

Writings & Meditations from the Báb

EXCERPTS FROM THE QAYYÚMU'L-ASMÁ

O PEOPLE of the earth! By the righteousness of the One true God, I am the Maid of Heaven begotten by the Spirit of Bahá, abiding within the Mansion hewn out of a mass of ruby, tender and vibrant; and in this mighty Paradise naught have I ever witnessed save that which proclaimeth the Remembrance of God by extolling the virtues of this Arabian Youth. Verily there is none other God but your Lord, the All-Merciful. Magnify ye, then, His station, for behold, He is poised in the midmost heart of the All-Highest Paradise as the embodiment of the praise of God in the Tabernacle wherein His glorification is intoned

At one time I hear His Voice as He acclaimeth Him Who is the Ever-Living, the Ancient of Days, and at another time as He speaketh of the mystery of His most august Name. And when He intoneth the anthems of the greatness of God all Paradise waileth in its longing to gaze on His Beauty, and when He chanteth words of praise and glorification of God all Paradise becomes motionless like unto ice locked in the heart of a frost-bound mountain. Methinks I visioned Him moving along a straight middle path wherein every paradise was His Own paradise, every heaven His Own heaven, while the whole earth and all that is therein appeared but as a ring upon the finger of His servants. Glorified be God, His Creator, the Lord of everlasting sovereignty. Verily He is none other but the servant of God, the Gate of the Remnant of God your Lord, the Sovereign Truth. *Chapter XXIX.*

EXCERPTS FROM THE PERSIAN BAYÁN

IT is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth, for as long as that guided soul is under the shadow of the Tree of Divine Unity, he and the one who hath guided him will both be recipients of God's tender mercy, whereas possession of earthly things will cease at the time of death. The path to guidance is one of love and compassion, not of force and coercion. This hath been God's method in the past, and shall continue to be in the future! He causeth him whom He pleaseth to enter the shadow of His Mercy. Verily, He is the Supreme Protector, the All-Generous.

There is no paradise more wondrous for any soul than to be exposed to God's Manifestation in His Day, to hear His verses and believe in them, to attain His presence, which is naught but the presence of God, to sail upon the sea of the heavenly kingdom of His good-pleasure, and to partake of the choice fruits of the paradise of His divine Oneness. II, 16.

WORSHIP thou God in such wise that if thy worship lead thee to the fire, no alteration in thine adoration would be produced, and so likewise if thy recompense should be paradise. Thus and thus alone should be the worship which befitteth the one True God. Shouldst thou worship Him because of fear, this would be unseemly in the sanctified Court of His presence, and could not be regarded as an act by thee dedicated to the Oneness of His Being. Or if thy gaze should be on paradise, and thou shouldst worship Him while cherishing such a hope, thou wouldst make God's creation a partner with Him, notwithstanding the fact that paradise is desired by men.

Fire and paradise both bow down and prostrate themselves before God. That which is worthy of His Essence is to worship Him for His sake, without fear of fire, or hope of paradise.

Although when true worship is offered, the worshipper is delivered from the fire, and entereth the paradise of God's good-pleasure, yet such should not be the motive of his act. However, God's favour and grace ever flow in accordance with the exigencies of His inscrutable wisdom.

The most acceptable prayer is the one offered with the utmost spirituality and radiance; its prolongation hath not been and is not beloved by God. The more detached and the purer the prayer, the more acceptable is it in the presence of God. VII, 19

THE One true God may be compared unto the sun and the believer unto a mirror. No sooner is the mirror placed before the sun than it reflects its light. The unbeliever may be likened unto a stone. No matter how long it is exposed to the sunshine, it cannot reflect the sun. Thus the former layeth down his life as a sacrifice, while the latter doeth against God what he committeth. Indeed, if God willeth, He is potent to turn the stone into a mirror, but the person himself remaineth reconciled to his state. Had he wished to become a crystal, God would have made him to assume crystal form. For on that Day whatever cause prompteth the believer to believe in Him, the same will also be available to the unbeliever. But when the latter suffereth himself to be wrapt in veils, the same cause shutteth him out as by a veil. Thus, as is clearly evident today, those who have set their faces toward God, the True One, have believed in Him because of the Bayán, while such as are veiled have been deprived because of it. VI, 4.

EXCERPTS FROM THE KITÁB-I-ASMÁ (The Book of Names)

ON the Day of Resurrection when He Whom God will make manifest cometh unto you, invested with conclusive proofs, ye shall hold His Cause as being devoid of truth, whereas God hath apprised you in the Bayán that no similarity existeth between the Cause of Him Whom God will make manifest and the cause of others. How can anyone besides God reveal a verse such as to overwhelm all mankind? Say, great is God! Who else but Him Whom God will make manifest can spontaneously recite verses which proceed from His Lord—a feat that no mortal man can ever hope to accomplish?

