



Bahá'u'lláh

MARKING *the* BICENTENARY
of the BIRTH of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH (1817-1892)



BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

*Marking the bicentenary
of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)*

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CONTENTS

Message from the Universal House of Justice
Marking the Bicentenary of
the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh,
October 2017

The twofold station
of Manifestations of God

The Significance of
the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh, the Supreme
Manifestation of God

The greatness
of this Day

The mission
of Bahá'u'lláh

The sufferings
of Bahá'u'lláh

Statement by Shoghi Effendi
on the Station of Bahá'u'lláh from *God Passes By*

A Tribute to Bahá'u'lláh
by the Universal House of Justice

*I am the Sun of Wisdom
and the Ocean of Knowledge.
I cheer the faint and revive the dead.*

*I am the guiding Light
that illumineth the way.*

*I am the royal Falcon
on the arm of the Almighty.*

*I unfold the drooping wings
of every broken bird
and start it on its flight.*

The Universal House of Justice

October 2017

To all who celebrate the Glory of God

Dearly loved Friends,

This salutary truth we maintain: that the peoples of the earth have always been remembered by their God. In every era of history, that unknowable Reality has opened the gates of grace to the world by sending an Emissary charged with providing the moral and spiritual stimulus that human beings need to cooperate and advance. Many of the names of these great Lights to humankind are lost. But some shine out from the annals of the past as having revolutionized thought, unlocked stores of knowledge, and inspired the rise of civilizations, and Their names continue to be honoured and praised. Each of these spiritual and social visionaries, stainless mirrors of virtue, set out teachings and truths that answered the urgent needs of the age. As the world now faces its most pressing challenges yet, we acclaim Bahá'u'lláh, born two hundred years ago, as such a Figure—indeed, as the One Whose teachings will usher in that long-promised time when all humanity will live side by side in peace and unity.

From His early youth, Bahá'u'lláh was regarded by those who knew Him as bearing the imprint of destiny. Blessed with saintly character and uncommon wisdom, He seemed to be touched by heaven's kindly light. Yet He was made to endure forty years of suffering, including successive exiles and incarcerations at the decree of two despotic monarchs, campaigns to vilify His name and condemn His followers, violence upon His Person, shameful attempts on His life—all of which, out of a boundless love for humanity, He bore willingly, with radiance and forbearance, and with compassion for His tormentors. Even the expropriation of all His worldly possessions left Him unperturbed. An observer might wonder why One Whose love for others was so complete should have been made the target of such hostility, given that He had otherwise been the object of universal praise and admiration, famed for His benevolence and high-mindedness, and had disavowed any claim to political power. To anyone who is familiar with the pattern of history, the reason for His ordeals is, of course, unmistakable. The appearance of a prophetic Figure in the world has invariably given rise to ferocious opposition from wielders of power. But the light of truth will not be put out. And so, in the lives of these transcendent Beings one finds sacrifice, heroism and, come what may, deeds that exemplify Their words. The same is evident in each phase of the life of Bahá'u'lláh. In spite of every hardship, He was never silenced, and His words retained their compelling potency—words spoken with the voice of insight, diagnosing the world's ills and prescribing the remedy; words carrying the weight of justice, warning kings and rulers about forces that would ultimately sweep them from their thrones; words that leave one's soul uplifted, awed and transformed, determined to free itself from the thorns and brambles of self-interest; and words that are clear, arresting, and emphatic: "This thing is not from Me, but from God." Might one not ask, in considering such a life: if this be not from God, what can be pointed to that is?

The perfect Educators Who, throughout history, brought light to the world, left behind a legacy of sacred words. Within the words that flowed like a river from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh are gifts of enormous range and sublime character. Not infrequently, one who encounters His Revelation responds first to prayers of surpassing beauty that satisfy the soul's longing to befittingly worship its Maker. Deeper in the ocean of His words are discovered the laws and moral imperatives to liberate the human spirit from the tyranny of worldly instincts unworthy of its true calling. Here, too, are found enduring ideals in whose light parents may raise children not simply in their own likeness, but with aspirations more exalted. There are also explanations that reveal the hand of God at work in the history of humankind's winding journey through the stages of tribe and nation towards higher forms of unity. The diverse religions of the world are shown to be expressions of a single underlying truth, related to one another by a common origin, and also by a common purpose: to transform humanity's inner life and outer conditions. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings testify to the nobility of the human spirit. The society He envisions is one worthy of that nobility and founded on principles that guard and reinforce it. The oneness of the human family He places at the core of collective life; the equality of women and men He unequivocally asserts. He reconciles the seemingly counteracting forces of our own age—science and religion, unity and diversity, freedom and order, individual rights and social responsibilities. And among His greatest gifts is justice, manifested in institutions whose concern is for the progress and development of all peoples. In His own words, He has “blotted out from the pages of God's holy Book whatsoever hath been the cause of strife, of malice and mischief amongst the children of men” and, concurrently, “laid down the essential prerequisites of concord, of understanding, of complete and enduring unity”. Might one not ask, what would be a befitting response to such gifts?

