, and exercises all the rights and prerogatives of independent Prophethood, is yet another fundamental verity which the Message of Bahá'u'lláh insistently proclaims and which its followers must uncompromisingly uphold. That He is not to be regarded merely as an inspired Precursor of the Bahá'í Revelation, that in His person, as He Himself bears witness in the Persian Bayán, the object of all the Prophets gone before Him has been fulfilled, is a truth which I feel it my duty to demonstrate and emphasize. We would assuredly be failing in our duty to the Faith we profess and would be violating one of its basic and sacred principles if in our words or by our conduct we hesitate to recognize the implications of this root principle of Bahá'í belief, or refuse to uphold unreservedly its integrity and demonstrate its truth. Indeed the chief motive actuating me to undertake the task of editing and translating Nabil's immortal Narrative has been to enable every follower of the Faith in the West to better understand and more readily grasp the tremendous implications of His exalted station and to more ardently admire and love Him.

There can be no doubt that the claim to the twofold station ordained for the Báb by the Almighty, a claim which He Himself has so boldly advanced, which Bahá'u'lláh has repeatedly affirmed, and to which the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' has finally given the sanction of its testimony, constitutes the most distinctive feature of the Bahá'í Dispensation. It is a further evidence of its uniqueness, a tremendous accession to the strength, to the mysterious power and authority with which this holy cycle has been invested. Indeed the greatness of the Báb consists primarily, not in His being the divinely-appointed Forerunner of so transcendent a Revelation, but rather in His having been invested with the powers inherent in the inaugurator of a

separate religious Dispensation, and in His wielding, to a degree unrivalled by the Messengers gone before Him, the sceptre of independent Prophethood.

The short duration of His Dispensation, the restricted range within which His laws and ordinances have been made to operate, supply no criterion whatever wherewith to judge its Divine origin and to evaluate the potency of its message. "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."

**(Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh)**

## From the Dawnbreakers

"...Mullá Husayn's account of this historic event as recorded in *The Dawnbreakers*, starting a few hours before sunset on 22 May at the gates of the city of Shiraz:

"... 'The Youth who met me outside the gate of Shiraz overwhelmed me with expressions of affection and loving-kindness. He extended to me a warm invitation to visit His home, and there refresh myself after the fatigues of my journey. I prayed to be excused, pleading that my two companions had already arranged for my stay in that city, and were now awaiting my return. "Commit them to the care of God," was His reply; "He will surely protect and watch over them." Having spoken these words, He bade me follow Him. I was profoundly impressed by the gentle yet compelling manner in which that strange Youth spoke to me. As I followed Him, His gait, the charm of His voice, the dignity of His bearing, served to enhance my first impressions of this unexpected meeting.

"We soon found ourselves standing at the gate of a house of modest appearance. He knocked at the door, which was soon opened by an Ethiopian servant. "Enter therein in peace, secure,"<sup>1</sup> were His words as He crossed the threshold and motioned me to follow Him. His invitation, uttered with power and majesty, penetrated my soul. I thought it a good augury to be addressed in such words, standing as I did on the threshold of the first house I was entering in Shiraz, a city the very atmosphere of which had produced already an indescribable impression upon me. Might not my visit to this house, I thought to myself, enable me to draw nearer to the Object of my quest? Might it not hasten the termination of a period of intense longing, of strenuous search, of increasing anxiety, which such a quest involves? As I entered the house and followed my Host to His chamber, a feeling of unutterable joy invaded my being. Immediately we were seated, He ordered a ewer of water to be brought, and bade me wash away from my hands and feet the stains of travel. I pleaded permission to retire from His presence and perform my ablutions in an adjoining room. He refused to grant my request, and proceeded to pour the water over my hands. He then gave me to drink of a refreshing beverage, after which He asked for the samovar and Himself prepared the tea which He offered me.