Truth can in no wise be confounded with aught else except itself; would that ye might ponder His proof. Nor can error be confused with Truth, if ye do but reflect upon the testimony of God, the True One.

How great hath been the number of those who have falsely laid claim to a cause within Islám, and ye followed in their footsteps without having witnessed a single proof. What evidence can ye then produce in the presence of your Lord, if ye do but meditate a while?

Take ye good heed in your night ¹ lest ye be a cause of sadness to any soul, whether ye be able to discover proofs in him or not, that haply on the Day of Resurrection ye may not grieve Him within Whose grasp lieth every proof. And when ye do not discern God's testimony in a person, he will verily fail in manifesting the power of Truth; and God is sufficient to deal with him. Indeed on no

account should ye sadden any person; surely God will put him to the proof and bring him to account. It behooveth you to cling to the testimony of your own Faith and to observe the ordinances laid down in the Bayán.

You are like unto the man who layeth out an orchard and planteth all kinds of fruit trees therein. When the time is at hand for him, the lord, to come, ye will have taken possession of the orchard in his name, and when he doth come in person, ye will shut him out from it.

Verily We planted the Tree of the Qur'án and provided its Orchard with all kinds of fruit, whereof ye all have been partaking. Then when We came to take over that which We had planted, ye pretended not to know Him Who is the Lord thereof.

Be ye not a cause of grief unto Us, nor withhold Us from this Orchard which belongeth unto Us, though independent are We of all that ye possess. Moreover, unto none of you shall We make this property lawful, were it even to the extent of a mustard seed. Verily, the Reckoner are We.

We have planted the Garden of the Bayán in the name of Him Whom God will make manifest, and have granted you permission to live therein until the time of His manifestation; then from the moment the Cause of Him Whom God will make manifest is inaugurated, We forbid you all the things ye hold as your own, unless ye may, by the leave of your Lord, be able to regain possession thereof. XVIII, 3.

¹ By 'night' is meant the period between two divine Revelations when the Sun of Truth is not manifest among men. In the Persian Bayán, II, 7, the Báb says, 'O people of the Bayán! Act not as the people of the Qur'án have acted, for if you do so the fruits of your night will come to naught'.

PRAYERS & MEDITATIONS

HALLOWED be the Lord in Whose hand is the source of dominion. He createth whatsoever He willeth by His Word of command 'Be', and it is. His hath been the power of authority heretofore and it shall remain His hereafter. He maketh victorious whomsoever He pleaseth, through the potency of His behest. He is in truth the Powerful, the Almighty. Unto Him pertaineth all glory and majesty in the kingdoms of Revelation and Creation and whatever lieth between them. Verily He is the Potent, the All-Glorious. From everlasting He hath been the Source of indomitable strength and shall remain so unto everlasting. He is indeed the Lord of might and power. All the kingdoms of heaven and earth and whatever is between them are God's, and His power is supreme over all things. All the treasures of earth and heaven and everything between them are His, and His protection extendeth over all things. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and whatever lieth between them and He truly is a witness over all things. He is the Lord of Reckoning for all that dwell in the heavens and on earth and whatever lieth between them, and truly God is swift to reckon. He setteth the measure assigned to all who are in the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. Verily He is the Supreme Protector. He holdeth in His grasp the keys of heaven and earth and of everything between them. At His Own pleasure doth He bestow gifts, through the power of His command. Indeed His grace encompasseth all and He is the All-Knowing.

Say: God sufficeth unto me; He is the One Who holdeth in His grasp the kingdom of all things. Through the power of His hosts of heaven and earth and whatever lieth between them, He protecteth whomsoever among His servants He willeth. God, in truth, keepeth watch over all things.

Immeasurably exalted art Thou, O Lord! Protect us from what lieth in front of us and behind us, above our heads, on our right, on our left, below our feet and every other side to which we are exposed. Verily Thy protection over all things is unfailing.¹

¹ The original of this prayer for protection is written in the Báb's own hand, in the form of a pentacle.