“It is the duty of every seeker to bestir himself and strive to attain the shores of this ocean,” Bahá'u'lláh states. The spiritual teachings brought by successive Messengers through the ages found expression in religious systems that, over time, have become fused with aspects of culture and weighed down with man-made dogmas. But look past these and it becomes clear that the original teachings are the source of the universal values through which diverse peoples have found common cause and which have moulded humanity's moral consciousness. In contemporary society, the reputation of religion has suffered a great deal, and understandably so. If, in the name of religion, hatred and strife are promoted, it is better to do without it. However, true religion can be known by its fruits—its capacity to inspire, to transform, to unite, to foster peace and prosperity. It is in harmony with rational thought. And it is essential to social progress. The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh cultivates within the individual and the community the discipline of acting in the light of reflection, and by this means, insights gradually accumulate about effective ways to work for the betterment of society. Attempts at social change through political intrigue, sedition, vilification of particular groups, or outright conflict are condemned by Bahá'u'lláh, for they merely perpetuate cycles of struggle while lasting solutions continue to elude. He champions instruments of a very different sort. He calls for good deeds, kind words, and upright conduct; He enjoins service to others and collaborative action. And to the task of constructing a world civilization founded on the divine teachings, He summons every member of the human race. Might one not ask, in contemplating the breadth of His vision, upon what foundation shall humanity realistically build hope for the future, if not this?

In every land, those who have been attracted to the message of Bahá'u'lláh and are committed to His vision are systematically learning how to give effect to His teachings. Cohorts of youth are becoming ever more conscious of their spiritual identity and are directing their energies towards the advancement of their societies.

People with divergent perspectives are discovering how to replace contention and the imposition of authority with consultation and the collective search for solutions. From every race, religion, nationality, and class, souls are uniting around a vision of humanity as one people and the earth as one country. Many who have long suffered are finding their voice and becoming protagonists of their own development, resourceful and resilient. From villages, neighbourhoods, towns and cities are arising institutions, communities, and individuals dedicated to labouring together for the emergence of a united and prospering world that might truly deserve to be called the kingdom of God on earth. On this two hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's appearance, the many who are part of this enterprise are reaching out to those around them with a simple invitation: seize this opportunity to find out who He was and what He represents. Put to the test the remedy He has prescribed. His coming offers sure proof that the human race, threatened by numerous perils, has not been forgotten. When so many people of goodwill throughout the world have for so long beseeched God for an answer to the problems that beset them in their common homeland, is it so surprising that He should have answered their prayer?

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

The twofold station of Manifestations of God

KNOW THOU assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him...

The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal Himself through specific acts. It is for this reason that they appear to vary in their greatness. Their Revelation may be likened unto the light of the moon that sheddeth its radiance upon the earth. Though every time it appeareth, it revealeth a fresh measure of its brightness, yet its inherent splendor can never diminish, nor can its light suffer extinction.

It is clear and evident, therefore, that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world. Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.79

These Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. one is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them all by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attributes, thou hast not erred from the truth. Even as He hath revealed: “No distinction do We make between any of His Messengers.” For they, one and all, summon the people of the earth to acknowledge the unity of God, and herald unto them the Kawthar of an infinite grace and bounty. They are all invested with the robe of prophethood, and are honored with the mantle of glory. Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur’án, revealed: “I am all the Prophets.” Likewise, He saith: “I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.” . . .

It is clear and evident to thee that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Cause of God, Who have appeared clothed in divers attire. If thou wilt observe with discriminating eyes, thou wilt behold Them all abiding in the same tabernacle, soaring in the same heaven, seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith. Such is the unity of those Essences of Being, those Luminaries of infinite and immeasurable splendor! Wherefore, should one of these Manifestations of Holiness proclaim saying: “I am the return of all the Prophets,” He, verily, speaketh the truth. In like manner, in every subsequent Revelation, the return of the former Revelation is a fact, the truth of which is firmly established . . .

The other station is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation, and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each one of them is known by a different name, is characterized by a special attribute, fulfils a definite mission, and is entrusted with a particular Revelation. Even as He saith: “Some of the Apostles We have caused to excel the others. To some God hath spoken, some He hath raised and exalted. And to Jesus, Son of Mary, We gave manifest signs, and We strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit.”

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.52

Beware, O believers in the Unity of God, lest ye be tempted to make any distinction between any of the Manifestations of His Cause, or to discriminate against the signs that have accompanied and proclaimed their Revelation. This indeed is the true meaning of Divine Unity, if ye be of them that apprehend and believe this truth.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.59

Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed unto men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.87

The Significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh

“IN THIS MOST MIGHTY Revelation,” He moreover, states, “all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation.” And again: “None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation.” Referring to His own station He declares: “But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the Robe of Prophethood, nor would any of the sacred Scriptures have been revealed.”

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p.99

That which hath been made manifest in this preeminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.103

How vast is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh! How great the magnitude of His blessings showered upon humanity in this day! And yet, how poor, how inadequate our conception of their significance and glory! This generation stands too close to so colossal a Revelation to appreciate, in their full measure, the infinite possibilities of His Faith, the unprecedented character of His Cause, and the mysterious dispensations of His Providence.

— Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.24

A Revelation, hailed as the promise and crowning glory of past ages and centuries, as the consummation of all the Dispensations within the Adamic Cycle, inaugurating an era of at least a thousand years' duration, and a cycle destined to last no less than five thousand centuries, signaling the end of the Prophetic Era and the beginning of the Era of Fulfillment, unsurpassed alike in the duration of its Author's ministry and the fecundity and splendor of His mission – such a Revelation was, as already noted, born amidst the darkness of a subterranean dungeon in Tīhrán – an abominable pit that had once served as a reservoir of water for one of the public baths of the city. Wrapped in its stygian gloom, breathing its fetid air, numbed by its humid and icy atmosphere, His feet in stocks, His neck weighed down by a mighty chain, surrounded by criminals and miscreants of the worst order, oppressed by the consciousness of the terrible blot that had stained the fair name of His beloved Faith, painfully aware of the dire distress that had overtaken its champions, and of the grave dangers that faced the remnant of its followers – at so critical an hour and under such appalling circumstances the “Most Great Spirit,” as designated by Himself, and symbolized in the Zoroastrian, the Mosaic, the Christian, and Muhammadan Dispensations by the Sacred Fire, the Burning Bush, the Dove and the Angel Gabriel respectively, descended upon, and revealed itself, personated by a “Maiden,” to the agonized soul of Bahá'u'lláh.

In His Súratu'l-Haykal (the Súrîh of the Temple) He thus describes those breathless moments when the Maiden, symbolizing the “Most Great Spirit” proclaimed His mission to the entire creation: “While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden – the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord – suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good-pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God’s honored servants. Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: ‘By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if ye be of them that perceive.’”

In His Epistle to Náṣiri’d-Dín Sháh, His royal adversary, revealed at the height of the proclamation of His Message, occur these passages which shed further light on the Divine origin of His mission: “O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from one Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And he bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow . . . This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of Thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred . . . His all-compelling summons hath reached Me, and caused Me to speak His praise amidst all people. I was indeed as one dead when His behest was uttered. The hand of the will of Thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful, transformed Me.” “By My Life!” He asserts in another Tablet, “Not of Mine own volition have I revealed Myself, but God, of His own choosing, hath manifested Me.” And again: “Whenever I chose to hold My peace and be still, lo, the Voice of the Holy Spirit, standing on My right hand, aroused Me, and the Most Great Spirit appeared before My face, and Gabriel overshadowed Me, and the Spirit of Glory stirred within My bosom, bidding Me arise and break My silence.”

— Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p.99

Bahá'u'lláh, the Supreme Manifestation of God

SAY: IT IS IN OUR POWER, should We wish it, to cause all created things to expire in an instant, and, with the next, to endue them again with life. The knowledge thereof, however, is with God alone, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. It is in our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendour, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages. This, in truth, is a matter simple of accomplishment. Such have been the evidences of My power from the beginning that hath no beginning until the end that hath no end. My creatures, however, have been oblivious of My power, have repudiated My sovereignty, and contended with Mine own Self, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p.39

Bahá'u'lláh is not the Intermediary between other Manifestations and God. Each has His own relation to the Primal Source. But in the sense that Bahá'u'lláh is the greatest Manifestation to yet appear, the one Who consummates the Revelation of Moses, He was the one Moses conversed with in the Burning Bush. In other words Bahá'u'lláh identifies the Glory of God-Head on that occasion with Himself. No distinction can be made amongst the Prophets in the sense that They all proceed from one source, and are of one essence. But their stations and function in this world are different.

— From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 19 October 1947

Regarding your questions: There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in Station to Bahá'u'lláh, having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years . . .

— From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 24 December 1941

There are no Prophets, so far, in the same category as Bahá'u'lláh, as He culminates a great cycle begun by Adam.

— From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 26 December 1941

(referring to Bahá'u'lláh) . . . to enshrine the holiest dust the earth ever received into its bosom.

— Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957*, p.122

(referring to Bahá'u'lláh) . . . the redemptive purpose of the life of the most precious Being ever to have drawn breath on this planet.

— The Universal House of Justice, *A Wider Horizon, Selected Letters 1983-1992*, p.77

The greatness of this Day

THE WORLD'S EQUILIBRIUM hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System — the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.136

This is the Day in which God's most excellent favors have been poured out upon men...

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.6

Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.16

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised one.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.10

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.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.10

We are possessed of such power which, if brought to light, will trans-mute the most deadly of poisons into a panacea of unfailing efficacy.

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.107

The Hand of omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.109

In confirmation of the exalted rank of the true believer, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, He reveals the following: “The station which he who hath truly recognized this Revelation will attain is the same as the one ordained for such prophets of the house of Israel as are not regarded as Manifestations ‘endowed with constancy.’”

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 110

“Centuries, nay ages, must pass away,” He affirms in one of His earliest Tablets, “ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory . . . How thankful must we be for having been made in this Day the recipients of so overwhelming a favor! Would that we had ten thousand lives that we might lay them down in thanksgiving for so rare a privilege, so high an attainment, so priceless a bounty!” “The mere contemplation,” He adds, “of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages – saints who longed to partake for one moment of its great glory.” “The holy ones of past ages and centuries have, each and all, yearned with tearful eyes to live, though for one moment, in the Day of God. Their longings unsatisfied, they repaired to the Great Beyond. How great, therefore, is the bounty of the Abhá Beauty Who, notwithstanding our utter unworthiness, hath through His grace and mercy breathed into us in this divinely-illuminated century the spirit of life, hath gathered us beneath the standard of the Beloved of the world, and chosen to confer upon us a bounty for which the mighty ones of bygone ages had craved in vain.” “The souls of the well-favored among the concourse on high,” He likewise affirms, “the sacred dwellers of the most exalted Paradise, are in this day filled with burning desire to return unto this world, that they may render such service as lieth in their power to the threshold of the Abhá Beauty.”