"Overwhelmed with His acts of extreme kindness, I arose to depart. "The time for evening prayer is approaching," I ventured to observe. "I have promised my friends to join them at that hour..." With extreme courtesy and calm He replied: "You must surely have made the hour of your return conditional upon the will and pleasure of God. It seems that His will has decreed otherwise. You need have no fear of having broken your pledge." His dignity and self-assurance silenced me I renewed my ablutions and prepared for prayer. He, too, stood beside me and prayed. Whilst praying, I unburdened my soul, which was much oppressed, both by the mystery of this interview and the strain and stress of my search. I breathed this prayer: "I have

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, 15:46.

striven with all my soul, O my God, and until now have failed to find Thy promised Messenger. I testify that Thy word faileth not, and that Thy promise is sure."

It was about an hour after sunset when my youthful Host began to converse with me. "Whom, after Siyyid Kazim," He asked me, "do you regard as his successor and your leader?" "At the hour of his death," I replied, "our departed teacher insistently exhorted us to forsake our homes, to scatter far and wide, in quest of the promised Beloved. I have, accordingly, journeyed to Persia, have arisen to accomplish his will, and am still engaged in my quest." "Has your teacher," He further enquired, "given you any detailed indications as to the distinguishing features of the promised One?" "Yes," I replied, "He is of a pure lineage, is of illustrious descent, and of the seed of Fatimih. As to His age, He is more than twenty and less than thirty. He is endowed with innate knowledge. He is of medium height, abstains from smoking, and is free from bodily deficiency." He paused for a while and then with vibrant voice declared: "Behold, all these signs are manifest in Me!" He then considered each of the above-mentioned signs separately, and conclusively demonstrated that each and all were applicable to His person. I was greatly surprised, and politely observed: "He whose advent we await is a Man of unsurpassed holiness, and the Cause He is to reveal, a Cause of tremendous power. Many and diverse are the requirements which He who claims to be its visible embodiment must needs fulfil. How often has Siyyid Kazim referred to the vastness of the knowledge of the promised One! How often did he say: 'My own knowledge is but a drop compared with that with which He has been endowed. All my attainments are but a speck of dust in the face of the immensity of His knowledge. Nay, immeasurable is the difference!'" No sooner had those words dropped from my lips than I found myself seized with fear and remorse, such as I could neither conceal nor explain. I bitterly reprovved myself, and resolved at that very moment to alter my attitude and to soften my tone. I vowed to God that should my Host again refer to the subject, I would, with the utmost humility, answer and say: "If you be willing to substantiate your claim, you will most assuredly deliver me from the anxiety and suspense which so heavily oppress my soul. I shall truly be indebted to you for such deliverance." When I first started upon my quest, I determined to regard the two following standards as those whereby I could ascertain the truth of whosoever might claim to be the promised Qa'im. The first was a treatise which I had myself composed, bearing upon the abstruse and hidden teachings propounded by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. Whoever seemed to me capable of unravelling the mysterious allusions made in that treatise, to him I would next submit my second request, and would ask him to reveal, without the least hesitation or reflection, a commentary on the Surih of Joseph, in a style and language entirely different from the prevailing standards of the time. I had previously requested Siyyid Kazim, in private, to write a commentary on that same Surih, which he refused, saying: "This is, verily, beyond me. He, that great One, who comes after me will, unasked, reveal it for you. That commentary will constitute

one of the weightiest testimonies of His truth, and one of the clearest evidences of the loftiness of His position."<sup>2</sup>