THOU art aware, O My God, that since the day Thou didst call Me into being out of the water of Thy love till I reached fifteen years of age I lived in the land which 181 witnessed My birth [Shíráz]. Then Thou didst enable Me to go to the seaport [Búshíhr] where for five years I was engaged in trading with the goodly gifts of Thy realm and was occupied in that with which Thou hast favoured Me through the wondrous essence of Thy loving-kindness. I proceeded therefrom to the Holy Land [Karbilá] where I sojourned for one year. Then I returned to the place of My birth. There I experienced the revelation of Thy sublime bestowals and the evidences of Thy boundless grace. I yield Thee praise for all Thy goodly gifts and I render Thee thanksgiving for all Thy bounties. Then at the age of twenty-five I proceeded to thy sacred House [Mecca], and by the time I returned to the place where I was born, a year had elapsed. There I tarried patiently in the path of Thy love and beheld the evidences of Thy manifold bounties and of Thy loving-kindness until Thou didst ordain for Me to set out in Thy direction and to migrate to Thy presence. Thus I departed therefrom by Thy leave, spending six months in the land of Sád [Işfahán] and seven months in the First Mountain [Mákú], where Thou didst rain down upon Me that which beseemeth the glory of Thy heavenly blessings and befitteth the sublimity of Thy gracious gifts and favours. Now, in My thirtieth year, Thou beholdest Me, O My God, in this Grievous Mountain [Chihríq] where I have dwelt for one whole year.

Praise be unto Thee, O My Lord, for all times, heretofore and hereafter; and thanks be unto Thee, O My God, under all conditions, whether of the past or the future. The gifts Thou hast bestowed upon Me have reached their fullest measure and the blessings Thou hast vouchsafed unto Me have attained their consummation. Naught do I now witness but the manifold evidences of Thy grace and loving-kindness, Thy bounty and gracious favours, Thy generosity and loftiness, Thy sovereignty and might, Thy splendour and Thy glory, and that which befitteth the holy court of Thy transcendent dominion and majesty and beseemeth the glorious precincts of Thine eternity and exaltation.

IMMEASURABLY exalted art Thou, O my God, above the endeavours of all beings and created things to praise Thee and recognize Thee. No creature can ever comprehend Thee as beseemeth the reality of Thy holy Being and no servant can ever worship Thee as is worthy of Thine unknowable Essence. Praise be unto Thee; too high is Thine exalted Self for any allusions proceeding from Thy creatures ever to gain access unto Thy presence.

Whenever, O my God, I soared into Thy holy atmosphere and attained the inmost spirit of prayerfulness unto Thee, I was led to recognize that Thou art inaccessible and that no mention of Thee can ever reach Thy transcendent court. Therefore I turn towards Thy Loved Ones—They upon

Whom Thou hast graciously conferred Thine Own station that They might manifest Thy love and Thy true knowledge. Bless Them then, O my God, with every distinction and goodly gift which Thy knowledge may reckon within the domain of Thy power.

O my God, my Lord and my Master! I swear by Thy might and glory that Thou alone and no one else besides Thee art the ultimate Desire of all men, and that Thou alone and none other save Thee art the Object of adoration. O my God! The paths of Thine inaccessible glory have prompted me to voice these words and the ways of Thine unattainable heights have guided me to make these allusions. Exalted art Thou, O my God! The evidences of Thy revelation are too manifest for me to need to refer to aught else save Thyself, and the love I cherish for Thee is far sweeter to my taste than the knowledge of all things and freeth me from the need to seek anyone's knowledge other than Thine.

All praise be unto Thee, O my Lord. I verily believe in Thee, as Thou art in Thyself; and of Thee, as Thou art in Thyself, I beg forgiveness for myself and on behalf of all mankind.

O my God! Wholly have I fled unto Thy face and have cast myself before Thee and no power have I over aught in Thy holy presence. Shouldst Thou chastise me with Thy might, Thou wouldst assuredly be just in Thy decree; and wert Thou to bestow every goodly gift on me, Thou wouldst indeed be most generous and bountiful. Verily Thou art independent of all the peoples of the world.

I have sought reunion with Thee, O my Master, yet have I failed to attain thereto save through the knowledge of detachment from aught save Thee. I have yearned for Thy love, but failed to find it except in renouncing everything other than Thyself. I have been eager to worship Thee, yet have I failed to achieve Thy adoration, except by loving those who cherish Thy love. No one do I recognize, O my God, except Thee. Thou art incomparable and hast no partner. Thou alone knowest our shortcomings and none other hath this knowledge. I beg Thy forgiveness for whatever doth displease Thee

I call upon Thee at all times with the tongue of Thine inspiration, saying: 'Thou art in truth the All-Possessing, the Peerless. No God is there but Thee. Immeasurably far and exalted art Thou above the descriptions of those who arrogantly assign peers unto Thee.'

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