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 110

Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name! This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of the Horizons and the beautiful springtime of His Holiness the Eternal one!

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í World Faith*, p.351

The mission of Bahá'u'lláh

GOD'S PURPOSE in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.79

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.214

The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.215

God, the True one, beareth Me witness, and every atom in existence is moved to testify that such means as lead to the elevation, the advancement, the education, the protection and the regeneration of the peoples of the earth have been clearly set forth by Us and are revealed in the Holy Books and Tablets by the Pen of Glory.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.130

. . . the fingers of divine power have unlocked the portals of the knowledge of God, and the light of divine knowledge and heavenly grace hath illumined and inspired the essence of all created things, in such wise that in each and every thing a door of knowledge hath been opened, and within every atom traces of the sun hath been made manifest.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p.29

Man is the supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of that which he doth inherently possess. Through a word proceeding out of the mouth of God he was called into being; by one word more he was guided to recognize the Source of his education; by yet another word his station and destiny were

safeguarded. The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom. If any man were to meditate on that which the Scriptures, sent down from the heaven of God's holy Will, have revealed, he would readily recognize that their purpose is that all men shall be regarded as one soul, so that the seal bearing the words "The Kingdom shall be God's" may be stamped on every heart, and the light of Divine bounty, of grace, and mercy may envelop all mankind. The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath wished nothing for Himself. The allegiance of mankind profiteth Him not, neither doth its perversity harm Him. The Bird of the Realm of Utterance voiceth continually this call: "All things have I willed for thee, and thee, too, for thine own sake."

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.259

How great is the Cause! How staggering the weight of its message! This is the Day of which it hath been said: 'o my son! verily God will bring everything to light though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth; for God is subtile, informed of all.'

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p.107

By the righteousness of the one true God! If one speck of a jewel be lost and buried beneath a mountain of stones, and lie hidden beyond the seven seas, the Hand of omnipotence will assuredly reveal it in this day, pure and cleansed from dross.

— Bahá'u'lláh quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.107

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.255

Through the movement of our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.92

Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb.

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í World Faith*, p.352

O ye respected souls! From the continual imitation of ancient and worn-out ways, the world had grown dark as darksome night. The fundamentals of the divine Teachings had passed from memory; their pith and heart had been totally forgotten, and the people were holding on to husks. The nations had, like tattered garments long outworn, fallen into a pitiful condition.

Out of this pitch blackness there dawned the morning splendour of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He hath dressed the world with a garment new and fair, and that new garment is the principles which have come down from God.

Now the new age is here and creation is reborn. Humanity hath taken on new life. The autumn hath gone by, and the reviving spring is here. All things are now made new. Arts and industries have been reborn, there are new discoveries in science, and there are new inventions; even the details of human affairs, such as dress and personal effects – even weapons – all these have likewise been renewed. The laws and procedures of every government have been revised. Renewal is the order of the day.

And all this newness hath its source in the fresh outpourings of wondrous grace and favour from the Lord of the Kingdom, which have renewed the world. The people, therefore, must be set completely free from their old patterns of thought, that all their attention may be focused upon these new principles, for these are the light of this time and the very spirit of this age.

Unless these Teachings are effectively spread among the people, until the old ways, the old concepts, are gone and forgotten, this world of being will find no peace, nor will it reflect the perfections of the Heavenly Kingdom. Strive ye with all your hearts to make the heedless conscious, to waken those who sleep, to bring knowledge to the ignorant, to make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and restore the dead to life.

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p.252

... “In every Dispensation,” He moreover has written, “the light of Divine Guidance has been focused upon one central theme . . . In this wondrous Revelation, this glorious century, the foundation of the Faith of God, and the distinguishing feature of His Law, is the consciousness of the oneness of mankind.”

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Promised Day is Come*, p.118

The sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh

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

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.99

O My servant that believest in God! By the righteousness of the Almighty! Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.148

Ponder a while on the woes and afflictions which this Prisoner hath sustained. I have, all the days of My life, been at the mercy of Mine enemies, and have suffered each day, in the path of the love of God, a fresh tribulation. I have patiently endured until the fame of the Cause of God was spread abroad on the earth.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.203

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

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p.76

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

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p.19

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

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p.109

. . . in Mázindarán, the blessed feet of the Abhá Beauty (may my life be offered up for His loved ones) were so grievously scourged as to bleed and be sore wounded. His neck also was put into captive chains and His feet made fast in the stocks. In every hour, for a period of fifty years, a new trial and calamity befell Him and fresh afflictions and cares beset Him. one of them: after having suffered intense vicissitudes, He was made homeless and a wanderer and fell a victim to still new vexations and troubles. In 'Iráq, the Day-Star of the world was so exposed to the wiles of the people of malice as to be eclipsed in splendor. Later on He was sent an exile to the Great City (Constantinople) and thence to the Land of Mystery (Adrianople), whence, grievously wronged, He was eventually transferred to the Most Great Prison (Akká). He Whom the world hath wronged (may my life be offered up for His loved ones) was four times banished from city to city, till at last, condemned to perpetual confinement, He was incarcerated in this prison, the prison of highway robbers, of brigands and of man-slayers. All this is but one of the trials that have afflicted the Blessed Beauty, the rest being even as grievous as this.