"I was revolving these things in my mind, when my distinguished Host again remarked: "Observe attentively. Might not the Person intended by Siyyid Kazim be none other than I?" I thereupon felt impelled to present to Him a copy of the treatise which I had with me. "Will you," I asked Him, "read this book of mine and look at its pages with indulgent eyes? I pray you to overlook my weaknesses and failings." He graciously complied with my wish. He opened the book, glanced at certain passages, closed it, and began to address me. Within a few minutes He had, with characteristic vigour and charm, unravelled all its mysteries and resolved all its problems. Having to my entire satisfaction accomplished, within so short a time, the task I had expected Him to perform, He further expounded to me certain truths which could be found neither in the reported sayings of the imams of the Faith nor in the writings of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. These truths, which I had never heard before, seemed to be endowed with refreshing vividness and power. "Had you not been My guest," He afterwards observed, "your position would indeed have been a grievous one. The all-encompassing grace of God has saved you. It is for God to test His servants, and not for His servants to judge Him in accordance with their deficient standards. Were I to fail to resolve your perplexities, could the Reality that shines within Me be regarded as powerless, or My knowledge be accused as faulty? Nay, by the righteousness of God! It behoves, in this day, the peoples and nations of both the East and the West to hasten to this threshold, and here seek to obtain the reviving grace of the Merciful. Whoso hesitates will indeed be in grievous loss. Do not the peoples of the earth testify that the fundamental purpose of their creation is the knowledge and adoration of God? It behoves them to arise, as earnestly and spontaneously as you have arisen, and to seek with determination and constancy their promised Beloved." He then proceeded to say: "Now is the time to reveal the commentary on the Surih of Joseph." He took up His pen and with incredible rapidity revealed the entire Surih of Mulk, the first chapter of His commentary on the Surih of Joseph. The overpowering effect of the manner in which He wrote was heightened by the gentle intonation of His voice which accompanied His writing. Not for one moment did He interrupt the flow of the verses which streamed from His pen. Not once did He pause till the Surih of Mulk was finished. I sat enraptured by the magic of His voice and the sweeping force of His revelation. At last I reluctantly arose from my seat and begged leave to depart. He smilingly bade me be seated, and said: "If you leave in such a state, whoever sees you will assuredly say: 'This poor youth has lost his mind.'" At that moment the clock registered two hours and eleven minutes after sunset. ... "This night," He declared, "this very hour will, in the days to come, be celebrated as one of the

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<sup>2</sup> "Mulla Husayn is reported to have said the following: "One day, when I was alone with the late Siyyid [Kazim] in his library, I enquired the reason why the Suriy-i-Yusuf was entitled in the Qur'an 'the Best of Stories,' to which he replied that it was not then the proper occasion for explaining the reason. This incident remained concealed in my mind, neither had I mentioned it to anyone." ("The Tarikh-i-Jadid," p. 39.

greatest and most significant of all festivals. Render thanks to God for having graciously assisted you to attain your heart's desire, and for having quaffed from the sealed wine of His utterance. 'Well is it with them that attain thereunto.'

'''At the third hour after sunset, my Host ordered the dinner to be served. That same Ethiopian servant appeared again and spread before us the choicest food. That holy repast refreshed alike my body and soul. In the presence of my Host, at that hour, I felt as though I were feeding upon the fruits of Paradise. I could not but marvel at the manners and the devoted attentions of that Ethiopian servant whose very life seemed to have been transformed by the regenerating influence of his Master. I then, for the first time, recognized the significance of this well-known traditional utterance ascribed to Muhammad: "I have prepared for the godly and righteous among My servants what eye hath seen not, ear heard not, nor human heart conceived." Had my youthful Host no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient---that He received me with that quality of hospitality and loving-kindness which I was convinced no other human being could possibly reveal.

'''I sat spellbound by His utterance, oblivious of time and of those who awaited me. Suddenly the call of the muadhhdhin, summoning the faithful to their morning prayer, awakened me from the state of ecstasy into which I seemed to have fallen. All the delights, all the ineffable glories, which the Almighty has recounted in His Book as the priceless possessions of the people of Paradise--these I seemed to be experiencing that night. Methinks I was in a place of which it could be truly said: "Therein no toil shall reach us, and therein no weariness shall touch us"; "No vain discourse shall they hear therein, nor any falsehood, but only the cry, 'Peace! Peace!'; "Their cry therein shall be, 'Glory be to Thee, O God!' and their salutation therein, 'Peace!' And the close of their cry, 'Praise be to God, Lord of all creatures!'"<sup>3</sup>

'''Sleep had departed from me that night. I was enthralled by the music of that voice which rose and fell as He chanted; now swelling forth as He revealed verses of the Qayyumu'l-Asmá',<sup>4</sup> again acquiring ethereal, subtle harmonies as He uttered the prayers He was revealing.<sup>5</sup> At the end of each invocation, He would repeat this verse: "Far from the glory of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, be that which His creatures affirm of Him! And peace be upon His Messengers! And praise be to God, the Lord of all beings!"<sup>6</sup>

'''He then addressed me in these words: "O thou who art the first to believe in Me! Verily I say, I am the Báb, the Gate of God, and thou art the Bábu'l-Báb, the gate of

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<sup>3</sup> Quotations from the Qur'an.

<sup>4</sup> The Báb's commentary on the Surih of Joseph.

<sup>5</sup> "In the first of his books he was, above all, pious and mystical; in the second, polemics and dialectics held an important place, and his listeners noticed that he unfolded, from a chapter in the Book of God which he had chosen, a new meaning which no one had heretofore perceived and especially that he drew from it doctrines and information wholly unexpected. That which one never tired of admiring was the elegance and beauty of the Arabic style used in those writings. They soon had enthusiastic admirers who did not fear to prefer them to the finest passages in the Qur'an." (Comte de Gobineau's "Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale," p. 120.)

<sup>6</sup> Qur'an, 37:180

that Gate. Eighteen souls must, in the beginning, spontaneously and of their own accord, accept Me and recognize the truth of My Revelation. Unwarned and uninvited, each of these must seek independently to find Me. And when their number is complete, one of them must needs be chosen to accompany Me on My pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. There I shall deliver the Message of God to the Sharif of Mecca. I then shall return to Kufih, where again, in the Masjid of that holy city, I shall manifest His Cause. It is incumbent upon you not to divulge, either to your companions or to any other soul, that which you have seen and heard. Be engaged in the Masjid-i-Ilkhani in prayer and in teaching. I, too, will there join you in congregational prayer. Beware lest your attitude towards Me betray the secret of your faith. You should continue in this occupation and maintain this attitude until our departure for Hijaz. Ere we depart, we shall appoint unto each of the eighteen souls his special mission, and shall send them forth to accomplish their task. We shall instruct them to teach the Word of God and to quicken the souls of men." Having spoken these words to me, He dismissed me from His presence. Accompanying me to the door of the house, He committed me to the care of God.

"This Revelation, so suddenly and impetuously thrust upon me, came as a thunderbolt which, for a time, seemed to have benumbed my faculties.<sup>7</sup> I was blinded by its dazzling splendour and overwhelmed by its crushing force. Excitement, joy, awe, and wonder stirred the depths of my soul. Predominant among these emotions was a sense of gladness and strength which seemed to have transfigured me. How feeble and impotent, how dejected and timid, I had felt previously! Then I could neither write nor walk, so tremulous were my hands and feet. Now, however, the knowledge of His Revelation had galvanised my being. I felt possessed of such courage and power that were the world, all its peoples and its potentates, to rise against me, I would, alone and undaunted, withstand their onslaught. The universe seemed but a handful of dust in my grasp. I seemed to be the Voice of Gabriel personified, calling unto all mankind: "Awake, for lo! The morning Light has broken. Arise, for His Cause is made manifest. The portal of His grace is open wide; enter therein, O peoples of the world! For He who is your promised One is come!"..."