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament*, p.3

At times His dwelling-place was a cave to which He refers in His Tablets addressed to the famous Shaykh ‘Abdu’r-Raḥmán and to Maryam, a kinswoman of His. “I roamed the wilderness of resignation” He thus depicts, in the Lawḥ-i-Maryam, the rigours of His austere solitude, ‘travelling in such wise that in My exile every eye wept sore over Me, and all created things shed tears of blood because of My anguish. The birds of the air were My companions and the beasts of the field My associates.’ ‘From My eyes,’ He, referring in the Kitáb-i-Íqán to those days, testifies, ‘there rained tears of anguish, and in My bleeding heart surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night I had no food for sustenance, and many a day My body found no rest . . . Alone I communed with My spirit, oblivious of the world and all that is therein.

— Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p.120

The vermin-infested Sýáh-Chál of Tíhrán; the bastinado inflicted upon Him in Ámul; the humble fare which filled His kashkúl while He lived for two years the life of a dervish in the mountains of Kurdistán; the days in Bagḥdád when He did not even possess a change of linen, and when His followers subsisted on a handful of dates; His confinement behind the prison-walls of ‘Akká, when for nine years even the sight of verdure was denied Him; and the public humiliation to which He was subjected at government headquarters in that city . . .

— Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p.292

Statement by Shoghi Effendi on the Station of Bahá'u'lláh from *God Passes By*

HE WHO IN SUCH DRAMATIC circumstances was made to sustain the overpowering weight of so glorious a Mission was none other than the one Whom posterity will acclaim, and Whom innumerable followers already recognize, as the Judge, the Lawgiver and Redeemer of all mankind, as the organizer of the entire planet, as the Unifier of the children of men, as the Inaugurator of the long-awaited millennium, as the originator of a new “Universal Cycle,” as the Establisher of the Most Great Peace, as the Fountain of the Most Great Justice, as the Proclaimer of the coming of age of the entire human race, as the Creator of a new World order, and as the Inspirer and Founder of a world civilization.

To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the “Everlasting Father,” the “Lord of Hosts” come down “with ten thousands of saints”; to Christendom Christ returned “in the glory of the Father,” to Shí’ah Islám the return of the Imám Ḥusayn; to Sunnī Islám the descent of the “Spirit of God” (Jesus Christ); to the Zoroastrians the promised Sháh-Bahrám; to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna; to the Buddhists the fifth Buddha.

In the name He bore He combined those of the Imám Ḥusayn, the most illustrious of the successors of the Apostle of God – the brightest “star” shining in the “crown” mentioned in the Revelation of St. John – and of the Imám ‘Alí, the Commander of the Faithful, the second of the two “witnesses” extolled in that same Book. He was formally designated Bahá'u'lláh, an appellation specifically recorded in the Persian Bayán, signifying at once the glory, the light and the splendor of God, and was styled the “Lord of Lords,” the “Most Great Name,” the “Ancient Beauty,” the “Pen of the Most High,” the “Hidden Name,” the “Preserved Treasure,” “He Whom God will make manifest,” the “Most Great Light,” the “All-Highest Horizon,” the “Most Great ocean,” the “Supreme Heaven,” the “Pre-Existent Root,” the “Self-Subsistent,” the “Day-Star of the Universe,” the “Great Announcement,” the “Speaker on Sinai,” the “Sifter of Men,” the “Wronged one of the World,” the “Desire of the Nations,” the “Lord of the Covenant,” the “Tree beyond which there is no passing.” He derived His descent, on the one hand, from Abraham (the Father of the Faithful) through his wife Katurah, and on the other from Zoroaster, as well as from Yazdigird, the last king of the Sásáníyán dynasty. He was moreover a descendant of Jesse, and belonged, through His father, Mírzá ‘Abbás, better known as Mírzá Buzurg – a nobleman closely associated with the ministerial circles of the Court of Fath-‘Alí Sháh – to one of the most ancient and renowned families of Mázindarán.

To Him Isaiah, the greatest of the Jewish prophets, had alluded as the “Glory of the Lord,” the “Everlasting Father,” the “Prince of Peace,” the “Wonderful,” the “Counsellor,” the “Rod come forth out of the stem of Jesse” and the “Branch grown out of His roots,” Who “shall be established upon the throne of David,” Who “will come

with strong hand,” Who “shall judge among the nations,” Who “shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay the wicked,” and Who “shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” of Him David had sung in his Psalms, acclaiming Him as the “Lord of Hosts” and the “King of Glory.” To Him Haggai had referred as the “Desire of all nations,” and Zachariah as the “Branch” Who “shall grow up out of His place,” and “shall build the Temple of the Lord.” Ezekiel had extolled Him as the “Lord” Who “shall be king over all the earth,” while to His day Joel and Zephaniah had both referred as the “day of Jehovah,” the latter describing it as “a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.” His Day Ezekiel and Daniel had, moreover, both acclaimed as the “day of the Lord,” and Malachi described as “the great and dreadful day of the Lord” when “the Sun of Righteousness” will “arise, with healing in His wings,” whilst Daniel had pronounced His advent as signaling the end of the “abomination that maketh desolate.”