**(End of quotation from Dawnbreakers)**

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<sup>7</sup> "It is related in the 'Biharu'l-Anvar,' the 'Avalim,' and the 'Yanbu' of Sadiq, son of Muhammad, that he spoke these words: 'Knowledge is seven and twenty letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. None thus far hath known any besides these two letters. But when the Qa'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining five and twenty letters to be made manifest.' Consider: he hath declared Knowledge to consist of seven and twenty letters, and regarded all the Prophets, from Adam even unto the 'Seal,' as Expounders of only two letters thereof, and as having been sent down with these two letters. He also saith that the Qa'im will reveal all the remaining five and twenty letters. Behold from this utterance how great and lofty is His station. His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones." ("The Kitáb-i-Iqan," p. 205.)]

"... Of all the tributes which Bahá'u'lláh's unerring pen has chosen to pay to the memory of the Báb, His "Best-Beloved," the most memorable and touching is this brief, yet eloquent passage which so greatly enhances the value of the concluding passages of that same epistle. "Amidst them all," He writes, referring to the afflictive trials and dangers besetting Him in the city of Baghdad, "We stand life in hand wholly resigned to His Will, that perchance through God's loving kindness and grace, this revealed and manifest Letter (Bahá'u'lláh) may lay down His life as a sacrifice in the path of the Primal Point, the most exalted Word (the Báb). 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."

Dearly-beloved friends! So resounding a praise, so bold an assertion issued by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in so weighty a work, are fully re-echoed in the language in which the Source of the Bábi Revelation has chosen to clothe the claims He Himself has advanced. "I am the Mystic Fane," the Báb thus proclaims His station in the Qayyumu'l-Asmá', "which the Hand of Omnipotence hath reared. I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit within its niche and caused to shine with deathless splendor. I am the Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai in the gladsome Spot, and lay concealed in the midst of the Burning Bush." "O Qurratu'l-'Ayn!" He, addressing Himself in that same commentary, exclaims, "I recognize in Thee none other except the 'Great Announcement' -- the Announcement voiced by the Concourse on high. By this name, I bear witness, they that circle the Throne of Glory have ever known Thee." "With each and every Prophet, Whom We have sent down in the past," He further adds, "We have established a separate Covenant concerning the 'Remembrance of God' and His Day. Manifest, in the realm of glory and through the power of truth, are the 'Remembrance of God' and His Day before the eyes of the angels that circle His mercy-seat." "Should it be Our wish," He again affirms, "it is in Our power to compel, through the agency of but one letter of Our Revelation, the

world and all that is therein to recognize, in less than the twinkling of an eye, the truth of Our Cause."

"I am the Primal Point," the Báb thus addresses Muhammad Shah from the prison-fortress of Mah-Ku, "from which have been generated all created things... I am the Countenance of God Whose splendor can never be obscured, the light of God whose radiance can never fade... All the keys of heaven God hath chosen to place on My right hand, and all the keys of hell on My left... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God. Whosoever hath recognized Me, hath known all that is true and right, and hath attained all that is good and seemly... The substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover." "Should a tiny ant," the Báb, wishing to stress the limitless potentialities latent in His Dispensation, characteristically affirms, "desire in this day to be possessed of such power as to be able to unravel the abstrusest and most bewildering passages of the Qur'an, its wish will no doubt be fulfilled, inasmuch as the mystery of eternal might vibrates within the innermost being of all created things." "If so helpless a creature," is 'Abdu'l-Bahá' comment on so startling an affirmation, "can be endowed with so subtle a capacity, how much more efficacious must be the power released through the liberal effusions of the grace of Bahá'u'lláh!"..."

**(Shoghi Effendi: The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh)**

“...And among the evidences of the truth of His manifestation were the ascendancy, the transcendent power, and supremacy which He, the Revealer of being and Manifestation of the Adored, hath, unaided and alone, revealed throughout the world. No sooner had that eternal Beauty revealed Himself in Shiraz, 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.”

**(Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitáb-i-Íqán)**

***He is the All-Glorious.***

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

By Thy name “He”! Verily Thou art “He”, O Thou Who art “He”!<sup>[12]</sup>

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

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

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

O Angel of light! Sound a blast upon the trumpet at the advent of this Revelation, for the letter Há’ hath been joined to the letter of ancient glory.<sup>[13]</sup> Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art “He”, O Thou besides Whom there is none but “He”!