To His Dispensation the sacred books of the followers of Zoroaster had referred as that in which the sun must needs be brought to a standstill for no less than one whole month. To Him Zoroaster must have alluded when, according to tradition, He foretold that a period of three thousand years of conflict and contention must needs precede the advent of the World-Savior Sháh-Bahrám, Who would triumph over Ahriman and usher in an era of blessedness and peace.

He alone is meant by the prophecy attributed to Gautama Buddha Himself, that “a Buddha named Maitreya, the Buddha of universal fellowship” should, in the fullness of time, arise and reveal “His boundless glory.” To Him the Bhagavad-Gita of the Hindus had referred as the “Most Great Spirit,” the “Tenth Avatar,” the “Immaculate Manifestation of Krishna.”

To Him Jesus Christ had referred as the “Prince of this world,” as the “Comforter” Who will “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment,” as the “Spirit of Truth” Who “will guide you into all truth,” Who “shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak,” as the “Lord of the Vineyard,” and as the “Son of Man” Who “shall come in the glory of His Father” “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,” with “all the holy angels” about Him, and “all nations” gathered before His throne. To Him the Author of the Apocalypse had alluded as the “Glory of God,” as “Alpha and omega,” “the Beginning and the End,” “the First and the Last.” Identifying His Revelation with the “third woe,” he, moreover, had extolled His Law as “a new heaven and a new earth,” as the “Tabernacle of God,” as the “Holy City,” as the “New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” To His Day Jesus Christ Himself had referred as “the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory.” To the hour of His advent St. Paul had alluded as the hour of the “last trump,” the “trump of God,” whilst St. Peter had spoken of it as the “Day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” His Day he, furthermore, had described as “the times of refreshing,” “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began.”

To Him Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, had alluded in His Book as the “Great Announcement,” and declared His Day to be the Day whereon “God” will “come down” “overshadowed with clouds,” the Day whereon “thy Lord shall come and the angels rank on rank,” and “The Spirit shall arise and the angels shall be ranged in order.” His advent He, in that Book, in a súrih said to have been termed by Him “the heart of the Qur’án,” had foreshadowed as that of the “third” Messenger, sent down to “strengthen” the two who preceded Him. To His Day He, in the pages of that same Book, had paid a glowing tribute, glorifying it as the “Great Day,” the “Last Day,” the “Day of God,” the “Day of Judgment,” the “Day of Reckoning,” the “Day of Mutual Deceit,” the “Day of Severing,” the “Day of Sighing,” the “Day of Meeting,” the Day “when the Decree shall be accomplished,” the Day whereon the second “Trumpet blast” will be sounded, the “Day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the world,” and “all shall come to Him in humble guise,” the Day when “thou shalt see the mountains, which thou thinkest so firm, pass away with the passing of a cloud,” the Day “wherein account shall be taken,” “the approaching Day, when men’s hearts shall rise up, choking them, into their throats,” the Day when “all that are in the heavens and all that are on the earth shall be terror-stricken, save him whom God pleaseth to deliver,” the Day whereon “every suckling woman shall forsake her sucking babe, and every woman that hath a burden in her womb shall cast her burden,” the Day “when the earth shall shine with the light of her Lord, and the Book shall be set, and the Prophets shall be brought up, and the witnesses; and judgment shall be given between them with equity; and none shall be wronged.”

The Báb had no less significantly extolled Him as the “Essence of Being,” as the “Remnant of God,” as the “omnipotent Master,” as the “Crimson, all-encompassing Light,” as “Lord of the visible and invisible,” as the “sole object of all previous Revelations, including The Revelation of the Qá’im Himself.” He had formally designated Him as “He Whom God shall make manifest,” had alluded to Him as the “Abhá Horizon” wherein He Himself lived and dwelt, had specifically recorded His title, and eulogized His “order” in His best-known work, the Persian Bayán, had disclosed His name through His allusion to the “Son of ‘Alí, a true and undoubted Leader of men,” had, repeatedly, orally and in writing, fixed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the time of His Revelation, and warned His followers lest “the Bayán and all that hath been revealed therein” should “shut them out as by a veil” from Him. He had, moreover, declared that He was the “first servant to believe in Him,” that He bore Him allegiance “before all things were created,” that “no allusion” of His “could allude unto Him,” that “the year-old germ that holdeth within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of the whole of the Bayán.” He had, moreover, clearly asserted that He had “covenanted with all created things” concerning Him Whom God shall make manifest ere the covenant concerning His own mission had been established. He had readily acknowledged that He was but “a letter” of that “Most Mighty Book,” “a dewdrop” from that “Limitless ocean,” that His Revelation was “only a leaf amongst the leaves of His Paradise,” that “all that hath been exalted in the Bayán” was but “a ring” upon His own hand, and He Himself “a ring upon the hand of Him Whom God shall make manifest,” Who, “turneth it as He pleaseth, for whatsoever He pleaseth, and through whatsoever He pleaseth.” He had unmistakably declared that He had “sacrificed” Himself “wholly” for Him, that He had “consented to be cursed” for His sake, and to have “yearned for naught but martyrdom” in the path of His love. Finally, He had unequivocally prophesied: “Today the Bayán is in the stage of seed; at the beginning of the manifestation of Him Whom God shall make manifest its ultimate perfection will become apparent.” “Ere nine will have elapsed from the inception of this Cause the realities of the

created things will not be made manifest. All that thou hast as yet seen is but the stage from the moist-germ until We clothed it with flesh. Be patient until thou beholdest a new creation. Say: Blessed, therefore, be God, the Most Excellent of Makers!"

"He around Whom the Point of the Bayán (Báb) hath revolved is come" is Bahá'u'lláh's confirmatory testimony to the inconceivable greatness and preeminent character of His own Revelation. "If all who are in heaven and on earth," He moreover affirms, "be invested in this day with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Bayán, whose station is ten thousand times more glorious than that of the Letters of the Qur'anic Dispensation, and if they one and all should, swift as the twinkling of an eye, hesitate to recognize My Revelation, they shall be accounted, in the sight of God, of those that have gone astray, and regarded as 'Letters of Negation.'" "Powerful is He, the King of Divine might," He, alluding to Himself in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, asserts, "to extinguish with one letter of His wondrous words, the breath of life in the whole of the Bayán and the people thereof, and with one letter bestow upon them a new and everlasting life, and cause them to arise and speed out of the sepulchers of their vain and selfish desires." "This," He furthermore declares, "is the king of days," the "Day of God Himself," the "Day which shall never be followed by night," the "Springtime which autumn will never overtake," "the eye to past ages and centuries," for which "the soul of every Prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted," for which "all the divers kindreds of the earth have yearned," through which "God hath proved the hearts of the entire company of His Messengers and Prophets, and beyond them those that stand guard over His sacred and inviolable Sanctuary, the inmates of the Celestial Pavilion and dwellers of the Tabernacle of Glory." "In this most mighty Revelation," He moreover, states, "all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation." And again: "None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation." Referring to His own station He declares: "But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the Robe of Prophethood, nor would any of the sacred Scriptures have been revealed."

And last but not least is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own tribute to the transcendent character of the Revelation identified with His Father: "Centuries, nay ages, must pass away, ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory." "The mere contemplation of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty," He furthermore affirms, "would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages — saints who longed to partake for one moment of its great glory." "Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future 'in the shadows of the clouds,' know verily," is His significant statement, "that in so far as their relation to the source of their inspiration is concerned they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them 'doeth whatsoever He willeth.'" And finally stands this, His illuminating explanation, setting forth conclusively the true relationship between the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and that of the Báb: "The Revelation of the Báb may be likened to the sun, its station corresponding to the first sign of the Zodiac — the sign Aries — which the sun enters at the vernal equinox. The station of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, on the other hand, is represented by the sign Leo, the sun's mid-summer and highest station. By this is meant that this holy Dispensation is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory."

A Tribute to Bahá'u'lláh

by the Universal House of Justice

ON THE OCCASION OF
THE CENTENARY COMMEMORATION AT BAHJÍ
OF THE ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

WITH SOUL STIRRING EMOTION we gather in the hallowed environs of His resting place to honor the memory of the Supreme Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh, on the solemn, historic occasion of the centenary of His ascension.

We lift our voices at the prompting of our hearts' desire to pay tribute to a life infinitely beyond compare. But how shall we realize such a wish when it is evident that no mind can attain the comprehension which would make possible the vocabulary worthy of His celestial court? In very truth, our tongues falter in their impotence to describe, let alone extol, the prodigies of a prophetic career which was framed in superlatives. For here at Bahjí, one hundred years ago, was drawn the last breath on earth of the world's greatest Luminary, Founder of the Dispensation marking the culmination of the six-thousand-year-old Adamic Cycle, and Inaugurator of the five-thousand-century Bahá'í Cycle. He, the Most Great Manifestation, appeared in the Most Great Name and endured the greatest suffering in authoring the Most Great Revelation, which is the wellspring of the Most Great Peace. In our attempt to appreciate these matchless bounties, we recite the gem-like names of the Adored one, picked out as pearls from the veritable ocean of His Revelation, bestrewing them throughout our testimonial that they may lend an acceptable gleam to our expression of His glory and majesty.

King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Supreme Mediator, Most Ancient Beauty: He is the Well-Beloved of all worlds. We hail Him as the long-awaited Promised one, the object of the adoration of the world. And we exclaim: "Hallowed be the Lord in Whose hand is the source of dominion!"

How grievously Bahá'u'lláh suffered to regenerate the world! Wrongly accused, imprisoned, beaten, chained, banished from country to country, betrayed, poisoned, stripped of material possessions, and "at every moment tormented with a fresh torment": such was the cruel reception that greeted the Everlasting Father, Him Who is the Possessor of all Names and Attributes. For two score years, until the end of His earthly days, He remained a prisoner and exile—persecuted unceasingly by the rulers of Persia and the Ottoman Empire, opposed relentlessly by a vicious and scheming clergy, neglected abjectly by other sovereigns to whom He addressed potent letters imparting to them that which, in His truth-bearing words, "is the cause of the well-being, the unity, the harmony, and the reconstruction of the world, and of the tranquility of the nations." "My grief," He once lamented, "exceedeth all the woes to which Jacob gave vent, and all the afflictions of Job are but a part of My sorrows."