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

O Songster of Paradise! Trill out upon the twigs in these wondrous days, for God hath cast His effulgent rays upon all created things. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who

[12 In the Tafsír-i-Hú Bahá’u’lláh explains that the name “He” (or *Huwa*, consisting of the letters Há’ and Váv) is God’s Most Great Name, for it is a mirror in which all of God’s names and attributes are reflected together.]

[13 That is, the letter “B” in the name “Bahá”]

art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

O earth of knowledge! Swallow up thy learning, for the Earth of true knowledge hath been outspread through Him Who is the Self of God, the All-Glorious, the All-

Bountiful, the Most High. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art "He", O Thou besides Whom there is none but "He"!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To graciously enable Thy servants to dispense with all but Thee, to draw nigh unto Thee, and to become detached from aught else save Thee. Thou, verily, art

the God of power, of might and mercy. Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art “He”, O Thou besides Whom there is none but “He”!

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

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

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

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Such being the case, I implore Thee to send down from the clouds of Thy mercy that which shall purify the hearts of Thine ardent lovers and sanctify the souls of those who adore Thee. Raise them up, then, through Thy transcendent power, and render them victorious over all who dwell on earth. This, indeed, is that which Thou hast promised Thy loved ones through Thy word of truth: “And We desire to show favour to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make of them Our heirs.”<sup>[14]</sup> Praise be to Thee, O Thou Who art “He”, O Thou besides Whom there is none but “He”!

**(Bahá'u'lláh: Lawh-i-Náqús (Tablet of the Bell))**

[14 Qur'án 28:5]

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

Lo, the gates of Paradise were unlocked, and the hallowed Youth came forth bearing a serpent plain.<sup>[15]</sup> Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with crystal waters.

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

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

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

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

Upon it was graven, in a secret and ancient script: "By God! A most noble Angel is this."<sup>[16]</sup> And the hearts of the inmates of the eternal realm cried out: "Rejoice! This is the immortal Youth, come with an ancient light."

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

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

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

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

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

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

[15 See Qur'án 7:107.]

[16 Cf. Qur'án 12:31]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

fancies and vain imaginings, that ye may, pure and unsullied, enter the realm of the spirit and partake with radiant hearts of the splendours of everlasting holiness.

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

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

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

**(Bahá'u'lláh: Lawh-i-Ghulámu'l-Khuld (Tablet of the Immortal Youth))**

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

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

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

This is the eve of that Day from whose horizon the ancient Morn hath dawned forth with the splendour of the light beaming from that effulgent horizon. Say: This is the Day whereon God established the Covenant concerning Him Who is the voice of Truth<sup>[17]</sup> by sending forth the One<sup>[18]</sup> Who imparted unto humankind the glad-tidings of this Great Announcement. This is the Day whereon the Most Great Sign appeared and proclaimed this mighty Name, captivating thereby all created things with the reviving breezes of the verses of God. Happy the one that hath recognized his Lord and is numbered with them that have attained His presence.

Say: He, verily, is the most perfect Balance established amongst the nations, through Whom the measures of all things are made manifest by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. He it is Who hath intoxicated every understanding heart with the wine of His utterance, and Who hath torn asunder the veils through the power of My Name that overshadoweth the worlds. He, verily, hath ordained the Bayán to be a leaf of this Garden and adorned it with the mention of this incomparable Remembrance. He hath admonished all men not to withhold themselves from the Dayspring of ancient glory, nor to cling, at the time of His manifestation, to such

[17 Bahá'u'lláh]

[18 The Báb]

tales and traditions as are current amongst them. Thus hath it been decreed in accordance with that which He hath revealed, and unto this beareth witness He Who speaketh the truth. No God is there beside Me, the Almighty, the Most Generous.

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

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

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

**(Bahá'u'lláh)**