The voice halts for shame from continuing so deplorable a recitation, the heart is torn by mere thought of the Divine Target of such grief—grief no ordinary mortal could endure. But lest we give way to feelings of gloom and distress, we take recourse in the tranquil calm He induces with such meaningful words as these: “We have borne it all with the utmost willingness and resignation, so that the souls of men may be edified, and the Word of God be exalted.” Thus, the Wronged one, patient beyond measure, preserved a majestic composure, revealing His true Self as the Merciful, the Loving, the Incomparable Friend. Concentrating His energies on the pivotal purpose of His Revelation, He transmuted His tribulations into instruments of redemption and summoned all peoples to the banner of unity.

No worldly power could thwart the purpose of the Most Exalted Pen. Through the copiousness of His writings, He poured upon the planet the healing waters of the Word of God renewed. Descending upon Him like a spring rain, His Revelation comprises some one hundred volumes—“volumes replete with unnumbered exhortations, revolutionizing principles, world-shaping laws and ordinances, dire warnings and portentous prophecies, with soul-uplifting prayers and meditations, illuminating commentaries and interpretations, impassioned discourses and homilies, all interspersed with either addresses or references to kings, to emperors and to ministers, of both the East and the West, to ecclesiastics of divers denominations, and to leaders in the intellectual, political, literary, mystical, commercial and humanitarian spheres of human activity.” Foremost among His Books is His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the charter of the future world civilization in which He has announced the Laws of God for this age. Our hearts thrill to the prospect that during the course of this centennial year, the annotated English translation of this Mother Book of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation is to be published. We acknowledge with astonished joy the prolific legacy of this divine outpouring. And we exclaim: “Praised be Thou, Who art the Desire of the world, and thanks be to Thee, O Well-Beloved of the hearts of such as are devoted to Thee!”

Today, we bear witness to the further abundance of a peerless heritage. With the setting of the Sun of Bahá, the Moon of His Covenant rose in reflected glory, lifting the darkness of a night of despair, and lighting the path to the unity of all humankind. In the fullness of its radiance stands the magnetic Figure of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the beloved Son Whom Bahá’u’lláh designated as the Interpreter of His Word and Executive of His authority, and Whom He appointed the Center of His Covenant, an office without parallel in all religious history.

We acknowledge the mysterious power of His wisdom, the illuminating potency of His words, the immortal example and unific character of His deeds. By His untiring exertions the fame of the infant Cause was spread abroad, the design of its Administrative order was completed, the World Center of the Faith emerged into clear visibility, and the splendors of the Mountain of God, as alluded to in Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Carmel, began to be manifested. With profound gratitude for such evident blessings we reaffirm our loyalty to the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh. And we exclaim: “Glorified be the All-Merciful, the Lord of Grace abounding!”

As a result of the phenomenal effects of His Covenant, a world community has been raised up on an “unassailable foundation.” The entire system of the Administrative order originated by Bahá’u’lláh in His Most Holy Book has been erected. A vigorous network of local, national, continental and international institutions functions in exemplary harmony throughout the planet. Vitalized and nurtured by His stupendous Revelation,

watered by the precious blood of countless martyrs, and tended by the loving care of unnumbered, devoted servants, the Tree of the Cause has, in these hundred years, grown mightily, has put forth its far-stretching branches and borne its first and plentiful fruit.

Bahá'u'lláh found the world in a “strange sleep.” But what a disturbance His coming has unloosed! The peoples of the earth had been separated, many parts of the human race socially and spiritually isolated. But the world of humanity today bears little resemblance to that which Bahá'u'lláh left a century ago. Unbeknownst to the great majority, His influence permeates all living beings. Indeed, no domain of life remains unaffected. In the burgeoning energy, the magnified perspectives, the heightened global consciousness; in the social and political turbulence, the fall of kingdoms, the emancipation of nations, the intermixture of cultures, the clamor for development; in the agitation over the extremes of wealth and poverty, the acute concern over the abuse of the environment, the leap of consciousness regarding the rights of women; in the growing tendency towards ecumenism, the increasing call for a new world order; in the astounding advances in the realms of science, technology, literature and the arts—in all this tumult, with its paradoxical manifestations of chaos and order, integration and disintegration, are the signs of His power as World Reformer, the proof of His claim as Divine Physician, the truth of His Word as the All-Knowing Counselor.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote voluminously about the purpose of this mysterious force and its transformative effects, but the essence can be drawn from these few perspicuous words: “Through the movement of our Pen of Glory We have, at the bidding of the Omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this worldwide regeneration.” And again: “A new life is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause or perceived its motive.” And yet again: “He Who is the Unconditioned is come, in the clouds of light, that He may quicken all created things with the breezes of His Name, the Most Merciful, and unify the world, and gather all men around this Table which hath been sent down from heaven.”

Let the denizens of the earth wake from their slumber at the resonances of His Name and arise from their confused dreams to embrace the clarity of the new Day: For “This is the King of Days, the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-beloved, Him Who through all eternity hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World.”

We here make this vow: With a stirring history of divine support behind us and a clear vision of unfolding destiny before us, we move onward, renewed, reconsecrated, resolute, until the consciousness of every human being has been touched by the knowledge of God's triumphant Faith. And, intoning the expectant words of His Martyr-Herald, we exclaim: “Exalted be His glory, and magnified be His might, and sanctified be His holiness, and glorified be His grandeur, and lauded be His ways!”



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